Remembered Worlds:
Rethinking Historical Space in a Global Age

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The past decade has witnessed intense controversies over the spatial frameworks which we use to understand the past. New notions of diasporic or global history contend with the views of those who seek to defend the image of the nation as the dominant framework for historical understanding. At the same time, debates over area studies raise questions about the notion of civilizational regions as a basis for understanding society. This paper seeks to place these debates in context by exploring the origins of contemporary spatial frameworks of social and historical knowledge. In particular, it focuses on two key developments in mid-twentieth century thought. The first may be described as 'the national mobilization of memory': the process by which individuals increasingly came to identify their personal memories with national history. The second was the growing use of world regions, defined by cultural commonalities, as a basis for studying social change. This exploration of the origins of key contemporary frameworks of historical thought seeks to shed light on future directions for developing new spatial perceptions of the past.

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In 1929, on the eve of the Wall Street Crash and the world depression, a group of French scholars launched the historical journal *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*. This new venture, which was to have a profound impact on the study of history worldwide, was inspired by a sense of impending crisis—if not by a prophetic vision of the looming economic debacle, at least by a wider sense of intellectual ferment. On the one hand, the speed of technological and social change had unsettled existing notions about the continuity between past and present. On the other, the emergence of new disciplines such as sociology and psychology was creating unexpected methodological challenges for historians. As Lucien Febvre, one of the leaders of the group, recalled: "History's crisis was not a specific malady affecting history alone. It was, it is one of the aspects, the specifically historical aspect of a great crisis in human understanding" (quoted in Dosse, 1994:9; see also Febvre, 1973).

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Though human understanding is always in a state of turbulence, there seem to be certain moments when an awareness of the inadequacy of existing paradigms becomes particularly acute. I would argue that the 1990s, like the late 1920s and 1930s, has been one of those moments. The causes of the contemporary crisis of understanding are complex, but they clearly include the ideological consequences of the collapse of the communist regimes, the postcolonial critique of Eurocentric modes of thought, and the increasingly ubiquitous influence of the phenomenon known as 'globalization'. Just as the worldwide crises of the interwar years affected the way in which the *Annales* historians interpreted the past, so these contemporary global upheavals inevitably influence the questions and perspectives which we apply, not just to studying contemporary society, but also to plumbing the depths of historical time.

One of the most unsettling challenges to understandings of the past comes—interestingly enough—from changing contemporary experiences of geographical space. Global migrations, the creation of diasporic communities and the re-awakened identity of subordinated indigenous societies challenge the dominance of the nation state as primary framework for the understanding of history. The 'decolonization of the imagination' promotes a questioning of the conventional boundaries of continents and civilizations, and encourages criticism of Eurocentric models of world history (Pieterse and Parekh, 1995). Existing spatial frameworks of historical knowledge often seem to hinder, rather than to help, efforts to understand the genesis of the intersecting transnational systems which now exert such influence over everyday life. At the same time, though, these challenges to conventional historical understanding have in turn provoked an intense reaction from those who seek to defend existing and imperiled visions of the past. History and memory, always political issues, have become more than ever topics of public controversy.

In the pages which follow I want to begin by exploring these contemporary controversies in a little more detail, but then go on to place them in a broader historical context. In particular, I shall argue that twentieth century spatial structures of historical understanding were powerfully shaped by two key trends in mid-century social thought. The first of these trends might be termed 'the national mobilization of memory', while the second was the growing use of civilizational regions as a basis for historical study. Present-day controversies over the 'politics of history' reflect the increasing tensions and slippages within the spatial frameworks of knowledge which emerged from these trends. To show these points, I shall draw on illustrations not only from the French context, but also from the development of historical ideas and debates in other countries, particularly Britain, the United States and Japan.

THE GLOBALIZATION OF NATIONALISM

It is one of the ironies of contemporary globalization that it involves the worldwide diffusion, not just of commodities, technologies, mass media and popular culture, but also of a distinctive form of nationalism, in which impassioned debates

over history play a salient role. To speak of 'global nationalism', of course, is not really paradoxical. As Benedict Anderson has eloquently shown, eighteenth and nineteenth century nationalisms were nourished precisely by the worldwide spread of trade, migration and communication—by the global replication of newspaper, novel, museum and mausoleum (Anderson, 1991). Nineteen-nineties nationalisms similarly share international commonalities both because they express themselves through the globalized media of radio, television, internet, etc., and because they react to international trends.

In the context of the wealthier nations of the world, 1990s nationalist rhetoric frequently centers upon efforts to defend 'natural' or 'commonsense' visions of the nation's past and present from the corrosive cynicism of a menacing 'cosmopolitan' elite (Lasch, 1995; Watanabe and Tanizawa, 1997; for populist political versions of this vision, see Front National, 1993; Pauline Hanson Support Movement, 1997). The sense of national vulnerability is all the more profound because the elite is often seen as being in league, not simply with the forces of globalization, but also with internal minorities: as suffering (in the words of U.S. commentator Joseph Sobran) from the vice of 'alienism'—"a prejudice in favor of the alien, the marginal, the dispossessed, the eccentric, reaching to an extreme in the attempt to 'build a new society' by destroying the basic institutions of the native" (quoted in Diamond, 1995:281).

In the European context, a rather early and striking manifestation of this form of nationalist rhetoric was a 1987 volume published by the group of French conservative scholars known as the Club d'Horloge and memorably entitled *The West Without Complexes (L'Occident Sans Complexes)*. In it, historian Michel Leroy describes 'the West' as resembling "one of those roads in Seville along which passes a procession of penitents, a circle of flagellants: their faces masked, as if to signify the loss of their identity, carrying the heavy cross of their guilt, denouncing themselves for their sins" (Leroy, 1987:11). Leroy's diagnosis is that the West is suffering from an 'AIDS of the spirit' which has robbed it of its 'immune system' and thus prevents it from "defending its identity and integrity in face of the expansionary force of other nations and other civilizations" (Leroy, 1987:16). The cure for this disease, however, does not lie in some transnational union of 'the West' against 'the rest', but rather in the reassertion of the nation, both as natural and historical community. Writing in the same volume, Didier Maupas argues that the West's spiritual sickness is a consequence of the replacement of the traditional belief in 'fraternity' with a fashionable exaltation of 'difference'. The only solution is a re-affirmation of the "natural communities in which man can rediscover himself in his own neighborhood. Fraternity is derived from proximity. To recover fraternity, it is therefore necessary to revitalize the family, the community of work or voluntary service, and patriotism at the level of the locality, the region and the nation" (Maupas, 1987:337). This recovery inescapably involves a recovery of national history, for (as Yvon Briant puts it) the nation cannot simply be seen as a geographical or political entity: "France is first and foremost a historical reality" (Briant, 1987:221).

