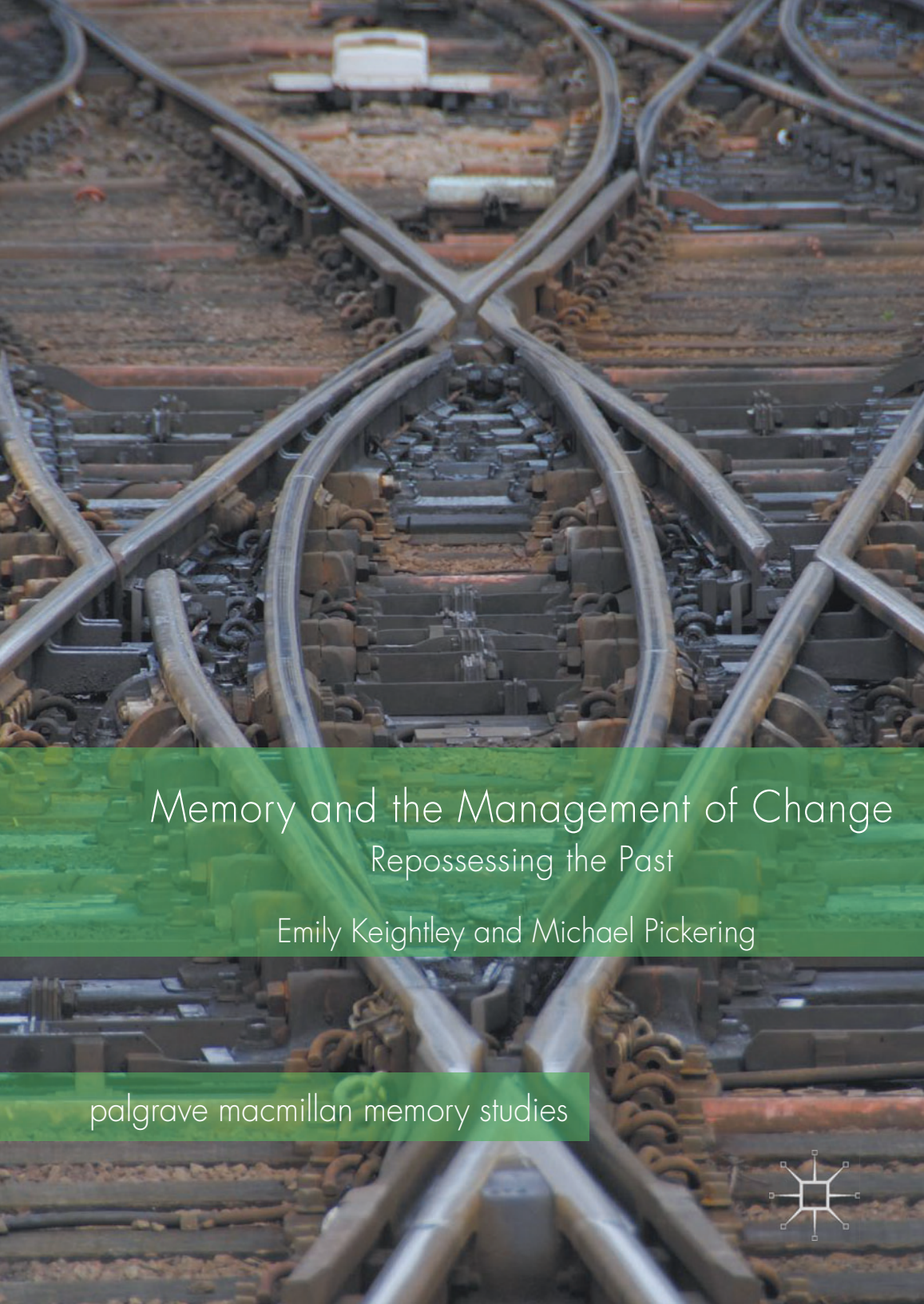

Memory and the Management of Change

Repossessing the Past

Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering

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Memory and the Management of Change

Repossessing the Past

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To Eva and Sam Armfield and Lucy and Joseph Pickering

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Remembering Subjects

Across the past two centuries we have turned to various communications technologies to compensate for the elusive quality of human memory. In the predecessor to this book, we explored how two such technologies, photography and recorded music, act as resources for conveying memories or stimulating their reawakening, regardless of whether they are centred on past events, people, or places. We showed that these are the two most salient technologies of memory in everyday life, and we demonstrated at considerable length how they operate within that context, helping to establish patterns of continuity and handle the changing contours of temporal experience. Their salience can be explained in part because they are for many people the most powerful artificial resources for remembering they know, and in part because in their manifest contrast, appealing as they do to different human senses, and being both immediately situated and distantly mediated in their production, they implicitly—and at times explicitly—complement each other. They do so by providing ways of keeping the relatively same past resonant within the present through their alternative yet mutually reinforcing capacities for transmitting or facilitating memory. Our previous book also made clear that neither phonography nor photography is sufficient unto itself as a means of recalling or drawing upon the past. While we showed that both images and sounds in these reproduced forms can be highly effective vehicles or catalysts of memory, it remains the case that they, or any

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other mnemonic conveyance, cannot be relied on for making long-term sense and meaning of the past, or for bringing past and present over the long term into a sustainable and fulfilling relationship. The means by which this is achieved is the mnemonic imagination.

This is the final instalment of a trilogy in which we have dwelt at length on the concept of the mnemonic imagination and shown how it works. The first book was devoted in its entirety to setting out all that we considered as being entailed in the concept. Among many other things we strenuously argued against the long-enduring commonsense separation of memory and imagination, demonstrating that in practice they operate together in an interactive process of productive tension. Obviously they possess different characteristics, and at certain times it is imperative that we insist on keeping them to the fore, but they do not exist in splendid isolation from each other and cannot be considered as irrelative faculties or dimensions for interacting with, orienting to and making sense of what has gone before. Memory acts on the imagination and imagination works with the material provided by memory as we move through our lives, adapt to changing times and change in our ways of seeing and thinking, whether through points of radical transition or through processes of gradual modification. The mnemonic imagination is the product of their dynamic interplay, enabling us creatively to bring together the relentless succession of experience in time and the (re) interpretation of it across time. It is because of its location in the temporalized space between the remembering I/we and the remembered me/us that the concept is also central to thinking about the complex relations between our own pasts and the pasts of others, between personal and popular memory as this traverses the lines of distinction marking out in any particular place or time those who are relatively close to us on the one hand and those who are relatively distant from us on the other. That is why the mnemonic imagination applies to both firsthand situated experience and secondhand mediated experience as we relate to our own pasts and to the pasts of others (Keightley and Pickering 2012).

In the follow-up book we showed how the mnemonic imagination operates with the material provided by photographs and recorded music, using its associations with the past as ways of managing the alternating currents of change and continuity, and holding to them as symbolic ballast against an always uncertain yet nevertheless desired, even longed-for, future: our new home, our dream holiday, our child still within the womb. We demonstrated in example after example how pieces of the past

are brought together and synthesized as interlinked elements of a larger and more coherent whole both in life-narratives and in stories of social groups, with meaning, value and significance being distilled from what we take from the past and what we make of it in an always mobile present where we are looking both at where we have come from and where we might be headed (Pickering and Keightley 2015). Our position in both previous books has been that it is only through the mnemonic imagination that we move from shadow dancing with the past to dancing between past and present in a series of cross-temporal interanimations that allows the past to have, in the continuing stories we make of it, an active and fertile presence within the present. That is why the concept runs centrally through both books and why it remains the predominant concept in the present book. It does so through the specific focus we maintain throughout.

This focus is signalled in both the title and subtitle. The title emphasizes how, with memory as our starting point, we strive to manage the shifts and turns, disruptions and shocks that are integral to our experience in the long term. We strive to manage such change within our own lives and in relation to the lives of those who are close to us. We also manage such change within the contexts of the social formations, institutional structures and cultural media in which we have, in myriad ways, a participatory involvement, and we do so as these formations, structures and media are themselves in continual, although variably paced, processes of change. Such change is multilayered and wide-ranging in how it is manifested, registered and handled. The subtitle of the book emphasizes how in concerted recollection and the development of an ongoing life-narrative we have continuously to take possession again of what the past has bequeathed us in its fragmented forms; we have to turn them into a cohesive pattern that is greater than its parts. In fostering and facilitating this, the mnemonic imagination entails repossession of the past in the interests of long-term patterns of identity, relationship and belonging. Engaging with change and transition in and over time by actively repossessing the past in altered conditions and circumstances is the theme that runs throughout the book. Our main line of interest abides in how memory underlies and embeds the management of change, or more specifically how the mnemonic imagination engages with the forces and patterns of change that affect or have affected us in our everyday lives and our ongoing trajectories of living. Without such engagement, we would be temporally forlorn, faced only with fleeting shadows from the past.

While our two technologies of memory continue to be discussed in this book, they take less of a central position than they did previously. In *Photography, Music and Memory* we were preoccupied by their differential yet complementary roles as vehicles or catalysts of remembering. We attended in great detail both to how they inform and influence voluntary acts of recollection and commemoration, and how they feature in processes of involuntary remembering, when memories come back unbidden and can sometimes almost shock us with their stark vividness or accompanying affective force. Here we take a quite different tack, attending more specifically and more concertedly to how these media figure in the management of change, with such management itself now becoming our major preoccupation. Discussion in this book will be based around our elaboration of the general conceptual issues we wish to highlight throughout. These general issues concerning change and transition are set out in Chap. 2. Their overall relevance is then demonstrated through more specific analytical lenses during the rest of the book. This consists of case study chapters dealing with three key forms of experience faced by everyone at some stage in their lives: breakdowns and ruptures, or at least major alterations, in close relationships with conjugal partners, families, or friends; irreversible moves from one place to another, whether proximate or distant; and intense periods of grief and mourning after the death of a loved one when we have to somehow assimilate this loss into our own ongoing lives. These forms of experience generally entail considerable change in our lives and require extensive and sometimes protracted management, both in relation to ourselves and others. It is because of this that they inform and provide illustrations of our overall preoccupation in the book. Although this is crucial, the primary reason for choosing these case studies is that the experiences to which they relate loomed largest in our fieldwork, conducted between 2010 and 2013, thus showing how common and widespread they are, and how ubiquitous are the questions they raise for acts and processes of recollection.[1] Those questions are addressed in a variety of ways, but they are informed by the more general issues discussed in the first chapter precisely because these issues have also been identified through fieldwork analysis.

The management of change involves many issues. The first of these, which is of focal concern to us throughout the book, turns around the relationship between memory and the constitution of selfhood—how it is formed and maintained, how it changes over time and how such

changes are handled, assessed and used. Our interest in selfhood is primarily centred around its symbiotic relation to memory and the stories people tell of their lives, always seeing these in particular social and cultural contexts. Remembering subjects on the one hand and social arrangements and formations on the other cannot be understood separately; they are mutually constitutive, with neither able to exist without the other. They also coexist in and across time. For this reason, a predominant issue in the relationship of selfhood to memory and remembering is how we look back from the present to the person we were—or believe we were—in years gone by. Looking back in everyday life from the changed perspective of the present is an interest we pursue in each chapter of the book, and individual remembering subjects within small social groups come to the fore here because, as Agnes Heller (1986, p. 158) has put it, if 'we seek to reconstruct everyday life we must take as our point of departure the standpoint of the subject: the participant within everyday life'. Our focus throughout the book on the concrete processes and practices of remembering is intended as a way of offsetting the tendency to see what is social in abstract, fixed forms, and instead conceive of its relations with self in terms of everyday relationships and lives lived in interaction with other lives, in specific conditions and contexts.

Selfhood in relation to the remembering subject may be one of those essentially contested concepts in the human sciences, but it remains indispensable in memory studies, not least because an abiding requirement of all remembering practices is a relative continuity and coherence of self as a sine qua non of being able to take action in the world, however small a part we may play in shaping it. Attaining and maintaining this continuity and coherence through the mnemonic imagination necessarily entails, to a significant degree, the agentic capacity of an authorial self, and while this in itself will receive extensive discussion in the initial chapter, we should make clear at the outset that in developing this discussion we accept the centrality of language in (re)constructing the past, with memories being discursively produced in the course of our everyday social relations, but we disavow linguistic monism and its associated eclipse of selfhood. Likewise, we acknowledge that self-formation and maintenance occur in relations of inequality and power, but we reject a Foucauldian conceptualization of the self-regulating subject constituted entirely in relations of social control. In doing so we agree with Steven Best (1994, p. 46) that this conceptualization has 'reduced consciousness and identity

formation to coercive socialisation and failed to grasp the individualising possibilities created by modernity'. The 'radical antihumanism' represented by this conceptualization of self poses 'the obvious problem of seeking social change without free and active agents'. Christopher Nash (1990, p. 216) backs this up in a well-made point:

> With any consistent obliteration … of discrete persons as agents of discrete events and intentions – or with any description of the subject as simply a manifestation of impersonal collective forces, we can't hope either to account intelligibly for change, explain to ourselves how we feel ourselves to be in disagreement with someone else, or hold anyone responsible for his or her acts. Nash (1990, p. 216)

In contrast to determinist approaches, we work with an alternative nonunitary, antiessentialist conception of the self, one that takes account of relations of power and structures of authority while also recognizing the limited but crucial capacity of exercising individual agency and developing positive forms of self-knowledge. We take that as our starting point in thinking about the remembering subject precisely because of 'the irreducibility of the individual person to the rules of large-scale systems' (Levin 2001, p. 101).

We also pursue this concern with selfhood because we believe it is worth more development than it has thus far received in the fields of both memory studies and media studies.[2] In media studies much work is focused, rightly enough, on national and transnational information and communications technologies, and the media institutions and corporations associated with them. Far less attention is paid to how, at the micro-level settings of everyday life, the content of such technologies is interpreted and used. We hope to offset this imbalance, in however small a way, by continuing the exploration we began in *Photography, Music and Memory* and looking closely at how visual and auditory media are taken up and integrally woven into people's lives, developing in this process an inside-out perspective. Our enquiry in both that book and this is particularly directed towards practices of localization in vernacular memory, or in other words towards how people at meso- and micro-social levels *make their own* the images and sounds that become key elements in their acts, processes and conventions of remembering. It is through attention to these localizing practices that we bring media and memory studies together, but as already mentioned, we're paying rather more attention

here to how our two key mnemonic resources inform and help form the ways in which individuals develop and sustain a sense of selfhood across the shifts and alterations of time.

Remembering is inextricable from the construction of such a sense of selfhood even while it is also an indissolubly social process. This duality has not been adequately taken up in memory studies, mainly because there has been far greater emphasis placed on collective and public forms of remembering, and by contrast a diminution of attention to memory from below—the phenomena of vernacular memory and remembering practices among small groups and by specific individuals. Concern for the ways in which common pasts are communicated has produced a significant body of studies critiquing the hegemonic purposes to which the past is put, whether in national political discourse or in mass-mediated representation. Some of the most significant historical events of the 20th and 21st centuries have been considered in this way, including the memorialization of the Cambodian genocide and the mnemonic commodification of terrorist atrocities (Benzaquen 2014; Hughes 2003; Sturken 2007). Much of this growing range of work is highly commendable, but it has construed collective or cultural memory mainly as an ideological battleground, an arena for the malign or progressive articulation of cultural, social and political power through the construction of narratives which legitimate or disturb established orders of domination and inequality. It is on times of rapid social and cultural change or radical historical rupture that these explorations of memory have most often been focused. As a result, remembering has been widely recognized as one of the processes through which social and cultural change can be managed, from tragic catastrophes such as 9/11 to more gradual but wide-ranging upheavals in social norms and expectations. With historical changes of these kinds, both event and process provide opportunities for struggle over their meaning and significance in the cultural practices which are then deployed in remembering them.

While providing a necessary critique of macro-level sociocultural constructions and uses of the past, this approach to remembering allows the social to be too easily hived off as an abstract domain distant from, and even independent of, the local and localized processes through which remembering is performed in everyday experience. It takes us back to the problem identified earlier, which we must now strive to overcome. The corollary of this abstracting effect is that individuals and their remembering practices are either consigned to the scrutiny of the psychologist or neuroscientist, or they are pressed into service as having an assumed

analogical value in revealing the nature and operation of group-level collectivities, exemplifying, or in aggregate terms illustrating, the ways in which large social categories and societies as a whole actively reconstruct the past, or use the past in interested and partisan ways in order to legitimate various kinds of social exclusion and inequality. These are undoubtedly critical aspects of the social and cultural character of popular remembering, but how popular memory and its articulation in public forms of communication and culture relate to the intersubjective processes of mnemonically constructing personal identities, and a sense of self over time, routinely goes unexamined and unexplained.

Taking the Vernacular Turn

This is in one sense unsurprising. The problem of the precise nature of the relationship between individual and collective remembering *over time* has continued to dog memory studies since Halbwachs's seminal theorization of collective memory and remembering and Bartlett's work on mnemonic schemas in the 1920s (Halbwachs 1980, 1992; Bartlett 1932; Keightley and Pickering 2012, Chaps. 2 and 3). In 2002, Wulf Kansteiner wrote a wide-ranging critique of the failure in collective memory studies to address this issue both methodologically and conceptually. Despite that intervention, there remains a largely unchecked extrapolation from individual memory to vast agglomerations of peoples with little if any sense of what is involved in this transposition.

One of the important points made by Kansteiner (2002, p. 189) was that it is because 'collective memories are based in a society and its inventory of signs and symbols … on the level of families, professions, political generations, ethnic and regional groups, social classes, and nations' that they 'can be explored on very different scales from the most intimate private settings to the public sphere'. What happens across these different scales cannot be run in together. Movement occurs between them, with memories becoming transferred from one scale to another, but what this involves and how the meanings of memories change as a consequence of such movement cannot be properly understood unless the scalar differentiations are themselves built into the analytical equation. In this respect, how individuals remember and how societies remember do not simply parallel each other, not least because of the huge variation in both individual remembering and collective remembering of past events or periods, with collective memory

in particular being found in small social groups, nationwide commemorations and anywhere in between. Kansteiner (2002) rightly cautioned against the imposition of the practices and processes of individual remembering onto the collective. He argued for recognition of the qualitatively distinct processes that collective forms of memory involve and advocated a turn to reception studies in order to address this problem. This is indeed a necessary move in order (among other things) to understand the particular ways in which cultural representations of the past are made our own in practices of vernacular remembering. Yet despite a concern for interpretive processes, Kansteiner retained broad-based public forms of memory as the primary analytical concern in memory studies. This is to get stuck at one scalar level and lose sight of interscalar movement. As an indirect consequence of this, he provided us with precious little sense of mundane collective processes of remembering by those who move in the same social midst.

In memory studies there has been a general failure to address the fundamental problem of how we should conceptualize or analytically approach the relationship between differential scales and modalities of remembering. This is of critical importance when the role of remembering in managing and negotiating change is considered primarily in the register of public culture because it leads, at least by implication, to a top-down model of collective memory. Considering the diversity of reception practices and the meanings they generate is all to the good in helping to offset this, but the kinds of change it sensitizes us to go analytically untackled when memory frames remain large-scale and mass-mediated in character, and when the ways in which change and transition are not only understood but also actively managed in everyday life through a personal/interpersonal mnemonic negotiation of experience are largely overlooked. Furthermore, the complexity of vernacular remembering, the diversity of cultural resources it draws on and incorporates, along with the ways in which the locally intersubjective aspects of social life shape and inform our experience of change, are radically underestimated.

In Kansteiner's account, large-scale public pasts are presented as a kind of primary definer of collective memory, and 'audiences' respond to them in the process of making sense of change over time in a predominantly reactive mode. A range of cultural products which refer to the past are widely distributed, and as a result, we develop a sense of widely shared memories—for example, as with the commemorative media coverage in the UK of the queen's 90th birthday, which mobilized a

predictable repertoire of British national memories weaving together a story of collective progress over the course of her exalted lifetime. For audiences this may have entered into and reinforced the symbolic assemblage of national memory in a variety of ways, contributing to a shared discursive mnemonic terrain, if not a consensual unitary narrative of Britishness and British identity. However, attending critically to this assemblage alone is insufficient because we operate simultaneously as individual and collective rememberers who work with a broad, heterogeneous range of experiences which are always in a myriad ways both intimately ours and broadly shared. We also need to consider how these same symbolic resources are mobilized and made our own in the process of interpreting our own experience. Such experience also opens up such resources to a wide range of use, including that which is critical as well as concurring.

To do this we need an analytical starting point that is an alternative to macro-scale forms of public memory. This would allow the personal and the public dimensions of memory and remembering to be held continually in view of one another across whatever comes between them. As Ricoeur (2004, p. 131) suggested, there is 'an intermediate level of reference between the poles of individual memory and collective memory, where concrete exchanges operate between the living memory of individual persons and the public memory of the communities to which we belong'. This intermediate level of reference is the domain we are referring to as vernacular memory. In our previous book, we looked through the conceptual lens it offered at the ways in which photography and recorded music operate in the interstitial spaces between personal and popular memory (Pickering and Keightley 2015, pp. 8–18; Pickering and Keightley 2013, pp. 97–112). It is within these in-between spaces that vernacular remembering occurs, where both home-mode and mass-produced cultural resources are given local meaning and value through our own everyday processes of making narrative sense of experience. They become vitally important for us in constructing and reconstructing an active sense of cross-temporal transaction as time inexorably passes and our lives inevitably change. For this and other reasons, the interstitial spaces and places of vernacular memory, in which change and transition, both the historically notable and the locally significant, are experienced and negotiated, require the same degree of concern as the large-scale collective memory of spectacular ruptures and cataclysms. We remain preoccupied with the former throughout this book.

Handling Change and Transition

Past experience and present identity are interwoven by narrative regardless of the particular cultural form such narrative takes. It is through the stories we tell of what happened in the past that we generate a sense of who we are in any given present, and of where we are—or believe we are—heading towards in the future. We can think of this process as the bringing together of a life, or more partially of bringing certain lineaments of experience into definition around key themes which help coordinate what we mean when we talk about that which gives a life some degree of unity and coherence. There are many such themes, with the central means in determining how they are brought together in the interests of continually aligning and realigning past experience and present identity being the mnemonic imagination. It is through the workings of the mnemonic imagination that the otherwise fragmentary pieces of the past are assembled, given pattern and order and assigned long-term meaning and significance. Without at least some effort after this we would be temporally adrift, floating hither and thither on currents over which we have little or no control. This process is of course not implemented in social isolation; it is shared most immediately with others close to us and is linked in vernacular memory to various communal narratives shared among families, friends and interest groups. In addition, we are continuously affected by our everyday social encounters and interactions, and some of these may slip out of the usual run and surprise us: a sudden lovelorn glance in a post office, a miscalculated conversational exchange at a bus stop. All of these encounters and interactions nevertheless occur and proceed in the absence of anticipation of any radical severance from what is usually expected in our lives. Such is the scope of everyday human hope, except of course among those who are desperate or who feel that mundanity is central to their existential crisis. Mostly we cleave to such hope, albeit in varying degrees, while at the same time knowing in a broader perspective outside of our daily routines that nothing is guaranteed, nothing is permanent and big-time change is potentially around every corner. Tragedy can strike whenever. A turn of events that is completely unforeseen may lead, by however many or few twists and turns, to major transformation in our lives or in society. This broader perspective is realized when, from time to time, pattern and order, meaning and significance are disrupted, or even ripped apart, by certain events and certain lines of development.

The bringing-together process thus must be reactivated in a way that is a good deal more concerted than is the case when life runs smoothly from one point to another, registering only small measures of change along the way. The pain of loss, the hazards of negotiating disastrous turnabouts of fortune, the perils of marked confusion over what to think or how to act in uncharted social territory—all subsequently call for stories that will make satisfying and sustainable sense of these experiences, thus helping us move beyond them by finding a relatively stable way of looking back at them. Developing new narratives and re-emplotting what has happened to us is central to remembering painful pasts well, or at least in ways that enable us to reach some point of reconciliation with the sense of malaise they have incurred. In doing so we draw on the mnemonic imagination to help us transform the pain, confusion and hurt we have endured and eventually turn the past towards other possibilities of being. Change and transition can of course be either welcome or unwelcome. From losing a parent to moving abroad, we involuntarily and voluntarily break with settled patterns of experience and with our own previous self-narratives. In either scenario, though, the past may jar and grate against a now inharmonious present, and we must then seek out new ways of working with the past as a resource for making sense of who we are and of our experience of ourselves over time if we are not to lose a more or less coherent sense of ourselves as being in the world. In finding them, re-evaluation and reinterpretation of the past exceeds the capacity of memory alone and requires the creative and synthesizing capacity of the mnemonic imagination. We explore the operation of the mnemonic imagination throughout the three case studies in the book. These are presented in a particular order: we move from a topic that has been considerably neglected in memory studies to one where a good deal of attention has been paid, and we finally turn to another that has been a major preoccupation for those who study memory and forgetting in an interdisciplinary manner.

Our first case study chapter is concerned with the ways in which the experience of relationship breakdown is managed through the remembering process. While the degree to which people undergo the disintegration of personal relationships with close ones varies, experiences of this nature feature in everyone's lives at some point. Failures of or fractures within relationships lead to intervals of transition which we have inevitably to navigate; in doing so, we hope to maintain or salvage some viable sense of self-integrity. We do this in face of the punctuating role in

our life-narratives which they retrospectively acquire. Such retrospective significance can of course vary with the magnitude of the remembered experience. From the first time a lover leaves us to a full-scale estrangement from a family member, these separations and ruptures in our personal lives require us to manage the changes they wreak. A key aspect of this is the re-establishment of at least some degree of continuity in our lives, no matter how difficult this may be. In connection with this, we examine the ways in which the mnemonic imagination operates in coming to terms with personal losses and ruptures within intimate relationships. We also discuss how in this context remembering well involves reconciling the disparity between the fuller relationship that was and the residues that remain. Among other things, the role of the mnemonic imagination in this process involves us in considerations of what could have been and what may yet still happen so that, in all of this, we maintain some sense of both perdurance and possibility in our sense of self and our relations with others.

Over the long course of time we may look back and remember certain close relationships we have lost. When we belonged in them they were enormously significant for us, and when they failed and broke apart the experience was full of emotional distress. Since then we have moved on, and memories of those lost relationships have become etiolated, feeble, without strength or substance. These memories are now relatively marginal in our life-narratives; they are stripped of their affective power, and if they are occasionally reactivated, then they are always so in relation to current narrative configurations. Helen Dunmore (2003, p. 145) has pointed to at least two causes of memory recession of this kind. The first of these occurs 'when there's no way of organising the past into a pretty shape, or even a shape you can live with'. The second occurs 'when there's no need to … because you've closed the door on it and you're never going to see any of those people again'. It may well seem strange 'how strong emotions can be so easily diminished as your life continues; how deepest intimacies become commonplace half-recalled memories', but it remains true there is no longer any regret at what we have managed to put behind us and more or less forget. This remains true even when there are photographs still in existence as evidence of those times and people: 'Those must have been my hands that squeezed the shutter, my eye that looked in the viewfinder and checked that everything I wanted was in the frame. But I don't remember any of it. It's all been wiped away with a clean click' (see also Boyd 2016, p. 179). In such

circumstances the mnemonic imagination has no work to do because it has nothing—or nothing with any warrant—to work on. The past has been erased or diluted as a resource, and our forgetting has proved the most fruitful process of handling change, arriving at accommodations with the past and opening up the possibility of renewal. We mention this because over time, memory recession of this kind is often experienced to a greater or lesser degree, and it is important to register this. However, in the case study it is not our major concern. Our concern lies far more with painful pasts that continue to haunt us, hamper us, fill us with unresolved emotional conflicts, leave us feeling paralysed, or present what may seem insuperable obstacles to our moving on. In such cases the mnemonic imagination has much work to do in turning the past into a fecund source that gives positive meaning to what we have done, or at least enables us to think well enough of what we have done that we are able to move forward into a different future. Such work can only be done when the past remains an active resource, when one wholesale section of it has not been wiped clean away; when the past can be actively repossessed and put to work in giving order to experience, or at least some semblance of it; and when the past can be distilled for forms of significance and value.

Our second case study chapter addresses the common experience of spatial mobility by exploring moments in the story of a life or of closely interrelated lives where a change of residence occurs. This occurs across the scales from the smallest of movements, such as flitting from one house to another within the same town during the course of childhood and growing up, to the most radical of movements, such as forced migrations after war or famine, regime change or racial persecution. While there are numberless differences between them, these experiences of changing places are made sense of through the processes of everyday remembering, and they involve assessments of both experiential loss and gain in differing degrees and configurations. This case study examines how these moments of movement feature in our lives and considers how we establish narrative continuity across them. How do changes of place and the conditions under which that change occurs pose challenges for telling the story of ourselves and reconciling not just me-then with me-now, but me-then-there with me-here-now? How do past places serve as evaluative frames for the present, and how do they provide us with reference points through which we can articulate experiences of loss, lack and longing? How do these changes of place implicate broader social and

cultural pasts in our more intimate autobiographical stories? What are the cultural coordinates we take in steering ourselves from one space-time to another, and how do these shape or inform the meaning of the movements that we make? In addressing questions such as these, our concern in the case study is on the one hand with the relations between a sense of belonging to locality and the lived environments of vernacular memory, and on the other with disruptions to that sense and their repercussions for processes and practices of remembering.

A sense of belonging is an important element of well-being because it involves feeling at one with the place where you live and with who you are. It creates a sense of connectedness, integration and participation, deriving from the relational process of our social encounters, interaction and intersubjectivity as this occurs in a particular locality. We become attached to a place because of the fulfilment associated with this sense. Such fulfilment means that 'belonging to locality', 'far from being a parochial triviality, is very much more of a cultural reality than is association with gross region or nation' (Cohen 1982, p. 10). But for one reason or another, as the case study shows, the fulfilment associated with belonging may be thwarted or undermined. We may be prevented from developing a feeling of belonging, or that feeling may be disturbed or swept away by various changes in our lives or in the social and cultural fabric into which our lives are woven. Further, certain people are not allowed to belong, to feel at home in particular groups or communities. They may not feel able to belong because of a lack of fit between where they are and who they are or are considered to be. Some people feel torn between different places and cultures, as for example is the case with one second-generation migrant we interviewed who has moved a good deal between England and the Indian subcontinent, and who has experienced different, at times contradictory, senses of belonging. Places themselves change over time, and this too may affect our affiliations with them. All these examples show that belonging is an ongoing process; it is not accomplished in any once-and-for-all manner but remains under review. It may perhaps be taken for granted in times of relative stability, but is repaired, reworked or renewed following changes in our lives or in the material and social dimensions of places of habitation and belonging. Such changes are commonly felt to have an adverse effect on our sense of belonging, but we also consider examples where they are beneficial, stimulating creative forms of remembering or stirring us to start thinking reflexively about the relations of place to who we have been, who we are and who we may want to become.

The final case study chapter deals with the most irreversible of life transitions and responses to them. As already noted, the relations of memory with death and terminal loss have perhaps been the most widely dealt with in the memory studies literature to date. From 9/11 to the Holocaust, we are haunted by the burden that events such as these place on remembering, personally and collectively. What is less commonly considered are the ways in which death, grief and mourning feature in all of our lives in often relatively unspectacular ways. This is because the common success of the mnemonic labour involved in coming to terms with the loss of a life renders it mundane and therefore virtually invisible. Our successes and failures in this regard usually pass unnoticed, our pain privatized or our resilience unremarked upon. The concern we have with remembering well involves us in the final case study in an attempt to shine a light on these times in our lives when the mnemonic imagination does its most challenging work: maintaining continuity of self and self–other relations in the face of a loss that possesses an absolute nature. The most significant issue here is what makes the difference between mnemonic success and failure in dealing with death. We ask how death punctuates our life-narratives, how mourning is performed as part of the remembering process and how even this most painful of processes can be potentially creative, allowing us to break out of a closed loop of grief in order to begin leaving our loss behind and conceiving anew how the future may be faced.

Handling change and transition is the key theme running through all three of our case studies. This is so because, although some attention has been paid to disruptions of memory and their affective consequences, there has been little work done in memory studies specifically on life transitions as they are experienced in everyday conditions and circumstances, and on the consequences they may have for what we remember and how we draw on the past in our own lives and in our participation in a variety of social groups. This is surprising because transition of one kind or another was a recurrent topic in our ethnographic research. That neglect provided us with our initial impetus in deciding to make it one of our chief preoccupations throughout the book, but in the case studies we have adopted our more specific focus on life transitions because these are the occasions when the mnemonic imagination is most needed, both in managing disruptive moments in our lives and in helping us renegotiate our relations with others across our variably experienced encounters with change. Of course, some of these encounters are self-generated,

while others are inflicted upon us from outside. We examine both kinds because they are universal elements of experience in late modern times, and they run through all three of the case studies. In addition, we deal with these disruptive experiences from the perspective of 'remembering well' insofar as our concern is not only with the potential dangers or damage these experiences may carry or inflict but also with the creative work we undertake through the mnemonic imagination in managing these changes, making sense of liminal experiences and establishing continuity over time vis-à-vis both ourselves and our relations with others.

We discuss transition most of all in relation to the disruptions involved in relationship breakdowns, spatial mobilities, loss and mourning, but as our fieldwork showed, transition is more pervasive in that it relates to movement from one state to another in assorted mundane ways as well as in life-changing disjunctures and sharp turns of direction in our world outlook or in our thinking about significant aspects of our lives. There is a background awareness of this broad range of different forms of change and transition throughout the book, perhaps especially in Chap. 2 where we develop a broad analytical framework for thinking of the experience of transition. This is based on a before/after temporal axis and a here/there spatial axis, with the intermediation between these two axes understood as providing the constituent dynamics of change and continuity. These two axes interrelate and inform each other through an effort at identifying and maintaining lines of continuity in particular locations within the present as well as openly registering and coming to terms with change. Maintaining or overhauling those lines of continuity is part and parcel of repossessing the past and managing change, and again, the central means for doing both in their interrelationship is the mnemonic imagination. The mnemonic imagination works across both the temporal axis, allowing us to establish continuity of self and self/other relations over time, and across the spatial axis, allowing us to establish continuities across changing spaces and places, as well as reconcile experiences that occur in various different places. Simultaneously, it allows us to move towards some degree of empathic engagement with the experience of different individuals and different social groups in other historical periods and places, and so expand and enrich our own horizons in the process, regardless of whether we're reading a nineteenth-century working-class autobiography or looking with fascination at the early twentieth-century documentary films of Mitchell and Kenyon.[3]

Across this book, photo images and pieces of music as they are acted on by the mnemonic imagination will be shown to be vital elements of everyday accommodations to change. Our discussion will be oriented to the rate, tempo and degree of change involved as well as the extent to which we gain and maintain control over the changes we experience in our lives. Through our general focus on the successful operation of the mnemonic imagination in the manoeuvres involved in these bids after control, a major aim in the book is to refine what we can establish about the complex but vital issues involved in remembering well. The value of the mnemonic imagination lies precisely in enabling such remembering to happen, and this is the case because when memory and imagination move beyond their own capacities and operate together, they forge new links between past, present and future, and so help us achieve richer forms of understanding of how the three major realms of time in our lives cross-refer and interconnect. Remembering well is thus in large part about being able to exercise at least some degree of agency in the attainment of narrative coherence across the helter-skelter of time's incessant movement. It is not simply about having happy memories or organizing the past into a pretty shape; it is far more about creative forms and practices of remembering that enable us to take our effective bearings for the future. Most of all, it is about re-establishing control over the consequences that follow from radical change and transformation. We shall illustrate this extensively in what follows.

Notes

1. For methodological details of the fieldwork, see Pickering and Keightley (2015), pp. 22–31.
2. Memory studies and media studies are adjacent fields, overlapping both in their mutual interdisciplinarity and in their cross-cutting interests. These cover such issues as processes of representation, relations of past and present, intersections of collectivity and individuality, technologies of cultural production and reception, continuities and contrasts in generational experience and the communicative politics of commemoration.
3. On the latter example, see Toulmin et al. (2004) and Toulmin (2006).

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CHAPTER 2

Transitions and Turning Points

Memory and the Mutable Self

In her account of herself as a child growing up in Egypt during the 1930s, Penelope Lively (1994, p. 1) begins by describing how the interplay of 'now' and 'then' first came to her with the force of a startling revelation: 'I can look back upon myself of now, of this moment. I shall be able to think about myself now, thinking of this—but it will be then, not now'. There is a spatial dimension to this—going by car from Bulaq Dakhrur to Heliopolis, travelling along a road lined on either side with oleander and jacaranda trees, all of them bright and laden with flowers—but as she sits on the tacky leather back seat of the car she realizes that there is a temporal dimension to it as well, for in a few hours they will return by the same route and 'pass the same trees, in reverse order', and then, but only then, she will be able to look back at herself 'of now, of this moment'. This realization wonderfully illustrates the dawning of self-awareness in which she sees herself as moving through time and being defined in herself by the cross-temporal and cross-spatial distinctions between 'now' and 'then', 'here' and 'there'. It endures in her adult memory as one of those moments 'in our childhood where we come alive for the first time', and to which, subsequently, 'we go back… and think: this is when I became myself' (Dove and Ingersoll 2003, pp. 136–67).

Alongside this, the spatial and temporal dimensions of remembering extend long forward to the much later period of her autobiographical

E. Keightley and M. Pickering, *Memory and the Management of Change*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies,
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writing as she considers the relationship between childhood memory and adult hindsight. Across time, at the point of writing, she also thought 'with equal wonder of that irretrievable child, and of the eerie relationship between her mind and mine' (Lively 1994, p. 1). The child Penelope Low, living in Egypt, became Penelope Lively, the grown-up married person with children of her own, living in England. There is clearly some relation between them, as she remains known by the first name she was assigned by her parents, but what kind of presence does that child now have within the mind of the mature woman she became? Although tantalizing pieces of the past remain with her, the child she once was is gone. Between the child and the adult are waves of development and change within the self. These make our experiences in the distant past unlivable again in the form they were lived through at that time.

George Herbert Mead ([1932] 2002, p. 58) made this point with admirable concision in the same decade as that of Lively's childhood:

> When one recalls his boyhood days, he cannot get into them as he was, without their relationship to what he has become; and if he could, that is if he could reproduce the experience as it then took place, he could not use it, for this would involve his not being in the present within which that use must take place.

As we change we lose the ability to experience and make sense of events and happenings in the exact same way we did in the past. At the same time we gain the ability to engage with our experience in quite altered ways, some of which were not available to us in the past and some of which may help us to see the past from a perspective that sheds new light on it. This does not mean that the once-lived past has completely disappeared, for clearly there are traces that remain, some of them perhaps with a brilliant allure or resilient echo, and there is certainly an interconnecting sense of identity between our temporally specific selves. Thomas de Quincey ([1821] 2003, p. 94) wrote about this in the following way:

> An adult sympathises with himself in childhood because he *is* the same and because (being the same) he is *not* the same. He acknowledges the deep, mysterious identity between himself, as infant, for the ground of his sympathy; and yet, with this general agreement, and necessity of agreement, he feels the differences between his two selves as the main quickness of his sympathy.

Along with the differences is the abiding knowledge that the child grew up and, however haphazardly, became the person who is still going strong. It is in part because in any adult person, the child is in some indeterminate way still there yet definitely no longer there at all. She can feel haunted by an old childhood photograph of herself, with the photograph seeming to provide incontrovertible truth that she did once exist, in some former flesh-and-blood version of herself, but that 'she' as she was then is now irretrievable. 'Then' and 'now' correspond, but only across an insuperable gulf. Again, and despite this, there remain those eerie residues of what was then in what is now, even though we cannot grasp with any hard-and-fast certainty quite what relation exists between who we were and who we are:

> All morning I'd felt the strange disjuncture that comes from reconnecting with your past. There's such a gulf between yourself and who you were then, but people speak to that other person and it answers; it's like having a stranger as a house guest in your skin. (Kingsolver [1990] 2004, p. 40)

Within the temporary abode of our current selves, our past selves are like this, familiar strangers, or strange familiars, whom we know and yet no longer know because we have changed, because we have forgotten as well as remembered and because our orientations, motivations and purposes in remembering are specific to the present even as they relate to the past or the future.

In this chapter, we shall explore at least some of the many features that are involved in the changes we undergo across the vicissitudes of time, and we will discuss how we manage the complex relations between who we were at various stages in the past and who we are now: a person immersed in a lived present but who is of course still changing and will in certain ways be different in the future. How do we navigate these differences in who we have been, who we are and who we will be, and somehow make them part of the same story? In considering these questions, our main interest in the chapter is in the process of looking back and all this entails. The colloquial phrase 'looking back' intrigues because it is at once commonly used and semantically vague. It seems to us worth thinking about for both reasons as we try to unpack what it involves and put forward at least some reasons for its prevalent usage.[1]

Looking back is done in a wide range of different ways, but perhaps most significantly over the course of a life it refers to the sense of having

been embarked on a journey, regardless of how many diverse places are encountered along the way or how many twists and turns have been taken in movements between 'then' and 'now'. At various points along it, looking back across this journey involves a series of assessments of the different directions we have taken and the cumulative but ever-shifting pattern that has developed. In this way, looking back is the necessary ground for seeing ahead, as in the Kierkegaardian dictum of having to understand life backwards but needing to live it forward. Its range of reference as a term of retrospection is also broad. In its colloquial usage, and maybe in its strongest sense, looking back refers to concertedly active forms of recollection, with these acting at times in close alliance with how we draw on elements of the past and in doing so manage change and maintain a cross-temporal conception of who we are. This is what is intriguing. The reference may appear simple enough, but quite what is entailed in its vernacular connotations can be subtle, equivocal, unsettling and striated with a sense of both loss and gain. What appears straightforward can, on inspection, be found to harbour unexplained implications or unexpected switchbacks of meaning. This is particularly so when 'looking back' is a term we use to think about how we came to be who we have become, and the journey we have taken in the accomplishment of this.