Leroy's graphic image of the courtege of faceless flagellants has been repeatedly echoed in the language of 1990s historical debates. In the United States, efforts to

draw up national standards for history teaching caused a political furor, and the standards themselves were revised after intense criticism from (among others) Republican Presidential Candidate Bob Dole, who described them as "a shocking campaign… to disparage America and disown the ideas and traditions of the West" (Nash, Crabtree and Dunn, 1997:245). In Australia, conservative historian Geoffrey Blainey speaks of the emergence of a 'black arm-band' view of the nation's past—phrase later taken up by Prime Minister John Howard (*Australian* 20–21 December, 1997). In Japan, the revisionist Institute for Orthodox History Education, established in December 1996, accuses the nation's education system of instilling a 'masochistic view of history' *(jigyaku shikan)* into the minds of Japanese youth (Association for History Textbook Reform, 1997) British commentator Stephan Shakespeare sees his nation's history books as offering their readers a vision of British history as "a rich tapestry of oppression" (Shakespeare, 1997:11).

These repeated images of self-abasement need to be understood in the context of a world of global knowledge flows where stories of the past have acquired an uncanny ability to slip unseen across the frontier, creating a babel of histories almost impossible to contain within any national master-narrative. The voices of defeated (or victorious) enemies, colonized subjects, dissatisfied trading partners can no longer easily be excluded from debates about the national past, and these voices from outside the nation's border, or from long-forgotten 'nations within', raise simple but deeply disturbing questions. If governments or citizens celebrate the glories of the national past, should they not also express shame at past failures and mistakes? Does not a country's celebration of its history need (as it were) to be paid for by a settling of national accounts for past wrongs? So the 1990s have been haunted by the specter of the guilty nation. Czech and German governments have apologized to one another prewar and wartime misdeeds. The Norwegian King has apologized for wrongs done to the nation's minority Saami population. In 1993 the then Japanese Prime Minister Hosokawa spoke of his "deep reflection on and apologies for the unbearable suffering and sorrow inflicted upon many by [Japan's] acts of aggression and colonial rule". In 1997, the Queen of England signed a statement of regret to New Zealand's Maoris for their dispossession by the British. Canada's Minister of Indian Affairs Jane Stewart began 1998 with an expression of 'profound regret' for Canada's racist attitudes and policies towards its indigenous people (Field, 1997:5; *Australian,* 4 June 1997; *Toronto Star,* 8 January 1998).

This rash of apologies is linked, of course, to an older and continuing debate about the teaching of national histories, and even about the words with which the national past should be debated. Controversies over content and method in the teaching of history are as venerable as public education itself. But in the past decade or so they have been given a new emotive charge. For the increasing international exchange of views over the teaching of histories makes it difficult to insulate the national past from the uncomfortable questions which we pose of 'others'. Can words like 'aggression', 'genocide' or 'war-crimes' be freely applied to the behavior of foreign nations, but excluded from descriptions of 'our own' national past?

As efforts to meld together the multiple memories of complex societies into a self-contained narrative of national destiny become more and more strained, some seek a solution to the problem in a return to the simpler stories of the past. In 1995 Nicholas Tate, head of Britain's Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority, sparked debate by suggesting that history teachers should return to a concern for fostering national identity by teaching the deeds of heroic figures such as Florence Nightingale and Horatio Nelson. His remarks struck a receptive cord with the *Times* newspaper, whose editorial commented "educators who despise the 'kings and battles' tradition of British history should ask themselves whether they are not more concerned with waging class war than with establishing historical truth" (*Times,* 18 September 1995). These views seem uncannily to echo some of the concerns of Japan's Institute for Orthodox History Education whose founder, Fujioka Nobukatsu, hopes to counter the lasting influences of 'Marxist indoctrination' with exemplary tales of individual morality and heroism (Fujioka 1996a;1996b).

At one level, these controversies might simply be seen as continuations of long-running debates between Left and Right within various nation states. But at another, they raise more profound questions about the spatial frameworks of historical understanding. Issues of national apology, for example, rest upon implicit notions of the nation as a neatly bounded community which continues through time, and whose contemporary members therefore inherit a particular responsibility for a similarly bounded national past. But in the modern global system the movement of people and the growth of international communications networks destabilize this image of the national community. The relationship between identity, ancestry and place grows increasingly complex, and people become connected to history in more complex and multilayered ways. We are forced to confront the problem: which bit of the past is 'mine', and in what sense am I responsible for its triumphs and disasters? Controversies over the politics of the past have led to efforts to 'transcend national history', to question the spatial boundaries which enclose our notions of history, heritage and memory (see for example Komori and Takahashi, 1998).

Responding to the contemporary 'crisis in human understanding', therefore, involves re-examining the intersection between history and geography—rethinking the 'time-space coordinates' which we apply to the study of society. A useful starting point for this task is, I think, to return to the interwar 'crisis of history' which inspired the *Annales* scholars and their contemporaries in various parts of the world. Exploring the spatial frameworks which emerged from mid-century visions of history can help us to understand how certain existing time-space coordinates have come to possess such power over the historical imagination, and can therefore provide an opportunity for opening up these coordinates to re-examination and re-imagination.