Memory thus seems to be our main resource for looking back, and in this respect it is vital to the constitution of selfhood.[2] Obviously the past does not live on in its entirety, for if it did we would be completely burdened by it. It would utterly swamp the present, and this is palpably not the case. Those aspects of it which we make intentional use of in our ongoing lives are selectively chosen, with the operative word here being 'we', for while we like to think of at least some aspects of the past as our own, individual to ourselves, the past is for the most part a shared resource, added to and taken from by those with whom we are closely associated, whether families or networks of friends. We do have our personal participation in it as a shared resource, and we do shape the past in certain ways that are quite personal to us, but even when we're alone and remembering, memory itself is a product of social exchange and communication. We need in various ways to move between what seems intensely personal and the ways in which self-told stories of family experiences, say, 'are embedded in relational structures that exist beyond individual knowledge' (Widmer and Jallinoja 2008, p. 7). The value of this is that it gives us a transactional perspective, for as we move through our lives,

from one stage of development to another, we do so in the context of various social relations that help give form, substance and meaning to this movement. At the same time, however, in looking back across it, we think about the specific person who is for each of us centrally wrought up in it, and how that person has changed from one period of life to another. We then have to gauge and assess all that is involved in our successive selves, in what is retained and maintained and in what is altered and accommodated, across the diverse social contexts in which those selves have operated and developed.

This remains important in spite of the ways a viable sense of selfhood and individuality has been theoretically challenged or denunciated in recent decades. At least as far as our ethnographic data are concerned, thinking about self in itself, along with self in relation to significant others, are vital issues in everyday accounts of our actions and exchanges, with notions of fluidity and fracture being notable mainly by their absence. In formulating our concept of the mnemonic imagination, we have shown elsewhere how it constitutes the central device through which these issues are handled, particularly in its contribution to the narrative schemas and frameworks within which we establish meaningful configuration in the midst of temporal succession.[3] The mnemonic imagination is the means by which interlinkages are made between the remembered 'me' and the remembering 'I', the remembered 'us' and the remembering 'we'. These interlinkages, in their autobiographical and vernacular social combination, are crucial to the more or less coherent stories which give unity, purpose and significance to what is recollected and recounted across time.

At many points in the book we shall return to these interlinkages, and we shall insist throughout that memory is never simply an individual possession. Instead it must be located between a person's relation to individual self and the social world she or he inhabits. That is why our abiding focus is on the relation between self and what Jeffrey Praeger (1998, p. 60) calls the intersubjectiveness of memory. Selfhood and self-identity do not arise out some essential inner core. Forging and maintaining a sense of self is not a solely inner-directed process, emerging and changing as a result of acts of introspection; it is just as importantly built up on the basis of our outer-directed experience in the day-to-day settings in which we live and through the relations with others who are most influential or salient for us. By the same token, we should not confine discussion of the self solely to regulative institutional structures, imperatives

and pressures and lose any sense of the agentic capacities of the individual in developing a sense of her or his self-identity—a sense that may derive, as Edward Sapir ([1934] 1970, p. 197) noted, from 'the ability of the individual to become aware of and attach value to his resistance to authority'. The trick is not only to distinguish between such structures, imperatives and pressures and what Sapir ([1934] 1970, pp. 196, 198) called 'a person-defining value', but also to try to keep both in our sights simultaneously.

It is worth dwelling for a moment on how a person-defining value may become attached to a particular memory, for we shall come across various instances of this throughout the book. For it to arise, recalling your presence in some past scene or setting is not sufficient in itself, even though this is a specific form of memory which may influence the intertemporal perspective in which the memory is placed. In this form of memory, your presence makes, or perhaps affirms, your individual participation at the time, which then contributes to what happens in the memory and perhaps modifies how it is remembered. There are occasions when we require knowledge of self-presence in this way, for the simple reason that evidence of being there at that time is necessary for the recollection and use of that recollection in a particular present, but this is quite different to what is established in the relationship between memory and selfhood. It is often the case that this specific form of memory is important for the constitution of selfhood, but it only becomes important when a person-defining value is associated with it, as for example when authority is resisted or convention is transcended in the execution of a social practice. What is then vital is the interpretation of what happened and of our personal participation as contributing to our sense of the person we have subsequently become. The mnemonic imagination is actively involved in the retrospective assessment of this and the post hoc assignment of value to the experience, and that is simultaneously achieved by embedding the memory within an attendant narrative whose purpose is to show how the memory in question has been formative in contributing to a sense of who we are, at the time we construct and recount it. Our understanding of the person-defining value of certain memories directly generates the perspective within which these memories come to stand, so that the way we see them is shaped by how they inform our personal identities: 'Change presupposes a certain position which I take up and from which I see things in procession before me: there are no events without someone to whom they happen and

whose finite perspective is the basis of their individuality' (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2002, p. 477).

Over the course of a life, people weigh up different goods and values against each other, reject some of these and take up others. Even when such rejection or adoption involves radical shifts of identification and allegiance, the task is to fit them into an overall narrative that situates such changes within a broader explanatory framework and, through the workings of the mnemonic imagination, manages whatever they seem to betoken, in either the short or the long term, by creating a sufficient sense of unity capable of convincing us and our close associates that in certain ways at least, we remain the same person despite the differences manifest at successive stages in our lives. Yet even as we move through these successive stages of the life course and encounter changes that are profound in their consequences and repercussions, we should be careful not to exaggerate them artificially. We should try to keep equally in view how selves acquire a sense of similitude across time in quite a different manner as they 'become routinised, lodged, committed and stablised' (Plummer 2003, pp. 524–5). It is important to be clear about this. The self is mutable, for even though we might rhetorically use the expression 'he hasn't changed a bit', in an implicit judgement that can be either positive or negative, and even though we may regard someone as highly stable, steadfast and unwavering, with largely affirmative evaluations attendant on this estimation of character, we definitely do not remain the same person throughout our lives. We change as our lives change and as we move through the successive stages of the life course. In light of this, we shall operate throughout the book with a firm conviction in the concept of successive selves, chronologically unfolding out of each other while also becoming changed over time because of the varying contexts of particular remembering occasions, but we shall also endeavour to unravel how our successive selves are always in some way or other a complex mixture of elements of continuity and discontinuity.

If our self-identities did not extend over time with a fair degree of continuity, there would be no coherence to them; they would fall apart into disconnected fragments. We strive to refit the temporal fragments we're left with in our memory into a subsequent pattern of sorts, but the very fact of succession also implies that the pattern we present conforms with a current self-conception. Our identities are always in process, though they may change more at certain times or junctures than at others. We live through such change, and in the moment of its happening

we may be caught up in the very flux and flurry of it. But as time passes we strive to glean from it what is most worthy of retention, or most rewarding in relation to how we have reflexively considered it, with the effort at this manifest in the ways we absorb experience in light of previous experience and use our mnemonic imagination to bring particular aspects of change into dialogue with others. Attempting to find some kind of balance between continuity and change is what is of paramount concern in thinking about the relationship of self and memory.

John Locke ([1690] 1997, p. 302) is usually credited with first equating self and memory. For him memory is what makes someone a person across the course of time, and personal identity consists of a continuity of consciousness in such a way that 'as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now as it was then'. Memory provides continuity, and this continuity is the sine qua non of the self, established over time. As a result, we gain personal identity to the extent that we actively recall our own actions in the past and take responsibility for them. Otherwise put, we are accountable for those actions because we remember them. The problem here is not that we need to have a conception of ourselves as persisting subjects in order to be moral agents, for this is clearly the case, but rather that memory has definite limitations. This was Thomas Reid's objection to Locke's equation of self and memory (we cannot remember everything, and in any case memories change over time), but to some extent at least Locke recognized this, acknowledging that memory is selective and far from comprehensive. Memory can also be disturbed or alienated, with individuals 'cut off from significant areas of their own life that had become inaccessible to conscious recall' (Danziger 2008, p. 106). Locke's conception of selfhood is therefore defined by memory, which we are consciously aware of and which we can intentionally bring back to mind. This helps provide the continuity necessary for the formation and maintenance of personal identity as well as enabling us to act as moral agents accountable for our past actions, and also on this basis able to think ahead and take actions which will have an outcome in the future, even if this is not always the one we anticipated.

This has been an influential account, and in many ways it is persuasive, with its influence in a more conceptual manner evidenced through its rearticulation and refinement in psychological continuity theories which view personal identity as the linking together of past and present

through autobiographical experience and the memories we have of it. Psychological continuity is established through connections within memory, which then underpin and secure personal identity. Unresolved issues here are exactly how many such connections are required in order to establish personal identity in this way, what particular sets of connection warrant sufficient evidence of 'sameness' in a person at different points in time and what forms of connection we commonly seek in developing a relatively coherent self-conception both in and over time. A further problem lies in the way in which memory itself is approached. In Locke's initial conception, the storehouse metaphor was used to explain how memory exists and is put into operation, with experiences being stacked away in safe storage, to be retrieved when needed (Keightley and Pickering 2012, pp. 39–40). Marya Schechtman (1994, pp. 6–7) has suggested that a latent picture of memory as a storehouse is present in psychological continuity theories, underlying the kinds of connections they seek to establish, and seeing 'memory as a straightforward link between a present moment and a single, well-defined past experience'.

Schechtman's objections to this view are worth summarizing. First of all, she points out that autobiographical memory is only one form of memory. In itself it is hardly monolithic because it includes direct reproductions of specific events alongside cumulative memory of certain periods in our lives and generic memories of certain kinds of experience reiterated over the course of time, such as high days and holidays. Some memories are recalled in vivid detail, while others are vague and indistinct. Summarized-experience memories and memories which lack any clear definition do not fit into the requirement of psychological continuity theory for connections between two firmly established moments of consciousness, one in the past, the other in the present. Fittingly, Schechtman (1994, p. 10) emphasizes the 'immense complexity of the relation "memory of"'. It is because this relation is complex that the further relation between selfhood and memory is not one that can be satisfactorily accounted for by conceiving of it in terms of any simple or direct reproduction of the past in the present.

Despite her critical objections to psychological continuity theories, Schechtman unfortunately retains too strong an insistence on the need for stability of self-identity over time, and empathic access to who we were in the past, for the development and maintenance of a narrative sense of self.[4] There are various problems with this, the most serious being that, while elements of continuity are evidently of huge

importance in relation to the passage of time, temporal succession also entails modification, alteration, mutation and discontinuity, which is precisely why we are able to distinguish between different stages in our lives and develop the sense that we have either grown, diversified and developed into a more mature person, or come into the realization that we were previously misguided, naïve or foolish: 'I used to think back sometimes on the plans that Valentine and I had made—living together in Paris on French bread and coffee and writing—and I didn't feel nostalgic or regretful, I only felt contempt for my deluded previous self' (Hadley 2013, p. 115). This is strongly phrased, expressing an abrupt turnaround between past self in her callow youth and mature personal identity in the present, and indeed at extremes we may feel moral repugnance or emotional turbulence when we consider the person we used to be: 'Once in a while I still see in my dreams that person who used to be me, or who I now believe was me, and wake up drenched in sweat' (Pamuk 2009, p. 6). Such extensive change belies both an idealized conception of stability of self over time and the necessary desirability of sympathetic feelings for the person who used to be me.[5]

Even at these limits there is still an articulation between the past self and the person we are now. The later appraisal doesn't mean that her or his previous self-understanding was not important earlier in life, for 'even when someone's self-interpretation is erroneous, the way in which that person understands himself is still a crucial feature of his identity' (Abbey 2000, p. 59). Although this needs to be recognized, what these examples show is that in the narratives we construct out of what we remember, there is always potentially an interspace of evaluative response to both the past self being narrated and the present self doing the narration, as a result of which what we think of ourselves back then, or what we think of how we thought of ourselves back then, may change, sometimes radically, and such change has to be managed in the subsequent narratives we tell of ourselves. The mnemonic imagination is centrally involved in these reflexive manoeuvres through which my narrative is revised 'in the light of my own response to what I think through in narrative form': 'Our past thus remains permanently open for reassessment. Just as one's response as a reader or audience of a great novel or drama can change as one gets older, so one's response to one's narrative thinking about one's past can change over the years' (Goldie 2012, p. 42). Such change may involve seeing matters in a profoundly new light, and this may plunge us into revising our own deeply held traits, as a result

of which, however briefly, we may enter into a period of conflict and turmoil. We may then say that in the longer term, conflict and turmoil, even though distressing and painful at the time, 'can be a good thing as a necessary part of a psychological progress of profound change in one's values, and in particular in one's defining traits, traits with which one identifies' (Goldie 2012, p. 142).

Profound change of this kind is relatively rare, while lesser discontinuities of various kinds are not. A developed awareness of discontinuities is of great importance for personal identity because without it, we would not be able to learn from experience, as for instance in assessing the difference between what we did then, and having reflected on this, what we do now as a result of certain decisions we have made. Here the contrasts between 'then' and 'now' are key points of reference in validating the decision we took to change some aspect of what we did or thought. This demonstrates that our understanding of certain experiences may change over time, as, for example, when we come to re-evaluate certain strong feelings we had about someone in the past, now seeing and thinking about her or him in a different light as we look back and take stock. Either directly or indirectly, this affects our self-interpretation as we would usually see such alterations as marking us out as now more perspicacious, generous or wise. What I do is in some sense expressive of who I have become, and yet what I do now may also affect who I may become in the future. When I enter into or undergo an experience, there is an expectation that my response to it will fall into an established pattern that stems from the character I have developed over the course of time, but of course only to the extent that the experience I encounter does not change this pattern in some way, for it is also be expected that what happens over the course of time does not consist only of what is familiar and predictable. 'Then' and 'now' by definition register different temporal contours.

It is perhaps worth saying a little more about the issue of character at this point because it is directly pertinent to the difficult question of the interrelations of what is taken as consistency in selfhood and how this is accounted for in the face of cross-temporal change. The argument that we should move from thinking of self-identity in terms of *idem* or sameness to thinking of it in terms of *ipse*, which 'implies no assertion concerning some unchanging core of the personality', is central to Ricoeur's project in *Oneself as Another* (1994, p. 2). One way of bringing about this shift is by conceiving of personal identity as a matter of character,

which Ricoeur describes as a 'set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognised' (p. 121). The challenge in such recognition is not to equate what is lasting with sameness but instead to square it with alteration over time. As we argued in *The Mnemonic Imagination*, some measure of self-constancy is quite compatible with the temporal extension of the self, and we referred there to character and its intersubjective assessment and endorsement as the key dimension of such constancy, with a leading example of this—keeping one's word—coming from Ricoeur. Keeping one's word both presupposes memory and (more importantly) implies evaluative judgement of the remembering subject because remaining faithful 'to promises or commitments', and being 'trustworthy and reliable despite the vagaries of experience and the relentless passing of time' is commonly accepted as a laudable aspect of good character (Keightley and Pickering 2012, p. 22).[6]

Developing and displaying certain self-defining traits over time requires an ability to think of ourselves as conscious subjects whose experience correlates with who we have become, but as we have seen, this does not preclude considerable disruption, change or alteration in one's self-defining traits in terms of who we have become since we experienced such disruption and change. For this reason in particular, our approach departs from a neo-Lockean psychological continuity view of personal identity which places too strident an emphasis on 'the holding of overlapping chains of *strong* connectedness' (Parfit 1984, p. 206). Tracing a trajectory through life in looking back over time is not dependent on such a view even though cross-temporal connections are vital to it. For us, the abiding point of Locke's conception of personal identity lies instead in what is made retrospectively out of what consciousness holds onto, or out of what memory may bring back unbidden, assessing experiences in light of their multiform qualities and how they contribute to our character or personality over time, adding to this the further dimension of selfhood that arises out of how we act reflexively on changes in our lives and what happens to us, week on week and year on year, thus changing in our own self-conception as well, with the mnemonic imagination being our conceptual template for explaining and understanding such processes.

Having recognized the necessity of both continuity and discontinuity for the formation and management of selfhood, we need to emphasize the dialectical relationship between them. First of all, as we noted earlier, the mnemonic imagination performs the important function of

reinforcing a sense of consonance between the remembering 'I' and the remembered 'me'.[7] Without such consonance, all conviction of going on being me would fall apart. Such consonance also serves to offset the complications introduced by chance, unforeseen twists in events and the muddle into which events sometimes descend:

> If I've learned anything in Kabul, it is that human behaviour is messy and unpredictable and unconcerned with convenient symmetries. But I find comfort in it, in the idea of a pattern, of a narrative of my life taking shape, like a photograph in a darkroom, a story that slowly emerges and affirms the good I have always wanted to see in myself. It sustains me, this story. (Hosseini 2014, p. 378)

The effort to establish cross-temporal continuities and a reasonably coherent narrative interlinking of I/now and me/then thus derives from the need we all have of creating some selective inclusion and thematic ordering of the past in the present, without which there would be no story we could tell to express who we were, who we are and who we may hope to be. Although in a court of law we should try to make our testimony as empirically accurate as we can, in processes of long-term recollection, there is no sharp divide between remembering and imaginative engagements with what memory provides, particularly where such inclusion and ordering are involved. That is why for us remembering well is about creative uses of the past for the sake of self-renewal, with the mnemonic imagination rearranging and re-evaluating the past in order to maintain an intelligible saga of ourselves within 'the perpetual slide of the present' (Lively 1994, p. 302).

Yet, secondly, certain events and experiences may disturb the relatively coherent narrative pattern we have built up in making sense of our lives, and we ourselves may come to see who we thought we were in the past as deluded, and thus we move on and change in our self-conception. From day to day and year to year, we keep track of what we have done and how we have responded to certain situations or developments, but at times we may stray from the trail of selfhood we have been following. We have to struggle to re-establish some viable sense of direction, purpose or motivation. In selecting from, organizing and reconstructing aspects of the past, the mnemonic imagination is engaged in an ongoing process of synthesis as new experiences are assimilated into an already established pattern, and changes accommodated into an existing narrative, or made

to extend, refine or transform that narrative. The effort nevertheless always involves movement towards the (re)establishment and (re)affirmation of some pattern and order in the way we look back and see how our lives have unfolded, distilling from this what is of greatest value and significance in our experience as we bring such esteemed qualities to bear on the present.

The knowledge this gives us is self-knowledge, but such knowledge is not solely derived from memory; it is achieved through bringing imagination to bear on the mnemonic resources derived from experience, condensing and reconfiguring it in the process of interpreting and understanding what it means to us. 'Anomalous events may thus be recast, representative ones emphasized, and other changes undertaken to make one's past more smooth and comprehensible' (Schechtman 1994, p. 11). Through such features of narrative reconstruction, the mnemonic imagination acts as a skilled artist stitching together salient pieces of the past to form that patchwork tapestry of personal development we call a life. The sense of self-identity we have over time allows our consciousness to extend backwards—not by finding straightforward connections between discrete, temporally isolated moments, but rather by striving for a more coherent integration of different processes and forms of experience, seeing this within the overall context of what we believe we have done and felt and thought, and thus we come into ourselves. Having a cross-temporal sense of being an experiencing subject and attaining a complementary sense of development and growth as this emerges from reflections on our experience and the extent of our self-awareness are crucial steps in attaining personal identity. In taking them, while can see that memory is vital for the constitution of selfhood, selfhood is not formed solely of out of memory. Memories are certainly in many ways organized 'along the string of the self' (Mead [1934] 1974, p. 135). They are indispensable in locating ourselves at one point in time to ourselves at another, in an earlier stage or several earlier stages in our lives:

> Maybe the hiss of the simmering water was what brought back, all at once, a scene from the earliest days of her marriage. Whenever she had felt particularly lonesome, she remembered, she used to set a tumbler of club soda on her nightstand. She used to go to sleep listening to the bubbles against the glass with a faint, steady, peaceful whispering sound that had reminded her of the fountain in her family's courtyard back home. (Tyler 2007, p. 61)

Yet however tightly or alluringly they interconnect across time, and however cohesively they are managed and maintained, memories are not sufficient in themselves for the formation and maintenance of selfhood. Memory alone does not allow us to arrive at knowledge of those thematic structures, arrangements, anomalies, alternatives, consistencies and inconsistencies, the breaks and points of refiguration that help form our sense of self in time and over time. Perhaps most critically, it does not give us the means for distinguishing between the wheat of significant experience from the chaff of trivial experience. When we talk of having learned from some experience or of cherishing what some experience has bequeathed to us, it is this process we have in mind, and it always occurs through the intersubjectiveness in which our own mnemonic imagination acts in dialogic communication with the mnemonic imaginations of others. Such interplay enables us to think and act reflexively as we change perspectives, exchange views and values and move in and out of consensus in negotiating the relations of self and other, situating ourselves within those relations and shifting among those relations in the continual exchange between personal identity and variegated sociality.

Our Selves and Other Selves

We hope by now to have strongly reaffirmed the sociological tenet that selfhood is not defined around a fixed, stable centre from which a relationship with the world is forged on its own masterful terms of thinking, willing and knowing, and that it cannot be conceived as antecedent to the multiple and diverse experiences which it assimilates yet also unaccountably transcends. Selfhood is braided within various networks of relationships, and it is mutable over time; indeed, self-awareness is only possible as a result of social interaction and as a consequence of having changed through successive, temporally distinguishable stages. The socialized self is also a historicized self. This means that the narrative account we give of it remains open and revisable, and that through this account and its relation to what we do, we are serially accountable to others. The narrative configuration of selfhood has also to explain change and discontinuity. In doing so, it provides a counter to relentless temporal succession and places discordance and divergence into the larger pattern which retrospectively we see as the trajectory our life has traced, always bearing in mind that this configuration intersects with other narrative accounts through the dense web of social relations

in which our lives are lived. Sustaining a sense of selfhood across time requires not only 'a certain narrative unity' in how we recount our lives, but also acquiring and keeping open a sense of how we fit into 'the wider story of various collectivities' (Appiah 1994, p. 160).

Of course there may be times, in looking back and thinking about the past, when this occurs in isolation: we take a lone walk through some deserted woodland or we sit by ourselves flipping through a photo album, but we commonly draw what happens then into the currency of our everyday social interaction, seeking out active corroboration, or at least implicit affirmation, of the memories we have communicated and the interpretation we have made of them. This way of accounting for ourselves, and of making ourselves count in the social circles we frequent, may seem somewhat at odds with the predominant conception of the self in Western discourse, with its roots in Cartesian philosophy and the European Enlightenment. Such a conception promotes a view of the individual person as bounded and autonomous, and of autobiographical memory as private and personal. In some ways, the genre of autobiography seems to encourage and endorse this view, placing the self as the major protagonist in a personal drama which is all pointed up and given emphasis by the plot and the main lines of the story, while at the same time being marketed chiefly through inflated claims of singularity and uniqueness.[8] This ethos of the autonomous self is encapsulated in the title of the well-known song, 'I Did It My Way', popularized by Frank Sinatra.[9] The fame and familiarity of the song attests to how deeply engrained the ethos is in Western culture, one which has until recently underpinned the whole Western psychology of memory.[10]

In rejecting it, we have to go further than the point we have made about the need for continual affirmation of what we remember and say that every memory, 'as personal as it may be—even of events that are private and strictly personal and have not been shared with anyone—exists through its relation with what has been shared with others: language, idiom, events, and everything that shapes the society of which individuals are a part' (Iniguez et al. 1997, p. 250).[11] This relationality always includes the person who remembers. As we have stressed from the start, the personal identity of the remembering subject is 'formed *between* rather than *within* persons' and so 'needs to be understood not as belonging "within" the individual person, but as produced between persons and within social relations' (Lawler 2014, pp. 17, 19). These twin points of emphasis are axiomatic for a sociological conception of

the rememberer's self-identity, and as a result, the powerful desire for a sense of self has to be understood as reciprocally related to our social roles and personae, for in operating with this individual sense of self, enduring in certain ways over time, the remembering subject always acts in and responds to the social world in which she or he lives and moves. Mead ([1934] 1974, p. 164) displayed pioneering insight in recognizing this interdependency when he wrote, 'Our own selves exist and enter as such into our experience only in so far as the selves of others exist and enter as such into our experience also'. Personal identity and social identity cannot be separated; they are interreliant even while distinct, with neither being prior to the other and neither being reducible to the other. Keeping this in mind is the task to be achieved, and for this reason (among others) the concept of experience figures centrally throughout this and our two previous books precisely because it traverses the vital space of this interreliance, thus helping us avoid both an oversocialized and undersocialized approach to selfhood: 'Experience is never exclusively personal or public, interiorised or outwardly facing, self-directed or the blind product of social forces. It crosses between these mutually informing categories and in that movement is formed the synthesis of self-definition and definition by others we call the self' (Keightley and Pickering 2012, p. 19). The upshot of this is that, alongside rejection of the mythical notion of a true self independent of the social weave of everyday life, we need to eschew those sociological approaches which in the past have sidelined individuals or theorized them out of picture, thus providing no recognition of self-identity and the capacity to be both accountable and counted on. This point extends to memory because of its importance in providing the autobiographical material that helps us construct and sustain a sense of personal identity, rather than being merely 'a cog in the wheel', 'a slave at the sink' or 'just another brick in the wall'.

In addition, personal identity is important in relation to remembering practices because it is through such identity that reflexivity occurs, with the mnemonic imagination being its key agent in its retrospective modalities, as for example when thinking of why a photograph or piece of music means so much to someone in the always-under-assessment relation between 'then' and 'now', 'here' and 'there'. Thinking about this in a deeply personal sense is still a social process, not least because it invariably involves other people and because it is sometimes shared with them in an intimate way (pathological cases aside, to be deeply personal is not

to be deeply insular). We cannot be reflexively self-conscious outside of the social world we inhabit because we cannot think about ourselves in ways entirely divorced from the attitudes and values of other people, or from the course of our continual exchanges with them.

For reasons such as these, our subjective viewpoints and the perspectives of significant other people are caught up in a perpetual if uneven process of intermediation, and it is this which enables us to grasp both the first-person perspectives of selfhood and the intersubjective contexts in which they form and are maintained, or at times disrupted and altered. At the centre of this intermediation, the mnemonic imagination moves between past, present and orientations to the future which are prevalent within a particular way of life, and coordinates them in the interests of achieving narrative coherence of self and the trajectory of self through life. In this process temporal succession is transformed by the mnemonic imagination into a series of coordinated strands of experience, turning what would otherwise be fragmented or heterogeneous events or episodes into relatively cohesive, interconnecting accounts that bring the three temporal modalities together within the same overall frame of reference. Particularly at those key moments, when the question of our identities is at issue, it is through the interanimation of these different modalities that the mnemonic imagination relates them in some applicable, pivotal sense to our sense of ourselves in the present.

There can be contradictions between how you understand yourself and how you present yourself, or between your own self-conception and how others perceive you or between your identity in the past and your identity in the present. These are all examples of potential obstacles that confront mnemonic imagining, and they may cause such imagining to fall short of its synthesizing actions. Yet at the same time, in looking back, such imagining helps us realize delusional aspects of ourselves in the past and the need to change for the sake of developing a more sustainable self-narrative. The development of such a narrative goes hand in hand with what we refer to as self-exploration. The reconstructive process of recollection is symbiotically related to the development of an individual self because drawing on and thinking reflexively about the past is necessarily vital to self-exploration, and the mnemonic imagination contributes to it through its active and ongoing interweaving of past and present as we seek both to maintain and renew our sense of who we were and who we are.

In this, as Montaigne was one of the first to stress, 'each of us has to discover his or her own form'; each of us has to 'look for our own being' (Taylor 1989, p. 181). At the same time, as we have already insisted, the construction of individual identity is conducted in dialogue with others, and because we are all immersed in particular cultural formations and particular modes of sociality, we necessarily share certain features and facets of self with other people through our relationships with them, as for example in the domains of work and family life. It is important that we keep insisting on this dialogical process, not least because its absence from discussion can easily lead into either a sideways endorsement of asocial atomism, or into a tacit acceptance of consumerist narcissism.[12] These would be unfortunate traps to fall into precisely because a 'decline in civic participation, an increasing sense that all relations and commitments are revocable, and the growth of increasingly "instrumentalist" attitudes towards nature and society, are manifestations of "the slide to subjectivism" to which modern culture is prone' (Rogers 1992, p. 6). Yet this slide, along with its various concomitants, does not invalidate all that the modern project of selfhood entails. All it does is point us to practices that fail or fall short of aspirations to freedom, authenticity, self-knowledge and remembering well.

Remembering well is part of that dialogue with others we have noted as central to the formation of self-identity, and thus it is central to how we arrive collectively at agreed meanings of specific events or experiences in the past. Sue Campbell (2006, p. 374) has put this well in noting that the 'integrity with which we remember has to do both with how we understand our own past in ways that contribute to self-knowledge, identity, and the shape of personal responsibilities and possibilities, and also with whether others can rely on our memories not only for what they do not know but also as a contribution to a social grasp of the significance of a shared past'. To this we should add that remembering well provides the basis for responding to and thinking about what and how other people remember, for imagining how they feel or think through their own memories. An impoverished or thwarted imagination makes it difficult, if not impossible, to see the world through another person's eyes. This aspect of remembering well is another mode in which the mnemonic imagination is applied, for exercising our own mnemonic imagination is a precondition for viewing a past event through another person's experience of it. That is how we may come to share the pain of

another's loss, recounted again after several years; the death of a young daughter, for example, may still be felt with much of its initial rawness and experience of vulnerability. In everyday life, developing an understanding of what the past, or particular elements of it, means to other people is commonplace. It is in part how friendships are formed, as we ask each other questions about our past, and through such dialogue we begin to move along the continuum from feeling kinship with someone to feeling that we are kindred spirits. Looking back is thus integral to the process of developing an understanding of other people's thoughts, feelings, attitudes and values, and not only in relation to the past. It is also important for learning to view ourselves through other people's eyes and ears. Looking back is central to social encounter and exchange while also being at the heart of sustaining a sense of self over time. Alongside this process, the mnemonic imagination is essential for how our life story comes to fit in with other stories—the stories of other people and other social groups, and ways of life beyond our own—or indeed how it comes to be defined in some form of distinction from them.

The cultural practices of remembering through which this interplay of ourselves and other immediate selves is continually set in motion are integral to vernacular memory and the process of making our own, which we have defined as a process based around acts and attributions of localization utilizing a wide range of mnemonic materials in the effort to establish and maintain cross-temporal transactions within a mobile present (Pickering and Keightley 2015, pp. 8–18). This process operates in the interspace between personal and popular memory, and it occurs over various levels across both time and space. Throughout this book we shall see how such differential scales of remembering are played out in vernacular settings and milieus, as for example in becoming implicated within them as points of reference in time or as markers of variation and mutation across time. Building the scalar dynamics of remembering into our thinking of how collective and individual memory are multiply interconnected, even when they may be directly in conflict with each other, is a further strategy we deploy in striving to avoid both individualistic conceptions of remembering processes and their obverse, those reifications of the collective dimensions of memory which deny the agentic capabilities of remembering subjects. These dynamics are conceived in terms of a continuum from micro (subjective and intersubjective) through meso (vernacular) to macro (national and cross-national) orders of remembering, with media-generated memory and memory associated with

media content shifting back and forth across the various scales involved in this continuum. It may seem that one of the pitfalls of an interscalar approach to the sociological study of memory is to regard these various scales as static or unchanging, with only memories themselves shifting in meaning and value as they move between macro, meso, and micro dimensions. While it may be that these shifts in meaning and value occur more frequently and continually, the scalar platforms of memory transmission are also subject to mutation and modification, in however gradual or piecemeal a way.[13]

Registering these moves is a further aspect of managing change, and they may of course be the catalyst for generating the senses of loss, lack and longing that are key components of nostalgia, as this becomes a font of creative renewal or, as in its commercial exploitation, a mode of retrotyping in which the pain of loss is neglected and longing for a falsely enchanted past is exaggerated (Keightley and Pickering 2012, Chaps. 4 and 5; Pickering and Keightley 2014). The engendering of loss, lack and longing in response to various manifestations of change raises a major consideration which we have so far only touched on lightly. This is the experience of transition itself, of moving from one situation, stage or set of conditions to another. Processes of transition are multifarious, relating to movement from one state to another in assorted mundane ways as well as in life-changing disruptions and sharp turns of direction in our state of affairs, our world outlook or our thinking about significant aspects of our lives. We can think of the experience of these processes on a before/after temporal axis and a change/continuity spatial axis. These two axes interrelate and inform each other, with the second following from the first and involving an effort at identifying and maintaining lines of continuity in particular locations within the present as well as openly registering and coming to terms with change. Maintaining or overhauling those lines of continuity is part and parcel of managing change, with the mnemonic imagination forming the central means for doing both in their relationship with each other. So for example, as we shall see later in the book, photo images and pieces of music as these are acted on by the mnemonic imagination are vital elements of everyday accommodations to change, with these being related to the rate, tempo and degree of change involved as well as the extent to which we gain and maintain control over the changes we experience in our lives. The successful operation of the mnemonic imagination in the manoeuvres involved in these efforts over control form another link to practices of remembering well,

for this is in part about being able to exercise at least some degree of agency in the attainment of narrative coherence across the varieties and vagaries of experience, and in part about re-establishing control over the fallout from radical changes that have happened to us, at whatever stage in our lives, particularly when such changes occur in an unforeseen or unplanned manner.

Transitions and Trajectories

Zygmunt Bauman (2004, p. 17) has observed that we 'tend to notice things and put them into the focus of [our] scrutiny and contemplation when they vanish, go bust, start to behave oddly or otherwise let you down'. When our everyday world remains largely the same, when life is running smoothly and nothing untoward has happened, there is little to recount, to ourselves or each other, so it is usually only when the daily round changes in some marked respect, when what is habitual is disrupted or when what is anticipated is thwarted, that we are likely to develop a story to account for it. Once made into a story, an event or experience running against the grain in this way is far more likely to be remembered. Similarly, 'deviation from a culture's canonical pattern' is by definition memorable, and because of this it becomes in itself storyable (Bruner 1990, pp. 49–50). A good deal of our daily lives is made up of ordinary, unvarying flow, and a good deal of our remembering within them is regularized and run of the mill, such as recalling where you keep your digital voice recorder or what time you need to leave the house to catch a local bus. This is quite different to actively concerted recollection and the work of the mnemonic imagination in reassembling certain pieces of the past and making them coalesce into longer-term narrative form. When we are faced with marked features of change, we rely on the mnemonic imagination to reorder and re-evaluate the transactional relations between past, present and future. Managing change thus means using our mnemonic resources in a creative and innovative manner.

For the most part, it seems, we strive to make sense of change as soon as we can. We may feel overwhelmed by it, unsure which way to turn and held in our tracks by the unfamiliarity of the situation or state we're caught up in, but as we settle ourselves into the flow of any particular transition, we begin to talk about it, to find words that give it experiential figuration and narrative form. It may be that certain changes in our lives take a long while to assimilate and develop a satisfactory manner

of presenting to ourselves and others, but when they do, the story we stich together helps to create understanding of whatever discontinuity is involved and so realign past and present in a new synthesis. The mnemonic imagination has a central role in this, but we do not simply exercise it on our own: all the time we are, as it were, comparing notes with other people in order to see what they think of what has happened in order to observe how they are applying their own mnemonic imagination in making sense of change, and seeking some form of reconciliation between time then and time now. Managing change is a collective vernacular process whereby pretransitional states are renegotiated in direct relation to whatever change has wrought. Change is then accommodated into some longer pattern, however drastic or radical its break with the past is felt to be. Nothing is ever ineluctably new. That is one side of where the mnemonic imagination moves, but as it roves between past and present it moves also to the side, where difference is registered in order to make meaning out of that difference and measure the extent of its alterations to what is anterior to it. When this effort after meaning is successful and we have incorporated the change into our lives, personally and collectively, we have laid the grounds for subsequent acts and practices of remembering well.

Transition always involves movement from one stage to another, but there are various types of transition and various ways of responding to transition. Although it always involves some kind of discontinuity and change, the movement is never of a piece, and it is only susceptible to the most general features, as for example with the life course which, apart from the commonality of an initial entrance and final exit, takes many different forms and develops in numberless different ways, even within the same social group or category. Even entrances and exits vary—there is more than one way to die, despite the fact of death's absolute terminus. There is always a temptation to generalize about such periods of turbulent transition as adolescence, and such generalizations may prove in greater or lesser degree to be valid, but the experience of such periods in life is felt in often highly personal modes, and it is important to keep these in our sights even as, at other times, we think of periods of transition in more prevalent or abiding terms.[14] In this spirit, we can of course distinguish broadly between transitions which are intentional and those which are involuntary. So for example we may decide to give up smoking or take up hill-walking every weekend, and these decisions are seen retrospectively to have led to certain transitions in our

health or lifestyle which were both deliberately and effectively brought about. They contrast with a stroke (to which smoking may have contributed) that subsequently prevents us from walking, or, on a broader stage, with being forced to gather up one's family and flee to another country because of a civil war raging in nearby streets. The contrast is not of course always so neat. We all move through successive life changes, but these often involve individual combinations of both volitional and irresistible change. Getting married in early adult life, but then shortly afterwards grieving for a spouse killed in a traffic accident, are cross-ripping examples. At the same time, while both forms of transition are experienced in individual ways and accordingly handled, interpreted and evaluated in as many manifestations as any culture can assimilate and hold, what does seem valid in general terms is that the degree of disruption or upheaval caused by change affects the potential for remembering well.

Although they can be closely entwined, we can also make a distinction between social transitions and life transitions. The former involve change in the broader social order to which we belong and the various social milieus we move among. A wide spectrum of responses are made to such kinds of change, from feeling emancipated or creatively engaged, to feeling restricted, regretful or resistant. Life transitions are affected by social and historical context, as for example with recruitment to military service during times of conflict or war, but they are felt and responded to directly in terms of an individual's sense of selfhood and autobiographical trajectory. With such transitions we can develop a concern with how particular events or experiences have a lasting influence, guiding subsequent life-course patterns. These may or may not involve personal choice; child abuse, for example, is never chosen, and the traumatic experience of it may be at the root of later psychological illness or the poor quality of interpersonal relationships experienced in adulthood. Here again we need to be careful in keeping variability in view and avoid the problem that has at times in the past beset the sociology of work or of the family, where emphasis is placed on role allocation and performance, with sight of the heterogeneous individuals who inhabit social roles being all too easily lost. This can easily lead to facile assumptions of normative patterning or standardization. In her overview of sociological perspectives in life transitions, Linda George (1993, p. 366) notes the connection of this with a further problem in sociology of failing to make adequate links between micro and macro evidence about the causes and consequences of transitions. George Ritzer's (1989, p. 601) view was that

'the issue of micro–macro linkage' was '*the* central problematic of sociological theory'. Arguably, this problematic remains, along with the attendant weakness in finding any satisfactory resolution of it in social analysis, but we can at least try to obviate it in memory studies by attending more closely to the interactions between individual and collective memory, and the ways in which memory moves and changes between different spatial and temporal scales (Pickering and Keightley 2015, 2016).

One example of this involves objects we hold onto at times of change and transition in order to secure the memories associated with them. This occurs across various spatial and temporal scales. Of course we can say that whether through deliberate choice or through involuntary uprooting, moving from one place of residence to another inevitably entails the confrontation of change, for the change generated by such a move repudiates what is familiar and in place. But deciding to move locally of one's own volition is quite different to being forced into exile or extensive cross-border migration. Jean-Sébastien Marcouz's study of residential moves within the city of Montreal is, relatively speaking, spatially local. These moves nevertheless occurred across different timescales and under variable existential conditions. He shows how moving forces us to face the memories that inhere in so many possessions, to think of what we want to recollect when resettled and to ponder over how this will help us through the transition from one place to another. Things embody memories, and moving becomes a means to reshuffle them 'by bringing them back into consciousness… making them explicit' and 'deciding which ones to reinforce, which ones to abandon or put on hold' (Marcouz 2001, p. 83). Where memory is constituted in and by objects, it is thus reconstituted through the displacement of those objects.

For those who suffer forced migration, there is little if any time for pondering or engaging in finely balanced deliberation over the differential values of particular mnemonic objects. The key overriding factor is whether or not they have time to gather together firstly what they may need for practical purposes and secondly for perpetuating individual and cultural identity. What is salvaged may have enormous symbolic significance, particularly when a planned or unplanned destination is reached. Encapsulated in personal mementoes, such identity may then be rearticulated 'when suitable conditions of resettlement allow for the retelling of the stories' that these objects may contain or be connected with (Parkin 1999, p. 314). As David Parkin (ibid.) has observed: 'When people flee

from the threat of death and total dispossession, the things and stories they carry with them may be all that remains of their distinctive personhood to provide for future continuity'. While scalar dimensions are demonstrably important, the emotional consequences of huge, unprecedented change may be connected more to a specific temporal stage in the life course, as for example when everything is suddenly lost to a child, with nothing remaining from home or the past; she or he is then bereft of those domestic objects and scenes that have been invested with deep mnemonic associations and were testament to a still-crystallizing sense of selfhood and belonging. This is what happened to an Edinburgh child during World War II, when her father was drafted into the army and her mother then died during childbirth, after which she and her brother were placed in a care home for widowers' children, the word 'home' here being in sharp contrast to the warm, integrative working-class habitation she had so drastically lost:

> You were given a number. You had your dignity taken away … Your hair was cut off as soon as you got there. From the time I was seven, I had nothing. Everything was left behind. You didn't have anything and you didn't have anyone. No one really cared.