MOBILIZING MEMORY

Though history, in varied forms, has ancient origins, there can be no doubt that the development of modern history writing has been profoundly interconnected

with the rise of the nation-state. It is not coincidental that many of the basic terms in which we now speak of the past—words like 'decade', 'century' and 'epoch'—first appeared in the seventeenth century, alongside the emerging outlines of the modern nation-state (Lukacs, 1968). With the creation of national education systems, the study of history became a key instrument for molding the minds of citizens, and in the process came to share in all the ambiguities which beset citizenship in the modern world. At one level, knowledge of history was a crucial part of the 'cultural capital' which enabled the citizen to participate in the life of society. It taught him (and more occasionally her) to understand the origins and workings of the political system, and to make sense of the rich array of historical allusions which saturated the rhetoric of political life. In this sense, it had a critical potential. In learning how things had come to be the way they are, the student of history also learnt to imagine that they might be otherwise. As Benedetto Croce put it, "the writing of history liberates us from history... from slavery to events and to the past" (quoted in Lowenthal, 1985:233). At the same time, though, history education was also used to celebrate the glories of the nation, to foster patriotism, and not infrequently to nurture a sense of superiority towards foreigners or colonial subjects. Within the school system particularly, the past was commonly presented in a series of narrative chapters which charted the march of the nation to its present power and glory.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, though, these national narratives were not, by and large, seen as being closely connected to the personal memories of ordinary citizens. The history taught in schools, and much of the historical research conducted in universities, dealt with events both chronologically and socially remote from the lives of most ordinary people: court intrigues, the exploits of warlords or explorers, the strategies of political notables. The patriotism conveyed through history education was a sense of loyalty to the nation's leaders and pride in their great deeds; but it seldom involved a sense of participation: a feeling that 'my memories' are the stuff of which national history is made. Unwritten, experiential memory shaped one's identity as a member of a family or local community, but remained largely distinct from the consciously memorized written history which shaped one's identity as the subject/citizen of the nation.

Some interesting insights on this point can be found in the work of Maurice Halbwachs, the French social scientist who, in 1925, first coined the term 'collective memory' (Hamilton, 1994:19). During the late 1930s Halbwachs turned his attention increasingly to the relationship between three types of memory: personal (or autobiographical) memory, the collective memory of families or local social groups, and history, which he saw primarily as a national matter (although he also recognized the existence of world history). Halbwachs' struggles to define the connections between these differing forms of memory remained incomplete, and were posthumously published in unfinished form in 1950 (Halbwachs, 1950). Generally speaking, though, he continued to insist on the separation between history, on the one hand, and individual or group memory on the other. "Normally", he wrote, "the nation is too far removed from the individual for him to consider the history of

his country as anything other than a very broad framework, with which his own personal history has only very few points of contact" (Halbwachs, 1950:67). While individual or group memories seem to us to be continuous, history is chronologically schematized: divided into neatly bounded epochs and phases. While memory is interior and experiential, history appears to exist outside or above us. Besides, while there are always 'many collective memories' attached to the multiple social groups in which the individual participates, "history is single, and we may say that there is only one history". (Halbwachs 1950:74) Of course, Halbwachs recognized that no single text could capture the totality of history, but none the less, all contributed to the creation of a single totality: "the world of history is like an ocean into which all partial histories flow" (Halbwachs, 1950:75).

And yet Halbwachs himself seemed somewhat uneasy with this dichotomy between memory and history, recognizing elsewhere that the two were not necessarily so easily separable after all. If one saw history "not as a succession of dates and events, but as everything which distinguishes one period from another", then it was possible to recognize that individual memory was full of living traces of the national and historical past, reflected in the manners, opinions and personalities of parents, teachers and others (Halbwachs, 1950:44). Halbwachs' fascination with the relationship between memory and history, and his ambivalent conclusions about this relationship, appear to reflect the fact he was writing precisely during the period in which it is possible to discern, in many parts of the world, a merging of autobiographical memory and the writing and teaching of national history.

The bringing together of history and personal memory—what might be called the 'national mobilization of memory'—can be seen as phenomenon closely linked to the emergence of mass society. During the 1920s and 1930s, urbanization and the rise of consumerism in industrialized and industrializing nations created a new vision of the social realm. This shifting sense of the national past was related to wider mid-century social change. The development of mass production and the mobilization of society for total war were associated, in many parts of the world, with an extension of public education and an expansion of state-run social welfare schemes. Such trends were supported by the evolution of social science techniques which sought to capture the totality of national society. The interwar fascination with the social totality promoted the development of new research methods: the techniques of mass observation, social survey and public opinion research. 'The public' came to be conceived of as an object susceptible to scientific measurement and analysis. In the process, rapidly shifting patterns in the consumption of fashions, music, film and household goods became the subject of media debate and academic research.

But a focus on the evanescent forms of modern mass society was associated with the simultaneous appearance of a nostalgic desire to create the essentialized image of an enduring, organic communal life (Harutoonian, 1997). This inseparable connection of 'modernization' with a yearning for lost authenticity is of course a widely discussed phenomenon. Renato Rosaldo's description of imperialist nostalgia, for

example, vividly recalls how twentieth century colonial administrators, missionaries and others in the Philippines mourned and recorded vanishing 'traditional cultures' even as they worked assiduously to eradicate them (Rosaldo, 1993). In the early stages, this often led to an intellectual dichotomy between a sociological and historical interest in the processes of modernization and temporal change, and a folkloric interest in a timeless cultural essence which was seen as surviving unchanged in the depths beneath the transient 'temporalized' surface of everyday life.

But particularly during the 1920s and 1930s it is also possible to discern a growing desire, amongst groups of intellectuals in a number of countries, to bridge the gap between these two modes of social imagination, to integrate ethno-cultural space and historical time, to create a new sense of national history. Here 'the masses' or 'the common people' came to be envisaged, not merely as contemporary creatures of modernity, but as possessing a past. The approaches and techniques of the new social sciences inspired historians to turn their attention from official archives and the diaries of the famous to the wealth of untapped resources (censuses, church records, ledger books, local newspapers) which could reveal the texture of forgotten everyday lives. In the U.S., this approach was pioneered by historians like Perry Miller, whose famous study of the lives and minds of the early puritans, published in 1939, inspired a whole generation of social historians (Miller, 1939). An even more far-reaching application of social science techniques to history is evident in the work of the French *Annales* school, where historians like Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre envisioned large-scale collaborations between scholars trained in demography, psychology, social statistics and other disciplines, working together to produce a 'total history' of the everyday life of particular societies.

In Britain, the writing of 'history from below' is often seen as having originated in the 1960s, or perhaps as having roots which go back to the 1950s studies of Cambridge historians like George Kitson Clark (Taylor, 1997). But this account overlooks the rich interwar heritage of writings on the lives of 'the common people', exemplified in the work of historians like J.L. and Barbara Hammond, G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate (see, for example, Cole and Postgate, 1938). In Japan, meanwhile, with the first stirrings of that genre of historiography which would become known as *minsh shi* (people's history), the changing everyday life of the masses began to be conceived as a central subject of national history. During the late 1930s and early 1940s historian Nishioka Toranosuke repeatedly stressed the importance of a national history which would capture the changing totality of 'the culture of the common people' *(jUmin bunka)*, and would thus in turn contribute to the nation's future cultural progress (for example, Nishioka, 1934; 1938; 1942; 1946; see also Kano, 1988).

The changing vision of the past was reflected in the growing fashion for genealogy, and in the emergence of oral history as a serious field of academic research. In the United States, the first centers dedicated to oral history were established in the late 1940s (Hoover, 1980). As Michael Kammen has observed, these trends were sustained by a new relationship between the central government and local memories. A

key feature of Roosevelt's New Deal was a series of cultural projects centered on "the concept of sustained government support for national, regional and local traditions" (Kammen, 1991:474). The Federal Writers' Project recruited writers and historians to collect and publish local folklore and life histories, including the autobiographical narratives of former slaves. Although many of these projects were abandoned or cut back during the war years, they provided the basis for a new relationship between state and memory which would re-emerge in the immediate postwar period (Kammen, 1991).

The shift of historical perspective both encouraged and was encouraged by new technologies for recording and representing the past. The first large-scale oral history projects, including Brigadier General S.L. Marshall's scheme, initiated in 1943 to record the wartime experiences of U.S. servicemen as they returned from the battlefront, were conducted without the help of tape-recorders. However, the rapid diffusion of tape-recording from the end of the 1940s onward was to prove a vital stimulus to the postwar popularity of oral history (Pogue, 1967; Schippers, 1967). Growing interest in the use of film as a vehicle for history teaching also had unexpected consequences. From the 1920s a number of educational groups had begun to experiment with the production of historical film, producing series like Yale University's famous 'Chronicles of America Photoplays' (Knowlton, 1929). Although these typically focused on the conventional great events of the national past—the Pilgrim fathers, Wolfe's capture of Quebec, the American Revolution etc.—their makers soon found that the medium of film forced them to pay a new attention to the historical details of everyday life. It was not enough to provide an accurate representation of the deeds and words of 'great men'. There was also the problem of the street scene and the crowd: how would people have been dressed? What would they have worn on their feet? What games would children have been playing in the street?

Like other aspects of the mid-century emergence of mass society, changing approaches to history had equivocal implications. On the one hand, many of the emerging generation of social historians were consciously critical and anti-elitist. They defined their goal as a more democratic history in which space would be created for the long silenced voices of farmers, factory workers, artisans and small traders. But at the same time, their more inclusive vision of the national past was also capable of sustaining a new, more populist nationalism. As Japanese historian Nishioka Toranosuke had recognized in 1938, a history of the common people had the potential to become "an appetizing national history which can win popular assent, in place of the existing dry, indigestible national history". So it could be used to foster a 'solid' rather than a 'fickle' patriotism (Nishioka 1938:10). This nationalistic potential is clearly visible in the Japanese cultural historiography of scholars like Kyoto University professor Nishida Naojir?, who sought both to focus on the real everyday existence and spiritual life of the people and to integrate individual consciousness with the totality of national history (Nishida, 1932; Nishioka, 1941:409). During the Pacific War Nishida elaborated his historical philosophy as the basis of a new

vision of the 'national entity' *(kokutai),* in which the changing forms of Japanese everyday life would be seen as revealing the gradual evolution of the national spirit, and this in turn would be understood (in quasi-Hegelian terms) as reflecting the wider spontaneous self-development of the universe (Shibata and Nishimura, 1978; see also Nishioka, 1941).

Though relatively few social historians may have shared Nishida's vision of the fusion of individual and national consciousness, the rise of the 'history of everyday life' undoubtedly made it possible to harness individual memory to the national past. As the scope of school history expanded to include the changing patterns of farm and factory labor, housing and diet, so the memories of one's parents and grandparents, the old tools in the garden shed or the ruined mill down the road became part of the raw material of the national past. In the United States, this change was already influencing school education during the interwar years, as history was integrated into the wider discipline of 'social studies', and the texts of educational reformers like Harold Rugg encouraged students to explore the social and economic dimensions of the nation's past (see Nash, Crabtree and Dunn, 1997).

It was in the immediate postwar years, however, that the new vision of history education was to spread much more widely throughout the industrialized world. Compare, for example, the opening lines of *Highroads of History*, a popular British primer published in 1920, with a postwar counterpart, *The Young Citizen's Social History of Britain*, first published in 1949. The earlier text begins: "You all love stories. This is a book of stories for little girls and boys. I hope the stories in it will please you very much... The words and pictures will tell you stories of our land in days gone by. They will tell you about the far-off days when our country was wild, and the people were savages. They will also tell you about the great deeds that men and women have done from that time down to the present day" (*Highroads of History,* 1920:7). By contrast, readers of the postwar volume are told "Let us imagine that you are going to write a book about the place where you live. It may be a town or it may be a village. I wonder how you would begin?" The following pages describe how traces of past survive, not just in documents but in old buildings, place and even family names, and the first chapter concludes with the statement that "there is not one of us who could not, if he tried, make a little history book of his own by looking about with sharp eyes on his town and village, using his common sense and asking questions" (Wragge, 1954:1–9).

In Japan, the new system of education introduced during the allied occupation followed the U.S. model in incorporating history into social studies. The atmosphere of postwar democratization encouraged educational reformers to experiment with ways of relating the daily life of their pupils to the wider story of the national past. Teachers developed slide shows on 'the history of our village', led projects to explore the origins of local landmarks, or encouraged students to turn their attention from Hollywood westerns to the pioneering achievements of their own ancestors in taming the wilderness and opening up new farm land (Takahashi, 1952). The aim, it was argued, should be to begin from the 'realm of experience' before moving outwards to explore national and international phenomena (Takahashi, 1952). This

coincided with a philosophy (disseminated, as we shall see, by cultural bodies such as UNESCO) in which education was expected to follow the hypothetical expansion of a child's horizons from self to family, to neighborhood and region, and finally to nation and world.