Subsequently, as an adult striving to work her way out of these radically contrasting childhood scenarios, she attempted to recreate the lost world of her first half-dozen childhood years through collecting, with this consisting of all sorts of things, from old photos to glass bottles, that discriminately linked to countless stories reconnecting her to the past. They became a means of symbolic self-completion (Hecht 2001).[15]

Extrapolating from these examples, we can at least suggest that expected transitions are potentially less likely to cause disruption in personal lives or the integration of established social groups, but whether or not they are anticipated, and regardless of whether they are voluntarily brought about, we remember certain changes in our lives as turning points, and we use these turning points as a way of gauging the degrees of continuity and discontinuity in the pattern of our lives and the lives of those close to us. It is through them that we gain understanding of how earlier events have continued to influence and inform later events. Any transition can become a turning point, but many do not; they remain fairly routine or ordinary while still being differentiated from what came before. There is no necessary reason for making too sharp a contrast

between them. Though Augustine, in one of the earliest autobiographical narratives, made his religious conversion the primary turning point of his life and so established such a momentous event as paradigmatic for such narratives, we should not see all turning points either as singular or as isolated in their magnitude from other events and experiences.[16] They are diverse and can send us off along different routes with different long-term consequences, even though in the course of time these may diminish in strength or be altered by other turning points: 'Past critical events may fade in importance while earlier or later turning points may suddenly assume new importance' (Hareven and Masaoka 1988, p. 275). It is how they unfold as a process and how they are understood as a duration which affects how they are reconstructed, reordered and reassessed at any stage in the life course. There is no once-and-for-all finality to this. The work of the mnemonic imagination is ongoing, involving periodic reappraisal of experience and subsequent reorganization of key coordinates in how the life course is interpreted and made sense of longitudinally. The mnemonic imagination is applied as well in understanding other people's recollections of critical events and turning points, as for example those involving the experience of previous generations. We have already mentioned adolescence as a turbulent biographical period, but how this is recognized and interpreted depends on historical context as well as prevalent norms and values. The mnemonic imagination is thus required for any mutual appreciation to be possible in a young person talking to a grandparent about her or his teenage years and gaining a viable sense of how adolescent experience has changed across the generations.

Talking to your grandparents about their past experience is different to talking about memories that relate to broader periods of past experience, such as those involving war or economic depression. It is a matter of scale and scope, with the mnemonic imagination having much more material through which to participate in the stories deriving from those periods. Of course, when overwhelming change creates 'such a deep rift in history that the things old men and old women know have become so useless as to be not worth passing on to their grandchildren', the mnemonic imagination is cast adrift, deprived of any suitable sociocultural moorings or sense of cross-temporal passage (Frazier 2007, p. 412). That said, the same point about scale and scope applies to a significant public event when personal recollections of it intersect with general versions of what took place and general interpretations of why it was

significant. The mnemonic imagination weaves these together into what is neither personal memory nor vicarious memory but a complex mixture of both. Often there is also an internalization of other people's memories, and these too become part of the overall combination. Without the work of the mnemonic imagination, that combination would be no more than a random assemblage, with little narrative interrelatedness between its different elements and few points of convergence in detail, meaning and assessment.

In short, the mnemonic imagination is vital for the management of change in all its diversity, for coming actively to terms with different kinds of transition in our lives and for achieving narrative intelligibility in relation to those points in time which, as in drama and literary fiction, there is a radical change of emplotted direction.

Mnemonics of Loss and Gain

Certain transitions in our lives involve us in the choice between two quite different alternatives, and as we look back from a subsequent time we remember both the road taken and the road not taken. The conventional emphasis in accounts of such transitions is on the melancholic quality cast by regret at the road not taken, but this is only one aspect of lost opportunities. There has been a critical neglect in memory studies of how lost opportunities are conceived and evaluated in everyday narratives, and of how they are related to current circumstances, plans, dreams and desires. In the rest of this chapter, we want to redress this neglect and reconceive the commonplace mnemonic motif of the lost opportunity in order to reach a clearer recognition of its simultaneous orientation to past, present and future, implicating both memory and imagination in its enactment.

The lost opportunity is a narrative feature common to autobiographical memory both in everyday life and in literary fiction. Thomas Hardy, for example, uses the lost opportunity as a device in both verse and novels. His poem 'Faintheart in a Railway Train' tells of a romantic encounter with a stranger which went unrealized, thwarted by fearful hesitation and rued from the window of a railway carriage, while in *Far from the Madding Crowd* Mr Oak's first proposal of marriage to Bathsheba Everdene is positioned as a key departure which comes to be recognized over the course of the novel as an opportunity most fatefully lost (Hardy [1925] 1968, p. 536; [1874] 1994). The narrative use of

lost opportunities is also found in vernacular culture. The English folk song 'Courting Too Slow' is a story of remorse over a lover lost as a result of hesitancy and caution: despite such gifts as rings for her fingers 'made of glittering gold', the singer loses out to a bold sailor who flatters and seduces his pretty Betty. In such examples the emphasis falls on the irretrievability of the experience only imagined, not enjoyed, while the chosen experience is characterized by a sense of absence or lack. This is in line with conventional assessments of the lost opportunity which see it as integral to a narrative mode that is necessarily regressive in operation because it is posed in terms of a future-driven relegation of the past to articulations of loss and mourning. It is as if looking back is then tainted by an intrinsic lack of transformative potential.

As with unexamined considerations of nostalgia, the sense of lost opportunities has been predominantly associated with an exclusively melancholic value.[17] Such an evaluation has effectively been prolonged within a broader thesis of postmodern temporality. Frederic Jameson (1991) has argued that we have lost the capacity to engage with experience historically: contemporary encounters with the past are instead associated with a banal longing for an unrealizable ontological security. Symbolic environments characterized by surface style and mediated pastiche are said to deny us any durable temporal moorings. In place of situated dialogic relationships with the past which facilitate agency in the present and future, undifferentiated longing invokes a generalized sense of pastness and fosters retrosensibilities readily sated by the products of the heritage industry (Jameson 1991).[18] The conception of lost opportunities in recollection which follows this pessimistic interpretive line prevents us from seeing them as effective modes of cross-temporal engagement. It presupposes that opportunities not taken have become completely disconnected from the present and are only available as a resource for mourning that loss. They offer little or no capacity for renewal.

The problem is of course broader than this. Even the statement of loss in the naming of these particular remembered events illustrates the one-dimensional understanding we have of them. By virtue of existing in the past, these opportunities are conceived of as lost, gone or unregainable, with the passing of time rendering them barren in terms of their potential to stimulate action or transformation in the present or future. The opportunity that once flashed for a moment is now displaced from the narrative continuity of biographical experience. The potential that

a particular junction of experience once possessed has vanished, leaving only the traces of what once may have been possible. We're haunted by unknown pleasures and taunted by what might have been: 'He had been thinking too much, these last two days—turning things over and over, figuring out how if just some single incident had happened, or hadn't happened, things might have been different' (Tyler [1966] 1987, p. 4).[18]

The received idea of the lost opportunity presupposes inevitable dissatisfaction with the present. Opportunities that are identified as not taken will, by virtue of their irretrievability, render the present deficient and unsatisfactory. The past cannot be reconciled with the present; it is set up as its perpetual adversary. This terminally negative relationship between the past and present leaves much of our experience of remembering choices and decisions which we have made unaccounted for. For us, the claim that we're unable to consider the paths we've chosen not to take in any other manner than as an expression of disillusionment is untenable. Although it is the case that remembering these experiential forkings of the roads we face can be an expression of an ineffectual desire to dwell pathetically on a past moment or period of time, they can also have creative and transformative potential. In the interests of a more nuanced appreciation of remembering lost opportunities, it is necessary to reshuffle the tenses in which they are normatively embedded. The past is undeniably a central referent, particularly those points in our experience in which we have intense emotional investment, or which we see as having been centrally formative in shaping our sense of self and subsequent experience. Yet we can see that the past is not our sole concern. We consider our past choices in relation to our lives in the present: our contemporary identity, our current conditions of existence, our estimated state of success or failure at this moment of time. These are not only narratives that reach backwards into the past; they are also narratives of becoming, stretching into the present and extending beyond it. Far from an abandonment of the present that seeks comfort in the putative securities of the past, remembering lost opportunities may be a mode of making sense of and reconciling our past and our present. Rather than positioning the past and present as conflicting sources of meaning, it is by moving between them that we are able to make meaning and value out of experience. Remembering lost opportunities is a key part of the ongoing autobiographical project of constructing and reconstructing narrative continuity, making our lives knowable and in doing so

achieving an always uneasy balance of continuity and discontinuity in our sense of self and of the world around us.

Lost opportunities as a site of mnemonic imagining involve a simultaneous orientation to both past and present. They are not exhausted by mourning chances we have foregone. They also provide ways of reconciling oneself to the changed conditions of the present in order to be able to move forward. The recollection and narration of lost opportunities are always ultimately contingent on the present, at least as much as the present is contingent on the choices we have made. The meaning of any given juncture in experience is made sense of in the interests of the present from which it is remembered. As time moves on, so do the meanings of these past choices—so much so that in time, they may not be recognized as points of opportunity at all. The self-knowledge generated in this mutual contingency is therefore, at least in part, oriented towards the demands of the present, enabling us to embrace change as well as achieve stability. But we need to go beyond this important recognition and acknowledge that reflection on a lost opportunity actually demands the involvement of multiple tenses. While the past is brought into consciousness from the perspective of the present and is made sense of according to its demands, it can implicate the future as we believe it might come to pass. The experiences we have chosen and those we have not lead us to particular possibilities for the future. By recognizing and narrating these chosen paths we are able to explore imaginatively the opportunities that remain open to us. Narratives of lost opportunities necessarily involve the future as it may have been. In returning to unrealized possibilities, we are able to speculate about what may still be.

Of course we can see how the invocation of two alternative futures can be conceived of as melancholic. Measuring them against each other may lead to dissatisfaction with the outcome which eventuated from the path that was taken, but this is not necessarily the case. It is how they are considered in relation to one another which reveals the transformative potential (or lack thereof) in the mnemonic imagining of this lost opportunity. Where the two accounts of the future are set up as competitive parallels, a melancholic yearning for the unattainable 'lost' future is perfectly feasible, but it is possible for these two senses of the future to overlap and inform one another. The future inspired by the path not taken is then able to stimulate, inspire and guide the potentially realizable future. Remembering lost opportunities should not be seen as inevitably involving irretrievable pasts and unrealizable futures. Experiential forks in the

pathways of the past can just as readily provide resources for renewal and transformation in the future, provided they can be reconciled with lived experience.

Conventional assessments which emphasize the backward-looking nature of these narratives highlight only the role of memory. If we are to recognize the multiple tenses involved in narrating lost opportunities, the faculty of memory cannot be considered in isolation. The interplay between memory and imagination which is generated by the mnemonic imagination is necessary in bringing what was and what might have been into active view of one another and in enabling them to be reconciled in the narration of experience. Attending to the work of the mnemonic imagination here allows us to move beyond conventional conceptualizations of lost opportunities which only permit loss and mourning, and instead allow creativity and transformative potential to be posed as well. Existing in the interstitial space between experience and absence, lost opportunities do not only implicate memory as the agent of their realization and communication. Imagination in combination with memory is vital if we are to successfully reconcile and bring what has been and what might have been into view of each other. Memory as a mode of temporal consciousness premised on lived experience cannot provide an account of imagined pasts or futures. Narratives of lost opportunities can only ever be partially constructed if there is no way of imagining the alternatives to our experienced past.

Operating analytically with the concept of the mnemonic imagination permits these narratives to be seen as fluid spaces of articulation, not only of loss but also of inspiration. Lost opportunities are thus far from irretrievable; they are essentially provisional, formed and reformed in our mnemonic imagination. The creative potential of the mnemonic imagination allows us to recognize the endless potential for reformulation of these forks in experience. Choices are never cast once and for all in a single figuration. They can be imaginatively reviewed, recontextualized and re-examined, permitting new meanings for both past and present. Just as past experience can take on new meaning in light of a changed present, lost opportunities that were once sources of sadness and absence can become relevant once more and play a revived role in the present and future. This is not always the case because our remembered lost opportunities can lose as well as gain in transformational potential; connections among the past, present and future can become fragmented as well as reforged. What is important is that their value and meaning are not seen

as fixed but rather subject to the shifting relations between past and present which the mnemonic imagination rides.

Recollecting lost opportunities provides us with a way of making sense of dilemmas and divergences in our lives, and in any particular instance this involves two roads: the one we have taken, and the one we could have taken. It's the way these two roads are reconciled in their narration, bringing the mnemonic imagination actively to bear on this process, which reveals the extent to which they provide us with resources for the present and future. Lost opportunities can implicate both melancholic yearning and future-oriented renewal, but they do so in different ways and at different times. In order to explore further what these alternatives involve, we turn now to the discussion of several concrete examples.

Lost Opportunities, Possible Futures

Rani is a young British-Asian woman in her mid-20s. In the elaborate narrative she gives, she traces her desire to be a dancer through the time of her childhood and adulthood. She talks specifically about her potential as a child to be a successful dancer, and despite waning confidence in her ability, she insists that her desire to achieve this remains undiminished. The failure to realize what she conceives as her potential follows the trope of lost opportunity in a recognizable fashion:

> When I listen to this music, I kind of sit back a little bit and reflect, but at some point I will want to get up and dance and I do find myself dancing in my room because it brings back again that musical influence … and it makes me feel like I should be doing more with it because I know that it's there and something I'm passionate about … I love dancing [laughs], all sorts of dances … I dance in front of a mirror to see that I'm still doing the right moves, but I feel sad and disappointed with myself because when I was a child I was so passionate about things I did. Like everything I did I always put a lot of my passion into it whether it was school work, reading, or dance. But I was brilliant at dance, and when I was younger I always dreamt of myself as an actress. I always used to say to my sister I'm *going* to be an actress, I'm *going* to be a dancer and I'm *going* to be on stage, but obviously over the years [pause] it's not the kind of career you pursue [pause]. I think if I was focused more and I had the right support and guidance I probably would have got there. And I just wonder, where is that vibrant, passionate child, where has she gone to now?

> That's how it makes me feel. It makes me feel like 'oh I wonder if I will ever do anything with my music or my talent, or with dancing, will I ever do anything'? And part of me just sees a closed door. Another part of me thinks there is still plenty of time, space and opportunity, and I like to think that there is another door there that is waiting to be opened. I know I will be content once I do that.

> When I was a child I had no fear of performing, but I was really, really fat as a child as well, and I think that was one thing people around me used to think: 'you, you're not being realistic'. My sister would say that. We recently had a conversation about how I was a dreamer. Now I kind of like look to the future, you know, when I'm 27, 28 this is what I'm going to be doing. But all the things I said I was going to do, I'm not doing, so I feel, what's happened to my dreams? And I had no fear then and that's why I said to everybody, 'you watch, I'm going to do that' … I think when I was a child as well there was a lot of the superficial side of it as well, the glamour and the celeb stuff. And me just feeling like, 'yes, I'm going to be on stage and you know, the audience and the attention'. That's me you know. If I work at it, I will not so much get the attention, but I will be rewarded for what I'm good at and it will work in a reputable way. Being famous as in being on TV, I wouldn't let anything get in the way. It was other people who used to put doubts in my head, like 'are you sure you're serious about this, are you sure that you know?'

> And if you come from a background of migration from India, you're pushed towards being a doctor, lawyer, accountant, something that's considered as professional. Those rigid roles. Me being the way I am, is quite different in that sense, because I really thought 'I'm theatrical', that's just me, that's my character. So if I want to be famous and be an actress or a dancer, no, they can't take that away from me. Why can't an Indian girl dance in their twenties and their thirties? You've got actresses and choreographers and people who are doing classical dance in their forties and who go to classical dance school and I'm pretty sure my Dad would be the first to be there and be interested in what they're doing. So why is it then that a 'normal' girl, living in a 'normal' society, would not be able to pursue that? I knew then that I was very different from the rest …

Listening to music stimulates Rani to think about professional dancing as an aim she has not pursued and an ambition she has not fulfilled. She recognizes this as a lost opportunity and constructs a typical-enough melancholic account of why the opportunity has not been taken and how this makes her feel. But she not only yearns for a point in her life

where she felt she had the opportunity to be a dancer; she also wonders about the 'vibrant, passionate' person she feels she was when that opportunity to dance seemed to be open and available to her. The pathos involved in her recognition of the present as lacking in what she most desired could be taken to suggest that her lost opportunity only speaks to the past, but this doesn't explain all aspects of the narrative. Through her mnemonic imagination, Rani constructs a diversified response in her account of the dissociation of aspiration and experience. Alongside the 'closed door' is 'another part' of her that retains the possibility of realizing her ambition. A strong affinity with the child she once was is retained. Is she still dreaming? Yes, but far from facilitating an abandonment of her desired outcome, Rani's narrative shows she still holds to it as she emphasizes that there 'is still plenty of time, space and opportunity' for her to pursue her dancing dream. She clearly identifies the present with at least some measure of dissatisfaction, and this stands in stark contrast to the past in which she was vibrant and passionate and 'very different from the rest', but she reorients herself to ways of achieving future satisfaction behind 'another door' by taking her bearings from the opportunities she hasn't yet pursued. She knows she will be content once she has achieved this.

Rani's narrative demonstrates that looking to the past to state her dissatisfaction in the present doesn't preclude future-oriented action. Instead it can facilitate it. Rani presents her adult life as it has so far been realized as somehow inferior to her childhood dream and what appears to have disappeared (hence the sadness that is part of her response), but she refuses to accept the commonsense view that disappointment has rescued her from a worse state of affairs. Simply because opportunity lost is identified in past experience doesn't necessitate a diminished capacity for action in the other tenses of experience. Although sharp comparisons between past and present are clearly evident in Rani's account, she actively goes on to reconcile them by reassessing herself in the present in light of the past and connecting it to a reimagined future. What could have been merges into what might be. Accounts of lost opportunities which only emphasize the contrasting constructions of the experiential tenses inevitably fail to identify the transformative potential of their subsequent reconciliation.

The articulation of lack and responses to it may take other directions. Louise, a white British woman aged 55, constructs the relationship between past and present in a more ambivalent way than Rani:

I'm a complete anachronism because I am a stay-at-home wife and mother and general pillar of the community. I'm a school governor and I run the autistic society and I'm secretary of the County Governors' Association and I've always been a volunteer, but I feel there won't be any more people that lead a life like I've lead … No regrets, I don't think, about not having had a career or a life of my own. It's been a life entirely lived for and through other people, but that's been my choice. I've wanted to do it. It isn't so much a question of spending a lot of time thinking about the past, but being very much aware, especially seeing my children grow up, how much I am a product of my time, and how that influences the way I deal with my grown-up children and the advice I give them.

When I was 18 and got married, my parents were terribly disappointed at the choice I was making because I turned down a university place in order to get married and it seemed like [pause] the most important thing to me. We've been together for nearly 38 years, but to my parents, who were brought up in the 1920s, 1930s, I had such opportunities that they didn't have, so it was very disappointing for them that I wasn't going to go to university. I was the clever one of the family, and they both, my parents had both got scholarships to grammar schools in the 1920s, 1930s and, well the early 30s, and had both left at 16 and had felt very privileged from the background that they were coming from, and having been allowed to stay on at school till they were 16 and they both went into library work. It was a great leap forward as far as their family was concerned; they were in a profession, a white-collar job. For me to have the chance to go to university and have a career um [pause] seemed very important to them and they really, my mother in particular, really thought I was making a bad mistake, making the choice I did.

I find myself now saying to my very career-minded journalist daughter – she's got a lovely boyfriend at the moment, who she's very keen on and it's a very good relationship, but he's looking to move, they're both working together at the moment, he's looking to move – and I'm saying 'oh go with him then', you know, 'it's so important, just go with him, you might not have a journalism job straight away um, but you could always temp and you'll pick up something later, but don't let this relationship go, it's too good, don't let it go'. And I said to her 'Jenny, please ignore me' because what I'm doing, I'm doing exactly what my mother did. I'm imposing my ideas about what's important in life on her in the same way my mother tried to with me. She was projecting, if I had your opportunities and I'm projecting from my experiences that the most important is the relationship, don't let that go. You move where he goes. And I said 'Just

> don't take any notice of me, I can see what I'm doing. You must make your own decisions …'
>
> That's the aspect of it which intrigues me. It's the feeling that you are, without realising it, a product of your own generation. My parents were very much so and my husbands' parents were; before the war their priority for their children was security. It was about 'you get a good job', 'you have a career, something with a pension'. Again it's such a different approach. Their ideal was a secure job and that you went to university and you became a teacher or something equivalent and you did that for the next 45 years and you got a pension at the end. You owned your own house, and that was their idea of the perfect life. For my children's generation, I'm saying to my daughter: 'why don't you go and have a year in Australia or something; you don't have to start work at 21, 22 and that'll be what you're going to do for the rest of your life'. People change jobs. There's no stigma attached to that anymore. There wouldn't be any stigma attached to coming back to this country and looking for a job in journalism and saying I went travelling for two years. It would perhaps be seen as an asset. But it wasn't like that for my parents, what they wanted for us was security. A pension, 'a job for life', that was what we used to talk about, 'a job for life'. That was the way they thought. When I was taking A-levels, A-levels were for five percent, it was a very small minority that went to university and so it was such a big deal and such a privilege, it was something they really wanted for me, and I thought 'oh well, when I'm a certain age I'll go and do my degree and I'll catch up and I'll get it done' but from the minute my children were born ... I just think 'no, no, I don't regret my choices at all'.

In her narrative Louise clearly identifies her decision not to go to university as the turning point at which her life could have taken an alternative route. Like the protagonist in Robert Frost's poem 'The Road Not Taken' (1967), who believes he is keeping the path he did not choose to walk 'for another day' (p. 129), Louise suggests that at the time, she hadn't understood the exclusive nature of her decision, thinking she could return to university at a later date. Though she declares that this opportunity disappeared as soon as she had children, the irreversibility of the decision was realized only gradually and with hindsight. Louise identifies herself as a social anachronism and clearly highlights the diminished social and cultural valuation of being a stay-at-home-mother and undertaking community roles rather than having a self-warranting career, yet she denies any dissatisfaction with her choice. She insists she has 'no

regrets, I don't think'. This is interesting, for her double negative and additional qualifying clause introduce an ambivalent note, and pivotally, in her narrative this takes the place of a conventional pejorative construction of an opportunity lost (to have a career rather than a family). The ambivalence arises out of the tension between social meanings which have become attached to her life choices in a changed present, and the retrospective personal assessments she makes of her long-term experience. Lost opportunities are thus not divarications in experience identified at a purely personal level. They arise out of the intersection between social and personal modes of making sense of the life course.

In the process of making sense of her experience, Louise seeks narratively to construct a favourable evaluation of the major choice she made in her life. In order to do this, she has to utilize explanatory frameworks alternative to the contemporary sociocultural conventions which cast doubt on the value of what she has chosen. Instead she draws on temporally situated narratives of historical specificity in order to construct her experience as valid when seen in the historical context of its enactment. She refutes the facile appraisal of her experience as a *lost* opportunity as she reconstructs the choices she made as logical and sensible given the social conventions and expectations of the period. She assigns even more influence to these historical conditions than to her parents' desire to see her go to university. Far from mourning a more individually singular past, Louise shows astute historical awareness in the process of making sense of her experience. She assesses past and present both in their own terms and in dialogic relation with each another.

In Louise's account, the remembering of a major fork in experience facilitates the validation of individual action and a reassessment of her personal identity. But it also shapes social relationships in the present. Her lost opportunity is neither seen in a negative light nor regarded as a seductive alternative that would have led to a superior or more fulfilled life. She doesn't succumb to the sense that her present life was inevitable because it wasn't avoided, and she isn't complacent about her present life even though she knows that it has another possible history from the perspective of the past. In addition, she draws on both public and private dimensions of remembering in her narrative to make positive sense of her experience. As a result of recognizing the tension between contemporary social valuations of experience and the historical conditions under which they were enacted, Louise is acutely conscious of

considering her daughter's choices through her own historically derived evaluative framework. This self-awareness encourages her to advise her daughter to ignore her advice, or at least view it from her own generational perspective. She perceives and accepts the historicity of her own judgements while also seeing the limitation of accounting for this parting of two alternative pathways in the simplistic terms of an opportunity irretrievably lost. Both her account and Rani's account show us the dynamics of vernacular hermeneutics as they reflexively dwell on the relations between on the one hand the historical conditions shaping their experience and the autobiographical sense they make of it, and on the other hand the individual agency in making visible in new ways opportunities that appear to have been lost to time. They show that such opportunities are never lost in the absolute sense that they can never be found again. Instead, lost opportunities may contribute to remedying the very absences that they make visible.

In characterizing memories of lost opportunities as the divergent pathways of what has happened and what could have happened, we have shown once again that memory doesn't operate alone. Imagination acts in concert with memory, bringing these pathways to a new juncture of reconciliation between past and present. Such reconciliation isn't invariable, which is why we have stressed the commonplace occurrence of melancholic regret and mourning for opportunities lost. This is articulated in everyday reminiscences; it is also a conventional device in literature and traditional song. The mnemonic imagination can nevertheless act on remembered opportunities and derive from experience the means to take one's bearings for the future. The passing of time makes clearer the specific conditions of the past that constrained certain actions, whether these were gendered conventions or the unequal distribution of opportunities in the social class structure. This can lead to a speculative reliving of what happened in the new terms of what could have happened. The path we could have taken always remains in the shadow of the path we have taken, and a lost opportunity always holds the promise of a future possibility. This transformative potential in a mnemonics of loss and gain is what lies concealed in the way lost opportunities are usually conceived and narrated, but the tenses of memory are not irreversible. They can be reshuffled so that, as our mnemonic imagination acts on them, what was lost can be creatively retrieved as an immanent gain for the future.

Notes

1. In addition to this, we make 'looking back' a recurrent analytical theme in order to signal the aspiration of moving between emic and etic perspectives, conceiving of these in terms of conceptual distinction rather than fixed binaries. This cross-relational movement is a defining feature of our ethnographic approach.
2. Theories of the self, self-identity and individual subjectivity are manifold, and they range across a number of academic disciplines and fields of study. It is not our purpose to review all these theories here. We draw on some of them, both directly and indirectly, when they inform our discussion, but our specific focus here is on the relationship between selfhood and practices of remembering, not with many of the issues raised by these theories. For general overviews, see Bauman and Raud (2015), Breakwell (1992), Burkitt (2008), Dweck (1999), Elliott (2014), Giddens (1991), Lawler (2014), Levin (1992), Solomon (1988) and Taylor (1989).
3. See Keightley and Pickering (2012), particularly Chaps. 1 and 2. For its application to studying the interrelations between media and memory, see Pickering and Keightley (2015).
4. With respect to this point of criticism, see also Schechtman (2001, 2004, 2005, 2011).
5. For a more developed critique of Schechtman, see Goldie (2012), Chap. 6.
6. The negative version of these qualities should be conceived in terms of a continuum, for this may involve judgements of someone acting 'out of character' as well as those being more comprehensively dismissive of 'bad character'.
7. We should perhaps point out that the distinction we make here between a remembering 'I' and a remembered 'me' is primarily temporal in reference. It is also quite different to Mead's distinction between 'I' as individual self-definition and 'me' as the internalized views of oneself among significant others, though we do endorse this as well. See Mead ([1934] 1974); see also Cooley ([1909] 1962, [1902] 1964), though Cooley ([1902] 1964, p. 184) takes this internalization further in his concept of the 'looking-glass self'.
8. For a critique of such claims, see Gass (1994), who bases his approach on the need to reconceive what it means to have a life worth living and worth writing about. Autobiography is of course a highly varied genre, encompassing a range of different self-conceptions and approaches to self-conception. For a general conspectus of the genre, see Weintraub (1975); for a fine collection of essays on different autobiographical forms, see DiBattista and Wittman (2014); and for one of the best academic treatments of autobiographical memory and the self, see Fivush and Haden (2003). It is perhaps worth adding that the rise of individualism has also been connected to the emergence and development of the novel

as a literary form, and to the bourgeois lyrical song; see Watt ([1957] 1977) and Maróthy (1974).

9. The lyrics for this song were written by Paul Anka, with the music based on the French song 'Comme d'habitude', which was co-composed, co-written and performed in 1967 with Claude François.
10. See Wang and Brockmeier (2002, p. 50) for a comparative study of the Western independently oriented self with the interdependently oriented self in many East Asian cultures, a self that is 'fluidly designed and inextricably connected within a relational network that localises the individual in a well-defined social niche'.
11. To this we can add a point made by Alasdair MacIntyre (1999, p. 249) about the requirement of thinking in cooperation with others for thinking for oneself: 'Even solitary monologues have to begin from what others have provided, and their conclusions have to be matched against rival conclusions'.
12. On the latter, see Slater (1997, pp. 92–6 and 100–30).
13. For further elaboration of this approach, see Pickering and Keightley (2016).
14. While adolescence is widely regarded in the West as a time of emotional turbulence involving a crisis of identity, this in itself is experienced in greater or lesser degrees of intensity, while outside the West this life period is considered in quite a different light, a classic case being that of Samoa (Mead 1928).
15. This is not as uncommon as it may appear. Another example is Suzanne Joinson's (2016) practice of collecting old photos from car boot sales and charity shops as a means of compensating for the lack of a photographic history of her childhood and growing up, her domestic photos having been lost when her parents' marriage disintegrated, and their council house was taken away because they no longer constituted a family.
16. Augustine ([ca. AD 397–400] 1948); see Becker (2014) for helpful commentary on this text.
17. See Pickering and Keightley (2015), Chaps. 4 and 5, for alternative conceptualizations of nostalgia.
18. See Hewison (1987) and Samuel (1994) for both sides of the heritage debate.

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CHAPTER 3

Intimate Relationships

The Missing Category of Close Relations

As we argued in our Chap. 1 and established in Chap. 2, remembering is never purely individual, however intimate or secret a particular recollection may be. This is so because our memories are socially and culturally formed, framed and embedded, and apart from certain private moments, when memories are in any case related to other people and understood through the sociocultural frameworks available to us, a good deal of the time we remember with others and interact with other people's memories in making sense and meaning out of what we retain from the past. Memory is also mediated through an increasing array of communication technologies, and among the many consequences of this is that it helps enable us to engage in acts of cross-temporal alliance, either by empathizing with how the past experience of others has been assimilated and learned from or by recognizing affinities with the past experience of others and so draw it into meaningful proximity with our own. The key point in this is the relation between representation and reception. It is with respect to the dynamics of this interrelation that we strenuously contest the tendency in the field of memory studies for memory to be abstracted out from the micro and meso levels of its operation, with claims about macro collective memory being made in isolation from how its representations are received and interpreted in the contexts of everyday life. Processes and practices of remembering at the intermediate level between individual and collective memory haven't been entirely

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neglected in memory studies, but they have certainly been relegated to the margins of the field and regarded as relatively insignificant.

In referring to this intermediate level, Ricoeur (2004, p. 131) describes an important component of it as the category of our 'close relations'—those people who 'count for us, and for whom we count'. It is because this category of relation is drastically missing in the socio-cultural analysis of memory, despite its fundamental experiential significance, that we now turn to it and give it our concerted attention.

Close others are central to the sharing of memory in a number of ways. It is worth quoting Ricoeur's (2004, p. 132) exposition of close others at length:

> To the contemporaneousness of 'growing old together' they add a special note concerning the two 'events' that limit a human life, birth and death. The first escapes my memory, the second cuts short my plans. And both of them interest society only in terms of public records and from the demographic point of view of the replacement of generations. But both events were, or will be, of importance to my close relations. Some of them will deplore my death. But before that, some rejoiced at my birth and celebrated on that occasion the miracle of natality, and the bestowal of the name by which I will call myself my entire life. In the meantime my close relations are those who approve of my existence and whose existence I approve of in the reciprocity and equality of esteem. This mutual approbation expresses the shared assertion that each one makes regarding his or her powers and lack of powers, what I termed attestation in oneself as another. What I expect from my close relations is that they approve of what I attest: that I am able to speak, act, recount, impute to myself the responsibility for my actions. (Ricoeur 2004, p. 132)

Our close relationships are thus at the heart of both what we remember and how we make meaning out of what we remember. As we noted in the previous chapter, the sense of self that we produce through the remembering process is intertwined with our experience of close others, while the process of synthesizing past and present, and assessing what results from this is enabled by the ongoing action of the mnemonic imagination. The mnemonic imagination is what allows us to recognize the past experience of others and draw it together into meaningful proximity with our own. For Peter Goldie (2011, p. 302) this involves entering into empathic relations with the experience of others—putting yourself in the shoes of another and then recollecting, resituating and

reinterpreting your own experience in light of these continually shifting relations. In Ricoeur's view, these relations are of course reciprocal: as we value others, we ourselves are valued. We take into account the valuations of others of our own experience, and we continually reforge our own narrative identities in relation to them.

Our relationships with close others are central to the mnemonic production and maintenance of narrative identity and to creative remembering in the present. They are so in a number of ways. Firstly, our relations with others are an integral aspect of the social milieu in which remembering occurs—we remember *with* others. The processes of remembering are braided within the experience of close relationships: a family album compiled or a photograph shared, an old story retold among friends, a tune of enduring emotional import replayed: 'This is a good one, I think you'll like this. I haven't listened to this one for a long time myself. Do you have Glenn Miller in Ireland? This brings back a lot of memories for me, of the time when Susan and I were young and just starting out together' (Madden [1992] 2014, p. 144). These are the everyday acts of remembering that simultaneously reaffirm the significance of a shared past in the present, establishing the continuity of our interpersonal relationships over time and actively constituting them in this process (Bluck 2003). At each retelling of a story, each glance at a family photograph, we imaginatively situate ourselves within our belonging with particular people: our narratively remembered 'I' becomes meaningful as it is situated within a narratively remembered 'we'. At the same time as relationships with intimate others are integrated within the present time of remembering, they are also constitutive of the raw experiential materials for remembering and so necessarily loom large in what we remember. Close others can be the explicit object of our memories, extending from a first meeting to the loss of a loved one, or they can simply be present as companions in our recalled experience, co-conspirators in a surprise birthday party or a fellow fan at that sold-out rock concert. It is perhaps in instances when this kind of remembering with, and memory of, close others fails that we can most easily understand its value. In his own memoir, Brian Dillon (2006, pp. 102–103) reflects on precisely this kind of failure:

> I had never seen most of these photographs of my parents until they were both dead. What I was looking at as I stared at them alone in my room was a world that, for me, had only come into existence with the disappearance

> of the figures at its centre. At least, this is how I remember it: that the images of them I found in their room after my father's death allowed me to picture for the first time what they looked like and the world they inhabited. Can this be true? Did they really never present me with the evidence of their lives prior to my own? Was there never an evening when, together, we passed around the mostly black and white images, my father ruefully noting his full head of hair, my mother recalling school-friends and flatmates? It seems an eccentric lapse: to behave as if our family had no visual history worth sharing. Not for the first time, I compared my own photographic inheritance unfavourably with the means I imagined other families employing to protect theirs: the album's material repository and the ritual (by which one comes to know the photograph as well as, if not better than the moment captured there) of communal perusal. (Dillon 2006, pp. 102–103)

For Dillon, the unfulfilled obligations of familial remembering seem to undermine the basis of his relationship with his parents. He is cast adrift in the present, divorced from the security of a shared past as the absence of the collective viewing of photographs destabilizes the associations and compromises the attachment of his close relations. The reciprocity of approval that Ricoeur identifies as central to our remembering of and with close others here seems hollowed out. The potential comfort and security that the images would provide—by warranting Dillon's loss of his parents within a continuous narrative of intimacy and intimate knowing—goes unrealized. Quite the opposite is the case with a female archivist in Nottingham who looks back from the age of 40 to 'the one song that stands out in my memory from my very early childhood' in Crieff, Scotland. This is of her grandmother singing Brahms's lullaby to her as she lay in bed:

> I can picture myself in the lower bed of the bunk beds I shared with my sister and my Gran stroking my hair and singing this lullaby. When I was seven [and by then living in East Coker, Somerset], she gave me a jewellery box for my birthday and when the lid was lifted, it had a small ballerina pirouetting in front of the mirror to the tune of Brahms Lullaby. I still have that jewellery box and it still works, the memories it evokes are strong and clear, never sad. (MO Spring Directive 2012 ([W4113])

This beautiful song extends out of her early childhood into mature adulthood in a reassuring line of continuity bred of intergenerational

closeness and the intimate sharing of it with her grandmother. Through it, her mnemonic imagination makes active connections back and forth in time, with these remaining vibrant as she holds the jewellery box and listens to the tune once again, her memory of her childhood and of her grandmother inextricably woven together with the same reciprocity of approval in remembering that the gift initially betokened.

Closeness in relations is of course highly variable. Within such relations we are in an incessant dynamic movement between being relatively distant and drawing relatively close. For example, in developing intimate relationships, we undergo a particular form of transition that takes us from what is initially a casual acquaintance to what is experienced as closeness, knowing another person as much as it is ever possible to know someone apart from yourself, but in time this may change, and we then draw back in some way and renegotiate the terms of the relationship. Even with those with whom we are in a close relationship, intimacy is experienced in different degrees from one day to the next, and we all value our own personal space, especially at certain times or on certain occasions. In addition, the value and vitality of different kinds of close relationship ebb and flow over the life course, with parental and sibling relationships dominating childhood and friendships outside of the family increasing in significance through youth, adolescence and early adulthood. Psychological research, which since the late 1970s has made a turn back towards the analysis of memory in its everyday contexts, explores in detail the characteristics and salience of these different kinds of remembered relationships over the life course (Cohen 2008, p. 3).[1] In early adulthood, for example, friendship has been characterized as 'a flexible and even hardy type of relationship, capable of resisting the long-distance and relational transformations and of having tremendous potential for resiliency' (Tani et al. 2015, p. 284). Personal memories relating to intimacy in relationships are of particular significance in (and subsequently of) a person's 20s and 30s (Williams et al. 2008, p. 59), while relationships with one's own children are salient in middle age. During adult life these different kinds of intimate relationships are reticulated, and they fluctuate in the experiential value they have for us.

It is the punctuating experience of particular memories of relationships that have been most closely attended to in psychological memory research. These memories have been conceptualized as self-defining: experiential reference points around which our reflexive sense of self-identity turns (Conway 2005). That this is the key way in which

relationships are remembered seems intuitively true: in explaining our contemporary sense of who we are, we refer back to key formative moments in our past which are regarded as illustrative of our identity over time. The humiliation of reading aloud in the classroom explains our shyness, or a romantic betrayal is used as the rationale for our reluctance to commit to a long-term partnership. Relationships are nevertheless remembered in different modes, spanning three levels of mnemonic specificity. These have been identified by Martin Conway (1992, 2003) as associated with lifetime periods (such as the time of being with a best friend at university); with general events (such as regular lunch dates with a lover); and with knowledge that is event specific (the content of a speech at a daughter's wedding). As Peter Goldie (2012, pp. 44–45) suggests, these different kinds of memories are pulled together in the process of creatively constructing autobiographical narratives. In this way they combine to contribute to the grammar of a remembered story of a life, influencing temporal periodization, providing a sense of continuity or identifying punctuating events and turning points. In *Love in the Time of Cholera*, Fermina Daza's reflection on her marriage illustrates how these different temporal modes of remembering relationships can become folded into one another: 'She wanted to be herself again, to recover all that she had been obliged to give up in half a century of servitude that had doubtless made her happy but which, once her husband was dead, did not leave her even the vestiges of her identity' (Garcia Marquez [1985] 2014, p. 279). The 'half a century of servitude' is at once a lifetime period and a set of generalized events, practices and ways of living which characterize her marriage to her husband. The death of her husband is the punctuating event which divides her experience into before and after her marriage, and then before and after her husband's death. In this instance, the rebirth of a new narrative identity, comprising a new configuration of experience around her newly found liberation, is challenging precisely because radically new ways of being in the here and now require the mnemonic imagination to revalue and reinvigorate those parts of experience which meet the demands of a changed present, but at the same time our memory is finite and frangible. While it provides the narrative scaffold for her remembered self, her relationship with her husband also undercuts that narrative, leaving her bereft, desirous of a renewed self-narrative but ill equipped to undertake the mnemonic labour required.

However much we invest these definitional intersubjective experiences with value and significance, conceiving of relationship memories as providing self-defining moments only accounts for temporal traffic moving in one direction: past to future. Memories of past experiences, in this case of close relationships, are positioned as stable reference points through which the remembering self is refracted, rather than memories as consequential upon experience being continually produced and reproduced through the ongoing and always changing remembering process. Something of the social and temporal contingency of remembering is lost, and in terms of remembering relationships in particular, we lose a sense of how memories of interpersonal change and transition are continually figured and reconfigured over time in a continually changing present, as well as informing the remembering self. Memories *of* relationships are always produced through remembering *in* continually changing relationships. In this sense we need to loosen the sense of fixity associated with deeply felt memories of close relationships. They are not stable references for the one-time production of the self but rather changing constellations of meanings that are produced as the relationships themselves transform. Our senses of our selves are relationally reconstituted in that process. Remembering subjects are not therefore 'born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves' (Garcia Marquez [1985] 2014, p. 165). It is in the wake of transitions in our relationships with close others that this obligation is most keenly felt, and it is the mnemonic imagination which then determines the fecundity of our attempts to meet it.

The Experience of Close Relationships and the Management of Change

By considering relationships with close others as integral both to how remembering occurs in the present, and to how memories are constituted and become in themselves changeable through the passing of time, we can hold together that which the psychological literature on self-defining memories has held apart. On the one hand, close relationships unfold over time, with the experience of others moving analogously to and at times enmeshing with our own. On the other hand, the creation, mutation and dissolution of intimate relations require the reformulation

of our narrative sense of self in and over time. In view of this, the main question we address in this chapter is how, in vernacular practices and processes of remembering, we navigate intersubjective continuity and change.

We negotiate the experience of change in our lives through our relationships and our variable memories of them, perhaps referring back to them and their stable continuities most of all in times of turbulence and upset. Close relationships can endure for a lifetime, as for example with parents, children or siblings, and although they are always evolving, they serve as social frameworks through which past, present and future experience are assigned both meaning and value. They continually locate us and our experience in particular ways, and as an eldest child, as a mother or a daughter, we understand and reflect on our own experience from these positions. We notice these positions and revalue our experience in relation to them most explicitly when they change in some way. For example, in becoming a mother for the first time we look back to our relationships with our own parents, and perhaps with our partner, to locate this new relational identity in the context of ones that have proved durable over time. We hold to them, or try to, as we reconfigure our experience and look forward to the road ahead. In the closing pages of Morrison's Beloved (1988, p. 273) Paul D looks over both the love and horror of his shared experience with Sethe of slavery in mid-19th-century Kentucky, saying, 'Sethe … me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow'. For Paul D, both yesterday and tomorrow are interpreted through the prism of their relationship—its resilience in the face of overwhelming hardship acting as a sturdy guarantor underwriting the very possibility of an anticipated future. Relationships can be stable reference points which endure through time, where the designation 'we' acts as a thread of continuity in remembered narratives around which other new experiences can be woven and interpreted. The mnemonic imagination has a dual function here both in making the imaginative leap that Goldie (2011) identifies of stepping into the shoes of another, placing their experience in an intimate and contingent proximity with our own, and in drawing the disparate pieces of these shared pasts into the orbit of that remembering 'we', so that our shared horizons of experience and expectation gravitate around our shared present. In such a way they then extend backwards into the past and reach forward into the future.

Some of our most significant relationships are not those we are born into. They can either be serendipitously found or carefully crafted and cultivated as we move through the life cycle. Of all of the forms these close relations can take, it is those bilateral personal relationships that have a particular significance in our everyday experience. The uniqueness of the dyad was explored by Simmel (1902, p. 40):

> The peculiar conferring of characteristics upon a relationship through the duality of persons concerned in it is exhibited by everyday experiences. For instance, how differently a common lot, an undertaking, an agreement, a shared secret binds each of two sharers, from the case when even only three participate … The social structure rests immediately upon the one and the other. The departure of each single individual would destroy the whole, so that it does not come to such a superpersonal life of the whole that the individual feels himself independent; whereas, even in the case of an association of only three, if one individual departs, a group may still continue to exist. (Simmel 1902: 40)

As Simmel suggests, it is the contingency of two individuals on each other in dyadic relations which confers on them their experiential significance. It is therefore unsurprising that the formation and dissolution of such relations has a particular significance in our life-narratives, yet the risks attendant on interpersonal dependency are considerable. The loss or failure of such closeness not only dissolves the dyadic relation but in doing so may leave us feeling rootless, with the ordered pattern of our lives seeming radically disrupted. Transformations in our relationships with close others can be amongst the most painful, with interwoven pathways either fraying and separating little by little, or being suddenly and violently torn apart, whether by accident or design. Our carefully storied accounts of ourselves in relation to others may then unravel, severing the temporal connections between the remembered 'I' and 'we' and the remembering 'I' and 'we'. For Stevens, the protagonist in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989, p. 179), this is a tragically belated realization:

> But what is the sense in forever speculating what might have happened had such and such a moment turned out differently? One could presumably drive oneself to distraction in this way. In any case, while it is all very well to talk of 'turning points', one can surely only recognize such moments in

> retrospect. Naturally, when one looks back to such instances today, they may indeed take the appearance of being crucial, precious moments in one's life; but of course, at the time, this was not the impression one had. Rather, it was as though one had available a never-ending number of days, months, years in which to sort out the vagaries of one's relationship with Miss Kenton; an infinite number of further opportunities in which to remedy the effect of this or that misunderstanding. There was surely nothing to indicate at the time that such evidently small incidents would render whole dreams forever irredeemable. (Ishiguro 1989, p. 179)

It is at these turning points or crises in our personal relationships that the mnemonic imagination has to work the hardest, for we have then significantly to recast our past experience around an added before/after point of transition in the interests of developing a renewed sense of self for the future. For Stevens, this involves a radical and rather unfavourable re-evaluation of his entire life. While he lived in the pursuit of professional and personal dignity, the final rupture in his relationship with Miss Kenton brought into sharp relief the terrible failure of that project: 'I can't even say I made my own mistakes. Really—one has to ask oneself—what dignity is there in that?' (p. 243). Recovering from such ruptures necessitates radical repairs to the fabric of the self, with our mnemonic reimagining helping to stitch our life-narratives back into a recognizable and continuous form. This can be both a painful and creative process, and in the most extreme cases it is impossible to fully achieve, with the future being thereby jeopardized.

The process of managing changes in relationships—the pleasurable shift from being a friend to a lover; the painful move from a lover to an ex—demands more from the mnemonic imagination than reweaving significant strands of our past experience. Our interpersonal relationships and changes within them are striated with broader social and cultural norms and conventions which inform our expectations of relationships, our experiences of them and the ways in which we remember them. So for example, Simmel (1902, p. 41) notes that, particularly in relation to marriage, 'the projection of traditional elements' onto an interpersonal relationship means that it is more than the sum of its subjective parts: its meaning is in part formed by the historical sociocultural cultural meanings of a relationship of this particular kind and the subject is therefore an 'entity outside of himself … something toward which he has obligations, and from which there come to him, as from an objective existence,

benefits and injuries'. It is the synthesizing capacity of the mnemonic imagination which enables social and cultural frameworks of judgement to be brought to bear in our remembering of intersubjectively constituted experiences. It may be, as in Simmel's example, that we interpret our lived experience of our relationship with our partner in terms of the social and cultural norms relating to Western conceptions of marriage—enduring, exclusive and based on romantic love. Just as these cultural conventions have informed our expectations of a marriage, so they provide templates through which to evaluate our cumulative experience of it. They not only shape what we remember of intimate relationships—a marriage proposal, our wedding vows, a first dance to what then becomes remembered as 'our tune'—but also provide institutional structures through which to maintain these memories over time, such as anniversaries and the conventions of wedding photography.

When close relationships break down we can find our experience at odds with these norms and conventions, so we then assess what has happened in terms of departures from them or our inability to step up to the mark: we were too young; he was the wrong type of person; she prioritized her career. Of course, this is not to suggest that where our experience diverges from social norms and conventions, memories become problematic. To the contrary, we may find value in the ways in which we diverge from traditional expectations. Yet regardless of which way we turn on this, the mnemonic imagination allows us to bring into view our own experience with the experience of others in a twofold manner: on the one hand gaining and establishing valued cross-temporal proximity with a partner or friends, and on the other establishing points of empathy with the past experience of distant or aggregated others. This dual synthesis is crucial, for it facilitates affective, moral and ethical responses to the experiences of others. In order to make these kinds of judgements we need not only to step metaphorically into the shoes of another; we also need to apply abstract criteria of judgement (Goldie 2011). For example, in the aftermath of an acrimonious divorce a separating couple may wish to rid themselves of all photographs commemorating the relationship, either to alleviate their own pain or to inflict pain on a partner, but it may be the moral decision, informed by more abstract notions of what is 'right for the children' as they grow up that leads to these images being retained. It is, then, in times of interpersonal strife and struggle, when close relations break down, that we may lean more heavily on

those more abstract codes and criteria, using them to recast our experience into new accounts.

These codes and criteria do not simply float in the ether. They are embedded in the cultural resources available for use in our everyday remembering practices and in the conventions associated with their realization, from the domestic patterns of family photography to the symbolic uses of music to mark special occasions or intimate associations. These resources shape the ways in which we marshall and interpret our experience, and articulate and present our relationships. The remembering of relationships is performed in and through a cultural landscape in which the resources that we use for remembering are intimately bound up with the performance of social relationships. It would for most of us be unthinkable to have a close, intimate relationship with another person and not have a photographic image of her or him, or the music that we play to recall our relationship. In his discussion of the role of cultural artefacts in producing our sense of the past, Alan Radley (1995, p. 50) refers to interviews with residents of a care home about their personal possessions. In reference to her personal photographs, one elderly woman remarks that they 'mean I was a woman. I had children and built my life around them. Happy memories'.[2] The images in this case sustained the pleasure of the respondent's relationships with her children in terms of the recollected fulfilment of gendered expectations of her as a woman. Through the use of these photographs she constructed an imagined continuity with her maternal identity, despite the fact that her children were grown up and leading their own family lives, and she herself had grown old. Indeed, as vehicles of memory, they enabled her to manage her transition from a mother at the heart of familial relationships to an elderly person physically excised from this context, living in a dissimilar environment in which she was no longer the carer but instead the cared for. In this sense, as José van Dijck has argued, our memories are always at once individual and interpersonal, and they always operate within particular social schemas and frameworks. In acts of everyday remembering we shuttle between the two and formulate our memories in the interstitial space between them. Van Dijck (2007, p. 6) conceives of this as 'personal cultural memory', defined as 'the acts and products of remembering in which individuals engage to make sense of their lives in relation to the lives of others and to their surroundings, situating themselves in time and place'. For reasons we discussed in our previous book, we have chosen not to adopt van Dijck's terminology, but the care home

resident's description of the processes of everyday remembering utilizing the cultural resources available in any given context aligns closely with our own sense of vernacular memory as involving the enfolding of the personal and the cultural—the individual and the collective aspects of past experience—in an ongoing process of making narrative sense of the self, and oneself in relation to others, over the tangled course of time. These mnemonic resources can vary widely. They can be self-produced (such as the digital snap) or mass produced (such as a favourite record). Like a mixtape, they can be deliberately constructed for the purposes of remembering, or like an object given as a gift they can acquire their mnemonic value over time, suddenly or incrementally, as the relationship with the giver changes. They can be deliberately deployed to evoke the past in the present and used self-consciously to engage in remembering processes that facilitate the retelling of a story, or they can be fortuitously stumbled across, with the past intruding unexpectedly in the present.

In our previous book we were concerned with the ways in which the two technologies of remembering—photography and recorded music—were used in the interspace between personal and popular memory in helping to sustain particular trajectories of living and to create relatively stable and coherent identities over time. In doing so we identified three distinct yet interrelated stages in the distillation of experience at vernacular scales: the initial sifting of past experience in creating mnemonic resources, alongside the localizing of cultural resources and their integration into remembering practices; the process of ordering experience into recognizable and communicable units and patterns, such as memories of key events, people and places, and putting these to work in recounting the story of a life; and the final distillation of lived experience in which value and significance are invested in relatively stable ensembles of experience which communicate the broader meaning of a life to oneself and others. These stages are not neatly divisible from one another, nor are they strictly sequential in character. They are specifically identifiable but interwoven layers of intra- and intergroup remembering, and in each of them the mnemonic imagination is at work synthesizing the first- and secondhand materials of into communicable forms and practices, assembling clusters of meanings around key features, so making cross-temporal connections between them, then drawing them together in a broader configuration—the story of a life, the story of specific collectivities—connecting past, present and future into a recognizable pattern unfolding, and in its unfolding becoming greater than its parts.

This threefold distillation of experience is applied here as an analytical framework through which to consider how the management of change and transition in close relationships is achieved through processes of remembering. Through this framework we can account for the ways in which making sense of changed relationships involves overlapping but nevertheless discernible clusters of practical and imaginative activity both in and over time. In remembering a marriage, for example, we may see the intensive creation of mnemonic resources which mark a moment of change in a relationship but also observe a reordering or reconfiguring of other mnemonic resources around the transition from single life to cohabitation—the delicate negotiations around the conjoining of photograph collections and the creation of new shared photographic resources, for instance. Over time the emergent meanings of our relationships settle out and become established around special places that we share, around groups of people amongst whom our connections to each other are recognized or around events we have experienced together. We mobilize these memories in the performance of the relationships through which they were forged, and in the longer term we bring these composite constellations of meaning into overarching narrative relation. Of course, memories of change in close relations are a complex mix of what is relatively conventional and pleasurable with what is relatively unusual and painful, and these composites in their association with a lost relationship carry intense value and significance in the story of a life: a loved one's diagnosis with an illness, a gradual decline in health, the moment of death and the practical and emotional experiences of mourning combine into the associated sense of a profound juncture in the narrative chain of a life, reflexively valued as constitutive of who we now feel we are in an altered present.

Creating Resources and Constructing Continuity

In managing close relationships we seek to guard against unwanted changes, using creative rememberingto overcome potential vulnerabilities and fragilities which could potentially throw into turmoil the relational sense of ourselves we have assembled and given order to over time. This is as much anticipatory and prospective as it is reactive and retrospective, involving the creation of (inter)personal mnemonic resources which will, in mundane ways, sustain and support cross-temporal continuity in our close relationships. These resources can take many forms.

They are for the most part based in the form of stories that we tell ourselves and others, but often they are also more sensory in form, as with visual images, music or evocative odours. Attendant on these resources are practices of creation, storage, use and sharing with others (Pickering and Keightley 2015, Chap. 3). The mnemonic imagination and its continual movement between past and present are central in the performance of these practices, from the desire to take a photograph of someone who counts for us to the sharing of a special piece of music with someone for whom we count. At the same time, the mnemonic imagination works on such resources in their subsequent use, allowing us to reactivate them in the ongoing process of making sense of our longer-term experience, assigning it direction, purpose and meaning, or establishing its abiding significance more broadly in the story of a life or the story of a social group. Our sense of continual and unrelenting temporal succession, and the changes in our relationships with close and distant others that is wrought up in this, stimulates our recording of the present in the interests of ensuring that desired aspects of it remain even as it recedes inexorably into the past. Through such recording, intercommunication occurs between those who matter to us, those to whom we matter, those on whom we rely in maintaining a sense of ourselves and those whose identity relies on ours in conspicuous return.

Marriage is conventionally a marker of transition in a relationship from being one of a possible number of temporary romantic relationships to becoming, at least in Western social convention, a monogamous life partnership. Both the media of remembering dealt with in this book are put to work not only in setting up a symbolic connection to this transition that will over time always trigger memories of it but also in setting up a symbolic cross-temporal continuity across generations. A white woman in her early 40s living in Bishop Auckland told us that when she and her husband were married, they chose to walk down the aisle after the ceremony to the playing of Charles-Marie Widor's 'Toccata', composed in 1879.[3]

> My parents had also had the same piece of music at their wedding so it was keeping a tradition going. It is a rousing piece of music and even in a small church, made the occasion seem very grand. Whenever I hear the music since, I always think back to walking down the aisle as man and wife, and being outside the church with people throwing confetti all over. The music continued in the background and I hoped it would go on forever … My

> Mum organised a small organ recital at my Dad's church as part of the celebration for his 70th birthday and asked the organist if he would play the Toccata at the end of the recital. Again, a magical moment that brought tears to my Dad's eyes. (MO Spring 2012 Directive [4376])

Significantly, the role of tradition in ensuring cross-temporal continuities is invoked here when it seems that the playing of this piece of music occurred only on two successive occasions, her own wedding and that of her parents, and not any further back than that. Such invocation speaks volumes about the symbolic connection and continuity that has been invested in this particular musical composition, an investment that is emphatically confirmed by its use as the now ritualized marker of another family celebration, this time of her father's landmark birthday.

Wedding photography has long been a cultural practice through which the significance of the transition from romantic relationship to life partnership is set down and retrospectively valued. Images from the day of the ceremony allow us to express its significance, outwardly to others and inwardly to ourselves. With Gabrielle, a white British woman in her mid-20s, the way in which she talks about displaying the photographs of her wedding illustrates an attempt to establish a double continuity over time, firstly with her parents and grandparents, and secondly with her husband.

> I have got a marriage photograph of my parents' which is quite important to me because I wanted to kind of mirror them in ours and put it up in the house. I'm going to. In their house they've got a photo of them and each one of their parents. I'd like to carry that on. That's quite sentimental to me. I thought I'd carry it on in this house. We love photos to bits but they are quite personal aren't they? So in our bedroom the photos are the photos that I made R for our anniversary. Like the ones of our wedding, but we feel they are kind of just for us, so they will go in our bedroom.

In her plan to place the conventional marriage portraits of her parents' marriage and her own next to one another, Gabrielle actively seeks to align or mirror her own wife–husband relationship with that of her parents. Unlike her husband's parents, Gabrielle's parents have had an enduring marriage, and she deliberately and self-consciously seeks to place her own marriage in that context. As a practice, this is something her parents did, displaying their own wedding photograph next to the wedding photographs belonging to each set of their parents. Gabrielle

recognizes her own part in the lineage of this emerging mnemonic tradition and actively seeks to construct her own narrative identity as a wife within it. Notably, she does not suggest including images of her husband's parents, either their marriage photograph or separately, as part of her own display. The continuity that she seeks to establish is one of happy and enduring marriages with no reference to their past, and therefore potential future, dissolution. Instead Gabrielle positions herself in a mnemonic relationship only with her biological parents and grandparents, and through her photographic practices of display, she constructs a successful marriage as the continuous thread which weaves them together. By mnemonically imagining her marriage as situated in time within this particular intergenerational narrative, drawing disparate parts of the past together into a coherent succession of marriages, Gabrielle is using her familial legacy to project the achievement and longevity of her own romantic relationship into the future with a certain air of inevitability, warding off any fear of potential failure.

Alongside the creation of intergenerational continuity, Gabrielle also undertakes much more private dyadic mnemonic work to consecrate the specificities of her own marriage. In doing so she moves from the use of the first person singular to the first person plural, signalling that her photographic activity vis-à-vis her parents and grandparents is focused on creating personal continuity through the transition from daughter to wife in her own narrative identity over time, whereas her shift to a constituent use of 'we' pronounces that the remembering of the marriage in this other photographic activity is an interdependent, joint enterprise, and that the significance of their relationship which it sustains over time is indivisibly shared. Gabrielle has actively created what is presumably a montage of conjugal images for R, using their anniversary as a symbolic opportunity to reiterate the importance of their shared past, not only for herself but also for him. By placing personal photos of their wedding in their bedroom, Gabrielle and R deliberately exclude casual acquaintances and even close friends from this domain of their remembering. Locating these specific mnemonic resources, which represent not only their wedding day but also subsequent wedding anniversaries, in the intimate domestic space of the bedroom that they daily share means that they alone are able to reconstruct through them the valued narratives of their wedding day and of their relationship in the intervening years. Through these practices of image curation and the location of display, intimate remembering reaffirms their shared past and allows them to be

the exclusive authors of their relationship over time. This is, at least in part, the means by which the successful future of their marriage, anticipated through Gabrielle use of intergenerational wedding portraiture, can then be fulfilled.

For Zadie, the creation of mnemonic resources enabling her to re-establish continuity in her personal relationships with her children was more desperately pressing:

> When I left home I didn't have any pictures and my eldest daughter was on the brink of leaving home. In fact, she had left home by the time I took these. I just knew that there wouldn't be many opportunities for the three of them to be together again, and I needed them in my new home. I really, really needed to have them with me and I wanted a picture to make a real statement about the fact that they were still a part of my life. So I wanted a picture of us, and that picture I've got on my wall at home above my mantelpiece. I've got that one with three single ones down the side of the children. Just different ones. So I've got this. I went to a sort of off-the-wall girl who was setting herself up as a photographer and said to the kids to wear what they wanted … So we had these random photographs taken, but as you see I've got one on the wall there [above her desk at work]. That's one of the set. They are here with me at work. They're my little gang … It felt right and I gave my ex-husband a copy of them as well because it was about capturing them, not me. But I am in them. Me with them showing that, you know, I am still part of their life.

Managing the painful experience of her divorce was just as much about managing the actual and potential changes in Zadie's relationship with her children as it was about managing the breakup in her relationship with her husband. Her narrative identity as a mother, despite her departure from the family home after her separation from her husband and her children's imminent transition into adulthood, proved salvageable as a continuing basis on which she could begin to rebuild her narrative sense of herself, forging connections between her pre- and postseparation selves. She articulates a keenly felt need to have her children with her, symbolically present in her new home. This is not merely compensation for the loss of access to her family albums, which she elsewhere describes leaving behind because they were 'part of their lives as well as mine. It was … collective property. I didn't feel like they were personally mine to take, although they are very personally mine—they are very personal to me, but I didn't have ownership of them'. The new photographs

have re-established a tangible visual resource enabling her to reaffirm her existentially crucial role as a mother despite the rupture in their living arrangements and the break in their biographical pathways. The new photographs are a new asseveration of her continuing relationship with her children and the significance of her own maternal identity: not only are they part of her life but she is also part of theirs. Zadie deliberately gives copies of the photographs to her ex-husband, which ensures that they will be simultaneously available to her children in the family home. The creation of these mnemonic resources is intended to generate a dual functionality, both reaffirming and revivifying her maternal relationship in a radically changed present marked by the disintegration of her conjugal relationship. That is, after all, the source of rupture in Zadie's life; it is this which has shaken her sense of self to its roots, and without her new mnemonic resource being invested with meaning that extends back into a common past, it cannot fulfil its function for Zadie. Reconfiguring her maternal identity depends on its legitimacy in the present—measured by its faithfulness to her maternal identity in the past—being recognized by her children. In this sense her creation of a new mnemonic resource not only provides high-grade grist to the mill of her own mnemonic imagination but is also intended as a potent stimulus for her children's mnemonic imagination, making the links that Zadie desires between the familial past and the postdivorce present.

Creating mnemonic resources for those to whom we are close is particularly common in parent–child relationships, and it becomes especially important for parents as children move from largely dependent states to largely independent lives and the development of their own immediate families. While this sometimes occurs around key birthdays—16, 18 and 21—Rosa, a Danish woman in her 70s who has lived in the UK since the 1940s, speaks of creating mnemonic resources for her daughter and giving them to her when she was married:

> We gave my daughter her photograph album when she got married, with all her photos going back … So she's got that. We collected them from birth to whenever she left, I suppose.

For Rosa, unlike Zadie, the creation of mnemonic resources is more singularly focused on providing resources for her daughter's remembering. The album Rosa curated constructs the story of her daughter's life. While this has always in a sense belonged to her daughter, with Rosa

saying that they gave her 'her photograph album', it has also belonged to Rosa as its author, and it has been embedded in Rosa's own family group. When her daughter left home to set up her own family, Rosa's perceived parental responsibility for constructing that narrative came to an end, the album ceased being added to and her daughter took formal custody of her own photo-freighted narrative. The transition in the parent–child relationship was managed by Rosa through a quasi-ritualistic relinquishment of authorial control giving open acknowledgement of the move from daughter to wife, but at the same time the gifting of the photograph album promoted a sense of continuity with the familial past even as it was carried forward into the future, now as a mnemonic resource with a changed status because of being resident in her daughter's married life.

This kind of parental and, as in the next case, grandparental activity is also crucial in managing other kinds of transitions in close relationships for children, as this grandfather, Benjamin, remarks:

> When my fourth grandchild was born a few months ago I took a photograph of my third grandchild, the three year old, with the fourth grandchild on her knee … They joined us with this obviously sleeping infant and the three year old was with us. We were very interested in the baby. The three year old wasn't. She had been told about Mum having a new baby but I don't think she quite twigged what was going on, and the baby was asleep. Then Mum sort of sat down on the couch and had the baby so all of a sudden there was this little light-bulb moment, and my little three year old granddaughter leapt onto the couch right by her Mum and says 'can I have baby on my knee please?' And I placed it there. The photo is there to conserve that moment, not just for me, but also for others. It's conserving that memory for H, the three year old, as well. She often picks it up and has a look at it. In fact, she picked it up and kissed it recently. It's not just for me, it's for other people too.

The birth of a new baby is obviously transitional for relationships within a nuclear family, perhaps none more so than the older siblings. Benjamin's taking the photo of the older granddaughter cradling the younger, and its subsequent prominent display in his home, is about more than remembering a moment of significance in his already inhabited identity as a grandfather. Just as significantly, it is about creating a mnemonic anchor for the older granddaughter to keep stable her developing relationship with her sibling over time. The image itself is

intended to capture the moment in which she self-consciously moves from being an only child to being an older sister. More than this, the creation of this mnemonic resource sought to inculcate a particular kind of relationship: one of intimacy and affection rather than disinterest or indifference. The older child's later affection for the image is taken as evidence of the success of this memory work on her behalf. In displaying this 'for H' Benjamin signals its significance to her, and by displaying it, rather than gifting it to her or her parents, he localizes the origins of their sibling relationship in his own home, embedding an implicit intergenerational continuity in the story he seeks to establish. In this way he brings himself into imaginative mnemonic proximity to his grandchildren, writing himself into their relationship narrative. In doing so he articulates and maintains his own cherished identity as a grandfather.

The Reconfiguration of Remembered Relationships

As we maintained in Chap. 2, ruptures and breaks figure in our lives as turning points around which we need to re-establish a sufficient sense of connection between what came before the turn and what came after, and thus regain a communicable pattern in our apprehension of self over time. Active use of the mnemonic imagination is required in this task. As a result, such points often acquire a narrative significance they did not have at the time of the turn, while new experiences may be interpreted and made sense of in relation to these previous configurations of significance.

Lorna is a white British woman in her late 60s. The account she gives of her transition from living with her grandmother to moving back to live with her mother, stepfather and stepbrother at the age of 11; the congealing of her around the change in her relationship with her mother; and the establishment of a relationship with her stepfather and half-brother, provides a narrative framework through which she is able to articulate the meaning of her childhood:

> I'd just moved here. Hated it. Well the whole transition from moving from my grandmother's to live with my mother and stepfather was pretty traumatic to start with. And they also had a son so I'd got a younger brother, or half-brother. The whole business of being transported into this other strange existence with a mother who I always thought of as very cold and distant, and her husband, a man who I had only had experience of as being

> very angry. He could get very angry. And a brother who … sharing life with another child was really, really strange. You know, occasionally they would come, my mother and her family, to visit her mother, usually on a Sunday afternoon, every so often. Very occasionally, she would come on her bike. That is one of my earliest memories of her – her turning up in a beautiful blue dress, peacock blue dress, on her bike in heels …
>
> As a child I guess you could say I was a bit spoiled in that because perhaps I got away with more things than I would or did in the first few months [at her mother's house]. That was quite a rude awakening. So it was very different. I remember it being very loving, although it was really quite different. I always knew that I didn't live with my mum. That was brought to my knowledge when I won a book at school, at the nursery school in the village. The woman was going to write my name in it and she said "what's your name?" and I opened my mouth and this big girl behind her said "it's this" and I'm "no, no, I'm so and so", "no, no she isn't. She's this". It's at that point that I realised that my proper name was something quite different to what I was being called.

The transition Lorna describes was a painful upheaval in childhood circumstances, moving from a relationship with her mother that was characterized by distance, both physical and emotional, to one of unheralded proximity. For her this transition formed a turning point in her early life, and not simply from a day-to-day world of familiarity to one of strangeness, albeit one which was overcome in the fullness of time. The significance of the move was that it became central to making sense of her childhood experience, particularly her emerging sense of identity on the threshold of another move: the shift into adolescence. Lorna has drawn together fragments of experience from this time in her life and made them meaningful in relation to the sudden return to her mother. It is the work of the mnemonic imagination which enables the drawing together and synthesizing of disparate elements of Lorna's childhood: the duration of her time living with her grandmother, the moment of moving to live with her mother, the earlier specific visits from her mother and the earlier generic yet infrequent visits from her family, the incident of discovering her real name and the time later spent living in her mother's home. In this process the changes in her familial relationships take on a cluster of meanings, from the readily identified pain of the upheaval that she describes as traumatic to the subsequent realization that the transition from her grandmother's house to her mother's crystallizes her

emerging sense of mature identity. The story of her childhood is configured into periods before and after this event, with her story turning on the sense of significance with which it has been invested.

The potential for Lorna's considerable change in circumstances to be much more problematic in her life was managed by the mnemonic imagination. In the process of drawing together and synthesizing elements of childhood experience, they become valued not only in relation to one another but also in relation to the ongoing present. Lorna weaves together threads of continuity between the before-and-after narrative periods of her childhood and, in retrospect, is able to reach a stage where they are satisfactorily reconciled. While she negatively values the precipitous move to live with her mother, she locates her pain in the expectation of her mother as being cold and stepfather as being angry, and in the unfamiliarity of being amongst siblings hitherto experienced on the basis of the distance between the two houses. She says that she'd 'thought of' her mother as cold and remote, and only known her stepfather as angry, but this opens up the possibility for her relationship with her mother not being as she'd thought it might be and for her stepfather having other, less troublesome aspects to his character after the transition had been made. Lorna implies in the account that the emotional root of her pain was a lack of understanding of her mother and stepfather created by her separation from them, rather than in the actual experience of her relationship with them after moving. This account neither undermines her experience of the pain of being taken from her happy home and relocated with her mother nor casts aside her expectations that their relationship might be difficult, but it does in addition allow for a legitimate positive revision of her assessment of the parental relationship after the transition has been completed. Her relationship with them was revalued after this point because it did not conform to those expectations. At the same time, experience of her new home as 'loving' has not diminished her valued memories of her time with her grandmother; later in the interview, the revaluation proves entirely compatible with a description of the close and lasting relationship that she came to develop with her half-brother. All of the familial relationships woven into the narrative have become consonant and continuous with one another rather than held in a state of competitive appraisal, and the pain experienced has eased in her creative delimiting of it, sealing it off from the present by locating it in a set of expectations that did not come to pass.

It is not only our experience of particular past events that become recognized as turning points in relationships. Remembering particular people can also generate a clustering of meaning which helps us assemble and organize the story of a life. What can at first blush seem like a relatively straightforward account of a shift in an intimate relationship can, on closer scrutiny, be seen as an entry point into managing a number of life transitions. In discussing photographs that he has displayed on his wall alongside those he has not, Alan, a male British musician in his late 40s, explains that

> They are the people that are important to me, even now. Even though I don't see them a lot, they are. That lot in that photograph I couldn't give a rat's ass about, to be honest. That guy became involved in a lot of heroin. He got caught up in one of the ways they diffused a lot of travelling culture in the 1980s, because you became a new age traveller, went off and lived on a bus and did all that kind of thing. But one of the Tory government's plans to diffuse that was to fill those communities with heroin and class A drugs and a lot of them developed smack habits. And he turned into a major idiot. I look at that photograph and I'm like, 'I liked you then Martin, but not what you became. He was a really nice, bright, intelligent lad and I saw all the kind of – what a Class A drug problem could do to somebody … That wouldn't go on the wall because it reminds me of a kind of crazy … That sums up a lot for me. It's an indicator of a lot of things.

Alan's friendship with M breaks down because of M's drug use, but the transition in their relationship becomes symbolic of broader sociopolitical changes which Alan experienced during that time. In his account he intertwines two associated transitions: the individual-level change in M, from being a 'nice, bright, intelligent lad' to being a 'major idiot', and the meso-level change in travelling culture in the 1980s, which in Alan's account is precipitated by class A drug use. This is in turn framed in terms of a macro-level clash of political ideologies in play during this period. The mnemonic imagination works to synthesize these constituent elements of the narrative, placing them in relation to one another and producing the meanings of this particular rupture in Alan's life directly in the interstitial oscillations between them. These meanings are manifold and relational. Despite his personal criticism of his former friend, Alan does not individualize the failure of their relationship,

instead locating blame with the class A drugs that he claims were pushed by the government of the day. Regardless of the validity of this, the failure of the relationship takes on a different hue. Alan utilizes a sense of continuity in his own political identity to interpret the experience of this failure as one which hinges on his political awareness and M's implied lack of it. His own enduring political identity precedes the breakdown of the friendship, provides a framework for interpreting the cause of the failure and continues into the present. The failure of the relationship marks a turning point in Alan's life story which allows him to traverse the diverse terrain of his experience, from the most intimate to the most public. Managing the loss of a close friendship through the process of reconfiguring his memories of it allows Alan to reaffirm his own political identity and in doing so conceive of himself as following a steady, unbroken trajectory through periods of social and political change which have thrown others calamitously off course.

What is particularly interesting about Alan's continuing account of his memories of this period is his reflexive description of the way in which the mnemonic imagination holds the past, present and future in provisional tension, providing opportunities for revising and rethinking oneself in relation to others from the perspective of an ever-changing present. The unfolding of a narrative, the way in which past and present are aligned within it and meaning made as a result of this process, is never fixed once and for all, but (re)performed and (re)produced again in every incidence of remembering, always allowing for the possibility for new meanings to emerge:

> I often think about the narratives of the way people have changed. I'll think about it in various different pathways. You look at the photograph and I look at somebody and the pathway will take you back to that event, and what they were doing. When you're on tour, you think about what the relationship was like, what was going on in that period and then you think about what it is like now, and how you relate to them as people now because you still know them. Or if you don't and obviously you feel – there's sadness if I looked at that other photograph. The way it will unfold. It's the unfolding. When I look back at that I think about my own personal change and what I've been through, in some ways I haven't changed at all in terms of what I'm doing, but in other ways I'm leaps and bounds away from that person. Pathways: they're never something set in stone. They'll change. If I look back again in 10 years at this picture, they'll be different.

The pathways that Alan discusses are not individual; they are interpersonal, point by every point. His own development over time is meaningful only in relation to the changes he recalls in those to whom he is or has been close. We weigh and measure the changes in ourselves against those we see in others, against both those with whom we have parted ways and those who have continued to tarry with us. As Alan's account demonstrates, our sense of proximity to and continuity with our remembered selves depends in degrees on the extent to which our network of close others has remained durable over time. That we see others and are seen by them in ways which persist through time can provide us with a relatively stable sense of who we are. When we mourn the mortal loss of someone close to us in our lives, our pain derives not only from their absence but also from the loss of the version of our self that was produced in our relationship with them. The dyad disappears with their exit from our lives, and that specific, relationally produced sense of our self, specific in various unique ways to that relationship, is extinguished in the process, accessible only through the pieces of the past (the photographs, the music or the mnemonic objects) which continue in their tangible disappearance from our lives, and the absence of any continuing dialogue about ever-shifting meaning those pieces of the past may have.

The Struggle for Significance

For Alan, as for many other respondents, using his mnemonic imagination to manage changing relationships has produced nuanced but relatively stable narratives which help configure his remembered and remembering self as evolving but continuous over time. Changes in relationships are at once enfolded into accompanying changes in personal identity and caught up in the current of broader social and cultural changes. While its uses are revised and reconceived, the past remains a resource for taking one's bearings for the future amid time's many alterations. For some, though, the magnitude of changes experienced in relationships or the drastic loss of intimate proximity after a relationship breakup poses what seems an insurmountable challenge that thwarts any adaptive use of the mnemonic imagination. This is felt all the more keenly when such loss is bound up in secrecy or is part of some kind of social transgression. In our fieldwork, we worked with a group of respondents who had been deeply affected by adoption, either having been adopted themselves or having had experience of their own

child being adopted. These respondents were part of a pre-existing support group which we were invited to join. The evolving conversations between members of the group, along with minimal intervention from us, offered a unique opportunity to attend not only to the specificities of the accounts of each of the women but also to the shared, common experiences in their struggle for mnemonic coherence and stability in the face of what was in most cases a painful rupture in that most intimate of relationships. In some cases, this rupture went on to cause friction and fracture in their other close relationships.

Adoption is not necessarily an exclusively or even predominantly negative experience (Didion 2012, pp. 60–61). It is nevertheless felt to have a minatory influence on the work of the mnemonic imagination in managing the disturbances it involves, regardless of whether these relate to birth mother and child, birth mother and her own parents and family or the disintegration of relationships among reunited birth parents and children. The struggle in managing them turns around the desire to establish a twofold significance over time: of a birth parent or child to oneself, and oneself to a birth parent or child. For birth parents and children alike, there was a double desire for recognition and assurance of being valued in the lives of others. As Joan Didion (2012, pp. 60–61), adoptive mother to her daughter, Quintana Roo, makes clear in her own reflection on adoption, this struggle for significance is fraught with pain, uncertainty and difficulty:

> Adoption, I was to learn although not immediately, is hard to get right. As a concept, even what was then its most widely approved narrative carried bad news: if someone "chose" you, what does that tell you? Doesn't it tell you that you were available to be "chosen"? Doesn't it tell you, in the end, that there are only two people in the world? The one who "chose" you? And the other who didn't? Are we beginning to see how the word abandonment might enter the picture? Might we not make efforts to avoid such abandonment?[4]

The 'approved narratives' of adoption in the second half of the 20th century have proved to be wildly inadequate, reiterating the failure of familial relationships in their efforts to mitigate them and inscribing that failure into the very fabric of fledgling family narratives. The disjuncture between the experience of adoption and its publicly prescribed narratives have left birth parents, adoptive parents and adopted children

cast adrift in the struggle to make long-term sense of their experience. What became evident from our own data was that the many-sided effort that Didion identifies—all of it addressed to the task of getting it right—is largely mnemonic in character. It involves the piecing together of a more or less cohesive story of a life, the identifying and articulating of the value and significance of relationships over time and the managing of broken or lost relationships by using mnemonic resources to create cross-temporal connections across the disconnected or disrupted pasts of parents and children.

For birth mothers, the fatal moment in their close relationships is the act of giving up their child for adoption. While other severances and experiences of heartbreak in close relationships may have followed, with parents, lovers or other children, giving up of their own child was the critical originating break from which all else followed. In the following exchange between four birth mothers, they describe the ordeal:

> **Lilian**: I didn't take a photo because I thought… I didn't have any right to. Because Jackie was born, she was distressed, so I had to have a forceps delivery and everything, and she was immediately taken to the special care baby unit. And I remember saying, you will let me see her won't you? (voice breaking). So when she was there I didn't take a photograph for me because I thought I didn't have any right because I wasn't able to look after her.
>
> **Emma**: And you have to psychologically prepare yourself to hand them over, don't you, so the thought of making a permanent record of that child is like…
>
> **Lilian**: So I thought 'what right have I got for me'? The way I got a photograph was, when she was five, I sort of had a mental breakdown really. I kept seeing little girls in the street and thinking 'is that my daughter'? So I wrote to the adoption agency and said that I need to know something about her. They told me how she was and that she'd got a little brother and they sent me, her adoptive parents had given two pictures of her in a baby suit thing, which they sent to me. They obviously wouldn't identify her as they were her as a baby. And I've met her adoptive parents, they're lovely. At that point… that's when I got those pictures.
>
> **Ada**: I got two photographs of N when I signed the papers. It was more or less a condition. It was like my reward for finally signing the court

> papers … But I was working when I got these photographs that the adoption agency gave me, and I'd sit on the bus and say to someone: 'look at these photographs of my friend's little boy – isn't he lovely?' I just wanted someone to tell me how wonderful he was.
>
> **Usha**: In the 60s it was the most shameful thing. You had to lay a whole plan of lies.
>
> **Lilian**: It was the same with me and it was 1978. It's not that long away. I was a student in [a city in the Midlands] but I wasn't allowed to go back home because my parents knew too many people and they were religious, so I stopped with a family who I didn't know, who were found for me by the adoption agency, so that I could go and have my baby in the hospital in a neighbouring city, so nobody would know. So if I had a photograph … and nobody talked about it. My parents didn't see my daughter.

What marks this conversation is the precariousness of constructing resources for remembering their relationship with their child. This is manifested in three discrete but intertwined ways. Firstly, the creation of mnemonic resources was prohibited or tightly controlled by the mother-and-baby homes and the adoption agency, making the establishment of a relationship with their child in their absence difficult. That was clearly the intention. The break between the birth mother and her child, for Lilian, Usha and Emma, was symbolized by their visual absence, their very right to a memory of their child denied them from the outset. Usha subsequently recalls the surreptitious practice of taking photographs in the mother-and-baby home and describes the fear that 'they'd find the camera and take the roll of film off me'. However, Lilian returns to the adoption agency to challenge her lack of resources. Official channels in later years became a source for rebuilding mnemonic narratives, and it was through the adoption agency that she was able to access two precious pictures of her daughter. Regaining these images provided a tangible means through which the mnemonic imagination was able in some way to reconnect past and present in the face of such complete loss. In this way photographs helped her to begin to rebuild a sense of continuity with a relationship which had, until that time, been an aspect of her past that had remained unassimilable to her life-narrative and had instead reverberated painfully and uncontrollably in the form of her breakdown. Possession of the photographs allowed her to begin making real a sense of interrupted maternal identity which was crucial to the story of her life,

affirming the existence of her daughter and her own entitlement, as her birth mother, to the images.

The lack of a sense of entitlement or right to resources for remembering children who had been given up is the second difficulty in managing the loss of their relationship with their child. The prospect of having reminders of their loss or of their perceived failure was unbearable. Lilian felt she had no right to construct the relationship as part of her mnemonic narrative, no right to seek to have the reciprocal significance of herself to the child recognized, as she was unable to look after her daughter. For Lilian, not taking photographs was a deliberate psychological strategy allowing her to elide that relationship as part of her past and therefore her future. In this case, managing the break in their relationship with their child was achieved by actively forgetting, seeking to erase this interrupted relationship from their life-narratives and subverting their own identities. As Lilian's account makes clear, this was largely unsustainable. The sense of not being able or entitled to be recognized as mothers, either in their own remembered accounts or publicly, was also managed through the simulation of maternal memory. Ada's description of showing the picture of her son to strangers on the bus, passing him off as the son of a friend, meant that for the briefest of moments she was able to obtain recognition of herself as a mother by proxy. In doing so, the loss of her son was fleetingly negated, continuity in their relationship was restored and she transiently inhabited the maternal identity she so desired.