From the 1950s onwards, the merging of individual, family and national memory began to be reflected in a new enthusiasm for conserving, not just the great monuments to the nation's political or cultural triumphs, but also more humble traces of the past. Writing of Britain from the vantage-point of the 1980s, Raphael Samuel observed that "the last thirty years have witnessed an extraordinary and, it seems, ever growing enthusiasm for the recovery of the national past—both the real past of recorded history and the timeless one of 'tradition'" (Samuel, 1989:xliv). Even in Japan, where the pressures of development left little room for the preservation of the mundane past, the postwar decades saw a dramatic upsurge of archaeology as a popular spectacle through which thousands of ordinary people all over the country participated in the excavation of 'their' past (Fawcett, 1996). Perhaps the most striking example of this passion to preserve vanishing traces of past everyday lives, however, was the upsurge of French enthusiasm for 'heritage'—*le patrimoine*. As Pierre Nora points out, in France, the postwar decades saw a constant extension of the range of objects and memories which were seen as being *patrimonializable*—capable of being rendered into heritage. The culmination of this trend was the enormous grassroots response to the official designation of 1980 as *l'anné du Patrimoine*, the Year of Heritage: heritage, in short "descended from the roofs of cathedrals and castles and took up residence among forgotten customs and ancient techniques, in local wines, songs and dialects. It left the museums and invaded parks and cobbled streets" (Nora, 1998:625). In the process, the individual's sense both of national history and of personal past were subtly transformed. The 'little history books' of personal and local memory become part of the 'big history book' of the nation.

National memories were possible at least partly because, in the mid-twentieth century, the experience of citizens in many countries was indeed becoming more uniform. Wartime experiences of conscription, of rationing and evacuation from urban centers were shared by large sections of the population in many countries. In the immediate postwar decades, this sense of common experience was maintained through mass consumption—the rapid diffusion of new household goods such as radios, televisions and refrigerators. Though not all shared equally in this consumer affluence, within the boundaries of industrialized nations the commonalities were large enough to maintain an illusion of national memory. The news and entertainment communicated through new consumer products also created a direct and personal memory of 'participation' in the historical events of the nation. Reports of the First World War had reached the population relatively slowly and unevenly, via newspaper or word of mouth; but a generation of Americans would later be able to recall the shared moment of hearing the radio broadcast which reported the attack on Pearl Harbor, just as a generation of Japanese people would be able to recall the momentous experience of listening to Hirohito's surrender broadcast.

The mobilization of memory was a profoundly political process, involving end-less (though sometimes covert) contests over the interpretation of elements of the personal past into the narratives of the nations. As Jerome Bruner and others have pointed out, autobiographical memory is not a stable reality, but rather a story which we ceaselessly edit and re-tell to ourselves and others from the shifting view-point of the present (Bruner, 1994). The national mobilization of memory—the drawing together of many personal memories around certain defining moments of the national past—subtly influenced the changing ways in which individuals, fami-lies and other social groups told, and therefore remembered, their smaller pasts.

MAPPING CIVILIZATIONS

This widespread re-imagining of the national past coincided with another mid-century trend which subtly but profoundly reshaped popular conceptions of his-torical space. The transwar period, from the 1930s to the 1950s, saw a new interest in promoting the comparative study of civilizations. The emerging comparative per-spective was based upon a re-conceptualization of space, in which the globe was divided, not into rival empires, nor into continents defined in terms of physical geography, but rather into major 'world regions' whose boundaries were under-stood above all in cultural terms. As Martin Lewis and Karen Wigen point out, a number of the labels which we now take for granted in mapping the world in fact had their origins in these decades. The expression 'Middle East' in its current mean-ing was first used by the British and U.S. military in the 1930s–1940s, while the label 'Southeast Asia' "entered popular consciousness in World War II, when mili-tary strategists used it to 'designate the theater of war commanded by Lord Louis Mountbatten'" (Lewis and Wigen, 1997:65–66 and 172).

Popular acceptance of this new geography was encouraged, in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, by the development of area studies from the 1940s onwards. During the War, the work of the U.S. Ethnogeographic Board helped to lay the foundations for the postwar boom in area studies by defining the new classificatory system of 'world regions' (Lewis and Wigen, 1997). This 'cultural' or 'civilizational' model of the world created an appropriate framework for the training of a cadre of academics and professionals, equipped with the linguistic and cultural knowledge demanded by the United States' dominant role in the postwar world. Central to the postwar diffu-sion of the new area studies approach was the work of scholars such as Robert Redfield, who helped to establish the Ford Foundation Cultural Studies Project, a 1950s initiative to promote interdisciplinary work in the comparative study of civi-lizations (Sartori, 1998). Like his contemporaries in the French *Annales* school, Redfield saw great potential for a bringing together of humanities and social science disciplines in collaborative efforts to comprehend the past and present of particular societies. Knowledge of the dominant civilizational patterns of each major world region would, it was felt, provided a historical basis for interpreting the contempo-rary and future destiny of each region in an interconnected modern world.

Postwar area studies have often been criticized for their intimate relationship to U.S. Cold War strategy, and in many respects these criticisms are well founded (for example, Wallerstein, 1997). Though scholars like Redfield resisted a narrowly utilitarian approach to research, area studies were explicitly recognized by policy-makers as contributing to the successful exercise of U.S. world power, and much of the funding for their development was provided under the terms of the 1958 Defense Education Act (Nash, Crabtree and Dunn, 1997). It is also important to remember, though, that the spatial imagination which underpinned U.S. area studies shaped postwar understandings of the past in many other parts of the world as well. Redfield's concept of comparative civilizations, for example, drew on the ideas of British scholar Arnold Toynbee, whose massive study of civilizational history was published in twelve volumes between 1934 and 1961. Toynbee's classification of civilizations was idiosyncratic—based above all on the foundational role of the great religions—but his research was driven by many of the impulses which inspired other varieties of mid-century area studies.