The third difficulty arose from the social stigma attached to their circumstances as young or unwed mothers. This entailed denial of the construction or possession of any evidence of their perceived transgression, with both Usha and Lilian implicitly referring to the danger of being caught in contravention of this normative condition by keeping mnemonic resources. This underwrote the women's sense of not being entitled to remember their children. Stigmatization weighed against other conditions that may have supported the action of the mnemonic imagination. All of the birth mothers were sent away from their hometowns and from their immediate families in order to protect their social reputations. This second rupture involved the removal of women from their most intimate memory community and in doing so set them apart from the vernacular mnemonic infrastructure through which we remember much of our week-by-week, year-by-year experience. Those with

whom they would have most closely and regularly shared in processes of remembering were kept at a distance in the interests of suppressing the memory of the soon-to-be adopted child.

In some cases mnemonic resources were made available—Ada received two photos of her son on signing the adoption papers—but their powerful evidential status rendered them a source of constant but uncontrollable mnemonic danger which threatened to destabilize the birth mother's carefully crafted life-narrative. Because of this, as Ada outlines, vehicles for remembering the lost child are actively destroyed as a strategy for managing this danger:

> We had a boiler in our kitchen. There was a coal boiler. I was getting married to R, and R knew that I'd had N. I was getting ready to go away, before, and my mother said 'what about your photographs' because I'd got the two photos that the adoption agency sent me and two very, very blurry shots from the mother and baby home. And she said, 'I'll keep them for you'. It was just that fear of discovery. And it was me that said 'no, we'll burn them', and I opened the door of the boiler and threw them in. That was sort of drawing a line. I never forgot him, but it was just that finding out, you'll be found out. Proof of…

Despite her soon-to-be-husband being aware that she had given birth to her son and that he had been adopted, the possibility of integrating that memory into her own fledging familial narrative was not considered to be a viable possibility. The potential danger posed by the sheer presence of the photographs was sufficient to demand their destruction. Under these conditions, the action of the mnemonic imagination is stymied and the failed relationship between mother and child is erased in its entirety (or such is the hope). The management of change is achieved through its denial.

These three interrelated problems, conspiring against the possibility of creating viable resources for remembering well, have made the possibility of managing the rupture between a birth mother and her child extraordinarily difficult. The rupture has had to be managed in the face of the near-total absence of vehicles for remembering their child. Managing the rupture in this relationship in the years after the adoption was primarily one concerned with managing absence and the lacunae that it created in their stories of themselves. As Ada explains, the pain of absence could at times be overwhelming:

> The only place I could cry was in bed. So I used to go to bed at night and be up really late reading. You'd hold it all together in the day. And the worst bit for me was when you closed your eyes, because I could remember him, picture him in my head, but then after a few months I couldn't remember him. And that was dreadful. So I cried for that.

> After I had met N I would come up with a story that justified me giving up my baby. Because it seemed where I was at 51, how on earth could I have given a child up … I'd had two other children, a grandchild, Sue had had trouble conceiving. So I sort of came up with this story … and I did sleep with him the night before he went, I did bribe a girl to let me sleep in the nursery in the mother-and-baby home, and I, I know this is imagined, I sort of in my head I told him this story of 'I will come back and find you'. Well I know I didn't. I know that I'd slept with him and it was uncomfortable. I was really tired. The intention was to sleep with him all night, because I'd got a baby there and I'd put him back in his crib. Then I was talking to T and I was talking about reasons, and I said to her, 'well was that real or have I imagined it? What was my intention behind giving him up?' because it's really easy to … So I have challenged my own basic need to give him up, and society was different. But you know, my parents did send me away, and I didn't challenge them for sending me away. I never challenged the thinking. And in a way it was a relief to go away because you're out of the gossip and out of that judgemental bit. So memory is real and imagined.

The pain that Ada felt in the immediate aftermath of the adoption was not simply for the loss of the child; it was also for her inability to remember. This was experienced as a second and even more secret loss. Without the vernacular cultural resources of photographs, music and other ephemera, and in the face of such stringent social pressure, the mnemonic imagination lies dormant, unable to gain any purchase on the past and reconcile it with circumstances in the present. In Ada's case, this left the ground open for her to go beyond the bounds of the mnemonic imagination and confect an account which justified giving up her son. While the account provided her with a socially acceptable explanation, as time passed she became increasingly aware that it did not square with key aspects of her experience, particularly her failure to challenge her parents in sending her away, and her relief at not being the subject of malicious gossip and peremptory judgement. The relief was felt in spite of the failure. It is only over the course of time, and in trying to explain

what happened to her daughter, that she is able to relate this to awareness of the demands placed on her in accepting the adoption and of the specific sociohistorical conditions under which it occurred. Gradually she has been able to draw memory and imagination back into alignment. She rejects the story that she constructed, but she is reflexively aware of why she constructed it in the first place. The shuttling back and forth between experience and expectation, and the continual revision and challenging of mnemonic meaning that results, can be characterized as part of remembering well. It involves the establishing of strands of continuity over time while always being open to the meaning of past experience being provisional.

Of course, having to manage absence is not the sole preserve of birth mothers. Adopted children face a similar deficit in the mnemonic resources required to manage the transition in their parental relations. This may only have been belatedly revealed to them. The times when this deficit is brought into sharpest relief are when the plethora of vernacular resources available to others are laid out before them, particularly as these might involve their own children. Julia describes this in detail:

> I feel a bit robbed in that sense because we've got boxes of photographs and me and my kids, we just sit and laugh at Maisie clomping around in my shoes when she was little. And you feel a bit robbed at that, the faces changing and looking like one another and seeing those similarities, and even though I've got lots of photographs from when I was a child and my sister and everything, it's that, it's that identity. That gap. The photographs you have of growing up are of really good memories but there is still something kind of missing, still that identity thing missing, because you don't look like any of them. It is really important. Whatever anybody says about whether you had a good or a bad upbringing, there is still that kind of recognition in the face: 'Well, you look like your great grandma'.

In the act of remembering her own children's childhood and their facial transformations over time, Julia feels the absence not of her birth mother specifically, but of others who look like her, against whom she can measure and weigh her own life-course changes. She misses the embodied traces of relationships, of physical connections between close others that are rendered visible, or in her case absent, in the vehicles of memory from her own childhood. Managing her own change and development over time is made challenging in the absence of those connections.

Managing the rupture in her relationship with her birth mother in particular is almost impossible in the absence of mnemonic resources through which to do so, and it leaves her with what she describes as a 'gap' in her identity. The story of her life is always rendered somewhat out of joint, marked by the unreconciled transition she made between birth and adopted families, along with the loss of family lineage.

For birth mothers and adopted children alike, dealing with the founding rupture creates a continual striving to ameliorate the absence or gap that it has left in the stories of their lives. Lilian's reunion with her daughter offered an unrivalled opportunity to fill that gap on the one hand by accessing some of her daughter's mnemonic resources and making them her own, and on the other by constructing new mnemonic resources and using them to give substance to the period of her suppressed motherhood:

> As far as J is concerned, I had a picture of her from just after she was adopted. Two pictures. And the way the reunion worked, we both put our names on the adoption contact register within a month of each other. I wrote her a letter, because they said I was the adult, and then she wrote back. And then I wrote back again and didn't hear from her for about a month, and I thought 'oh gosh' because I'd said something about meeting. I felt 'something's gone wrong here', but then when she did write back, it was a big envelope and she's sorted out pictures of herself and an essay she'd written at school and she'd filled it with sweets as well, so it was this big package with all these bits in. So I'd got these pictures of her, but very limited amounts. What I'd really love is pictures of her as she was growing up, but I can't ask for those. But, the other thing that I have is that for her 29th birthday she was at my house and because it was coming up to my parent's wedding anniversary I managed to get all my family together for some professional photographs. So now I have up on my wall a photograph of me and my daughter which is just beautiful, and three pictures of Jackie with her cousins, with all the family, and with me and her. And I've also got a picture of her that she gave me in my bedroom and I've put angel cards around it, and that's, so that's really important for me.

Lilian cherishes the pictures that her daughter sends her, but what she covets are images from her over the course of her childhood that would run analogously to her own life-narrative. This would provide a rich resource for the mnemonic imagination. It would allow her to reconcile her daughter's experiences with her own, weaving them together and

rendering their relationship meaningful over time while limiting the disruptive effects of the original cataclysm in their relationship. The lack of a sense of entitlement to this means that the desire is thwarted. Instead Lilian turns her attention to the creation of new resources, such as the portrait of her and her daughter together, which now hangs in pride of place in her home. Lilian actively seeks to return her daughter into the family from which she was excised by inserting her into their own mnemonic repository.

Keryn's experience as an adopted child was quite different. While her intensely felt reunion with her mother was deceptively straightforward and met with enthusiasm, the reconciliation between them was short-lived. It led to a second estrangement. Despite this, Keryn was deeply hurt when she was excluded from commemorating her mother's life by participating in the mourning practices of her mother's family:

> When I met her, I did it all by detective work and just turned up, like you shouldn't do really, and I lived with her for a year and we had a really happy time. But it was like a honeymoon really, it wasn't very realistic … Now I'm finding out through Facebook that she died and that other people have died and I've been completely blanked out of the funeral, and so I've been really upset about that. I felt kind of cheated so I even madly stalked and got the words to the funeral, accounts from the celebrant, I've got the autopsy. Well, my mother died when she was sixty and I'm forty something and I'm thinking 'I want to know if there is anything hereditary, and how bloody dare you not invite me to the funeral when you came to my bloody wedding! And that really caused ructions, but I thought 'no, it's about me and him getting married, we want everybody there, so why does it matter'. So yes, I've got all the death records, how much her heart weighed. Because these are the only things I can get. I've got nobody to talk to about it. I can't say goodbye. So I have to get what I can. And E can't see her now, which I wanted to try and do but… I did have that happy time there and I have got lots of photos, and I gave her lots of photos of my childhood, and when I've lost touch with her I've now lost those things. I don't know where they are, they've probably been burnt or something.

Keryn has sought frantically to redress this second loss. She has gathered all of the publicly available resources she can find about her mother's death in order at least to approximate the cultural conventions of remembering a loved one. Unvarnished public biological records stand

in place of intimate, personal vehicles of remembering, yet in using these to maintain the significance of her birth mother in the story of her own life, Keryn has defied her expulsion from her mother's family. Offsetting this is the probable destruction of the mnemonic resources she gave her mother, which would mean that her significance to her mother and her place in her mother's close family is forever erased. In death she loses the last vestiges of her relations with her mother, and just as seriously, she loses the traces of her own mnemonically constituted identity as a birth daughter.

As Lilian's previous account has demonstrated, the practices of family photography can be used as a means by which to manage the lacunae in life-narratives created by adoption, but it may be that the social conventions around the use of media can be stifling and actively inhibit the work of the mnemonic imagination. For Emma, in the years after the adoption of her son, the coded uses of family photography which emphasize the recording of the nuclear family, and particularly of children's development and close parental bonds, made the absence of her son all the more keenly felt. This led to her broad rejection of all photographic practices:

> I think for me it was the opposite. I didn't want photographs. No. I think the one I wanted I hadn't got. And I didn't want photographs of me either, and I think it was something about the loss when I gave my son away. I felt I lost half of myself. To see me in photographs, it was like, that's not me.

Emma was unable to meet the demands of photographic convention, so for her, photographs represented only what was absent: her son and her relationship with him. She became the embodiment of this loss; the adoption was always inscribed upon her. The remembered maternal 'I' could not be reconciled with the remembering 'me' who was estranged from her child. Emma was unable to recognize herself over time, and that in itself represents another drastic loss.

Other kinds of mnemonic resources with the potential to evoke the period in which women gave birth to their child and their subsequent adoption also proved challenging. The public nature of recorded music and its circulation alongside its personal uses in private space make it a potent and somewhat uncontrollable resource for remembering. As we have discussed elsewhere (Pickering and Keightley 2015, Chap. 4),

remembering with recorded music is characterized by its durational character along with its potential to collapse the temporal distance between the remembered 'me' and the remembering 'I', generating the powerful sensation of 'being back there'. For both Lilian and Emma, this proved disturbing and subversive of their attempts to manage the experience of adoption.

> **Lilian**: I think for a while it was really difficult to listen to music. Because music for me has always been really, really important, there were so many memories anchored by music of that time, when I discovered I was pregnant, when I went for my first scan. All those sort of things would be anchored in music. So I didn't want to listen to the radio because something would come on and bring back something that, for my own sanity, I needed to keep pushed down. So for a long time I didn't want to listen to music that was around because it would expose vulnerability that I didn't have the luxury of tapping into really.

> **Emma**: I bought a lot of new age stuff. A totally different sort of music to what would have been around [at the time]. Now I would listen, but for years I just would not. You know what's going to come out. It meant I could enjoy music but it wasn't doing something I didn't want it to do. I had to revert back to Dominic Cassidy, because he was my first love, and I was only about 12 then so I would go back, because that was a happy time. So I just remember listening to Dominic Cassidy, because he was safe. And it was before all this.

Rejecting the music of the period of pregnancy and adoption was a strategy adopted by both women; they deliberately avoided the memories which it indexed. For Lilian this entailed a general avoidance of music, whereas Emma sought out music unconnected with the critical period, specifically choosing music that predated it, music from a 'happy' and 'safe' time. In doing so Emma bypassed the adoption in preference for a newly forged continuity between her earlier childhood and her postadoption self. In diametric contrast to Lilian and Emma, Usha did not avoid the music she associated with being pregnant with her daughter who was to be adopted. She endured the pain of remembering which Lilian and Emma feared and strategically avoided:

> I have womb music, I call it, for all three of my children. And J's is 'Where do you go to my lovely?' by Peter Sarstedt. And for many years before I

> met her, I would just weep. But now I smile. For me the link was finally … the circle was completed when she came. When I hear '69 music now, the other ones, I can't even think of them now, I have a terrible fear in me because, you're missing periods, and you think 'oh, Jesus Christ', and the music will come, and I'll think 'oh God' (shudder). And then I'll think 'you're all right – you're an old woman now – nobody can get you'. But the fear comes with the music, except for 'where do you go to my lovely?'

Usha's affective response to the specific song that she associates with her pregnancy has changed, precipitated by the resumption of a relationship with her daughter. While for years it evoked her absence and the seemingly irrevocable separation that the adoption wrought, it is now associated with the restoration of narrative continuity across that separation. Usha describes this change as the closing of the circle. It is the action of the mnemonic imagination on the music/memory link that brings about this revaluation. Interestingly, that doesn't happen with the music that she more generally associates with her pregnancy. Such music seems irredeemably bound up with the fear of falling pregnant as an unmarried woman in Ireland during the 1960s, rather than with her mother/daughter relationship. The mnemonic imagination makes it possible for Usha to hold in tension the pleasure of a restored maternal relationship on the one hand and the visceral recall of the fear of pregnancy on the other, allowing both the pain of the rupture and its subsequent annulment to be effectively synthesized. It is this holding in of tension that enables the adoption to become configured as an autobiographical turning point, bringing about a profound transformation with long-term consequences, but at the same time continuities across time have later been constructed, facilitating a relationally constituted sense of self before and after the turning point to be strengthened and consolidated. Usha recalls her pain, but in altered times it is stripped of its disruptive power, instead becoming a newly constituted source for making sense of her experience in the present and future. In the long-term aftermath of adoption, this is what remembering well entails.

Whereas for some adoption is an ineradicable site of pain, indexing or leading to other undesired changes in affinities with those nearest and dearest, relationships with close others can instead prove to be a source of stability and continuity as the suffering caused by adoption is endured, as Usha notes:

> **Usha**: I've got a photograph that is amazing in what it does. It was taken secretly at the mother-and-baby home. I was always terrified that they'd find the camera and take the roll of film off me, but they didn't. And I got about six pictures. Nobody in it, just G, because I didn't want anyone who was helping me to get caught. One of them is of G just before she was going to go to the other parents. And she was wearing a, oh this has made me sad (voice breaking), a pink frock, that my father had bought. He was colour blind so I'm surprised it wasn't green. And so when I look at this picture now, it's knowing that she was about to go, knowing that my father bought the dress, this absolutely fantastic dress. So that picture is not just of some little baby who's just been fed, she didn't even have her eyes open, she was just under the six weeks, but my father is in it even though he wasn't there. So that is precious, in this one beautiful little picture.

In Usha's account, we see her simultaneous grasping together of the pain of her experience of giving up her daughter and a key strand of continuity which traversed the rupture. For Usha, the pink dress has come to signify her father and his care, his love for her so poignantly revealed in his attention to the dress and in overcoming his colour-blindness to attend to the choice of colour. This keeps in difficult balance the heartbreaking moment of her daughter's departure that is also signified by the picture. Her mnemonic imagination synthesizes those temporal dimensions of the past, present and not-present in the photograph and finds bountiful solace in her significance to her father. This transcended the loss of her child. Her double emphatic use of the word 'knowing' is particularly telling. At the moment when her future seemed unknowable and the past felt like a scant resource for understanding what it might hold, it was two certainties—her daughter's departure and her father's care—that she turned to simultaneously in order to make sense of what was and what may be to come. In remembering this today, she returns to these two items of knowledge, one painfully disruptive, the other unwavering and abiding. They act as dual prisms through which her story can be told.

Some people continue to find this narrative weaving together of broken and continuing relationships too difficult or too disconcerting, with the mnemonic imagination unable to assemble and give order to the disparate relational identities involved. The care of someone to whom they are close, along with the importance of this person in their lives, can bring even more sharply into relief the absence of another such person. Lilian is one such case:

> I keep them [pictures of J] separate because I wouldn't want to find a picture of a happy family holiday in the middle of a set of pictures of J, because one of the issues when you have a reunion is that you don't have those memories. You know we have built up some memories now from when we met, but there are no memories before that. There is just that great big gap. It's a different thing you attach to those photos. And it would be painful if I came across a picture of my nephew when he was seven in amongst my pictures of J, because it would emphasise that I didn't know her when she was seven.

For Lilian, memories of her close relationships with other members of her family which have been continuous over time, such as with her nephews and nieces, do not constitute viable mnemonic resources for making sense of the absence of, and the absence of her in, J's childhood. Whereas Usha creatively weaves these relationships together, Lilian has to hold them apart in a kind of zero-sum mnemonic game. The management of mnemonic resources such as photographs allows for this holding apart to be maintained. While on the one hand Lilian demonstrates her competency in managing the pain of her daughter's absence, on the other hand the pleasurable past she has shared with close others remains an untapped resource for the mnemonic imagination to begin its integration of her daughter's absence into a self-affirming life-narrative.

In all of the cases among this group of women, birth mothers and children had longed to be reunited. Reunion figured mentally as the opportunity to restore the relationship that had been cut short, thus in some manner remedying the ensuing years of loss. Sadly, the promise of these reunions and the hoped-for years to follow rarely lived up to expectations, as Keryn's 'honeymoon' experience illustrates. The devastating sense of loss caused by the adoption could never be fully ameliorated, although as Lilian and Usha both attest, in varying degrees of remembering well, ways could be found of managing that loss and coming to terms with it. Perhaps worst of all, the reunion was in itself considered a failure, as Julia recalls:

> JULIA: When I met my birth mother, and I only met her once, she gave me a photograph of her, two photographs, one that she took in the mother-and-baby home. They weren't allowed to take photographs, they were surreptitiously done, you know. There is one of her holding me, she's looking down and you can't see her face, her hair is very long over down here. And there is one of me that she took. She handed them over to me, and

> she gave me a few other things. We only met once in Cornwall where she lived and that was it (vocalised ripping sound). She gave me the tag that was on my wrist in the hospital and a couple of other things, and it was almost like I know I've given you these things, they would have gone with me in my coffin, but I've handed them over. And that was it. I didn't get any photographs of when we met. Didn't think. It was so awkward. It was such a weird thing. I never actually got a photograph of us together. And that was it. Game over. Blew my chance. I've got one photograph of her, one photograph that she sent me. We wrote a couple of letters to each other before we met. And I've got a photograph of her at home leaning back and laughing, and we're very similar to look at. So I've only got three photographs linked to my mum. I really regret not having a photograph taken because you feel like that's it, you had your chance but you feel like you blew it all because you didn't say the right thing at the right time and that's it.

The meeting with her mother is narrated not only as a turning point but also as a lost opportunity. While on the one hand Julia takes possession of a number of precious mnemonic items, including a photograph and her hospital wrist tag, on the other hand these items remain out of context, divorced from her personal experience. Without an accompanying relationship with her mother, these items are empty vehicles of memory. They cannot be invested with the value and significance that Julia desires through the intertwining of her mother's experience with her own. Julia assigns this failure to herself because of not saying the right thing at the right time, thus creating an opening for their relationship to develop. The failure is somewhat mitigated by Julia's reading of the images. Photographs permit visual connections to be explored even in the absence of a reciprocal relationship in which their reading can be situated. Julia defies a sense of complete loss, seeking to recognize herself in her mother, focussing on their embodied rather than emotional connection. The value of physical resemblances is symbolically heightened in the absence of a social relationship. It is the one thing that cannot be provided by an adoptive family, no matter how stable and loving. In this way Julia draws from the images the only mnemonic value available to her, using it to make sense of her sense of who she is in the present. She also had a similar experience in her meeting with her paternal grandmother:

> And it was like we had a very short meeting, about an hour long, because they were cooking and we weren't invited to stay. It was all very strange,

> but what we did was like an almost frantic exchange of photographs. She looked at mine, I looked at hers.

Despite a relationship between them failing to develop, Julia's interaction with her grandmother becomes a resource for the future to the extent that she names her daughter after her grandmother. Not only is this a construction of continuity in the absence of a conventional familial relationship, but it also seeks to provide these familial connections for her own daughter. The lost opportunity for a relationship with her mother is reprised with her grandmother, but she responds differently, literally turning it into a resource for generational renewal. She takes her grandmother's name and invests the symbolic value of this in her own daughter, drawing her grandmother into her own life story, but doing so on her own terms and in the absence of a long-term reciprocal relationship.

Resituating the Self

The absence of mnemonic resources and social frameworks for remembering poses a considerable challenge to the work of the mnemonic imagination in attempting to shuttle back and forth between past, present and future experience, and weave together a cohesive life story. Gaps and lacunae in memory require intensive working and reworking, disentangling and reweaving what can be salvaged from the past until satisfactory ways of living with the past can be found. Only then will some resemblance of remembering well be achieved.

In concluding this chapter, we turn to one participant, Nisha, for whom the foreclosure of the mnemonic imagination had been almost total. The failure of her marriage after years of domestic abuse left her unable to recognize herself, as the ruination of her marriage precipitated experience of devastation in her sense of self. She was left feeling bereft, unable to move forward. She felt paralysed by the past. The close relationship with her sons finally provided her with a new position from which to conceive her past. Through them she found a way of building fresh mnemonic resources with which to recognize herself anew:

> Over the years I've tried to block out all the memories. I don't do photographs, I don't look at photographs, but music triggers these thoughts off. Marriage wasn't … It was an arranged marriage. He was from here. But it

> was that control factor. Being away from this country, domestic abuse, the concept I had was it was when a man hits a woman. But when I became a foster carer, they send you on courses and plus, I worked for a Rape Crisis centre. It's the control factor, because he's a policeman. So it was undermining me all the time. It was a phase where I was from there (hand gesture) to there (hand gesture). I was about 9 stones, but by the time I had my second child in 2002 I had gone to 15 stones. It was that undermining you all the time. So I didn't like looking at myself. That was a dark patch for me. So I didn't like looking at pictures at all. I did take pictures of my children because I thought … Eventually I stood up and said I can't put up with this anymore. So, then had to fight for this house for nearly two years. All the family came along and said this, this and this. This is getting a bit emotional (voice breaks). I've noticed that I tend to block memories, but when they open, when the box gets full up, it's just… a bank. […] I don't go back. It's basically thinking why did I waste my time on you? The anger. The rage. Thinking why did I let someone do that to me. I'm in that denial mode: 'no, it wasn't me'.

For Nisha, the failed marriage, the struggle for her home and familial condemnation were indissolubly bound up with her own physical change as she put on excess weight. It was as if they were inscribed on her body, visible to her on every glance in the mirror and in every photograph that might be taken. Her continuing inability to come properly to terms with her painful past rests on the denial of her own position within it, as she emphatically rages not only against her husband but also against her remembered self: 'it wasn't me'. While music, with its unbiddable presence in private and public space, has the ability to create painful confrontations between her past experience and her present self, photographs are more amenable to control. Disengaging from photographs of herself completely is the best way she can find of rejecting her remembered self within her arranged marriage. Such disengagement is more than the avoidance of painful memories; it is also the failure to find them meaningful in relation to how she now regards herself:

> Photos to me don't mean anything but uh, I, it's just I want my children to know that … So I've just started to take pictures of them. Well, from day one I took pictures but I've not put myself there to be seen in the pictures. I don't like pictures. I mean, coming from six girls, at that time, there were no pictures, or there's only odd pictures here and there, so you don't know what happened. I mean you're growing up, so I want my boys to know. So for their sake I've started to do that. I've just done my son's

> ninth birthday. I had a photographer, a friend of mine, who did the pictures and everything. I think, after a long time, I made sure I was in them for them to see. But to be honest, looking at them, I don't feel anything. Is that just me? Just how I am? Pictures mean nothing. But then if you think about it, if pictures were in your life from an early stage then you can look back, they can bring the memories and thoughts back, but if they haven't … So to me pictures are nothing. That's gone. It's like my marriage. That's gone.

What is striking about Nisha's account is the sharp tension between rejection of memories of herself and her marriage and the need to construct mnemonic resources for her sons relating to their own childhood. For the first time since her divorce, she took the opportunity of her youngest son's ninth birthday to insert herself into the photographs, integrating herself in his mnemonic resources, thus self-consciously placing herself within the story of their childhoods. This was not an easy decision, and it did not mark a revaluation of photographs as mnemonic resources, for she claims not to 'feel anything' when looking at them. This is clearly compounded by the absence of mnemonic resources with which to remember her own childhood. Their absence has stunted her literacy in the language of family photography and left her unsure of the value of photographs as vehicles of memory.

In the interview with Nisha, we looked at the photographs of her son's ninth birthday together. The embryonic beginnings of some reconciliation between her remembering and her renewed postdivorce self did then begin to emerge. We asked her what she thought of these photographs when she first saw them. She responded:

> I don't like myself. I haven't ever seen myself apart from the mirror. But that's not bad. I have never taken pictures like that. Going to this length I have never … I have never thought about this. But now I'm looking it's making me smile. That could be a good thing. And I want them to … I think it's a part of me thinking about what I've missed out … and I want them to have that. The poor lads have been through a lot because of what was going on, till he moved out in 2009, no, 2010, so I thought it might be a new beginning for us.

While she still doesn't 'like' herself in the photographs, she does at least recognize herself and see some positive value in this. More than that, the photographs are making her smile. It is in the re-viewing of the images,

the re-remembering from a changed present that offers her the opportunity to begin building a new self-narrative, one in which she has won her struggle to keep her home, to lose the weight she gained and to be a successful mother to her two happy sons. The time of her marriage, when her self-identity was continually in jeopardy, may remain beyond the reach of her mnemonic imagination, but the absence of resources in her own childhood has become a stimulus to action in the present on behalf of her children. Even though her distrust of photographs remains, the conventions of family photography are beginning to provide her with a framework for undertaking a new kind of mnemonic labour. These fresh resources provide fertile, although not wholly unproblematic, ground for Nisha to generate a new turning point in her own life and that of her sons. In doing so she has moved towards, if not fully achieved, a considerable change around in her relationship to others. She has moved from the complete rejection of her past self and the paralysis of her mnemonic imagination to a changed situation in which mnemonic obligations to her sons offer the opportunity to start the difficult process of creating and compiling new mnemonic resources. These hold the promise of redefining her as a successful mother rather than a failed wife. Following this is the longer process of allowing the mnemonic imagination to gain traction, little by little, on the resources now available and so begin the slow work of learning to remember well, and in that way reconstitute her identity.

This slow and gradual work is, as we have seen over the course of this chapter, intimately tied to ways in which we situate and resituate ourselves in relation to close and sometimes distant others, continually reconfiguring to a greater or lesser extent our social networks of belonging over time. These networks are not only bounded by time but also in space. In the next chapter we consider the ways in which these processes are emplaced, and performed in and through the geographies of our experience. A spatialized understanding of memory is in one sense taken for granted; it pervades our everyday language in the twinned pairings of the there-then and here-now. However, the precise ways in which our experiences of life transitions, and the manner in which they are made meaningful in the remembering process, are shaped by the spaces and places of experience then and now, have yet to be closely scrutinized. The same is true of the extent to which everyday spatial transitions are themselves managed and made sense of by the mnemonic imagination. It

is to this task of attending closely to the ways in which place is implicated in life transitions and their mnemonic management that we now turn.

Notes

1. This turn to the everyday in psychology has not been without its critics. Cohen (2008) provides a helpful historical and more detailed explanation of these debates within psychological memory research.
2. The transcript quotation cited by Radley (1995) is from research data collected by Sherman and Newman (1977–1978).
3. Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937) was a French composer, organist and teacher, best celebrated for his ten organ symphonies.
4. All of the respondents in this group happened to be women.

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CHAPTER 4

Places of Habitation and Belonging

The Significance of Place and Space

In the previous chapter we made clear that our close relations with others inform not only what and whom we remember, but also how we remember over both short and long periods of time. Recollection and reconstruction help us make sense of a changing gamut of social relationships, perhaps especially across the extended course of a life, while at the same time relatively stable and continuous relationships within that ecology can provide us with points of orientation and frameworks of interpretation through which to understand our cumulative experience and the transitions and turning points that are integral to it. Of course, our remembering of and with close others is not isolated from other sociocultural features of vernacular memory which inform and give shape to memory as both process and product. Our relations with close others, and our remembering of and with them, are always temporally located and spatially situated.

It is with this in mind that we want to turn in this chapter to space and place as a specific dimension of lived experience and a vital element of vernacular remembering. Space and place are part of the stuff of memory; at the same time, they provide the topographical arrangement of remembering practices and processes in the present. As Joanne Garde-Hansen and Owain Jones (2012, p. 4) note, 'Memories of who we are now, who we were, who we wanted to become, are wrapped up in memories of where we are, where we were, and where we will be

E. Keightley and M. Pickering, *Memory and the Management of Change*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies,
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(would like to be)'. Our past and present locations and the past and present locations of others are key points of reference in the management of change and transition. Through them we strive to make narrative sense of the relations between constellations of 'there and then' (both our own and others) from the perspective of a continually moving 'here and now' (both our own and others). Remembering is always at once both a situated practice in the present, structured by the places and spaces in which it is enacted, and 'an important process of placing and locating people and communities, both geographically and socially', along with our own position within them (Tolia-Kelly 2004, p. 314). The existential question, 'With whom do we belong?' is always accompanied by another: '*Where* do we belong?' It is to that question that this chapter attends.

Unlike intimate relations, the significance of place has not been neglected in memory studies research. Perhaps most importantly among all this research is the large body of work on the cultural geographies of memory.[1] In large part this work explores specific cultural places of memory, including commemorations, memorials, landscapes and urban environments, and the ways in which the past is communicated, articulated and embedded in and through these temporalized places (Boyer 1994; Rose-Redwood et al. 2008; Jenks 2008; Stangl 2008). While this literature has been crucial in providing insights into the ways in which collective memories are materially and symbolically inscribed as well as spatially embedded, it tends towards an analysis of place as sites of memory, both material and nonmaterial, which are dislocated from wider ecologies of social and cultural remembering. From Ground Zero to Auschwitz (Sturken 2007; Charlesworth 1994), the layers of the past sedimented in these sites of memory, along with their specific politics of inclusion and exclusion and the broader ideological narratives in which they are enmeshed, have been excavated and made subject to scrutiny. Clearly these sites demand concerted analysis on their own terms, and equally clearly such an analytical focus should never be lost, but the ways in which they form part of broader lived environments in and through which remembering is performed is much less frequently attended to. This particular emphasis on sites can be traced in large part to Pierre Nora's (1989, p. 7) influential distinction between *lieux* and *milieux de memoire*:

> Our interest in *lieux de memoire* where memory crystallises and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where

> consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn – but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de memoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de memoire*, real environments of memory.[2]

The environments in which lived experience occurs have, according to Nora, been evacuated of the continuous and unselfconscious transmission of past experience and collectively remembered values and meanings by the ruptures with traditional culture wrought by mass culture and globalization. If, as Nora (1989, p. 8) claims, we had been able to continue 'living in memory, we would not have needed to consecrate lieux de memoire in its name'. While Nora's account provides a helpful framework through which to explore the material instantiation of elite memory and the extent to which this is normative, archival and self-conscious, we do not have to look far for critical judgement of Nora's rather blunt polarization of a golden age of 'social and unviolated' lived memory and the poverty-stricken simulation of memory that modern sites of memory provide.[3] While such judgement is relatively uncontentious, with few scholars in contemporary memory studies subscribing to Nora's starkly contrasting characterizations of modern and premodern memory, Nora's legacy has, over the last twenty five years, been highly influential in serving to direct our analytical attention to sites of memory at the expense of a sustained consideration of the continuing importance of lived environments of vernacular memory. Vernacular memory is not of course a fixed or timeless process. As we hope to have shown in previous chapters as well as in our previous book, it has changed considerably in both form and practice under the sociocultural conditions of late modernity. For all that, it remains the brackish but fertile water flowing between individual and collective forms of remembering. It is within the in-between space it occupies that first- and second-hand experience can be reconciled and synthesized in the ever-changing conditions of the present. Understanding the ways in which this form of memory is spatially located, indivisible from and stimulated by the environments in which it is performed, is a core concern of this chapter.

Inattention to the diverse and changing environments of vernacular memory has been a historical failing of Western memory studies research. We can illustrate this with reference to anticolonialism. In his discussion of alternative accounts of colonial and postcolonial experience,

particularly from the perspective of women and other subordinated social groups, Stephen Legg (2007, p. 461) notes that subaltern studies in the Indian subcontinent have been active in exploring the 'memories and recollections of nonelite struggles against colonial and nationalist authority'. For example, Veena Das (2006) describes her own ethnographic work which explores the residue of Partition violence in the everyday lives of South Asians as tracing the descent of violence 'into the ordinary'. While not self-consciously located in memory studies, Das's work interrogates the ways in which this descent into the ordinary is spatially structured in the context of Partition, and especially so in terms of relocations between, and repositioning in, space and place. Her research is animated by questions relating to how the radical ruptures caused by emplaced intercommunal violence are managed over time: 'what it is to pick up the pieces and to live in this very place of devastation?' (p. 6). In attempting to answer this question, she sets her work against a generalized suspicion of the ordinary in anthropological and social research. This 'seems to be rooted in the fact that relationships require a repeated attention to the most ordinary of objects and events, but our theoretical impulse is often to think of agency in terms of escaping the ordinary rather than as a descent into it' (pp. 6–7). What Das's work suggests is that severe rifts in the fabric of experience are closely associated with the lived places of everyday experience, and it is then through them that they may be articulated in vernacular processes of remembering. By turning to the everyday as the arena in which accumulations of experience are arranged, synthesized and mobilized, this and other work of its kind has achieved a reconnection of the temporal, the spatial and the social. An excessive emphasis on sites of memory tends instead to hold them apart, and against this tendency we need to stress that the ways in which the past is creatively rendered in the present is both socially and spatially situated, with those social and spatial contexts being in turn continually maintained or reconfigured in the process.

Alongside this concern with mundane environments and the manner in which they 'seep into, and provoke, memories', social and cultural geography has generated new ways of thinking about place (Das 2006, p. 458). Doreen Massey's (1995, p. 188) reconceptualization of place as 'constantly shifting articulations of social relations through time', along with her characterization of places 'as attempts to define, and claim coherence and a particular meaning for, specific envelopes of space-time', constitutes a crucial shift away from a fetishization of space and

place that 'threatens to obscure the wider production of social memory' (Atkinson 2007, p. 523). In a similar move, Julia Bennett (2011, p. 1) folds together the spatial, the temporal and the social as indivisible in the production of a sense of local belonging:

> Local belonging is essentially a belonging in place. When one has lived one's entire life within one place alongside many lifelong personal attachments to family, friends and other people, one's whole being is attuned to the milieu. In this sense the place is incorporated into the body, and the body, the person, is 'woven … into the texture of the place'.[4] Such an intermingling of people and place is a form of 'cultivation', an ongoing activity.[5] It is only through the performance of 'everyday lives' that this engagement with the place can be seen.

For Bennett, it is through the routine activities of vernacular memory that this sense of local belonging is brought into being and mobilized. Places are not simply the locations in which social experience takes place; rather, place and social experience are mutually constitutive. Social identities are interpolated by the places in which they are expressed and made manifest, while places are shaped by social actors and actions situated within them. Remembering past experience is therefore always shot through with the dynamics of place, and the sense of self that we produce through the remembering process is always emplaced, not only located in time and in networks of social relationships but also situated in the spaces and places in which our remembering and remembered experience have taken and continue to take place. What Bennett's reflections on the production of an emplaced sense of belonging and the centrality of place in making sense of self and self–other relations then lead to is the question as to what happens to any achieved stability in our cross-temporal sense of self and our relation to others when our places of habitation and belonging change, either voluntarily or otherwise. How do we negotiate spatial transitions through the remembering process, and how are those transitions remembered?

Mobile Memory

The relationship between spatial dislocation and memory has, in the last decade, emerged as a preoccupation in memory studies research. This has involved an increasingly prevalent tendency to see mobility across

both time and space as an intrinsic feature of social and cultural memory. Astrid Erll (2011, p. 12) goes so far as to suggest that 'all cultural memory must "travel," be kept in motion, in order to "stay alive," to have an impact both on individual minds and social formations'. This perspective has led to the development of an array of conceptual and theoretical approaches to analysing and accounting for the ways in which memory travels, along with the consequences of this for the kinds of identities, experiences and social formations it supports.[6] Each of these approaches has attempted in various ways to develop ways of thinking about the movement of memory across both time and space. So, for example, for studies of transcultural and multidirectional memory, the sociopolitical upheavals of late modernity—mass migration, war and genocide, economic and cultural globalization—mean that memory moves in new ways and on unprecedented scales. In the case of global memory, particular attention is paid to the nature of these movements once they have been transformed in a digital context. These approaches have been particularly attentive to the macropolitical dynamics involved in the spatial movements of memory. States, elites, large-scale institutions and public bodies all have a role in authorizing memory and propelling its movement both across and within territorial borders (Radstone 2005). Memory does not move of its own volition. The 'movement of memories is enabled by infrastructures of power, and consequently mediated and consecrated through institutions' (Tomsky 2011, p. 50). The macropolitics of the movement of memory and its rearticulation and reconstruction under new sociopolitical, economic and cultural conditions is vital to understanding how, for example, the memories of war, genocide and systemic exclusions are able to gain or lose their purchase in present social and political discourses: the right to return, the right for recompense, the right for recognition and civic inclusion—all hinge on these dynamics.

All of this is incontestable. So too is the value of the work associated with these approaches. We do nevertheless need to be aware of the dangers implicit within them. The first of these is the risk of abstracting memories as cultural products from the creative social practices in which they are embedded and which feed into or partly comprise remembering as a process. The very definition of cultural memory itself revolves around the unmooring of memories from their originating social contexts, so that they are free to travel across time and, in relation to transcultural and transnational memory, across vast tracts of space. Emphasizing the relative independence of memory in cultural

forms thus risks sliding into reification and simply describing 'crystallisations or concretions of the past—the hypostatisation of memory—as in Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de memoire* by which [national] memory is preserved' (Crownshaw 2011, p. 1). The dynamic relationship between individual practices of remembering, the social conditions in which these are enacted and the cultural and communicative forms in which they are transmitted are not routinely held in view of one another in such a way that acknowledges the spatial transitions involved. Such acknowledgement is important because the meanings that are produced through mobile remembering are produced in the oscillations between them. Secondly, as Radstone has suggested, the kinds of movements of memory across space that have been attended to in this body of work may make it seem as if 'distressing, unwelcome and forced dis- and relocations, as well as the pervasiveness of more privileged and planned modes of global transit, *can appear* to render long-term attachments to, and locatedness in place anachronistic'. This is not the case, and neither is it the case that mnemonic remixings and retellings occur outside and independently of their originating spatial and social contexts. Instead, 'locatedness remains nevertheless utterly—though complexly—significant' (Radstone 2011, pp. 114–5).

We should stress that these risks are implicit. There are various transcultural memory studies which have not yielded to these potential pitfalls and which have developed analytical strategies to account for the interscalar dynamics of mobile memory and the ongoing centrality of sociospatial locatedness within everyday processes of remembering. This is perhaps best illustrated in the work of Michael Rothberg (Rothberg 2009; Rothberg and Yildiz 2011). Rothberg (2009, p. 3) has explored the postcolonial intersections of cultural memory narratives and the mnemonic transformations that these intersections entail. For him, memory is '*multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing; as productive, not privative'. For example, in work with Yasemin Yildiz, Rothberg considers the way in which German Holocaust memory is interpolated by Turkish migrant mothers through communal practices of remembering, and how in doing so their remembering practices (and the memories they bring into dialogue with Holocaust memory) widen notions of citizenship and national identity that are otherwise anchored by an exclusive remembrance of the Nazi past. It is precisely the situational specificity, not only national but local and communal, that produces creative renderings of Holocaust memory.

There are, however, some aspects of the mobility of remembering that are overlooked by transcultural memory studies and associated research. The focus of transcultural memory literature focuses on large-scale movements of memory and macro-scale memory narratives. Memories of collective, public, historical events—genocide, political oppression, natural disasters—have been considered, with memory of the Holocaust looming largest amongst them. What have been routinely overlooked are the less spectacular memories of everyday movement and what is at stake in their traversal of time and space. These include ordinary mobile 'activities which are often personally and culturally significant within people's lives (such as holidaymaking, walking, car driving, phoning, flying)' alongside more profound movements, such as moving home or migrating (Urry 2007, p. 19). This is perhaps the case because of the origins of transcultural memory research, and while it has explicitly sought to avoid the reification of memories and to embed them in the social contexts in which they are articulated, there has nevertheless been a tendency to begin from the movement of a memory as product and to consider how these memories are 'received locally' (Crownshaw 2011, pp. 2–3). The cognitive and discursive frameworks of cultural practices of reception are insufficient to explain how spatially dislocated memories are made our own in the lived contexts of the everyday via many different cultural resources. Multiple intersections, including the personal, popular and historical, are involved in the process of making sense of and synthesizing the memories of others, and memories from other places, into our own bodies of narrative and understanding. Changes in public memories as products are prioritized over explorations of the ways in which spatially mobile memories become integral elements of everyday life. As a result, the complexity of spatially mobile memories in vernacular processes of remembering is radically underestimated.

Movement towards a fuller exploration of the vernacular forms of spatial transition is what we wish to initiate in this chapter. The move does not simply involve shifting to a consideration of how mobile public memories are made our own. Rather, it involves a wholesale shift of perspective from analysing the articulation of a predefined mobile cultural memory in the vernacular domain, to beginning with remembers themselves and their own spatial movements, then considering how their transitions across space and place are managed through remembering processes and practices. As John Urry (2007, p. 5) has discussed at length, mobility is not a singular experience; it is multifarious, often

contested and made all the more complex by 'extensive and intricate connections between physical travel and modes of communication [which] form new fluidities and are often difficult to stabilise'. For us, the distinctively mnemonic aspect of the struggle to stabilize the meaning of our movement across time and space involves both the making our own of inherited spatial memories and the vernacular articulation of collective experiences such as large-scale migration, but at the same it also means moving into the ordinary and taking into account those small-scale, personal movements—moving house, leaving home for the first time, taking holidays, having a day out—which inform our sense of belonging in time and space in the manner that Julia Bennett (2011) describes. An example of this is going to the cinema. In her account of this, Susannah Radstone (2011, p. 109) demonstrates just how mundane, but also simultaneously affecting, the experience of spatial dislocations, real or imagined, can be:

> We all know how it feels – that experience of finding ourselves, or perhaps better put, losing ourselves, in an uncanny or excessive space. On leaving the cinema, our surroundings, even when familiar, may take on a strangeness lent to them by the continuing presence of the cinema's imaginary spaces and places. Far from a loved one, we find ourselves neither where we, or they, are. These disorientating experiences demonstrate the competing material and psychical realisms of location. Where we are, and where we feel we are, may not coincide. These apprehensions of spatial dislocation and disjuncture can be triggered … by the cinema, as well as by other immersive media. But they can be generated, too, by actual uprootings and relocations – by experiences of exiledom, refugeedom and migration, when the actuality of our location may jar particularly harshly with where we feel we are and where we long to be.

While Radstone's reference to actual movements in space return to the spectacular rather than the mundane, it is precisely with these ways in which our sense of belonging in and to a place, as well as to and with particular people, can be disrupted by changing place and space, and with the ways in which we continually manage these transitions through everyday practices of remembering in order to establish and re-establish a coherent and continuous sense of ourselves in relation to others, that we are concerned in this chapter.

Places of belonging, as well as the mnemonic management of changes within them, can provide relatively stable resources in remembering

processes through which we are able to negotiate other kinds of turns and transitions in social experience. Continuities in places of belonging can act as scaffolding for the negotiation of changes in our relations with others, as for example by helping to impart a sense of continuity between what was before and after those changes. Charles Fernyhough's (2013, pp. 97–99) autobiographical account of Goldhanger, a place where he walked as a child with his father, and to which he returns after his father's death, provides just such an example:

> We would never have come this way when I was a child. Dad would have found it too crowded, with too many signs of human occupation. The caravan parks, for all their promise of a cheap holiday, would have filled him with dread … The landscape, then, explains its own unfamiliarity. I know, because my father's remembered foibles tell me so, that we wouldn't have started our walk from here … There are other reasons to think that this was not the way I used to come as a child. I remember – that is, I have a clear and vivid recollection – that we used to part in the village if Goldhanger and cut across the fields to get to the sea wall … I have an image of Dad and me parking, leaving the car and setting off. I remember it because Dad was always very anxious about leaving his car, a white Vauxhall Carlton estate, parked on a village street. I seem to remember an overgrown green, perhaps with a pond and some benches. There were no parking restrictions, no yellow lines that we could see, but he would still worry about leaving the car anywhere other than his own driveway. I suspect that it's this anxiety that sticks in my memory. We remember the unexpected, and the sight of an adult showing any barely perceptible emotion was enough to burn the memory for posterity. In that moment I had a sense of by father's vulnerability. This was not exactly unusual; my parents had been through a divorce and they were already painfully human to me. I knew by now that grown-ups had feelings that weren't always brave or honourable. But still, I must have been intrigued by this faint show of weakness, as he engaged the new-fangled central locking system and walked on, checking back at the car one last time.

For Fernyhough, there is a discomforting unfamiliarity, a sense of disorientation, in revisiting this once-familiar place, while at the same time a sense of the continuity of the place between then and now allows him to open up that sense of unfamiliarity to scrutiny, exploring the changes over time that occurred between there-then and here-now. The landscape, partly familiar and partly made strange by those changes, provides Fernyhough with the architecture for remembering his now-dead

father, his 'foibles' seamlessly melding with and imparting meaning to his contemporary movement (or failure to move in the same way) through that landscape. The village green and its conspicuous absence of parking restrictions is not simply the backdrop to his encounter with his father; it is inextricable from it. It is the very thing that reveals his father's adult weaknesses, but also Fernyhough's changing relationship with his father and his own subsequent ascent into adulthood. Fernyhough's sense of belonging in the landscape was not complete—his assimilation into it was far from fulfilled in his recognition that 'we would never have come this way'. However, it was precisely those spatiotemporal fissures and lacunae through which he was able to reimagine his father and his relationship with him in spite of his absence. His father and the landscape were inseparable; the unfamiliarity of the landscapes can be explained by memories of his father's foibles, his engagement with which were in turn revealed by the same landscape.

While Fernyhough's return was an embodied one, as Radstone's (2011) earlier example of spatial disorientation associated with cinema-going suggested, many of our returns to familiar places and sojourns in unfamiliar places are mediated in one way or another. We revisit places from the past imaginatively via various media of remembering, both personal and public, including music, photographs, television, film and diverse online platforms. We do not physically inhabit two places at once, but through our mnemonic imagining we oscillate between the there-then and here-now. It is the availability of past places in cultural forms that allows us, via mnemonic imagining, to reconstruct our movement between places, but as we discussed in *Photography, Music and Memory*, the nature of their accessibility is contingent on the affordances and limits of the medium in question, whether that is the photographic frame or the difficulties of sharing memories elicited by music because of its oblique yet indexical relationship with our lived experience. At the same time, the circulation of modes of revisiting there-then in cultural forms opens up to us other people's places of habitation and belonging. While it is never guaranteed, in any time or place, remembering well through these modes of revisiting involves realizing the potential for bringing into relation the places of belonging of others and those of our own, from childhood homes and neighbourhoods onwards. It is a matter of opening up opportunities for empathic relations with the pasts of both close and distant others. Communications media are directly and indirectly implicated in our experience of transitioning between spaces, both

those we experience firsthand and those we experience by shuttling between the spaces and places of our own and other people's belonging. They are essential to the mnemonic work involved in making sense of these cross-spatial mobilities. Our configuration and reconfiguration of new sociospatial continuities in a continuously moving present depends crucially on the flexibility with which we are able to wield our cultural resources for remembering space and place.

Inherited and Imposed Places of Memory

It is precisely this kind of cultural mediation which allowed Kia, a young British Asian woman in her early 30s, to navigate the experience of transition between India and the UK. This transition between places is twofold: it is a spatial transition that she has experienced firsthand in her movements between her home in the UK, and India as a distant homeland in which she has spent extended periods of time at regular intervals. Kia's own movement between places echoes an earlier transition, one which she has inherited and which is refracted through her own movements between the UK and India . Her parents' original migration betweenIndia and the UK is experienced by Kia at one remove (despite actually being born inIndia , she grew up in the UK), but it reverberates through her own mnemonic negotiation of relations between home and homeland. Kia is a professional photographer. She has used her own domestic and professional photographic practices as the means through which she is able to synthesize a double sense of India as the there-then of her parents' homeland and as a there-then of her own birthplace, which has been regularly visited through her own childhood and young adulthood, and of the UK in the 1970s as a second there-then into which her parents arrived, bringing her with them. These various configurations of there-then are the basis on which rests her contemporary sense of Britain as, for her, where home is and what home means. At the same time, establishing this basis was a struggle:

> The reason I got into photography is because there were lots of questions about who I am and where I'm going and why. Things are the way that they are with my life and the cultural kind of conflict between myself and my parents. I realised there was a real gap in communication between my generation, which is second-generation Indian, and with my parents' generation, which is first-generation Indian. Obviously there's the age gap,

but then there's also the cultural gap as well. Me taking photographs was really a conscious effort. As I was looking at my photographs, I realised that it answers a lot of the questions. It sort of filled in a lot of the confusion and the frustration.

This was a picture that was taken in India . I was in India and I basically went to spend some time with my family. The reason I wanted to, was because here, everybody is just rush, rush, rush. As you can see, it's like 6:30pm and everyone's gone, you know. I really wanted to go with them to get that real quality time which we just don't get here. I got there and I realised, 'oh God, this is frustrating', because I hadn't been to India since I was eighteen. So there'd been a six or seven year gap. All of sudden, everyone's got TVs and that's all that everybody was doing: watching television. I thought, well, this doesn't really feel much different to being in England where everybody's just focused on the television. This was my cousin's house at the time in India . This is her granddaughter and that's her son. This is really the first time that I'd really connected with this family. I felt a really, really strong connection with this little girl. I think it was really at that kind of time when I was really looking to settle down and I was feeling quite maternal. The bond that I struck up with this little girl was quite special to me and I spent this really intense kind of period in India . I think India does very strange things to you emotionally. You become quite family orientated because it's all about that. But at the same time there were just afternoons where you'd get all the jobs done in the house and then everybody would just sit down and then watch TV. Then you'd think, 'okay, I don't quite know what to do with myself because, it just doesn't feel like I'm on holiday or it doesn't…' I don't know. I didn't really know what to expect, but that wasn't it. I guess my way of dealing with it was to go around taking pictures and just observing what was going on. This was the first photo. I knew there was a real sort of special kind of feeling in that house, and it was the light. There was a real warm kind of atmosphere. I think this was taken at four o'clock in the afternoon or something. It's the golden hour in photography. The light was really beautiful and special. There's something quite special to me about this picture, but when I showed it to people, people didn't quite understand why I was so connected to it. Then when I came back to England, I put it on a forum and then people started telling me how they felt about it and, you know, the symbolism behind the empty chair. There was all sorts of – people were sort of bringing out all sorts of things that I hadn't noticed.

This was taken a year later, when I went back. That's his daughter again, the girl that was sitting on the floor, and that's her mum bathing her. So

> I showed him and he said, "Oh, it looks like a painting." And that was a really good compliment for me. Not just a compliment but it really showed something about the fact that somebody who is from a completely different culture or economic background, understood the relevance and the art behind it. I don't think it's something that I would have heard from my parents. The older Indian generation, at least the generation that my parents came from, maybe don't understand art the way that I would like to understand art. I don't quite understand art either but, you know, having spent time with people that are also from India, um, you know, maybe my parents' age or a few years younger, coming from maybe a writing background or an art background, they understand art in a more kind of academic, more of a learned way, being able to discuss it. Whereas we maybe just say, "Oh, that's a nice picture and I like it".

For Kia, India and England are constructed as places with different temporal rhythms. On the one hand, England is characterized as fast-paced, and as a result, this attenuates the possibility of the kind of social and emotional engagement that Kia desires and finds lacking in her relationship with her parents. On the other hand, India is presented as affording these kinds of durational possibilities for reflective relationships. Kia's productive cross-referencing of a remembered India and a contemporary England relies heavily on the continual work of the mnemonic imagination in shuttling back and forth between there-then and here-now in their various sequential forms. Such work in and over time supports the attribution of particular respective values to India and England as places. The maintenance of a sense of sociocultural difference between India and England is crucial for Kia because it provides the comparative gap through which she can open up and explore the contradictions and tensions in her own identity. However, when she is confronted with a changing there-then, an India that cannot be regarded as timeless but rather as continually shifting, she is required to revise and reconceive those relationally constituted mnemonic meanings. This is most obviously the case when she has returned to India after a number of years and changes have occurred in her absence. Finding that everyone is spending time watching television, just as they do in the UK, proves unsettling. Such unexpected and undesired moments of congruence between the two major places in her life seem to cause Kia the most consternation because they diminish rather than open up the productive cross-referencing between places that her movement between India and England had appeared to offer.

Remembering well in this instance involves the recognition and renegotiation of difference between the there-then and here-now, for only through this will the creative dimension of remembering be sustained. It is for this reason that temporally specific outlines of particular experiences are deliberately traced in Kia's autobiographical narrative, each one in some manner constituting a turning point, a discursively produced moment of change through which her sense of identity is then revisited. For example, her extended description of the strong feelings of connection she had with the young girl in the photograph offers an opportunity to weave together her sense of generational identity with an emergent maternal identity. What is particularly striking is that she links this and an attendant longing to 'settle down' in India rather than England, suggesting that this happened because the family orientation of India , as she described it, did 'strange things' to her. Reconstructing her memory of that visit in this way means that she can then manage the fact that this maternal identity has not, to date, been realized in her life in England.

While Kia remembers India and her visits there as historically specific moments in time, her remembering of India from her current location in England involves an incomplete movement between the two dimensions of her cultural identity. The initially inherited nature of her India /England transition and the degree of inaccessibility and unknowability that this brings, alongside its regular firsthand reprise through her visits to India , generate moments of discomfort and a sense of being literally out of place. Her expectations of easeful belonging jar against the experience of those times of not knowing what to do with herself, and these temporal lacunae mark out the always provisional nature of her identity as it is constructed between places. Peculiarly, the feeling ofbelonging in place as always being in formation also provides moments of connection which are experienced all the more sharply for existing within a sense of being out of place. The validation of the photographs she took in India —both by her Indian relation, who remarks on the similarity her photograph bears to a painting, and by fellow photographers in a British online community, who reflect on the symbolic aspects of the composition—is taken as evidence of her successful traversal of the cultural and economic differences between the two places, imparting to herself an identity as an intermediator between them. The aesthetic response made by her Indian relative is set against her parents' inability to respond to art in this manner because of their perceived lack of cultural capital. Kia explains this as deriving from their inflexible location in

the there-then—an older Indian generation which is quite distinct from the subsequent Indian generation to which she feels communally much closer. In this way her parents are conceived as doubly out of place in the present, conforming neither to contemporary Indian nor to British aesthetic or critical standards. While Kia positions herself as mediating between quite distinct cultures, and while she is able to claim affinities based on her generational identity, she conceives her parents as spatially and temporally dislocated, unable to connect the meanings of the there-then and here-now.

For Kia, photography as a vehicle of memory allows her to abstract and then relocate cultural differences between her inherited India and her home in England, visibly in physical space. Her reflection on the light, the 'special' atmosphere, the warmth of the scene in the 'golden' photographic hour around 4 o'clock infuses India , and more specifically the familial domestic space in India , with a mythic, timeless quality. This quality allows her to imagine an India of the past which she can only access secondhand and to reconcile it with her own experience of this inherited place in the present, although on her return to England, the experienced tension between an inherited and experienced there-then permeates her memory of the place, a continually present 'other' place which she uses to negotiate and understand her simultaneous feelings of belonging and not belonging. In her discussion of the photograph posted on the online message board, the image is mnemonically reimagined. Resituating it in discourses of photographic practice facilitates new interpretations of its symbolic meaning that accord with her contemporary experience in England. Taking the images back to India thus continues this reciprocal mnemonic movement between the two places in her life. She uses the aesthetic frameworks derived from discussions about the original image to find points of commonality and connection with her Indian relatives regarding the second photograph of the child. The photographic images not only provide her with vehicles for her own personal memories of India as a place but also operate as cultural resources on which her mnemonic imagination can act in order to reconcile the differences between India and England and her temporalized movements between them. Kia's transitions between places are navigated via the mnemonic practices associated with photography. They become a way of confronting generational ruptures and anticipated changes in her own shifting identity between daughter and mother. Photographic images are

created and used continually as resources to reimagine these places anew in her unfolding autobiographical narrative.

If certain places can produce simultaneous feelings ofbelonging and not belonging which have to be imaginatively navigated over time using the mnemonic resources we have at our disposal, then involuntary movements between such places can result in painful and dispiriting experiences which are difficult to manage, regardless of the mnemonic resources available to us. Radha is a Kashmiri woman in her late fifties who lives alone. She is divorced, and her former husband is deceased. She has two adult sons who do not live locally. Being the youngest child in a large family, with her father having died young, her eldest brother acted as her guardian. In the following extract, she recounts her memories of the way her arranged marriage was decided on and the ensuing move she made to England while listening to the music of her childhood:

> If there is any decision making or sitting together then I should be there, but no, I shouldn't be there because I'm the youngest in the family. She [my sister] said my brother asked if there is 'anybody you think [is suitable], you can tell us'. Now, I was thinking I'm not going to break this tradition. This … but this song is beautiful. That song is people who have died or gone far away, she sings 'Allah, bring them back'. And she'd talking about her beloved but she is saying I wish I could have a mirror and all the time I see through this your picture. Anyway, I said, 'what happened to that person [her previous suitor]? His mother came and she said 'Do you think we are mad?! For two and a half years we are coming to see you and now you are saying 'don't, we don't want to talk about it''. She was very rude. Anyway, I said 'why'? My brother said 'she Radha has never done anything. She always had a maid, she always had a comforted life. I want her to marry the person that can give her comfort and is responsible and M is that person'.
>
> To be honest [weeps] I actually said that I actually wanted to get married to anybody now. Because I hated… Since my mother died, I lived with one sister and brother-in-law is there and another sister, and I see time is not right. I shouldn't be here. And now I said okay. When I saw M, he was like my eldest brother. It was about fifteen years difference of age. But I just want to come out of there. So I came here. I know first thing I didn't like. I had no experience at all. Because we were dependent we never even go up to the gate. Postman or anybody comes and we don't even know.

> We would just sit in the car, drive, come back and sit in the car and that's it. So no experience, nothing. I don't blame anybody. I tell the children that it was my destiny…

> When I came, first two, three weeks are okay. He had a holiday. Some time off. Then he introduced me, 'this is the sweeping brush and this is the gardening tools and this is …' Everything I started doing. I wasn't used to it. I remember my sister came after two, three years. They were in Libya. Two phone call I remember. One was that all my hands, this pus and blood used to come from this dust allergy. M in the evening used to put iodine on it. But now I'd learned working and I want to do my best. And I asked my sister, she made a joke. I said 'could you tell me, did your hands used to bleed when you worked'? She laughed and I was very angry and put the telephone down. I cried. Then after two, three hours, she rang. She said 'Radha, sorry, I know you were angry. She said yes. When the blood comes I don't work. And you will get used to it'. Very bad memories really I have. So that's why I'm thanks to M, for bringing me here and having two boys. What life would I have had? No matter my sister looking after me, but it isn't fair really. I used to hide, try to be in my room.

In this narrative, Radha describes the way in which her brother decided whom she was going to marry, rejecting one long-term suitor's family and instead selecting another in apparent haste. The marriage required her to move to the UK to be with her new husband, a move that involved a range of attendant difficulties, not least learning the expected domestic duties of an obedient wife. The transition that Radha made from one home to another was a point of painful rupture, with the sheer weight of tradition seeming to prevent any challenge to the process she might have wished to mount. A double disjunction was felt: the involuntary nature of her move to the UK, and the radical difference between her life in Pakistan as the youngest child and her life as a wife in an arranged marriage. She was distressingly aware of her exclusion as the youngest female child from any decision-making process; even finding out the rationale for the choice of her husband after the decision had been made was of necessity conducted surreptitiously via one of her sisters.

The move was involuntary in a second sense. Since the death of her mother, she felt increasingly out of place and burdensome in the houses of her siblings. As a young woman of a marriageable age with limited experience of everyday domestic labour, her sense of being quite literally

out of place grew to the point where she attempted to render herself invisible, as not fully inhabiting the domestic space, by hiding in her room. At this point in her narrative, she suggests she would have married anyone in order to escape her cumulative feeling of being displaced and unwanted. What is fascinating about this account is that she temporalizes this acute feeling when she says she could see the time was 'not right. I shouldn't be here'. Radha situates herself in relation to her close others as both out of place and out of time: among other things, she is too old and her mother too long dead for her to remain in the maternal home. Her unbelonging involved the unravelling of all three of the coordinates of belonging that Linn Miller (2003, p. 217) identifies in her exploration of belonging: 'first, the sense of belonging that refers us to social connections, to a sense of connection to a particular community of people; second, the sense of belonging that refers us to historical connections, to a sense of connection to our past or to a particular tradition; third, a sense of belonging that refers us to geographical connections, to a sense of connection to a particular locality or dwelling place'. It is as if Radha recognized that the place of home had become the irrevocable past before she has managed to leave it, thus trapping her in a place and time to which she no longer belongs. She knew she must belong elsewhere in a new future, but she had no control over what form that new elsewhere took.

The home of her new husband in the UK to which she fled was not, as is clear from the narrative, a place where a sense of belonging was immediately forthcoming. As well as a new country, the domestic expectations of a housewife were foreign to her. She mnemonically shuttles back and forth between her life in Pakistan and the UK, trying to make sense of this foreign quality. Radha's inability to belong in the UK is located as standing between the oppressively cosseted (in)experience of her life in Pakistan and the duties of a doctor's wife in the UK. In her retrospective account, her sister became a bridge between her life in Pakistan and her life in the UK, and although she remembers her sister somewhat cruelly laughing at her sense of disorientation in her new home, with the pain of this embodied in her bleeding hands, her sister nevertheless endorsed her new life in the UK and her forced transition from what she had left behind in Pakistan.

The role of everyday remembering in making sense of the experience of not belonging in either place of habitation posed similar challenges for Radha as it did for Kia. This involved a creative reworking of the

relations between past and present places of (not) belonging in order to take her bearings in the present and for the future. Radha had to find positive ways of affirming her belonging to her new place of habitation in order to make it her own. The mnemonic imagination has been the chief mechanism for achieving this complex relational reworking of her former life in Pakistan and the radically changed life into which she had been parachuted. It is put into operation as she performs and reperforms the story of her life that she tells to her sons. On the one hand, she presents her life in Pakistan as headed to a dead end, devoid of possibilities for the future, by asking the rhetorical question, 'What life would I have had?' and by acceding to narratives of fairness and obligation which emphasize that it was incumbent on her to move on from the family home. On the other hand, while she recognizes the 'very bad memories' from the early days of her marriage, she sublimates her wifely role by emphasizing her identity as a mother. The sacrifices she made in taking on the former role are weighed against what she conceives as the greater, more rewarding experience of being a mother to her two children. She tells of this using the trope of destiny, narratively arranging her transition from Pakistan to the UK as part of a predetermined process with a fulfilling outcome. Characterizing this in terms of inevitability confirms the loss of agency and control, but at the same time it legitimates her now relatively coherent sense of self and feeling of belonging derived, at least to some extent, through identification with her social, relational and material surroundings. The transition, in spite of Radha's experience of it as primarily involving a sense of displacement from either place of habitation and belonging, has thus been reconfigured in such a way that she's been able to forge for herself 'a mode of being in which we are as we ought to be: fully ourselves' (Miller 2003, pp. 217–8).

For Radha, music is the cultural form which best opens up this creative space in which the mnemonic imagination is able to work. Her account of the transition between Pakistan and the UK was given to us while she was listening to the music of her childhood. The consonance between the theme of the song of 'people who have died or gone far away' mirrors her own experience of leaving a known home for an unknown one. But it was not just this particular instance in which music produced an effective mnemonic space for the articulation of loss over time and space. Radha has a broader analogous relationship with music as it is woven through the story of her life, providing a precious strand of continuity across transitions, particularly that between Pakistan and England:

> The other thing she (my sister) gave me was this radio and record player. It was very handy when I was coming from Pakistan. I had a lot of very, very extremely old records from my mother's time, some I bought at that time, in the 70s, or someone gifted them. And my sister used to go to Kabul and started moving around, and she used to bring some back. And my brother-in-law brought some, he was a journalist and he used to go around the world, India, Bangladesh, Kabul, and he used to bring them. And when I was coming, I asked M, 'is there anything you want me to bring?' (because they were looking around for dowry things), he said 'don't forget to bring your music. All the records'. And the records, they are there.

Radha has long collected records. She inherited some from her mother, received many as gifts from siblings and relations, and bought many herself during her time in Pakistan. Her music collection acts as a material manifestation of the constellation of her relationships during her life in Pakistan. They are strongly linked to a sense of belonging (or rather of having belonged) there. In particular, the music marks travels across time, especially in relation to those records she inherited from her mother, and travels across space, as for example is suggested by those bought by her loved ones for her on their various journeys. These associations with people, as well as the places and movements among them, are melded with her own contributions to the collection in the form of the music of 1970s Pakistan. While the value of the collection as a carrier of personal memories of key relationships—not least with her mother—is crucial, it is the mnemonic value of the collection as a vehicle for memories of homeland that is of particular salience in the narrative. The intimate connection between music and place proved a source of consolation in her marriage-related transition from Pakistan to England, then offered a renewed source of cultural value in her husband's request that she bring all of her records with her. Moreover, as the keeper of the collection, Radha operates as a bridge of memory between the there-then of Pakistan and the here-now of her family and friends of Pakistani origin who live in the UK. The music acts as a link to and a conservation of people's affective connection to a distant, past place. As custodian, Radha has cemented a new sense of belonging in the present among the Pakistani diaspora in England.

Unfortunately, this is only one side of the story, and if we move around to the other side, we find that the music as a mnemonic resource and source of cultural pride is set against her status as a divorced woman. This acts as a stigma against her in the Asian community and thus becomes a source of social estrangement:

> The boys, they were very good, they did listen. Because I was very worried, where they will end up. I was on my own. All my nephews, nieces, they are all very well educated. All the time I was thinking, my brother, if anything goes wrong with them, my brother, sister, particularly my brother is going to kill me. You know 'you are like this, you know'. If we have divorce in Asian community, it is all lady's fault. Always lady's fault. They don't listen. They talk about 'oh, she can't cook, she can't do this or that'. If they don't listen then they go and whisper, 'oh, her character wasn't good, oh, she was with somebody else'. It's horrible! I do go in the community. I'm always there. I want to be there really, but I just keep away. Because I'm on my own they can say anything. They do call me. They say I'm a snob. I'm not a snob at all really. When I get to mosque I don't make a difference who sits next to me. People they do find somebody, same status, same clothes and things. But no, my status is everybody. God has given every single person a quality. Poor or rich.

Radha believes there is an insidious continuity between her brother and his family in Pakistan and the diasporic community in England, one which is manifest in the lack of any qualitative distinction in their judgement of her as a divorced woman. Her desire to live within the Asian community and feel an integral part of it is clear, yet she can only haunt its fringes. A full sense of social belonging is not possible for her. In this sense, the rupture between Pakistan and England may not be openly visible, but it remains palpably there in her not fully belonging in either place. The tragedy in this is that through her divorce, Radha acted with a sustained sense of agency for the first time in her life.

Involuntary transitions between places, either inherited or imposed, bring with them a set of various problems and difficulties which create a sense of dislocation from those places in both the past and present. There is no straightforward move to be made in which belonging can be transposed from an original homeland and fulfilled in a new place of habitation. Instead, what is characteristic of migrants and people of mixed heritage is the experience of 'manifold and at times contradictory senses of belonging' (May 2011, p. 370; see also Ifekwunigwe 1999). Both Kia and Radha's mnemonic oscillations between places involved the establishment of always provisional and partial points of identification across the lacunae that the movement between places opened up. This is not to downplay the sense that, for both of them, reaching this establishment involved certain highly valuable creative steps. Each of them found in two different media fecund resources for the mnemonic imagination

to open up opportunities for the disparate fragments of homeland and host land to be woven together into a relatively new and coherent narrative in which points of identification and belonging could begin to be reconfigured.

What unites Radha's and Kia's experience is the hard toil that can be involved in managing movement between places. In our next examples, it is not difficult transitions between places but difficult rifts and ruptures within places which figure. When these affect our places of habitation and belonging, alternative sets of shifting patterns of identification and belonging are experienced and handled in everyday remembering practices.

Changes Within Places

As we have already suggested, the most dramatic social transformations we encounter may be experienced in our most intimate, everyday locales. Changes in how we see the world can alter our relationship to familiar places, our sense of belonging in them and their significance in our life stories. Yet when profound disruption occurs within a certain place, its continuance as everyday backdrop may be vital in managing the disruption. To the degree it is effective, though, such management means that places themselves are in the longer term mnemonically reimagined. For Rachel, a British woman in her late forties, the geography of her local Midlands suburb has provided a stable environment through which her turbulent relationships with her ex-husband's family, and then her ex-husband, can be soundly articulated. Senses of social and emotional proximity and distance, as well as changes in them over time, are expressed through her movements within the familiar landscapes of home and neighbourhood.

> I look at that [photograph] and I think 'oh yeah that's the first time I met his mum and dad', but I don't actually remember it as such. It tends to trigger other events around that time. Things that you don't have pictures of, but you know happened. Like my husband hadn't seen his parents for ages, for a couple of years, and he was playing tennis in the local park and his parents only lived on the other side of the park. They lived on one side of the park and we lived on the other side. He was playing tennis with a friend and he saw his mum walking through the park and obviously she spoke to him and she had said to him at the time, "come home, come

and see your dad" and he said "can I go and fetch my wife?" and she said "no", so he says "well I'm not coming then". She knew about the baby through the community and through friends but she still didn't want anything to do with us.

But then about a year later one of the other relatives came round and says "ooh your mum wants to see you". I think it had a lot to do with the baby, because there were no other grandsons and sons are very important in Indian families and I think because my husband was the youngest child and she was his favourite. So I think she really missed him by that point. When it first happened they sort of think 'oh it's a phase' or 'they'll get over it, he'll come back' but after five years quite blatantly he wasn't going to come back. So she got in contact with him and he said exactly the same thing: "can I bring my wife?" and they was like "if you have to".

I actually saw her recently, and I've always had the greatest of respect for his mum. She was really, really awful to me, but I have a great respect for parents generally. My first husband banned me from seeing her and vice versa after we got divorced and I didn't see her for a lot of years and always ask about her through the children, because the children still go and see her and I say, "oh how's Ba" (that's what they call her, which is mum in Indian) and they say "oh yeah she's alright". But she's very old now. She's not going to last forever and I would really regret it if I didn't see her again. And I just happened to be on her road through work a few months ago and I was right near her house and I thought 'do you know what, I'm going to see her, I don't care what that miserable…old person says'. So I went round to see her. Fortunately she was in. I knocked on the door and she looked at me. Considering she's not seen me for probably the best side of ten years, the first thing she said to me was "you've got so fat", like that. After ten years that's the first thing she said to me, she goes "you're so fat" and then she goes (well she knows what my first husband's like) so the next thing she did is she sticks her head out the front door, looks both ways and she goes "does J know you're here?", and I went "no of course he doesn't". "Get in" she said. And she pulled me in. Even after all these years and we're divorced and she still reacted the same; "don't tell J" 'cause she knows he'll go absolutely mad - "why did you have her in the house". He's quite bitter.

But it was really nice seeing her, she made me a cup of coffee and we had a chat for about an hour, then I dropped her off where she was going. It was really nice seeing her. I was glad that I saw her. It was really strange that even though I had not seen her for ten years that it was just like I'd seen her last week.

A photograph of a family gathering is for Rachel the point of entry into a network of memories relating to her rejection of and subsequent estrangement from her ex-husband's parents, her own divorce and the re-establishment of a relation with her ex-mother-in-law. In the two interrelated vignettes, the local area that she, her ex-husband and his parents lived in informed and shaped both her sense of closeness to, and separation from, her ex-husband and his parents over the course of time. Rachel as a white British woman and her husband as a second-generation British Asian were ostracized by both sets of parents. This was the drastic consequence of their intercultural marriage, despite living in such close local proximity to his parents in particular. In narrating her exclusion from her husband's family, she draws on the local topography to work through the paradoxical physical closeness and their social and emotional separation. The location of their respective homes across a small urban park meant that they faced one another across a gulf of green space which acted as a material and a social divide between them. The arrangement of key places—homes, the park and the footpaths between them—became ways in which Rachel was able to arrange her experience of the looming absence of her husband's family in her past while at the same time reconciling this with her sense of not belonging in this shared place. Her reference to her ex-husband's chance meeting with his mother is situated in the park between the two houses. The park is of particular significance as a neutral and yet in some senses unpredictable zone which everyone crosses without wanting to encounter anyone else, so as the site of this serendipitous meeting, it becomes a major temporal marker of the durational lengths measuring the family's separation. In the first part of Rachel's narrative, the public park stands in stark contrast to the home of her parents-in-law: a private place from which she is excluded and through which she defines her familial unbelonging in time and space. Her husband's refusal to accept his mother's invitation to come home symbolized his banishment from his own family and simultaneously affirmed his belonging with Rachel in their own private domestic space.

The home as a site of familial belonging is crucial in Rachel's account because it also provides the framework through which she accounts for her (and her ex-husband's) subsequent reconciliation with his parents and their emergent closeness. While his mother's eventual invitation of her into their home was begrudging at best, and by Rachel's own admission her mother-in-law had been 'awful' to her for a number of years, in Rachel's story, this is of limited significance. It is her physical presence in

their home, and the recognition of belonging that this affords, which is emphasized, for this signified the beginning of her integration into their family. In this way Rachel emplaces the transition from not belonging to belonging, mnemonically eschewing many of the lingering resentments between her and her husband'sfamily. No doubt for a number of reasons, domestic space is seen in stark binary terms: inside (belonging) and outside (not belonging).

The constellation of both public space and domestic place in Rachel's account forms what Paul Basu (2013, p. 116) calls a cultural memoryscape, a 'varied mnemonic terrain' in which individuals 'negotiate a plurality of allegiances and identifications'. The particular landscape of memory in Rachel's case was again reoccupied in making sense of her second estrangement from her husband's parents after her divorce. The initial emotional and social disconnection, paradoxically signified by the physical proximity of their respective homes across the park, was transfigured into a different kind of spatial separation. Both Rachel and her husband's parents moved away from their houses across the park. The new social distance between them was then matched by the new physical distance, and this time it was enforced by her ex-husband's autocratic command to both Rachel and his mother that the two of them should never meet. Ironically, his stubborn intransigence in this respect matched that of his parents when he and Rachel were first married. No longer held in each other's orbit either by bonds of marriage or by physical proximity, Rachel and her ex-mother-in-law did not see one another for a decade.

The disconnection was problematic for Rachel in at least two ways. Firstly, it ran against her sense of herself as someone who respects and values the status of parenthood. It was this which underpinned her unwillingness to let her ex-husband's parents' initial hostility to her inhibit her eventual acceptance into the family. Secondly, after the divorce, Rachel's sons maintained contact with their paternal grandparents, meaning that her renewed relegation from her ex-husband's family could never be forgotten or easily come to terms with because it was always staring her in the face. Rachel was routinely reminded of the hurt caused by that relegation via her sons' continued interaction with them. This explains why her desire to reclaim a sense of belonging to that paternal family line persisted despite the dissolution of her marriage.

In making sense of this reiterated transition from not belonging to belonging and belonging to not belonging, Rachel again uses places inhabited by her and her husband's family to construct a narrative of

their reunion. A second, apparently serendipitous meeting occurred when she found herself in her ex-mother-in-law's road for work purposes. It was her physical presence in proximity to her ex-mother-in-law's home—a space of belongingg from which she had been excluded for a second time—which resulted in a sudden and determined resolution to end the disconnection. In knocking on the door, she actively subverted her ex-husband's control over contact with his mother, and so by implication with where and with whom she belongs. This is mirrored in her ex-mother-in-law's (albeit initially furtive) behaviour in welcoming her, unsanctioned, into her home. All too briefly, the domestic space becomes a site for the two women to perform autonomously their connection with one another as mothers, daughters and wives, free from the interference of oppressive male relatives. The domestic space is perhaps one of the few places in which this could be done. Rachel finds herself actively 'pulled in' to her home by her ex-mother-in-law, which of course is in stark contrast to her reluctant welcome over a decade earlier. She is welcomed back into a place of familialbelonging once more, although this time no longer as a wife or daughter-in-law but as a mother.

For Rachel, the transition from marriage to divorce and to separation from her ex-husband's family was complicated by their sons' belonging to her ex-husband's family and to their coassociated place of habitation in which belonging was routinely marked out and performed. Repositioning her relationship with her ex-husband's family in terms of her status of mother to their grandchildren, she is able to regain access and so in that way find a stronger means of managing the reiterated transition between social exclusion and inclusion which she has experienced in the long term. Rachel re-establishes a pattern of continuity in her life-narrative and sense of identity over time, one that was badly disrupted by her divorce. This is clearly signalled in the sense of temporal reduction that comes with her reconnection with her ex-mother-in-law. The ten-year span of their separation is suddenly gone, and it's as if it was only last week that she had last seen her. This huge diminishment of temporal distance happily symbolizes an incipient healing of the hurt caused by the double refusal of allowed belonging she has encountered and endured during the course of her life.

The story of a life is woven into and between the places in which we experience the differences between belonging and not belonging. It gains in significance through the ways in which we tell of how shifts from one to the other have been realized. Places, particularly places like the

home which are intimately inhabited, become symbolic reference points in life-narratives. They come over time to act as interpretive templates through which to articulate and make sense of family relationships, involving love of parents for their children, love of children for their parents and love of conjugal partners for each other—or conversely the fraying and severance of these relationships, along with the disintegration of the meaning-making frameworks they provide. For Rachel, in the complex ways in which she relates to them, domestic spaces in particular become imaginative resources for managing change, resources she can use in her mnemonic reimagining of the past in response to change, especially change which entails challenges to her identity as a wife and as a mother. It is her maternal identity which is paramount, one she must insistently retain, maintain and remake in the sometimes mocking face of change. Of course, it is not only our social relationships—intimate or otherwise—that change. Places themselves change, sometimes in tandem with and sometimes in contradistinction to changes in our relationships and identities. Changes in the configuration of place are experienced as transitions in their own right. These changes must then be gauged for the extent to which they can be reconciled with what came before and the manner in which they are compatible, or not compatible, with what we wish to retain from what came before.

Changing Places

From Nottinghamshire to Northumberland, the landscapes of some local communities in the UK have seen radical changes over the past thirty years. Nowhere is this more stunning than in pit villages and communities. What was most distinctive about the landscapes associated with the hazards of coal mining has now disappeared after the decimation of the mining industry and the closure of most of Britain's pits after the bitter dispute of 1984–1985. Once thriving rail routes servicing large mining communities have been decommissioned; in a few places the industrial structures of mines themselves have been preserved in commemoration, sometimes forlornly, sometimes gloriously; and most spoil heaps have been removed or planted upon, providing sites for recreation in what were once the landscapes of labour. These are just three examples of these radical changes. There are many more. Alongside the physical transformations in the environment experienced by these communities, huge disruption in people's lives came about with the closure

of the pits. During the course of our fieldwork we interviewed a number of ex-miners who had been employed in collieries across the East Midlands before the swathe of pit closures in the 1980s and onwards. In the following interview, Dominic, an ex-miner in his late fifties, is looking at a series of personal photographs from this period. He describes the role of changed places in the remembering processes that are involved in attempting to re-establish some element of continuity across what were largely felt to be devastating changes to people's ways of life, social identities and attachment to community.

> Both these subjects I deal with [in his local history work], both sort of got hammered. Railways, I saw the demise of that, and then I saw the demise of [the pits]. There's a sense of loss. There is a sense of loss but there's also a sense of pride I suppose. They tried to save this actual head stock. There was a group and students came down and I remember the lass, she says it was quoted like £300,000 to save it, when instead we could have made the place into a garden, so I wasn't totally on board. She said, 'Well, you know Dominic, your generation's there; we thought you'd automatically be on board'. And I says 'you know, tell me what you see when you see that head stock' and she says, 'well, mining and close communities and all this and that'. I says 'I see that partly, but I also see a lot of heartbreak and pain and sometimes tha's got to go to get rid of that heartbreak and pain. I'm not being funny'. Cause that's how I look at it. I do see lots of heartbreak and I think about some of the meetings and arguments and falling out with people who you never talk to again and all that sort of thing … I think straightaway about the hopelessness of the strike, the coal crisis, everything that went wi' it, despite what we'd done. [It] were a hopeless case.
>
> That one [photo of a kitchen]. The range, I think about me granddad and grandma down pit village and rice pudding, what they used to do and bread and butter pudding and all that and the people that always used to be in cause it were a big family.
>
> I love that one [photo of two boys sat on a railway bridge]. Because y'know, the lads sat there looking. That's the mind-set from that era. I mean, what do I do now with these? Do I take a photo of that, wi' two kids that can't see over a bridge now? One you see there is probably some drug thingy, like the heads. At the side of where this line used to run and that, something like that. Because things change. Photographs are about the comparison. Cause without that comparison you can't see whether you've progressed, what you've lost, what you've gained. You do lose

> things and you gain things. All this stuff [points to computer] is fantastic. But, you know, there's people's attitudes. Worse or better now? You've got to understand them [photographs] for the future. To know where you're going.