Toynbee's ideas in turn also exerted an influence on the work of postwar *Annales* school historians like Fernand Braudel (though Braudel was also critical of his British contemporary's magisterial generalizations about the past). From its inception, the *Annales* group had been fascinated by the complex interrelationship between human societies and their geographical environment. In Braudel's writing, this fascination provided the basis for a vision of the global history centered upon major civilizations each of which "has its own geography with its own opportunities and constraints, some virtually permanent and quite different from one civilization to another" (Braudel, 1994:11). As he wrote in *Grammaire des Civilizations*, his famous textbook for senior level French high school students, all civilizations could be seen as possessing a system of deep underlying structures—"religious beliefs, for instance, or a timeless peasantry, or attitudes to death, work, pleasure and family life" structures which persisted with only the most gradual of changes beneath the ever shifting surface of transient historical events (Braudel, 1994:28). A comprehensive understanding of world history required that all the social sciences should be brought to bear on the task of analyzing underlying civilizational structures and interpreting their influence on the interrelated destinies of different civilizations in the modern world.

Each of these versions of civilization theory embodied its own map of the world. Toynbee, with his focus on major religions, identified twenty-eight historical civilizations (of which ten had survived into recent times) but omitted large parts of the globe, including Australasia and Sub-Saharan Africa, from analysis. Braudel's definition of the 'Far East' included the Indian Sub-Continent and Southeast as well as East Asia, while his discussion of European civilization left room for a separate treatment of Russia/the Soviet Union—'the Other Europe'. U.S. civilization theorists, meanwhile, tended to make use of an increasingly influential area studies model of the world which united the Soviet Union with Eastern Europe but separated South, Southeast and East Asia. Beneath these differences, though, the various mid-

century versions of comparative civilization theory shared underlying common perspectives. All need to be understood in the context of an implicit vision of a global modernity, in which different regions of the world were gradually—to varying degrees and at varying speeds—becoming participants. As colonial empires crumbled and newly independent nations appeared, a crucial issue for scholarship in the wealthier nations of the world was to understand the relationship between the global modern and earlier, more local cultural formations. To what extent did modernity represent the triumph of the western model of civilization? To what extent could the fundamental patterns of other civilizations survive within, and adapt to, the modern order? The answers to these questions, it was believed, would cast light on the potential of particular countries or regions to participate in worldwide processes of postwar economic and social change.

The mid-century comparative civilization approach also reflected a distinctive relation of scholars to their subject matter. It provided a framework within which area specialists from leading industrialized countries could offer an interpretation of their particular area of expertise to an audience of fellow academics, government officials and others in their home country. These area specialists differed from the earlier generation of colonial officials, whose social experiences had been constrained by the hierarchical structures of life in the colonies, yet who had often been required to immerse themselves in the details of administering a particular confined territory. They differed, too, from the classical Orientalists, whose research had tended to rely on the interpretation of the written archive. Living in an age of air travel and of first-world research grants which commonly translated into large sums in the local currency, the new breed of area specialist learnt the language of the target region and traveled back and forth for stints of 'fieldwork'—a concept extended from anthropology to a wide range of other disciplines in the middle decades of the century. Armed with a training in disciplinary techniques and theories as well as language, the area scholar was expected to return from 'the field' with insights which would contribute to a steadily growing total picture of the uneven march of the world into modernity. Comparative civilization theory provided a manageable way of equipping these budding area specialists with a cognitive map of the broad cultural patterns and historical influences which they could expect to find in their chosen area of study. In turn, the knowledge they brought back to their home institutions would help to refine the picture of the civilizational patterns which characterized each of the major world regions.

Comparative civilization theory, in this sense, created a framework within which scholars in the still-dominant nations of western Europe and North America could acknowledge and come to terms with the growing visibility of the 'other' in the postwar world, while still retaining their sense of the centrality of 'western civilization' as interpreter of the world, and as crucible of the modern. It was therefore perhaps not surprising that this approach to the past should have been slower to win acceptance in other parts of the world. In Japan, for example, postwar history writing was powerfully influenced by Marxian theory and by debates over Japan's

position within the evolution of world capitalism. These controversies were con-
ducted within the bounds of a quite different imagined map of the world: one
where the main dividing lines lay between rival imperialist systems or between capi-
talist and pre-capitalist societies. It was only in the 1960s that the work of scholars
like Yamamoto Shin began to introduce civilization theory to Japanese historiography,
and not until the late 1980s that such ideas became widely influential. (ItU, 1990).

The comparative civilizations approach, however, fitted not only with the post-
war boom in area studies, but also with a new interest in the teaching of world
history. The horrors of the Second World War gave birth to a postwar hope that
universalist approaches to education could help to prevent the resurgence of na-
tionalism and of internecine conflicts between nation states. This aspiration was
most clearly expressed in the work of UNESCO which in the 1950s, for example,
organized major international meetings on the teaching of history and promoted
the signing of bilateral agreements about the content of national history curricula
(see Lauwerys, 1953). In the U.S. too, the growth of area studies gradually encour-
aged a shift away from the notion that world history was synonymous with the
history of 'western civilization', and towards a more global comparative civiliza-
tions approach, represented by the 1960s and 1970s initiatives of educators such as
Leften Stavrianos (Nash, Crabtree and Dunn, 1997).

My argument, then, is that two roughly concurrent trends—the mobilization of
memory and the rise of comparative civilization theory—shaped the spatial struc-
tures of the historical imagination in ways which still have a profound influence
today. The image of the world generated by these trends was one in which the
individual stood at the center of a series of ever expanding circles of history and
memory. At the most immediate level, individual experience flowed into the collec-
tive memory of family, local community, village or town. These collective memo-
ries, however, were merely part of the wider memory of the nation; and the national
community in turn formed part of a larger civilizational area with which it shared
underlying and enduring heritage of tradition, experience and beliefs. At each stage,
as one moved out through these concentric spatial circles, the density of shared pasts
became more dilute and the sense of common belonging receded. Yet even at the
outermost limit—the circle which represented the history of the world as a whole—
fundamental commonalities linked all to the global experience of humanity.