The intrinsic tension running through Dominic's account derives from the sense of loss associated with the closure of the pits and the decommissioning of the railways associated with this, the recognition of the struggle against that loss as divisive and painful, and the sense of wanting to value the coal mining past and the ways of living that it entailed in such a way that it will inform and enrich the future of the community. This tension was openly expressed in his disagreement with a young woman who, after the closure of the pits, became involved in an effort to preserve the pit headstock as part of the industrial heritage of the region and a symbol of the resilient, tightly interwoven communities that were organized around this defining feature of the landscape. The young woman argues that the pit head is a symbolic focal point of a past redolent with the positive communal values which were integrally bound up with coal mining as an industry. In a critical qualification of this view, Dominic is unable to separate these values, and the pride that he himself has in them, from the pain and heartbreak which arose from the fissures and cleavages that opened up within the community, and from the hardships and privation that the struggle against the pit closures involved. Embedded in the local landscape are both the loss of a longed-for past and a continual reminder that the very struggle to maintain it undercut the communal relationships it sought to preserve. For Dominic, the dilemmic provocation in this is best resolved by deciding that the former places of mining, even those that are central to a sense of his own personal past, must be allowed to change. The places that he remembers have to be reoriented to the future. The £300,000 required to maintain the pit headstock would have been, in his opinion, better spent on a communal garden, a place where community relations could be reactivated. A preserved headstock would instead have been only a monument to a painful and now moribund past.

Managing the transition between the landscape of the pit village to a new place of community involves embracing the changes in the locality that Dominic inhabits. Some of these have been highly negative, so doing this means accepting the tremendous disruption generated by the closure of the pits while seeking continuity, in the best ways possible,

with the spirit of those close communal ways of living that pit life entailed. Similarly, in his discussion of the photograph of the two young boys looking over the railway bridge and the impossibility of taking an image like that now, he articulates the loss of a particular way of living experienced in his own childhood, but he also suggests that the abiding value of the images lies in the possibilities they afford for critically reflecting on the relationships between past and present, thus weighing up the experiential losses and gains which are wrought up in the ways people occupy and use the local environment. He sets off what he later goes on to describe as a close relationship between the pit communities and the material environments that they inhabit, against contemporary ways of living independent of the landscape that are afforded and fostered by new media and information technologies. Rather than mourning this as a straightforward loss, Dominic considers the possibilities that these new technologies open up while at the same time attempting to retain the value of the ways of living which are more closely tied to the lived experience of place.

In attempting to draw up a balance sheet of these experiential losses and gains, Dominic moves in his remembering away from those places of employment and industry which are most closely connected with the upheaval and discord of the pit closures. He reorientates his memories of the mining past around the intimate places of hearth and home. The pit village and miners' homes, rather than the pit itself or the public spaces of the local railways, become central symbolic places through which Dominic attempts to manage and negotiate the changes he's experienced and the continuities he wishes to refurbish and through that process maintain. One of these places is the cooking range on which his grandparents cooked basic but comforting meals amid the hubbub of an extended family group. In Dominic's narrative, a large family came together in the small home of his grandparents, and this remembered domestic space becomes the site of desired belonging and a symbol of the shared past rather than the more contentious place of the pit. The pit instead reminds him of divisions between management and miners, and dissension among miners during the 1984–1985 strike. Dominic also emphasizes the cultural aspects of pit life which revolve around strong connections between place, identity and communal ways of living, rather than industrial relations, in order to strengthen other strands of continuity that endure despite the bitter memories of the pit closures:

> I often talk to my daughter and say, 'you know, your granddad, he were always singing, you know'. There was always music – even through there weren't a radio, there was always music in the house. Music's always been important and art for mining families … I think music and art has been really important to mining because it goes with the nature of the work. It's like now – it's like outdoor pursuits. If you'd work down there and come out of it, like me, I go fishing and walking and that. It's a natural thing to do because it gets you away from down below – even though I'm not in it now and I haven't been for a long time. It's difficult because obviously a lot of people are moving now. I mean, the whole reason we did the [community] project was there was a perception that this was become sort of a commuter belt for Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield and that people – you often hear people say 'we live next door to them; we never see them'. So the reason they did it was to gather this changing before that generation passes on that were attached to them staple industries. What will attach to this sort of life we're going into I don't know. It's a bit more disparate than it used to be. It's not totally gone. We often reflect on where we live now.

Dominic's reconstruction of continuity spans the personal and the public. He describes the mobilization of his memories of his own father's singing in conversations with his daughter in the interest of making intergenerational connections that are premised on the relationship between embodied cultural practices and the ways of living that were shaped by the places they inhabited. It is not a direct attempt to pass on to his daughter knowledge of the pits as an industrial landscape or mining as a form of manual labour; rather, it is an indirect, perhaps more subtle effort after imparting a general sense of inherited belonging to a particular family and a particular community. In this manner, he attempts to look forward to the future, his own and his daughter's, by taking his bearings from the past. In doing so he liberates himself from the pain of the abrupt transitions of the past thirty years. His community work exemplifies this in a more collective context. The local history project he refers to has attempted not just to record oral histories of mining but also to conserve in some sense the cultural activities and interests connected to mining subcultures and the lived experiences of local places of habitation associated with the pit village. He sees the value of such a project as lying primarily in what it counters: the relentless social change, which involves, among other things, a perceived loosening of the emplaced aspects of social relations—the never-seen neighbours and the transient commuter experience. For Dominic, these cultural features of

the mining past can positively inform the present. This shows that nostalgic longing for emplaced social relationships and the recognition of an increasing lack of those things in the present is far from paralysing. It is the longing for them which stimulates creative action in the present—the effort to develop concrete strategies for embedding these past ways of living in contemporary mores and so enriching 'where we live now'.

Making Places

When places are radically transformed in their physical nature and social function, those who remain living there have also to change in their feelings of habitation and orientation to their everyday environment. There are also occasions when we have to make completely new places of belonging. Moving home requires the active construction of domestic spaces as locations of belonging, and this helps us manage the transition from one locale to another. We rarely feel we belong in the new place right away. Household objects carry memories for us of their previous locations and seem for a while out of place; we need to allow these memories to diminish, and so a gradual process of bedding-in is required. We achieve this not only by gaining a close feel for the new place but also by making it our own. We embrace the transition while also seeking out certain continuities between where we used to live and where we live now. For Lisa, a British woman in her thirties, managing the change between one home and another involved a complex process of establishing a new sense of belonging, not so much for her or for her husband but principally for their children. While both she and her husband are originally from the Midlands, they moved to London for work purposes after finishing university. Their children were born there. The social and financial pressures of living in London precipitated a move back to the Midlands and to a bigger house, with Lisa taking a break from her career to spend more time with their young children. Creative familial remembering practices in the context of their new home in the Midlands formed an essential strategy for negotiating and making sense of their move from one place of habitation to another, along with all the social shifts and psychological upheavals that it entailed. In the first instance, Lisa sets the discursive terms for the transition between homes, justifying the rupture which was, to all intents and purposes, a voluntary one. She does so by constructing the move as necessary:

> We just needed more space. We were lucky because we'd had a house before we moved to London, we'd got capital to invest whereas a lot of our friends still rent. And it was a two-bedroom house, but it just wasn't big enough and we had a garden, but it just wasn't quite big enough for both the children, and so we needed to expand really and the only way we could have done that in London was to have moved out of the area that we lived in, and we thought if we're going to move away from Hackney it would have to be a long way away because it is such a great place to live, it's all or nothing.

While London and specifically the Hackney area was a place where they were happy and enjoyed living, the physical constraints, particularly for their children, began to chafe. In conjunction with this, a local move to a less desirable area of London, which would have disconnected them from their social life in Hackney, would have been a constant reminder of the loss involved in their move away. Through her remembered account of their decision to move, Lisa emphatically defines the transition as the only possible course of action. It is as if she insists on it as inevitable in order to forestall any self-doubt, and once the decision had been made, it became imperative to see the changes in their lives as eminently justifiable and valuable. This validated how they set about coming to terms with the house and location move as a family.

Once the necessity of the transition had been established, Lisa went on to talk about the active mnemonic management of the transition between the two places of belonging which she and her husband have generated with and for their children. As part of this process, she utilizes the conventional practices of domestic photography.

> We did an album for the children when we moved from Hackney up to here. It's all their friends from London so that they wouldn't forget who they were. They all went to the same child minders so they've all grown up together … It's just really nice having these pictures of them doing things on the last days and then there is this little girl who lived over the road from us. It's pictures of their friends when they were growing up to remind them and of things we've done. This was bonfire night and that's my daughter and our neighbour over the road and another friend and we went out to a huge park in Hackney called Victoria Park and they have an amazing firework display every year and we'd covered them in these luminous bracelets and necklaces so we could see where they were in the dark and we took hot chocolate and flapjacks and they'd all got ear defenders

> on so they weren't frightened by the noise and it was just a really nice thing. We used to have lots of shared bath times with people and days out.
>
> This was in Greenwich, in the museum in Greenwich. Just going out and meeting friends. It was just nice having all these so that the children can look at them and remember their friends. Sometimes they'll ask to look at it and then sometimes more with Kitty she'll say "oh I really miss Bella today" or "I really miss Ivy today" and so we'll get the book out and we'll look at the photographs and she might write a letter or something. It's a nice way of keeping their memories of their early years alive.
>
> Sometimes when I look back to when I was sort of that age I find it difficult to differentiate between various groups. But having this, it's really nice for them to look back and remember and we ought to try and update it and put in some of their new friends and have kind of a new album. We are lucky in that most of these children have come up and stayed, along with their parents. We ought to put some pictures in of them visiting here so it sort of carries on, and sort of help the children so they don't feel like they have been moved away from their friends in London and that they are not to have any kind of connection with it, because we want to try to maintain that for as long as possible.

Lisa created a photograph album for her children comprising images of their activities and play with their friends in Hackney, particularly during the last days they lived there, with the explicit intention of using the album as a tool to stimulate and keep alive her children's memories of Hackney and the relationships that they had with friends there. As with Rachel, these images represent and enter Lisa into a cultural memoryscape in which both she and her children once belonged. Her references to Victoria Park, Greenwich and the private domestic spaces of shared bath times are sociospatial microconstellations which contribute to a vernacular geography of belonging, the physical break with which has to be consciously and carefully managed for her and her children.

This was done primarily through domestic photographs, and it is these most of all that helped her children make sense of the transition between Hackney and their new home in the East Midlands. The photos were taken in anticipation of the move, and they mainly focused on shared events and activities. Lisa and her husband deliberately created continuities between the two times and places of their children's lives, strategically deploying the evidence of these continuities after the move.

This has been wholly successful, with their daughter, for example, feeling reassured of the links between her here-and-now relationships and those relationships emplaced in a past sphere of living. Both children have in this way been encouraged to hold to the conviction that those who are no longer copresent in space still have a strong presence in their lives. What is particularly significant about the mnemonic mobilization of photographic resources is the ways in which they move Lisa's children beyond a virtual connection with past people in past places. As resources for remembering, the photos are self-consciously used to stimulate creative action in the present, such as her daughter writing a letter to a London friend in order actively to rearticulate and retain their earlier relationships, making them congruous with their later postmove relationships.

The difficulty that Lisa faces in managing the sociospatial transition between homes is that her children will remember Hackney and childhood friends there from a rapidly changing present, with the danger that new experiences and relationships may gradually eclipse those from the metropolitan past. Lisa anticipates using the album as a way of managing this perpetually mobile present by updating it, incorporating new friends and relationships into the album over time, and therefore placing them in direct narrative connection with the originating friendships located in Hackney. In addition, she anticipates a careful collocation of images representing visits made to the Midlands by their friends from Hackney, thus weaving together and holding in relation a dispersed network of relationships that have evolved through time, rather than setting up a stark contrast between 'them–there' and 'we–here'. Nevertheless, the balance is always a tricky one.

Lisa's entire account revolves around constructing for her children continuities between past and present homes across time and space, but given their very young age, why does Lisa place such a premium on maintaining and keeping alive the memories of a past home for them when this could serve to emphasize or even exaggerate the significance of the move as a rupture in their lives? As she notes from her own experience, unaided, her children are unlikely to remember these earlier groups of children. From her own account, the answer to this question seems to turn on her desire to align her children's memories of Hackney with her own, thus creating a cohesive family memory of their time there. As she notes when closely describing days out with friends, she wants her children to remember 'things we've done', signalling that the remembering

practices she enacts are just as much about authoring a strong sense of familial togetherness over time and, crucially, across the places of home as much as they are about the children maintaining an individual sense of connection with their past home. In addition, Hackney and the social relationships associated with it are crucial to Lisa herself, particularly as a young working mother. The move to the East Midlands involved a big personal change for Lisa too, from working outside the home to working within the home. Maintaining a connection to the social groups that she belonged to in Hackney provides her with a connection to her past self as more than a mother. Her identity as a worker outside the domestic sphere is one that she herself says she is keen to reinhabit in the future.

The transition from one family home to another and the cross-temporal management of this requires a multilayered mnemonic response which at once weaves together life there and life here for the individuals concerned, and maintains an integrity and coherence in the shared nature of the continuities that are established. In Lisa's case, this requires taking on significant creative mnemonic work for her children in order for them to reconcile and hold together a disparate sociospatial network of relationships which have unfolded and are unfolding over the course of time. The resources for remembering which she has created are intended to act as stimuli for her children's mnemonic imagining, but her own mnemonic imagination is caught up in them too. They have also been created in order to align their (positive) memories of a past home with her own. The intent in this respect is to make the personal value that the emplaced relationships there held for Lisa, as a mother and as a working woman, continuous with their present lives despite the switch in the circumstances of her labour. Using her mnemonic imagination to construct and maintain continuities between the places of home helps Lisa make sense of the transition between her own successive socially situated selves.[7]

Conclusion

We began our discussion of experiences of place and the ways in which remembering is involved in transitions in and between places with a reflection on the challenges posed by continual shifts between them. One example of such challenges was Kia's continual sense of in-betweenness, a sense always existing across and betwixt places as a result of an always unfinished transition between them. This is quite different to the

deep sense of place in which the past suffuses everything that is familiar: 'Where he came from, he knew the past. Every stain on his table, every crevice in the wall, every broken fence post, every rock and gully had a past, prompted a memory, told him that he belonged' (Bigsby 2003, p. 94). This sense of place, where the past has a presence in everything, may prove enormously fulfilling, with 'each rock, each stone and tree' being a landmark 'built by our own past and our people', where all that is in it 'beats with its own pulse' (Keenan 2001, p. 24). Yet unless it is continually reflected on and allowed to actively permeate everyday culture, such familiarity of place can easily induce complacency and even lead to stagnation, with the past's vitality in the present time of a place greatly diminished. It may then be time to change places, to move away to some other place.

In steering this discussion towards a conclusion, we return to the experience of being out of place or inhabiting transient or temporary places, but we do so by attending to the necessity of sometimes being out of place in order to remember and rearticulate emplaced bonds of belonging. The creative work of remembering place involves constructing a sense of continuity with our most familiar places of belonging over time, but as Deirdre Madden ([1992] 2014, p. 2) has described, our relationships with our most intimate places can become cluttered and difficult to discern. It is as if we are then too embroiled in the midst of our experiences of them: 'I had found out more about my own country, simply by not being in it. The contrast with Italy was a help, but in many ways I felt I could have gone anywhere, so long as it was far away and provided me with privacy, so that I could forget all about home for a while, forget all about Ireland, and then remember it, undisturbed'. This long-term movement in and out of place—forgetting it in order to deepen and refine the remembering of it—underlies the beginning and end of exploration:

> And the end of all our exploring
>
> Will be to arrive where we started
>
> And know the place for the first time. (Eliot 1963, p. 222)

This knowing is just as fulfilling as the relished sense of place that comes from many years of inhabiting it, but it is always a mistake to think that we can deliberately produce it simply by returning to remembered

places, and that we can easily gain continuity without thoroughly managing change:

> Once or twice during my brief first marriage, when we lived in Heacham, I took Sylvia down to the [beach] hut and we relit the primus. Playing house, I suppose, trying to re-enter as children what we could no longer believe in as adults. But everything I had anticipated as a long, secure sequence, the roar of the primus, the taste of the tea in the green bakelite cups, the packet of digestive biscuits we had brought with us, our wistful absorption in the old magazines we found in the cupboard, all the remembered pleasures were curiously abbreviated, no sooner tasted than tasteless. (Garfitt 2011, p. 27)

Diametrically opposed to this are those moments when, after many changes have been negotiated and assimilated, the past suddenly and fortuitously arises, taking us by surprise not only with its vivid completion of detail but also with its unheralded sense of affirmation, its auspicious pointing forward to some future happiness or fulfilment:

> Turning … into the room again, Alice was subject to a leap of promise … light moving on pink wallpaper, the dark bulk of a wardrobe in the corner of her vision, the children's voices from outside, the room's musty air and its secrets, a creak of floorboards – these aroused a memory so piercing and yet so indefinite that it might have only been the memory of a dream. There was summer in the dream, and a man, and some wordless, weightless signal of affinity passing between him and her, with everything to play for. This flare of intimation buoyed Alice up and agitated her, more like anticipation than recollection. Love seemed again luxuriant and possible – as if something lay in wait. She went along the landing breathless, and aware of her heart beating. (Hadley 2015, p. 14)

It is in the moment of turning from the open window of an upstairs room to its interior that the memory of another bedroom, one inhabited during a distant summer, and of a relationship just opening up in this place, comes back unprompted and unsolicited, bringing with it such a leap of promise that it seems as if the past has turned into anticipation of what is still to come. In this moment, the place of here-now is transformed by the place of there-then. Is this just a romantic illusion? Maybe, but maybe not, for the process takes Alice out of place and into some as yet unrealized possibility while also reinforcing the bond ofbelonging

to the place she is in: the inherited home where her family is gathered, which is now decrepit but full of memories. This back-and-forth movement is possible precisely because Alice has moved on, accepting what has happened in the failed relationship and throwing herself fully—if somewhat flightily—into the flow of new, unfolding developments. It is possible because transitions have been successfully made and change effectively managed.

All these examples—including the necessity of sometimes feeling out of place—emphasize that 'the locus of memory' is as much in place as it is in time (Lowenthal 1997, p. 180). Just as over time remembering provides a creative process through which we can articulate to whom we belong (or not), so it also involves the articulation of where we belong. Changes in patterns of belonging in time and place make demands on the process of remembering, requiring it to operate in the interests of establishing continuities between one or more cases of there-then and here-now. On the one hand, this can involve the use of relatively stable places and constellations of places in the form of memoryscapes that provide a stable network for making sense of changes and ruptures in our social relationships. On the other hand, changes in places and the social changes attendant on them necessitate a mnemonic reimagining of places themselves, their sociospatial significance over time and the ways in which their meanings can be mobilized in the interests of constructing and articulating a coherent story of an individual life, or the collective lived experiences of families, groups or communities. In this sense, places are not simply the stages of our remembered experience. As sociospatial constellations, they are crucial in the active mnemonic production of experiential meaning.

As many of our examples have demonstrated, transitions between places and emplaced social transitions involve a mnemonics of loss and gain. Remembering well turns on the possibility of reconciling what is lost from a past place with what is gained in new places of belonging and habitation, or in relation to what can be carried forward and made our own as we move from one place to another. There are nonetheless some social experiences of life transition which, by definition, involve an almost exclusive sense or feeling of loss. These experiences highlight the limits of the mnemonic imagination in establishing and maintaining transactional relationships between past, present and future experience. One such life transition is our experience of death—both the imminence

of our own and the endurance of loved ones. It is to this limit case that we turn in the next chapter.

Notes

1. For excellent overviews of this literature, see Legg (2007) and Hoelscher and Alderman (2004).
2. See Basu (2013, pp. 115–116) for a reflection on sites of memory as '*the* dominant metaphor for exploring cultural memory'.
3. See, for example, Withers (1996) and Till (2003). For our earlier critique of Nora (1989), see Keightley and Pickering (2012, pp. 143–150).
4. Ingold (2000), p. 198.
5. Heidegger (1971).
6. For transcultural and transnational memory, see Radstone (2011), Crownshaw (2011b), and Erll (2011). For global memory, see Reading (2011b). For multidirectional memory, see Rothberg (2009).
7. The importance of Laura's management of change so far as her children are concerned is illustrated by one of our MO respondents, a former teacher and postman, married with two daughters and three granddaughters. In 1953, when he was six years old, he and his parents moved from the United States to live in England (his mother was American and his father British). The long-term consequences of this 'dislocation of my early years' were difficulties in learning to read and write, and a failure to develop any sustained motivation to achieve a successful career: 'My early adult years were rather aimless, as I drifted from job to job'. Once he entered teaching, he loved it and was totally dedicated to it until 1993, when his earlier problems resurfaced: he had a serious breakdown and suffered badly from depression. After this, he left teaching and joined the postal service (MO Spring 2012 Directive [H4553]).

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CHAPTER 5

Memory and Mourning

Terminus and Transition

We have dealt thus far with definite social and spatial configurations and contexts. We have seen that changes within or between them can cause disruption in the pattern of our experience, which then places unusual demands on the practices of vernacular remembering and their role in the maintenance of coherent emplaced stories of specific groups and communities. At the same time, particular memories and congregations of memories of our relations with close others over the course of time, along with the places and spaces in which we belong, provide us with the material from which we can construct and sustain what seem, at least for certain periods of time, to be temporally stable imaginative architectures through which we are able to manage other shifts, changes and transformations. In this chapter our case study explores the very limits of our capacity to manage life transitions. With death being irrevocable and its resulting loss appearing absolute, we're faced with the most challenging of such transitions. As we consider what this entails, we find that memory and remembering are inextricably entangled in the experience of grief and mourning. In face of the finality of death, we can only turn to memory in addressing the yawning absence it creates. We turn inevitably to memory as we try to hold onto the abiding significance and lasting virtues of the person who has passed, and reflect on what was special and singularly meaningful in the story of her or his life. This chapter attempts to unravel the paradoxical dance between the painful task of

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remembering in the wake of death and, and in its repercussions for our own life afterwards, its unavoidable yet hopefully fruitful necessity.

Experiences of death have the potential to strike at the heart of our continuous sense of self in relation to others and to unsettle the mnemonic terrain on which this is built. Established notions of with whom and where we belong can be cast into doubt by the irreversible loss of close (and sometimes distant) others. So, for example, 'when a couple lose a child, the grief does not draw them together but instead destroys them', for when they discover 'that there can be no consolation, no release from the anguish of it, each comes to understand that we are essentially alone and that's how they end up living' (Buckley 2006, p. 273).[1] The descent into doubt occurs especially when the deaths in which we are involved are outside of our social expectations, when they are premature, sudden or unexplained, or when they involve pain and suffering through illness and decline as a precursor to the experience of bereavement. In contrast, the death of both close and distant others can cause us to question the validity of life-narratives and the values invested in them in quite subtle and nuanced ways, even providing or leading us towards certain turning points and opportunities for seriously rethinking past experience. Through the deaths of others we may also begin to contemplate and anticipate anew the one which may be the most intimate of all: our own. Reflecting on our transition from rememberer to being remembered makes us think all the more sharply about the question of self-continuity and the cumulative outcome of our various successive incarnations of selfhood.

Despite the inevitable disruption it brings to our lives, death is embedded in our social experience. It is shot through with cultural conventions and historically specific moral expectations of the ways it should be managed and responded to in everyday life. The rifts and breaches in experience that it causes may seem impossible to bridge in the searing immediacy of loss, but in time the mnemonic work of imaginatively reforging broken linkages between shared pasts and futures marked by sheer absence makes possible a reinvigorated orientation to the future. It is in direct connection with this that we explore the processes and practices involved in the often painful reweaving of life-narratives in the wake of death, and the ways in which remembering figures in such processes and practices as we mourn, and in mourning attempt to encompass the weight and meaning of our loss.

From the Universal to the Particular

Death, loss and commemoration have long been a preoccupation in memory studies. With the emergence of mechanized warfare, the unprecedented loss of life in World War I and World War II as well as the horrors of the Holocaust, concerns and debates over the representational politics of these events in public culture gained momentum in public discourse and academic enquiry across Europe.[2] In the wake of subsequent internecine conflagrations, genocides and periods of violence in other parts of the world, including South Africa, Rwanda and the Balkans, the issue of commemoration and its link to communal reconciliation and distribution has loomed large (Williams 2007). While, as Hess (2007, p. 813) notes, 'analysis of the rhetoric of memorial is a long-standing scholarly tradition' dating back to Aristotle, in recent years a particular focus on commemorative practice and memorialization associated with what Logan and Reeves (2009) call 'places of pain and shame' have followed in the tradition of analysing sites of memory. As they suggest, the emergence of a concern with these kinds of *lieux de memoire* contrasts sharply with the focus among previous generations on the preservation of material culture reflecting 'the creative genius of humanity rather than the reverse – the destructive and cruel side of history' (p. 1)

Contemporary forms of collectively remembering death and atrocity are routinely viewed through the analytical lens of the ethics and politics of representation. For Jeffrey Alexander (2004, pp. 12, 27), the representation of such pasts in narrative form is a 'complex and multivalent symbolic process that is contingent, highly contested and sometimes highly polarising', but the sharing of them also 'allows collectivities to define new forms of moral responsibility and to redirect the course of political action'. In this sense, while the cultural practices of commemorating these pasts are shot through with difficulties, it is precisely through their contested discursive processes that the narrative construction of events to which identity claims are intimately tied is accomplished. Politicized subject positions become inhabited: the victim, the perpetrator and the witness, along with moral and ethical action in the present and future, are premised on them. Increasingly this has been conceived as intimately tied to what Jeffrey Olick (2007, p. 14) has called the politics of regret, involving 'a new principle of political legitimation' in contemporary culture.[3] In Olick's analysis, the collective

memory of nations as articulated in public and state discourse is one preoccupied with the horrors of history. This collective memory is 'now often disgusted with itself' and intent on 'learning the lessons of history rather than fulfilling its promise or remaining faithful to its legacy' (p. 122). In this formulation, past death and suffering have suffused national and supranational discursive practices of collective remembering.

This mnemonic turn towards death and suffering has, in large part, been conceived in key areas of memory studies as a positive turn away from celebratory, nationalistic renderings of the national past. As Pawas Bisht (2013b, p. 14) suggests, the 'conceptualisation of a politically progressive or emancipatory transnational memory' is now common across a significant body of contemporary memory studies research. The emphasis is on a connective move away from competitive or appropriative frameworks towards 'affiliation across lines of difference' (Hirsch 2012, p. 21). Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (2010, p. 5) tie this largely mediated globalized memory of suffering to the emergence of 'the growing moral consciousness' of the global audience. One of the most prominent perspectives in this body of work is Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider's (2002, 2005, 2010) account of cosmopolitan memory based on the universalization of Holocaust discourse. For Levy and Sznaider, this kind of collective remembering of death and suffering can provide a moral template and a set of discursive practices conducive to the development of a universal human rights discourse. In response to a normative particularism which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s in accounts of Holocaust memory, and which brought with it attendant dangers of exclusivity and a competitive dynamics of victimhood, Levy and Sznaider's (2002) account of cosmopolitan memory centres on the universalization of the Holocaust as what Alexander (2002, p. 6) calls a 'generalised symbol of human suffering and moral evil' and as a past that, once loosened from the communities which experienced it, has become of general significance across national borders and cultures. The role of the media in representing the suffering of others has been central to scholarship in this area, with recent work (such as that of Neda Agha Soltan) attending to the mobility of images of death and the possibilities that digital technologies afford for the appropriation and use of such images in 'public acts of performed cosmopolitanism' (Reading 2011; Scott 2014; Assmann and Assmann 2010, p. 239).

Approaches which promote the universalization of cases of death and suffering as the *suis generis* of cosmopolitan memory have not been

without their critics. Ross Poole (2010, p. 39) challenges the extent to which the media can deliver on Ricoeur's notion of being faithful to the past, for 'if we rely on the media to provide us with our memory of the Holocaust, we will find ourselves increasingly lodged in a self-referential present: our experience will not be of the past but of now'. Poole's concern is actively to resist a presentist perspective on the loss and suffering of those who perished in the Holocaust and instead recognize their suffering on its own historical terms. It is only in this way that we may come close to the faithfulness to the past that Ricoeur advocates. A further difficulty with Levy and Sznaider's approach to cosmopolitan memory and other advocates of universalizations of this kind is that they do not focus sufficiently on the concrete practices and processes involved in remembering. A sense of how Holocaust memory is actively constructed and reconstructed over time is similarly absent. Focusing analytically on remembering practices is necessary in order to avoid the reification of memory as an entity either historically predetermined or entirely defined by the demands of the present (Olick 2007, p. 10).

The argument continues over the extent to which Holocaust memory can and should be universalized as a foundation for a broader human rights discourse rather than considering the contingent, fragmented and often disparate ways in which Holocaust memory occurs. There have, however, been a number of recent empirical sociologies which have analysed the remembering of the death and suffering of others in 'processual terms (as the outcome of ongoing cultural practices and unequal encounters) as well as generative ones (as an activity that is productive of stories and new social relations rather than merely preservative of legacies)' (Cesari and Rigney 2014, p. 20). Research by Pawas Bisht (2013a, b) on the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster and Brian Conway's (2010) analysis of the commemoration of 1972s Bloody Sunday both focus on the communicative and representational processes, actors and sociopolitical contexts through which the remembering of two very different instances of death and loss on a collective scale have been articulated. They consider the tensions, contingencies and interscalar dynamics in play in these processes, with Conway emphasizing the importance of memory choreographers and their exercise of agency in making the move between private remembrance and public commemoration, and Bisht (2013b, pp. 18–19) emphasizing the messy local–global dynamics in which memory agents construct and navigate 'competing moral and political claims'. For both Bisht and Conway, the processes of remembering death and

suffering over time are neither universalizing nor best seen in terms of their historical particularities. Instead they are caught up in a web of competing discourses through which linkages between the past dead and the present living are continually cast and recast in an ever-shifting set of social, political and temporal relations. They tread the difficult line between presentism and historicism, locating memories of death and suffering as at once future oriented, and shaped and informed by the socio-political demands of the present. In this way they are potential resources for the forging of new and reconfigured identities as well as for the making of claims premised on them. At the same time, those claims are always tied to and delimited by the irreducibility of past loss and an ambition to be faithful to the suffering that it entailed.

A further value of the work of both Bisht and Conway is that they open up the possibility of considering the ways in which death and mourning are conducted across the different scales of memory. In its polarization of memories of death as universal or particular, collective and cultural memory studies have tended to elide the ways in which individuals and social groups are implicated in its remembrance. Sites of painful memory and representations of death and suffering have been analysed largely at the macrocultural level, with relatively limited consideration of how individuals and social groups are implicated in the ways in which death and loss are remembered over time. Conway (2010, pp. 146–7) develops a model of commemoration which sees remembering practices operating within and between individuals, small groups, social groups and institutions, with the relations between these levels characterized as 'sustained struggles over what meanings can be associated with the past and who could claim ownership of them'. In his analysis of the dynamic relationships between different agents of cultural memory and their communicative practices, Bisht develops an approach which is somewhat less hierarchical, instead working with a connective, nodal communicative model through which the remembering of the Bhopal disaster has been negotiated by individuals, groups and institutions of varying capacity and agency. For Bisht (2013b), the practices of remembering death and suffering can be seen as an ongoing configuration and reconfiguration of meanings and allegiances which oscillate on a temporal plane between past and present, but which also move across local and global scales, and shuttle back and forth between individual and collective social scales.[4]

This emphasis on remembering as a process comprising complex cultural practices which range across and between vernacular and institutional milieus has not been restricted to a focus on mediated communication. Indeed, as Paul Connerton (2011, p. 17) notes, there has been a 'sea change' in historical research produced by a shift in 'attention from the stories of elites to the histories of everyday life'. This has led to 'the continuous victimisation of large segments of humanity along the lines of class, gender and race' being held up to 'extensive scrutiny'. In his own work which reflects this shift, Connerton has explored a wide range of embodied cultural practices, from tattooing to quilt making, which provide an alternative starting point to that taken by universalist approaches in which the memory of death serves the purposes of political legitimation. For Connerton, analysing cultural memory in terms of its legitimizing function needs to be supplemented with another kind of history: that derived from the spirit of mourning. Among other things, the value of this lies in the ways grief, loss and mourning are in themselves generative of new trajectories and practices of cultural remembering. Through them, embodied, affective experience can be articulated, and the losses and gains involved in experiences of suffering and death mnemonically narrated (Connerton 2011, pp. 30, 12). Emphasis on the aspects of cultural memories of death and suffering which exceed their role in justifying contemporary political agendas or actions allows the demands of the past and the requirements of the present to be held in tension with each another, positioning cultural memory in a relationship of continual negotiation between the two. It also allows for the possibility of realizing a turn to the vernacular in our analysis of death and mourning. Such possibility lies precisely in its accommodation of the affective, corporeal performances and particularities of remembering which are excluded from considerations of accounts emphasizing the universal, institutional and future-oriented potential of past suffering.

Mourning and remembering those who have passed involves a dynamic interplay between individual experience and social practice. Their affective and embodied aspects are articulated through collective modes of engaging with the past; they are inscribed in cultural forms which allow those pasts to be shared over time beyond the immediate social groups in which they are experienced. Here we should note that the shift in perspective towards the everyday and the vernacular has had some curious analytical consequences. Where it might be expected

that the analytical lens of memory research would increasingly expand to incorporate the micro-level, routine ways in which death is remembered in everyday life, a strong focus on the exceptional and spectacular in terms of death and suffering has been maintained. For example, Connerton's (2011, p. 30) primary concern is with mnemonic responses to historical 'traumas' such as the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s or the 'peculiar institution' of African-American and African-Caribbean slavery.[5] Such cases are characterized as involving 'circumstances of mourning where the benefit of rituals and rules do not obtain and cannot be drawn on as a repertoire of practices and as emotional resources' (p. 12). This sense—that death and the potential responses that we make to it routinely exceed the cultural repertoires we have for coming to terms with it—has a long history and underpins recent writing on both individual and collective trauma. It leads to an impasse. Despite Connerton's suggestion that embodied, affective modes of remembering the dead and those which focus on political forms of legitimation in the present are not mutually exclusive, we are left without an analytical framework for understanding the interplay between them. If painful pasts exceed the social and communicative conventions associated with death, by what means do we respond to them, make sense of them and share them collectively through processes of remembering?

This analytical lack is compounded by the routine application of the concept of trauma to social and cultural mnemonic practices. In the analysis of individual responses to shock, pain and loss, trauma certainly has a place in explaining the inaccessibility of past experience which has severely disrupted and damaged the psyche of the sufferer. The problem lies in its profligate application. We previously considered the limitations of the term 'trauma' in a more generalized analysis of remembering painful pasts through mass-collective cultural processes precisely because of the communicative limits that trauma as a 'wound on the mind' imposes:

> Although inevitably marked by silences, lacunae and forgetting, histories have to be understood in terms of the temporal interlinkings of past events and processes, their causes and effects, their patterns and consequences. Trauma is a term for the absence of these interlinkings or an understanding of them, and just as it is only through remembering that past experience becomes meaningful in relation to our contemporary selves, so it is only through memory that we can tell the story of our troublesome pasts and share with others at a collective level the nature of our pain. (Keightley and Pickering 2012, p. 178)

'Trauma' as a conceptual focus fails to account for the ways in which the remembering of painful pasts involves the back-and-forth narrative movement between past losses and present experience, identity and action. It also fails to account for the ways in which painful pasts can be shared and made meaningful in a collective context as it is unable to explain the ways in which death and suffering are articulated in and through social frameworks of remembering. It cannot, because of this, feasibly accommodate the focus proposed by Olick (2007) on practices of remembering.

As a consequence of both the focus on the historically exceptional and a routine usage of trauma as an explanatory concept, we have very little understanding of the ways in which death is actually negotiated through everyday remembering processes—of how, for example, a mother's death can overshadow a child's birth and lead to confusion and doubt concealed by keeping up emotional appearances:

> Grief wasn't the half of it. It triggered in her a loss of confidence, as if she'd woken up in the middle of life, not knowing how she'd got there. When the baby was born in the autumn, she'd been ashamed to tell anyone how disappointed she was. She kept her feeling hidden from everyone … allowing herself to manifest only the emotions she thought would be fitting. (Madden [1994] 2008, p. 37)

Mourning in close conjunction with remembering may well have profound psychological consequences and cause bafflement or questioning of one's actions, attitudes and abilities, but this is not traumatic in the sense of experience becoming inaccessible and incommunicable. At the same time, as Connerton notes, remembering in the spirit of mourning exceeds contemporary rhetorical purposes of legitimation and validation in the present. The loss it involves makes it irreducible to the demands of the present. If 'large-scale events [that are] so widely recurrent in the histories of peoples … pose questions of identity and call for ways of coming to terms with the losses they impose and the legacy that they leave', it would be remarkable to try and argue that this is not the case for the deaths we experience that go unacknowledged in public historical accounts—those of parents, children, friends and lovers (Connerton 2011, p. 17). While it is temptingly easy to universalize under the rhetoric of trauma the mnemonic responses to the historically exceptional deaths and forms of suffering most people would never encounter in

their everyday life, its limitations as an explanatory concept become strikingly clear when we attempt to explore the ways in which we experience death in everyday life, along with the imaginative work required to render mortal loss meaningful and possessed of narrative value.

The Mundanity of Mortal Loss

As Peter Goldie (2012, p. 56) notes, in the wake of death 'we relate to our past in a special way, realising that things as they used to be, and as we remember them, can never be the same again'. The perplexities of remembering in such circumstances combine on the one hand the pain of seemingly insurmountable loss, and on the other the profound need for memory to slake the thirst for presence that we have when someone close passes away. This is captured by Joan Didion (2012, p. 188) in her reflection on mourning her daughter:

> Go back into the blue.
> I myself placed her ashes in the wall.
> I myself saw the cathedral doors locked at six.
> I know what it is I am now experiencing.
> I know what the frailty is, I know what the fear is.
> The fear is not for what is lost.
> What is lost is already in the wall.
> What is lost is already behind the locked doors.
> The fear is for what is still to be lost.
> You may see nothing still to be lost.
> Yet there is no day in her life on which I do not see her.

For Didion, the pain of her daughter's death was knowable and, while caught up in its midst, is almost welcomed because it is precisely this pain that keeps her daughter proximate to her, keeps her imaginatively, if not physically, present. It is the anticipation of her daughter receding into memory, her presence gradually fading from everyday life, which is the source of her terror. After the death of his wife, Pat Kavanagh, in 2008, the novelist Julian Barnes (2014, p. 98) had very much the same fear: 'And so it feels as if she is slipping away from me a second time: first I lose her in the present, then I lose her in the past' as memory fades or fails.[6] The vertiginous fear of losing not simply a loved one but also their remembered closeness to us is touched on again by Didion in relation to the death of her husband. There she details more explicitly what is

required for the integrity of a life-narrative to be retained if the story of our lives is not to fragment and disintegrate in the experience of loss:

> I know why we try to keep the dead alive: we try to keep them alive in order to keep them with us. I also know that if we are to live ourselves there comes a point at which we must relinquish the dead, let them go, keep them dead. Let them become the photograph on the table. Let them become the name on the trust accounts. Let go of them in the water. Knowing this does not make it any easier to let go of him in the water. In fact the apprehension that our life together will decreasingly be the centre of my every day seemed today on Lexington Avenue so distinct a betrayal that I lost all sense of oncoming traffic. (2006, pp. 225–6)

With death and mourning, remembering well has a price. It involves the renarration of a loved one into the past tense, and their relegation to a photograph or the ephemeral music on the radio. Didion's account gives a sense of the importance of everyday media as vehicles for the process of managing death and loss through processes of remembering even as the gradual recession of loved ones in memory seems then to consign them to the margins of our ongoing experience. In the gerontological literature, 'although there is recognition that the objects, images and sounds recollected across a lifetime may potentially occupy a special place in older adults' lives, they tend to be treated as passive props or stimuli to more active reminiscence "work"' (Hockey et al. 2005, p. 135). In contrast, as Didion's accounts make clear, vernacular media such as a photograph or once-shared music are 'constitutive of [the] social time' of mourning, providing cultural resources for the process of imaginatively reassembling past experience before and after death into stories we can live by. They permit the dead to be present but at a symbolic distance. They help create a delicate balance between keeping the dead imaginatively alive as a significant constituent of our self–other relations over time, without preventing grief from overwhelming or paralysing our continuous sense of self and social action in the present.