This imagined structure is vividly illustrated by the proposals for history teaching
which emerged from UNESCO's 1950 international conference on the writing of
history texts. The final report issued by the conference recommended that children
should first (until the age of about ten) be introduced to such topics as family history,
the development of crafts carried out in the local community, the history of their
own school, and the significance of nearby churches, castles and historic monuments.
(Lauwerys, 1953). This would provide a gradual introduction to the all-important
concept of national history, for "in our day, the nation is the most important and
most extended group with which most human beings identify themselves. It is one
of the tasks of education—a task often unacknowledged or underestimated, to help

the future citizen to identify himself closely with it" (quoted in Lauwerys, 1953:62). National history, however, was not to be taught in isolation, but must be integrated into a wider curriculum which includes study of the particular civilization to which the nation belongs. Since most of the participants in the 1950 conference came from European countries, their chief focus was on sketching the outlines of a suitable common curriculum for European history. In the senior years, however, knowledge of one's own country and civilization was to be linked to a comparative study of civilizations which allowed pupils to visualize the simultaneous but uneven unfolding of the stages of progress in different regions of the world. The delegates' ultimate goal, in other words, was "not to supercede the teaching of national history, but to supplement it by placing it in a wider framework. Did not Ranke say that 'the great nations possess a double character, one which is national and one which concerns the destiny of the world'?" (quoted in Lauweys, 1953:79).

A FRACTURED MODEL

It was only more gradually, in the course of the late twentieth century, that paradoxes and conflicts within this spatial model of the past became evident. The mass society which promoted the sharing of experiences was a also a society which promoted social and geographical mobility. So children were being encouraged to relate the landscape of their daily lives to the wider trends of national history at the very time when they were decreasingly likely to have any real ancestral ties to that landscape. These tensions became increasingly obvious from the 1960s onwards, with the rapid growth of international mobility. Now school pupils whose parents had only recently arrived in France from Algeria or in Britain from the Indian subcontinent (for example) were expected to explore 'their' past in the chateaux of the Loire Valley or the Tudor cottages of the English countryside.

The postwar ideologies of welfare and assimilation also drew into the national education system long-excluded groups whose memories were difficult to incorporate into the meta-narratives of conventional national history or area studies: African-Americans in the southern U.S.A., indigenous peoples in North America, Australasia and elsewhere. At the same time, the common experiences generated by mass consumption were spilling over national and 'civilizational' boundaries, uniting not just the citizens of the nation, but an increasingly global middle class. For an emerging generation, communications media created, not national but global memories: French, Japanese and Argentinian citizens are likely to share with Americans a memory of the moment they heard the news of John F. Kennedy's assassination.

In the past fifteen years or so, as these deepening tensions have become increasingly unmanageable, the problem of memory and history has again come under intense scrutiny. (see, for example, Connerton, 1989; Kammen, 1991; Hamilton, 1994). One of the first to raise the issue in the 1980s was the French scholar Pierre Nora, who lamented what he called the 'conquest and eradication of memory by

history' (Nora, 1989:8). Nora argued that the emergence of the 'memory-nation' from about the 1930s onward had proven to be "the last incarnation of the unification of memory and history" (Nora, 1989:11). Since then, memory had increasingly lost its spontaneous character: becoming a commodity artificially conserved in museums and monuments, rather than sustained by the experiences of daily life. As populations grow more mobile and the pace of change accelerates, people lose touch with the 'environments of memory' *(milieux de memoir)* which once surrounded them, and become reliant instead on consciously re-created 'sites of memory' *(milieux de memoir)* (Nora, 1989).

In his more recent writings, Nora has increasingly stressed the way in which the enthusiasm for creating 'sites of memory' has shifted the popular sense of the past away from a focus on the nation and towards a fragmented celebration of local and group narratives—"there is no commemorative superego: the canon has vanished" (Nora, 1998:614). Nora's earlier vision of the 'conquest of memory by history', seems, indeed, to have given way to a sense of unease a 'conquest of history by memory'. Very few people today, after all, would accept Maurice Halbwachs' confident belief in history as singular, or even as potentially singular. Instead, history (like memory) has come to be seen as a multiplicity of irreconcilable narratives, each attached to a particular social group (see, for example, Nora, 1998).

At the same time, mid-century versions of civilization theory have also come under attack for several reasons. On the one hand, they are often criticized for overemphasizing the autonomy of individual civilizations and for failing to play sufficient attention to interconnections between one region and another: those interconnections so vividly portrayed in the work of historians like William McNeil. On the other, it is pointed out that, in identifying 'civilization' with powerful urbanized communities, scholars like Toynbee neglected large swathes of human history. (see Lewis and Wigen, 1997; Nash, Crabtree and Dunn, 1997). Yet this critique has seldom involved rejection of the organizing framework of large contiguous regions defined in terms of an underlying common culture. Instead, it has encouraged a refinement of that image: boundaries are redrawn to create a more coherent and inclusive picture; cross-border interactions are made more explicit.

Lewis and Wigen, for example, reject Toynbee's model of civilizations, but propose, as the most useful framework for understanding the geography of humanity, a revised map of 'world regions'—"large sociospatial groupings delimited largely on the grounds of shared history and culture" (Lewis and Wigen, 1997:157). Although they acknowledge the contribution of postmodern geography to a questioning of existing spatial frameworks, they see in postmodern approaches a worrying tendency to abandon spatial classification altogether (Lewis and Wigen, 1997). While they recognize the importance of middle grounds, diasporas, cultural archipelagos and matrices, they interpret these as the cross-border dynamics of a cultural order still firmly based on world regions.

Meanwhile, during the 1980s and 1990s, the civilizational model of the world enjoyed a new wave of popularity, most strikingly illustrated by Samuel Huntington's

article (and later book) 'Clash of Civilizations' (Huntington, 1993; 1996). Although Huntington's thesis, with its emphasis on the deep and immutable boundaries between cultural areas, was widely criticized by his fellow political scientists (and by historians, anthropologists and others) it has been taken up in political rhetoric and media debates around the world. Huntington's popularity was doubtless enhanced by the fact that his ideas resonated with a growing interest in civilizational theory in countries like China and Japan. In Japan, for example, the recent writings of historians like Ueyama Shumpei, It? Shuntar? and Kawakatsu Heita have revived interest in earlier models of civilization theory (such as Toynbee's) which they sought to rework and adapt to explaining Japan's growing power in the modern world. (Ueyama, 1990; Ito, 1990; Kawakatsu, 1991).

In the final sections of this paper I want to go a little further than writers like Lewis and Wigen in questioning the spatial images bequeathed to history by mid-century thought. The current 'crisis of understanding' makes it important to look again, not only at the intersection of memory and national history, but also at the concept of culturally-based world regions as a mediating stage between national and global pasts. The sense of historical space as a series of concentric circles is losing its persuasive force. Even as early as the 1950s, the Japanese historian Uehara Senroku questioned the postwar assumption that education should begin from the realm of the child's personal experience, and move step-by-step outwards towards neighborhood, region, nation and world. After all, as he pointed out, the individual is not a self-generating entity, but is to a large extent constituted by the regional, national or global community to which he or she belongs. In this sense, it might be equally meaningful to take the world as the starting point for nurturing children's consciousness of their own individuality (Uehara, 1958). These thoughts prefigure the more recent writings of scholars like Bruce Mazlish, who calls for a global history which takes transnational phenomena as its starting point, observing that this "global history might foster all kinds of new maps, especially those stemming from the new communications and cultural ties of our satellite age" (Mazlish, 1993:19; see also Mazlish, 1998).

GLOBALIZATION AS HISTORY

The point is not that national histories, or the histories of world regions, are anachronisms to be thrown onto the intellectual scrap heap. A large part of recent human history, after all, has taken shape within the boundaries of the nation, or of regions such as 'Europe' (variously defined). In this sense, the study of national and regional histories continues to have enormous importance. But difficulties arise when concentric circles of contiguous space come to be seen as the framework for a total understanding of the past. For this model of space obscures a host of historical experiences vital to interpreting the contemporary global system. In trying to make sense of the contemporary system it seems essential to be able to make simultaneous

use of a range of *different* spatial maps to analyze *different* historical processes and interactions.

The area studies vision of world regions as a basis for understanding the past, for example, has obvious uses. For a historian who wants to study the spread and evolution of the character-based writing system which originated in China, the geographical category 'East Asia' makes sense (though it would make even better sense if it were expanded to encompass most of Vietnam—now usually classified under the heading 'Southeast Asia'). But using 'East Asia' as the primary space for understanding the whole past and present of area now encompassed by the nations of China, Mongolia, Japan, Korea and Taiwan is much more problematic. The greatest problem is that, since the region is a vast and diverse one with few overarching commonalities, those few things which *are* shared by much of the region tend to be given disproportionate weight in interpretations of 'East Asian history' or 'East Asian society'. A good example of this is the obsessive attention paid to that shifting complex of philosophical ideas known as 'Confucianism'. It seems fairly clear that the influence of 'Confucianism' has varied enormously across the region according to place, time and social class, and that for many people in many times it had little or no influence at all. But the visions of 'Chinese', 'Japanese' and 'Korean' histories as contained within the framework of 'East Asian' history makes it almost inevitable that plausible common denominators like 'Confucianism' will come to be seen as the underlying motive forces of the region's past.

At the other end of the scale, the aspects of the past most thoroughly concealed by this vision are non-contiguous histories—those experiences and memories shared by people who live in places geographically far removed from one another. A striking example of this is the modern history of indigenous communities around the world. Despite their great diversity, indigenous societies worldwide face certain sorts of common challenges and problems which arise, not from innate cultural similarities, but from shared experiences of the encounter between small, relatively decentralized communities and the modern nation state. Forms of study and teaching which link the experiences of indigenous societies in (say) Australia, the Philippines, Japan, Russia and Brazil can bring to light important issues, differences and commonalities, which remain invisible when the history of indigenous societies is studied in a national or even a conventional 'area studies' framework.

The history of indigenous societies is just one of many examples where linkages created either by trade or communication routes or by common experiences of colonization, invasion or migration create 'space warps' which defy conventional geography. It is, of course, in the twentieth century that this warping of space has become most obvious and most significant to our historical understanding. As many writers have pointed out, major metropolitan centers now often have far more contact and similarity with one another than they do with their rural hinterlands. A whole range of modern historical phenomena can therefore only really be understood by taking a spatial perspective which ignores the conventional boundaries of nation or world region, and links a variety of diverse, non-contiguous points around

the face of the globe. Historicizing globalization, therefore, involves a re-imagining of varied forms of space in history. It requires, in other words, a kind of 'anti-area studies', in which the aim is not to plot the communal trajectory of national society or civilization within the march of global progress, but to observe major global trends from a variety of positions which are as far apart as possible.

One type of 'anti-area' studies might be the study of the way in which a particular set of ideas or ideologies is understood, applied and developed in quite different situations. An example of this is the teaching on the varied experiences around the world of what are commonly called 'the events of 1968'. Here it becomes possible to consider how people from a broadly similar social stratum—mostly young, middle-class and university educated—related to broadly common set of ideologies in radically different circumstances. What is important, though, is that the 'map' of 1968 should include not only places like Paris, Berkeley and London but also Tokyo, Mexico City and Bengal.

Another sort of 'anti-area study' might comprise studies which deal with the social formation of global systems or organizations, and the interaction of these systems or organizations with local society in many parts of the world. One might think, for example, of a cross-disciplinary social study of organizations like the World Bank or UNICEF, which would operate at two levels. At one level, it would consider how these organizations, with their international networks of employees and offices, develop their own set of cultural resources and behavioral patterns. On the other, it would look at the interaction of these global bodies with specific, geographically distant, local communities. The map appropriate for this sort of study cannot be predicted in advance but would need to be carefully tailored to the research task. It might, however, focus on selected points in Asia, Africa and the Americas, and include urban as well as village communities.

'Anti-area studies' in this sense would require many of the skills traditionally demanded of area studies specialists. It would need people with a real knowledge of different languages and societies, and with a strong theoretical understanding of the issues to be researched or taught. But it would differ from conventional area studies in the sense that it neither pulls together a range of disciplines into the study of a single social 'whole', nor combines a variety of area specialisms into a single discipline. Instead, it uses knowledge of a variety of places and a variety of disciplinary approaches in order to elucidate problems which cross boundaries. In doing this, it accepts the need to draw its own maps.

Ultimately, such an 'anti-area' approach also involves, not only tracing the link between personal memory, group memory and national history, but also addressing the problem of global memories: the diverse ways in which people all over the globe now simultaneously experience the events which at once unite and divide us. The debate then becomes something more than a controversy over the sort of national history that should be studied or taught in schools, and more than a debate over the relative weight that should be given to various world regions in the teaching of world history. It becomes a starting point for re-imagining historical space and perforating the frontiers that surround national and regional histories themselves.

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