The mediated communication of death and suffering has been a central feature of the growing body of literature on memory and digital, mobile and social media. One of the key features of this work is its attention to the ways in which locally produced representations of death and mourning come to circulate publicly, operating as collective resources for the establishing of memory narratives which go beyond the local conditions of their production. For example, as Reading (2016, p. 146) notes,

'dying, death and dead bodies are captured through local and immediate mobile and social ecologies by ordinary citizens who then share and mobilise digital testimony to news corporations broadcasting nationally and sometimes globally'. A growing strand of research on web memorials also explores the personal–public dynamic (Hess 2007; Papailias 2016; Maddrell 2012; Roberts 2004a, b; Klaassens and Bijlsma 2014). While a significant proportion of these studies relate to the memorialization of loss as part of historically significant or notorious media events as diverse as 9/11 and the Sandy Hook school shootings in 2012, they also cover what we may in contrast call run-of-the-mill deaths and the ways communications media contribute to their negotiation (Hess 2007; Papailias 2016). In their research on web memorials in the Netherlands, for instance, Klaassens and Bijlsma (2014, p. 283) found that it was 'parents, and in particular mothers, [who] create web memorials in remembrance of their deceased children'. The 'memorials provide access to a community of social support, consisting primarily of strangers and/or people who have experienced a similar loss'. What is particularly important about this body of literature is that it highlights the decline of traditional rituals of mourning derived from religious, class and other social frameworks and affiliations. It makes clear the effortful searches made through everyday vernacular practices for new frameworks of remembering. While the research involved recognizes that traditional and emergent rituals of 'have the twin function of – on the one hand – diminishing the danger of succumbing to intense emotions by raising a feeling of solidarity, and – on the other – of enhancing the sense of being connected to a larger community, on which basis these emotions are acknowledged as well as dimmed and kept under control', it remains unclear precisely how these competing demands are negotiated through the remembering process (Wouters 2002, p. 2). How past experience comes to be re-evaluated, how bonds of belonging are reimagined under the conditions of absence, and how temporally and spatially situated narrative identities come to be reconfigured through remembering processes which fluctuate between grief and the need to move on, all require further consideration. Implicit in this is a need to understand better the move between individual and collective modes of remembering death: how can the experience of seemingly incommunicable pain, over time, be articulated and managed through the social processes and communicative practices of remembering the dead? How can the pain of loss be shared?

The transmission of memories of death and suffering operates in three dimensions: a social dimension encompassing the particularities of grief and their collective remembrance; a spatial dimension in which memory of past cases of death and suffering are transmitted globally; and a temporal dimension moving from immediate loss to the ongoing management of memories over the years that follow.[7] As we have discussed in our writing elsewhere, the intergenerational dynamics of mnemonic transmission are particularly pertinent here. We experience death not only directly but also at a distance. Loss, distress and pain in the pasts of others comes to mark our own experience in sometimes profound ways. Grief can be inherited, and this then requires complex memory work for it to be rendered knowable and meaningful for those who vicariously experience it, as post-Holocaust literary works such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus* ([1973] 2003) have demonstrated so acutely.[8] The effort after temporal, emotional and familial continuity that is made in the intergenerational communication of death and suffering is described in Charles Fernyhough's (2013, pp. 115–6) reflections on the ways in which he has communicated the memory of his dead father to his own children:

> He died more than a decade ago, too soon to get to know any of his grandchildren…. As time has gone on I have wondered more and more about how the children are to know him, how I myself should talk about him, and the rights and wrongs of negotiating the memory of someone who is no longer here. Our memory of him is not a particularly visual one. We don't spend a lot of time, as a family, going through photographs, and Dad died before digital pictures and video became ubiquitous. Talking to the children about Grandad Philip's funny pronouncements means that he becomes more real for them than a photographic image. It allows the kids to own a bit of him, to incorporate him into their way of looking at the world … I want to say that they remember this affectionate, vulnerable, opinionated man, even though their stays on the planet did not overlap. It's a harmless idea, surely. Grief and regret for what has gone, and pride and joy at what has arrived to take its place: all these emotions have combined to help me try to fix that broken link between the generations. I can't be the only parent who has tried to implant a child with a memory for a lost grandparent or, more tragically, for a dead parent or sibling. But something makes me uneasy. I am actively manipulating their take on the past, tampering with what I should leave alone. Among all the murky choices parents have to make, this one is rarely examined.

The communicative rituals and practices of remembering which seek to establish and maintain narrative coherence, generational continuity and familial identities over time are not taken for granted but are reflexively undertaken. Fernyhough's memory of pain and loss was imaginatively synthesized with his present pride in order to create familial continuities across the lacuna that his father's death has left in his children's firsthand memory. And Fernyhough is exactly right in saying that it is what underlies the choice of creating such continuities that needs more extensive exploration.

To recapitulate: Didion's and Fernyhough's accounts both show that in this context, creative remembering, particularly such remembering using vernacular media, lies in the development of ways to live with the disruptions and incorporate the losses that death inflicts in our individual experience and in broader collective experience. The process involves resituating and retelling our experience with a past loved one, now in the unmitigated glare of their absence, and effectively communicating the results of this to oneself and to others.

Inhabiting Grief

It is to a portrait of everyday grief, moving between the suffering contained in Didion's accounts of personal loss to the social acts of passing on stories of the absent person which characterize Fernyhough's account, that we now turn. In our fieldwork, accounts of the death of loved ones were almost always both searingly painful and embedded in the mundane routines of day-to-day life. They were both intimately felt and socially performed. It was through creative acts of remembering that these seemingly polar responses to loss were reconciled, allowing (to varying degrees) the death of a loved one to be assimilated. In order to examine more precisely what this entails, we begin with a diary account of remembering practices given us by Helen, a British woman in her fifties, during the months immediately after the death of her second husband, M, from cancer. They had been married for approximately fifteen years and were both passionate music lovers. Her experience of his death is refracted through her music listening practices.

In Helen's account, the initial temporal proximity of M's death proves an almost insurmountable obstacle to remembering him freely in everyday life:

> For ten months I have been unable to listen to any of the CDs we collected. I did try early on in a sudden desire to conjure him up, but a few bars of the very familiar music of L'Arpeggiata made me realise I could not bear to listen to it and turned it off.[9]

At once, the closeness of his death to the present has rendered past and present inseparable from one another, while imagining him in the present remains inextricable from the pain of his absence. She is unable to sustain a cross-temporal distance between his death and the memory of him in the present. This, as she notes, is made all the more difficult by the intrinsic affordances of music which are able to collapse such distance between the remembered and the remembering self. On the one hand, this creates the most intense and intimate possibilities for identifying with one's own past experience and that of others; on the other hand, it makes changes that have occurred over time more difficult to disentangle and reflect on critically. For both reasons, music which they shared in their life together is felt by Helen to be too powerful to bear listening to. Instead, she has to find oblique, slow and piecemeal ways to draw her experience with M into her present, so limiting the potential memories of him have to intrude painfully in the present. Listening to music via the radio, an activity they would have shared, but without deliberately seeking out music they were specifically fond of, is one way in which Helen attempts to achieve this:

> As I do not want a music-less life, and generally find Radio 3 a comfort, I have continued to listen (at first simply to break the silence). It is inevitable that I will suddenly hear a piece that forcibly revives a memory and can reduce me to tears and create a physical ache in my chest (the term 'broken-hearted' feels more than just words at times).

While this strategy provides a way of re-engaging with music as an activity shared with M without deliberately conjuring him up through their favourite music, it can be instantly undermined when a recording that has intense connections with M is fortuitously heard. This causes intense anguish and hurt. As Helen's account demonstrates, remembering well in the midst of grief is, in the first instance, a process which involves the deliberate but selective use of mnemonic cultural resources in order to develop and sustain a symbolic boundary between a lost loved one and the life lived without him in the present. Finding ways of looking back at

life with him from life without him while avoiding their sudden collapse into each other is an evolving process and one which is never guaranteed success.

For Helen, managing both everyday experience and the memories of her late husband that may arise at any time is also spatially situated in the places of their shared experience. The shadow of their shared past hangs over the present even as it marks the start of a longer process of creating a body of 'normal' experience lived in the absence of her husband. In the early weeks and months of her grief, the shadow is synonymous with her loss, making any recollection of M still able to 'knock me sideways':

> Having gone to France after he had died to complete the legal details of putting the house in my name alone, I went to a dance performance given by a Franco/Japanese dancer and choreographer. I was with the friend who introduced us to our bit of France when we went to stay with her after her husband had died. The first dance piece was quite interesting and attractive but the next couple were pretentious and her dancing skills not up to it, but then she performed a dance to Dido's Lament.[10] She used a recording that I knew by Janet Baker – who has a voice that can express emotion without milking it – and the sound quality in the theatre was excellent. On this occasion, the difficulty of being in France at our cottage without M, and the fact he had died just four months before, plus the sentiment of the piece, made me close my eyes to shut out the crass dance and weep in the dark. It took me back to that moment in the theatre where I had gone in an effort to do something 'normal' not associated with M. Just to write this brings back that evening: warm, the theatre crowded with local people – many of them young girls, no doubt fans of ballet. Everyone was in fine form, talking and laughing and all I could feel was this surreality of being there without M. The effort of doing anything was difficult and then this lovely, sad music came and knocked me sideways.

The disjuncture that Helen describes between the familiarity of their place of living in France and the present moment of inhabiting that shared space destabilizes the present in a manner she describes as 'surreal'. The spatial continuity between there-then and here-now is, for the moment, starkly at odds with her loss. The mnemonic imagination has not yet been able to reduce or reconcile this contrast, though Helen does acknowledge its possibility in the final sentences of the extract. When reflecting on the music she heard on her return to France, she begins a process of re-evaluating the past, and out of this

re-evaluation she aspires to a time when she will not be flailing in the deluge of her loss:

As the soprano sings 'Remember me …' I, of course, could do nothing but. Where once I thought of Dido's plight, now I feel it as my own – or rather, I am the one left, not a Dido who will leave. We never talked about him dying – he was too determined to survive and the end then came too quickly. I knew he was leaving but could not say it to him.

The lyrics of the music stimulate her to reflect on her own experience of having been left by M and weigh the consequences of M's will to live against her own lack of preparedness for his death. These are woven together into the beginnings of an explanatory narrative which makes sense of her intense pain: the 'end … came too quickly' for her to be able to orientate herself to a life without him. Helen begins to create the first tentative cross-temporal relinkings by reimagining the past from her current position. She retrospectively constructs her own anticipation of his death ('I knew he was leaving') and connects it to her inability to acknowledge it in the face of his fight to survive, at once setting up a narrative connection between past and present which explains her pain and renders the loss of M as inevitable. In this way the combination of the shared space and the music as a cultural resource allows her to open up to scrutiny the nature of the loss she has incurred rather than just rawly experiencing the hollow pain of his absence.

Helen writes in further detail about below the efforts she makes to create a domestic space which does not permit the gratuitous, unruly intrusion of M and his passing. It is in this sense that she now talks about making their shared home hers rather than theirs, creating a spatiotemporal distance between their past life together and her contemporary present alone. But as the following extract shows, these practices are fraught with difficulties that require, at least in the initial phase of this process, a continual engagement with the tangible materials gathered over a life together. The aim is to semidetach them as mnemonic vehicles of their shared past:

> Came across, in my efforts to tidy up and make the house mine, M's Genesis tape. Apparently his brother bought it for him and it became a favourite of his. It became something I heard in the car with M in the very early days when we were just getting to know each other and it became a part of the motorway between our separate homes. It started as background music, rather foreign to me, but I began to feel a certain tension

> when the track 'Hold on my Heart' came on.[11] So hard to describe. I realized that M was listening with a different intensity. Nothing was said but there was this awareness in the car. Today I made myself listen to the tape and, now, on YouTube, and did not feel that ache I keep talking about in connection with some music. I can see, and even hear, the motorway and can see, out of the corner of my eye's memory, his hand on the gear stick, but rather than sadness, I can recall the slight excitement and questioning of what was happening – or not. Which was the whole point. I still was not sure and, I realize, nor was he. How exciting is that! I can feel it now. I could make myself weep, easily, but it is the questioning optimism I feel so strongly. We both, but particularly M, had less-than-happy memories of first marriages. He was so tentative about diving into anything, but this song made me see that he was seriously asking himself about the chances. I have looked at the lyrics and realize, in retrospect, just what he must have been thinking. 'Hold on my heart / just hold on to that feeling / we both know we've been here before / we both know what can happen …' It would have been our 15th wedding anniversary this August and all I can say is that it was worth all this agony, and I would give anything to be back on the M1 listening to Genesis.

What is particularly notable about the description that Helen gives of the discovery of the Genesis tape and the experience of listening to it is the control that she starts to exert over both the practice of remembering and the meanings which arise from this. She describes making herself listen to the tape as an act of deliberate remembering, choosing her moment and carrying it through despite an awareness of the potential pain which might be generated. She describes the significance of the music and she recognizes two potential affective responses to it: making herself weep by focusing on the loss of her husband, or reinhabiting the sense of 'questioning optimism' which she retrospectively identifies as characterizing the original listening experience for both her and M. In this sense she deliberately subverts the pain of loss by mnemonically imagining her past with M at the point when their mutual feelings were beginning to pull them together. This helps her hold the past apart from the present and so move between them in a productive way, appreciating again what was happening to them at the moment of listening. It makes her feel that she would 'give anything' to return to that moment. Their shared past comes to be positively valued, but from the perspective associated with what has intervened between there-then and here-now. In this sense Helen's effort to remember M involves a move to 'reclaim'

their shared experience from the cold clutch of grief, separating it from the experience of loss and synthesizing it with a changed present that is enriched by its reconnection to M:

> First goal is just to be able to listen to some of it again – would love to be able to reclaim L'Arpeggiata with its immediate recreation of a French summer and feel only happiness in it.

Her description of the music she had necessarily to turn away from in the months following his death involves a recognition of it as both a source of pain and as a source of renewal in the present. While the music as a vehicle of remembering remains constant, the role of the mnemonic imagination is to reposition its relation to the past and present, loosening the connection between their shared past together and the experience of his death, and in doing so producing a new synthesis of a fondly remembered past which enriches rather than diminishes a changed present.

Reclaiming the cultural resources that so potently allow us to traverse the temporal terrain between our shared past with a loved one and the present characterized by their absence is rarely absolute. It seems unlikely that L'Arpeggiata will ever fully be returned to index the pleasure of a shared life, absolved of its connection to M's death. This is certainly the case for Janet, a British woman in her 70s:

> 'Mr Tambourine Man'. I like the song, but it also takes me back to A's death. He used to play the guitar a little bit and he used to sing it to me. If they play it on the radio or, you know, if it comes on the radio, straight away I sort of stop and I smile and I listen and just think back to the occasion when he used to sing it to me … I think about him every day still. Not a day goes by when I don't think about him. He's been dead ten years. So it's tinged with sadness, happiness, regret. All sorts of emotions. As soon as it comes on, my little ears prick up. It's quite a poignant memory, that one. And they still play it. After all these years, it still comes on the radio.

The passing of time and the intensive work of the mnemonic imagination does not, as perhaps Helen hopes, totally annul the devastation of loss or allow the complete elision of the rupture wrought by a loved one's death. There is no seamless integration of the before of shared pleasure with the after of solitary pleasure. For Janet, hearing the music

symbolically associated with her husband produces an affective manifold in which pain and pleasure, sadness and joy, satisfaction and regret continue to feature. Remembering well has its limits, and it does not necessarily involve the wholesale annulment of grief and mourning, but increasingly they do become relinked to pleasures shared in the past and to fresh appreciation of the former spouse. This may even involve rejection of those vernacular resources of deliberate remembering discussed earlier because of indifference to them or the continuing presence of other once-shared material stuff: 'The albums are back on their shelf … and I never look at them, but my heart echoes with those old years and all the paraphernalia of his life that still lies around me reminds me not of the man who has just died, but of the man I once loved' (Tremain [1979] 1999, p. 152).[12]

Piecing the Past Together

We have moved from discussing how the passing away of a loved one rends the fabric of lived experience in the immediate weeks and months afterwards, to considering how in the longer term relatively cohesive and trusted narratives are remade in the aftermath of death. This remaking is crucial for effective (as opposed to pathological) mourning, for it is a reparative process whereby the bereaved 'decathect the dead person and reinstate him or her in their inner worlds and so enrich them' (Witham 1985, pp. 90–1). In what follows we explore this process in more detail, paying particular attention to the re-establishment of coherent self-identities and stable self–other relations over the course of time.

In the following extract, Rachel describes the complicated process of making sense of her family history in the wake of her father's death, with an emphasis on the ways in which she and her sons are positioned in these familial relationships. She describes finding photographs left by her father and the difficulties she encountered in piecing together their shared past in his absence:

> When my dad died recently, there was photographs we found amongst his things and I had absolutely no idea who they are of at all. And it vaguely makes you wish … My eldest son took a real interest in my dad (he was my dad's favourite). My dad used to talk to him for ages and I know my eldest son always wishes that before he died he'd got to spend a lot more time with him, because he was really interested in my dad's past. He's interested

> in family. We've come across boxes and albums and everything of photographs, but the most interesting photograph amongst them all – people always have skeletons in the cupboard, don't they? – is this picture of an Indian princess. It's something that my family never ever talked about. My dad must have been mortified feeling like it was almost like history repeating itself when I married an Indian man because my great-great-grandma was an Indian princess that my great-great-granddad had met in India when he was serving [in the military]. We didn't know this until recently. So I've already got Indian blood in me, which obviously makes me attracted to people of colour I think. I don't know. So when I started dating my first husband, my dad must have been horrified because obviously my dad knew about the Indian Princess but just did not talk about it at all. I knew sketchy bits, but they'd never talk about it and then when we went through my dad's things when he died, there was this photograph of the Indian princess.

On finding the extensive collection of photographs from her father, many of which refer to people she does not know, Rachel expresses an initial regret (which she does not go on to articulate in detail) implying a sense of a lost opportunity, for she knows she could have asked her father more about them during his lifetime. Her regret is left unelaborated in favour of the task of resituating her father and his photographs in the context of her own and her sons' lives. Her eldest son is placed in a special relationship with her father, and this relationship is framed as an intergenerational bridge between her and her sons and her father and his earlier familial past. Her own fractious relationship with her father based on her decision to marry an Indian man (which she discusses elsewhere) makes it difficult for Rachel to place herself in this position, but in locating her son in this role, she establishes an intergenerational continuity in which she is vicariously located, thus eliding the disconnection she felt in relation to her father. In this way, quite literally, her regret is abandoned in her narrative and managed through the discursive construction of an alternative relational continuity via her son. Significantly, she positions her son's interest in family history as ongoing rather than restricted to his relationship with her father. This creates an intergenerational trajectory which has the potential to persist over time in such a way that her father may continue to inform the family's present and future.

Alongside the management of her father's death, Rachel utilizes the rediscovered photographic resources left by her father to construct a renewed sense of her own life-narrative, interweaving a longer familial

history of dual-heritage marriage with her own multicultural relationships. She uses the image of the 'Indian princess' to invest legitimacy in the 'sketchy' family story of her great-great-grandfather's marriage to an Indian woman and to position herself as having a biological ('blood') connection to and therefore an ongoing affinity with 'people of colour'. In doing so she is able to set up a causal link between her family history and her own marital experience. This serves to validate her experience, which was deeply marked by her own parents' disapproval of her marriage to an Indian man (her first husband) and the initial rejection she experienced by her first husband's family. Her choice of husband is at least in part recast as inevitable, determined and legitimated by her genetic inheritance, rather than being taken solely as a product of her own socially situated agency. Somewhat paradoxically, this same narrative configuration is used by Rachel to explain her father's rejection of her after her first marriage—that he would have been 'horrified' at her unwitting recapitulation of a relationship from a previous generation, with the implication that this intercultural marriage was socially unacceptable at the time and that her father's response was based on his inherited historical experience of social stigma. This kind of reconfiguration of the inherited past in the wake of her father's death allows Rachel to smooth over past ruptures in their relationship by providing an explanatory narrative which does not locate blame or responsibility with either her or her father. The onus is placed instead on historical circumstance and biological inheritance. Her regret regarding the limits of their relationship during his lifetime and the impossibility of redressing this in the wake of his loss are effectively managed through this creative reworking.

The process of making sense of parental loss and the everyday mnemonic efforts to construct intergenerational continuities in the wake of the death of a parent can take a variety of forms. Ivy, a British woman in her sixties, recalls her efforts to embed memories of her mother in the childhood of her children despite her mother's death occurring before their birth. Indeed, the temporal proximity of these two events underlines the significance and pathos of her investment in these activities. In her account, told in conversation with her husband, Michael, she describes how she utilized her mother's life as the raw material for stories to be told to her own children, at first orally and then in written form:

Ivy: I don't know why I'm getting like this [tearful]. I wanted to tell the story of my mother. Because she died about

a fortnight before the twins were born. And that was a shame. I thought, 'Oh, they won't know her'. What a shame. So I started to write stories about her. For the children, for three-year-olds. I decided that was where I would pitch it. So I've done that. And then I got together some photos of her to put in.

Michael: You would have them at the table, perhaps they'd come round for tea, Ivy would sit with them and ad lib stories about her mum. And they would say, 'Tell us a L story', and so–

Ivy: I used to read them because then they thought they were real stories.

Michael: Yes, and you wrote them down.

Ivy: So I wrote them down so that I could read them–

Michael: Have them repeated as little children like, so it was repeated.

Ivy: They're 19 now.

Interviewer: Do they remember those?

Ivy: Oh, they do, yes.

Interviewer: And were they interested in seeing your mother, seeing the photos because of the story?

Ivy: Yes. Oh, well this is my mother. And R, the eldest granddaughter, we – we've got this in a frame, a proper one, this is just a copy. And I would say to her, 'Who is that?' And R would say, 'That's me'.

Interviewer: Do you like seeing resemblances in photos?

Ivy: Yes, yes. Yes, yes.

Ivy is visibly moved in her attempt to give an account of the ways in which she sought to remember her mother and embed memories of her in her children's own experience. In the deliberate storytelling strategies that she describes, Ivy acted as the medium through which secondhand accounts of the past could be transmitted. In doing so, she constructed an intergenerational continuity in spite of the lacunae which separated the lives of her mother and children. She does so not solely in the interests of her children but in a manner similar to that discussed in Fernyhough's (2013) account. Ivy emphasizes that she wrote them down so 'I could read them', while her husband's response emphasizes their children's listening experience. This implies that the act of

telling these stories was not simply about the conveyance of memories to her children but also about articulating and reaffirming Ivy's own sense of herself as a daughter, an identity reaffirmed at the same time as she was assuming her new maternal identity. Everyday remembering practices created a bridge between these identities, and the storytelling they involved was interwoven with visual images. When describing the display of photographs of her mother, Ivy takes considerable pleasure in the physical resemblance between her daughter and her late mother, but more significantly in her daughter's recognition of this resemblance. The photographic images validated her deeply felt connection with her mother and at the same time provided a way of maintaining her mother's presence in the domestic space of the present.

While these mnemonic strategies for managing the experiential disturbances that the death of a parent causes operate in the interests of constructing an individually coherent life-narrative for Ivy, her remembering practices were also shared, both through the support of Michael in undertaking the storytelling and through the participation of her daughters as receivers of and respondents to her stories. Such shared practices may extend beyond family membership and immediate social networks, thus incorporating broader historically situated sociocultural frames of meaning. For Linne, a German octogenarian who has been living in Britain since the late 1940s, remembering the loss she experienced in her early life in Germany during the World War II includes both her individual experience and the international conflict that was still raging at the war's end:

> Come the end of the war, the Americans came to occupy the area, which was fine, and then Russia was given more land and the Russians came in instead of them. There were stories of rape and all the things that go with it. We were only about five kilometres from the border, so we tried to escape, my friend and myself, but we were caught the first time and brought back eventually to the Commandant who wanted us there, one during the day and one during the night. And we said, 'Can we go and get our clothing and so on?' We got back to our mothers and we were immediately sent off again. We got across the border, but the Russians saw us and shot. They shot my friend next to me. I was fifteen and I joined a stream of people who were walking from there, and I walked all the way back, four hundred kilometres, on my own in what I was – Somebody stole my backpack in the end and I had literally only what I was standing in.

> My brother died just recently. This is important. I told you about crossing the border. On this side, there were the Russians and then there were three ditches and you had to get through those three ditches and then you had about, oh, a good half a mile, if not more, of no-man's-land, and that's where we had to go. We went back there to stand there and see it, Derek and I, and there's now a stone to remember those – in memory of borders and those who died there. It says on there, 'Let us remember and let it be a warning for the future'. That is quite – that was quite something for me.

In the opening extract, Linne's description of the death of her friend weaves together the historical geopolitics of 1940s Europe with her personal struggle as a young woman in these unprecedented conditions. Both the Russian occupation and their vulnerability to sexual exploitation provide the explanatory frames for her friend's eventual death in their attempt to cross the German border.[13] The apparent distancing device of the sociohistorical context rubs up sharply against the simple, stark, still shocking detail that her friend was shot right next to her. The intimate physical closeness of her friend's death breaks through the historical distance to bring that past event hurtling into the present. In the second extract, Linne introduces a specific incidence of remembering this border crossing by revisiting the site of her friend's death via mention of the more recent death of her brother, with whom she undertook the visit. It is important to understand the spatial as well as temporal implications of this. They had to travel from home in England to the place on the border where her friend was shot, and travelling across this distance was integral to the act of remembrance even as that distance had over the years helped her overcome the horror of her friend's violent death. By visiting the place of the border crossing with her brother, Linne constructed a cross-temporal continuity between her relationship with him and her relationship with her friend. Through this in her narration she brings into relation her remembered and remembering self across the transformative experience of their deaths. This is a creative way of remembering an exceedingly grievous event. Notably, Linne offers hardly any detail about her personal relationship with her dead friend and the loss she felt in intimate terms. Indeed, there is remarkably little about her friend in the story. Linne's affective response to her murder is instead absorbed into a broader historical canvas, a mnemonic strategy that is encapsulated at the end by mention of the memorial stone. This provides a second thread of continuity through which the losses of the past can be

read as having the power to enrich, rather than undermine, faith in the future. In that way the continuing distress over her friend's death is managed by emotionally camouflaging it in a bigger story, the memory of which is made to turn towards the interests of years yet to come.

This process of ritualized remembering, both in terms of Linne and her brother's return to the site of the violent death she witnessed and her engagement with its formal commemoration, operates as a way of making sense of wartime murder and accommodating it into subsequent lived experience, including the 'natural' death of loved ones, is particularly important when other explanatory frames don't make sense. One such frame is religion, but for Linne any faith in it was destroyed by what happened to her:

> My dad was brought up as a Roman Catholic and when I saw all the things that were happening, for instance, to Jewish people and there were thousands of people killed in my home town – I saw my friends lying there dead with heads off and arms off – and what affected me in particular was I saw a nun torn to bits. And I thought, where is God then if – ? She'd done nothing. You know, I kept questioning that all the time. Why that, and why are some people protected and others not? And so, in the end I – On my way back, on the journey back when I was a refugee there, on my own, there was a night, one particular night I remember when it was raining and thundering and I was wet through and I was starving – I ate grass, I was so hungry – and I was praying. You know, I said, 'If you're there, just help me. You're not there at all', and I shouted at God and nothing happened. And I suddenly – it suddenly came to me that there is no God. No. Yet I brought up my children so that they must make up their own minds.

What Linne's account shows is that where the experience of death is so extreme, and so at odds with the predominant sociocultural way of understanding it, that way of understanding needs to be abandoned. Witnessing so much violent death led Linne to a turning point that was at the same time a point of revelation: there is no God. Though she clearly describes the horror of what she saw, the narrative focus in Linne's account falls primarily on this sudden realization and the personal, internal transformation in how she sees the world. Rather than being necessarily destabilizing, her rejection of belief in religious explanation proved to be an event which consolidated her self-identity and self-knowledge, and led her surely to the wise step of allowing her children to do as she did and make up their own minds about the existence or nonexistence of God.

Death and the Mnemonics of Loss and Gain

While the transitions that death and mourning precipitate are invariably marked by a sense of drastic loss, the stories told by both Helen and Linne suggest that it is not loss and absence alone that characterize these transitions. Instead we see, to varying degrees, a sense of something gained in the wake of death: a reorientation to the future in a revised or reconfigured way following our return to time and the ever-changing world. While death can be experienced as a devastating break in our sense of to whom and where we belong, particularly in the early period of our mourning, the experience of being cast adrift in a diminished present can, almost despite the odds, stimulate creative and constructive action in the present. This goes beyond a simple coming to terms with the loss of a loved one. Such action is clearly evident in Dominic's account of his wife's death and the spur this gave him to find a new partner:

> My wife died in 2000 which was … I was married for forty eight years, and that was a pretty awful time after she died. It was horrible. I'm sure anyone dying is horrible but I found that particularly difficult. But anyway, I would spend a lot of time basically trying to find somebody. Find someone to live with or find someone to make love to or, or whatever one wants to do. So I used to have huge numbers of ladies to lunch and things like that, and then eventually, I got to know a lady and I went out with her for two years, and I actually thought to myself, if I get enough wrappers off this lady, there's bound to be something interesting underneath. Bit like a Christmas parcel. Well, after two years, I gave it up. We had a theatre ticket to go and see *the Mikado* at the Little Theatre and she said she would still come, but about ten days later, she wrote and said she didn't want to and I could have the ticket. So I rang a friend of mine and said, 'do you want to come to the Little Theatre'? She said, 'I can't, I'm looking after the grandchild, but I know somebody who might be interested'. So I said, 'Well, give her a ring and see whether she'll have a phone call from me'. So I gave her a ring and she was of the opinion, well, it's a bit of a blind date and, at seventy, do I really want to bother with this? Anyway, she decided to come and we hit it off very well and we've been together ever since. So that was a real lucky break. She spends weekends here and comes for dinner in the evenings, and that's basically it really.

Dominic's deliberate attempts to find a new partner do not, as his account suggests, in any way minimize the pain he experienced in relation to his wife's death. He refers to the singularity of this experience as

'particularly difficult' following the length of their marriage, but it was precisely the acute experience of losing the intimacy of his relationship with his wife after so many years that created the quest to find a new partner. Far from diminishing the significance of remembering his wife, memory of her was integral to the future-oriented project of finding a new partner as well as to the past-oriented task of finding an appropriate place for her in his emotional life (Worden 1991, p. 16).[14] While Helen described the surreality of inhabiting social spaces in M's absence, Dominic's account suggests a deliberate and ultimately successful attempt to re-embed himself in not only an intimate relationship but also a wider social network of lunch dates and theatregoing. The effort this required was clearly not inconsiderable, involving two years of an ultimately unsuccessful relationship, a multitude of social activities and blind dates, yet interestingly he evaluates his ultimate success in this regard as being 'lucky'. Indeed, his emphasis on luck as common to both of his conjugal relationships creates a coherence, rather than competition, between his intimate and loving relationship with his wife and that with his current partner. It also serves narratively to elide the devastating loss he suffered in the wake of his wife's death, instead giving more weight to the emotional and psychological gains that both these relationships have given him. While he doesn't conceal the extensive effort made to establish another relationship in the wake of his wife's death, focusing on this alone would have served to emphasize the loss her death wrought in his life, rather than foregrounding the joy at the fulfilment he found in his relationship with her and the possibility of recapturing this with another. In the delicate mnemonic balance between loss and gain following the death of a loved one, Dominic strived to turn loss into gain and find substantive continuity between his life with and without his wife.

The mnemonics of loss and gain are of course not always so heavily weighted towards the latter. Dominic's response to loss as a reorientation towards the future stands in stark contrast to the longitudinal reaction of Derek, another British man in his seventies. Even years after the death of his wife, his grief persists, and does so in spite of seeing how his daughters have flourished in their mother's absence:

> Obviously I've got loads of pictures. We're very proud of them and had a very happy life together. C had a difficult birth with the first one and that's the way it goes, but anyway she was alright after that, and we had three

> lovely daughters. Three wonderful daughters. Unfortunately, on February 1st 2001 I lost my dear C to breast cancer. I think on most days of the week people say it gets better. It doesn't get better. I miss her so much, but my daughters are marvellous to me. C would be very proud of them; it's no less than what she would expect them to be. We were all together when she passed away. she was in hospital and she said, 'I don't want to die here. Take me home'. We were all sitting at the side and actually she died in the arms of my youngest one.

For Dominic and Derek a similar period of time has elapsed since their wives died, but for Derek his remembering of his wife remains dominated by what he has lost. This sense of loss hasn't diminished: 'It doesn't get better'. Indeed, within the first few minutes of talking to him, we witnessed Derek pick up a photo of C and burst into tears.[15] The extent to which he remains devoted to her is suggested in his description of her as his childhood sweetheart (they had met in primary school and stayed faithfully together up to her death). He fully acknowledges that his daughters have been 'marvellous' and have more than met their father's (and mother's) expectations of them, but this is hardly sufficient compensation for him. Where Dominic has reconceived his loss through his narrative of luck, seeing both past and present as positive, Derek's felicitous relationship with his daughters is so inextricably bound up in his shared past with his wife and in the moment of her death that any focus on their subsequent achievements only serves to underscore his loss. In both cases the mnemonic imagination is in play, working to harmonize past and present, but only Dominic has attained a successful balance between the two periods of his life associated with his two conjugal relationships. Derek remains locked into his marital past and is unable to move forward with any conviction or purpose. While he is able to imagine a fulfilling future for his daughters despite his wife's death, he himself is continually referred back to her absence, obstructing any sense of positive action in the present and future.

The relational sense of loss and gain is explicitly reflected on by Lorna, a retired publican, following the death of her long-term partner, L. In the extract below, she discusses the ways in which cultural resources such as photographs are crucial in confronting the losses and gains which the death of a loved one can involve, and in facilitating the mnemonics of their reconciliation. She discusses in particular the value of the photographs (or some of them) which she has of L:

> L and I spent quite a few holidays in Spain, and met people there and kept in touch with them from England. So they're lovely memories, they are. But the trouble is, one memory sort of brings out all the threads, doesn't it? And then all the rubbish comes as well. And what that ultimately led on to is, ultimately, L died. It was his house in Spain, he bought it when he left London. That was for our holidays. And then he died, and I couldn't sell it until the death duties had been paid in Spain, and then I suddenly start remembering the agony of his last few months and the following year and sorting out all the business. And so I think 'right, I'll shut it up'. And so that's why the pictures I have got out of him are not in Spain, so they don't conjure up the not-so-good. But it's no good trying to think it didn't happen. If the other stuff didn't come out as well, then the good ones wouldn't be as good by comparison. You know, there's some, particularly with L I mean my whole life with him was just so different to anything I'd ever experienced before. And there were huge great changes from up and down – so yeah – it was a real roller-coaster but we had some fun.

Photographs from their time together in Spain are, for Lorna, very difficult to disentangle from the experience of her partner's illness and death, and the subsequent hassle over death duties and the like. She describes these things as connected by 'threads', clearly interwoven but threatening to unravel and consume the pleasurable memories of their lives together. In order to prevent this, she categorizes her images of L, deliberately engaging with those not located in Spain and therefore not so closely bound up with the experience of his death and its aftermath. What is particularly significant about her account is her recognition that these two sets of images are relationally rather than independently valuable. The painful images and memories of L's death are required in order for her to fully experience the pleasure of those which are not indexical of his passing and instead emphasize the fun times they shared. This illustrates how the role of the mnemonic imagination in managing the life transition instigated by death is not only the attenuation of loss through a reconfiguration of life before and after but also the bringing into balance of destabilized temporal relations and the re-establishment of equilibrium across positive features of both past and present experience. The consequence of this for Lorna is her understanding that the degree of pain felt at his loss is indicative of the degree of pleasure taken from his presence in her life. This makes the mnemonics of loss and gain both/and rather than either/or, thus making for a productive

shuttling back and forth between before and after the decisive moment of mortality.

The deaths that we encounter in our everyday lives are of course not always those of close others. While not involving the kind of pain that the loss of a close other entails, the deaths of others not, or no longer, close to us can nevertheless engender complex ways of configuring our experience and identifying past turning points in our own life stories. Death can in this sense be succeeded by an interval of severe disturbance but also become a point of reference for the mnemonic imagination in reworking the relations between past, present and future experience. In the extract below, Max, an ex-miner from the East Midlands, recalls the death of an ex-girlfriend many years after they broke up:

> I used to go out with a girl for two or three years and I sometimes wonder, what if I hadn't split up with her? We'd have got married. She's dead now, mind, but there's always lots of things that could have happened in your life, you know? There are coincidences. She's dead now but I sometimes think, 'I wonder what it would be like if I'd married her' …. You start thinking of things and thinking, 'well, what if?' I mean, I've been buried at pit once, and I think, 'what if they couldn't have got me out?' I wouldn't be here now.

In the first instance, the death of his ex-girlfriend serves as a stimulus for thinking about paths not taken in his own life, about the possibilities that went unrealized and the contingency of those that were realized. This generates a sense of narrative openness in relation to Max's own life; it becomes replete with a sense of what might have been. What was once considered a clear decision (for example, to break up with his ex-girlfriend) is reconceived as chance or coincidence. In considering what life may have been like had they married, the death of his ex-girlfriend is in one sense abstracted, but it provides Max with the opportunity to reflect on what the loss of a wife might entail, how he might now have been mired in grief rather than happily married to his current, very much alive partner. Implicit in his narrative is also the possibility that this experience of loss may be one he is yet to face in the future, while beyond that, his ex-girlfriend and her recent death becomes a more general motif of lost opportunities or attenuated experiences (as he suggests, there are 'lots' of these in one's life). These are then weighed against an example of rescue from death's jaws rather than of the closure of experiential

possibilities. The finitude of his own experience is brought into sharp relief in this vignette. It is not so much that the death of one particular woman is a turning point in his life-narrative, but rather that it enters him into a reflection on a whole serious of turning points and potential turning points which have or could have entailed both losses and gains.

The mnemonics of loss and gain in the mutual assessment of past and present do not only inform self-identity but also derive meaning from our social relations with both close and distant others. We return to Linne, the German octogenarian living in Britain, who articulates the ways in which losses and gains at a collective level can be managed, weighed and reconciled through the process of remembering:

> When I was nursing in London there were a lot of Jewish people there. You might feel the same with something that happens here; you're part of that country and you feel the guilt of your people. To make friends and look after Jewish people was something quite special. I had one Jewish rabbi who was my patient. I looked after him. Afterwards, he invited me to their house and we got very friendly and he told me his … He had been at Auschwitz and his wife had been killed there. Then one day – I find this emotional – his daughter came and put this on my arm and it had belonged to his wife. Yeah. It's got the Star of David on it. Above there is a picture. Yes, it's really very nice. Well, it's the only thing he had left of his wife, and he gave it to me. So that's special.

The deaths that Linne refers to at first involve the mass killing of Jewish people during the Holocaust. The loss Linne felt as a result of Holocaust deaths was vicarious. She didn't know any victims at a personal level, and her experience of loss was belated, occurring well after the deaths had actually occurred. These deaths did not mark a turning point for her, but they did become an interpretive prism through which her past experience is viewed, validating her nursing vocation and profoundly informing her subsequent friendship with the rabbi under her care. As a German woman, she carries with her a sense of shame and guilt in relation to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Remembering her friendship with the Jewish rabbi provides the basis on which her mnemonic imagining makes linkages between collective identities and past personal experience, the transactional meaning of each being contingent on the other. This enables her to move across from the macrohistorical frame of the Holocaust and national responsibility to a close focus on the particular death of the rabbi's wife in Auschwitz. The mass deaths of distant others become the

death of someone made much closer by her friendship with the rabbi. Again, this specific death did not punctuate her life story as a turning point, but receiving from the rabbi's daughter the Star of David with the picture above it did feature as such, marking out a sense of atonement though her giving of care. This is not presented as either forgiveness or the removal of Linne's guilt, and it does not in any sense reduce the rabbi's loss, but the deeply felt relationship between Linne, the rabbi and his daughter lays the foundation for at least some degree of exoneration. Passing on via his daughter something that had belonged to his wife was recognition of this. Symbolically, it was an act of redemption.

Arrested Experience and the Limits of Memory

In the aftermath of death, our first desperate sense is of irredeemable loss. As this period settles into itself, the mnemonic imagination gradually begins its work of reconciling the losses with possible gains as it roves over the past and draws on the resources we have gathered from our experience in the interests of taking our bearings for the future. In this way our misfortune may open 'the way to blessings you would never have thought to hope for, that you would not have been ready to understand as blessings if they had come to you in your youth, when you were uninjured, innocent', with the corollary of this being that the 'future always finds us changed' (Robinson 2015, p. 223). Yet as we saw with Derek's account of the death of his wife, the work of the mnemonic imagination in reconciling losses and gains is not limitless or without difficulty. It may be frustrated or made more complex when a loved one and our long-term relationship with her or him is arrested by death at the same time as our relationships with others continues. The difficulty turns on the temporal disjuncture that death entails. On the one hand, death takes those who have passed to an ever-increasing temporal distance from the present, our relationship with them never to be added to or developed further, only consolidated and in a sense reified as an integral feature of our life-narratives. On the other hand, our own experience and the social relationships that mark it continue in an onward march from the present into the future. Reconciling the fixity and finality of death with the continually changing contours of lived experience is a challenging process, and the effort involved may place the mnemonic imagination under strain as it seeks to manage the changes and transitions that death brings in its wake.

The tension involved in this is reflexively identified in accounts of remembering loved ones. Abigail, a British woman in her sixties, describes how memories of loved ones are abruptly curtailed by the moment of death, how they are rendered as static, indicative of a finished life, the totality of which has now to be accepted, in radical contrast to the continually moving and evolving lives of the living, relations with whom are always subject to change and revision:

> That was my aunt, died. My brother-in-law who is dead. You will always remember the man as he was. He died in the early ninties, about ten years after that photograph was taken. He was quite young. He was only in his early fifties. So he never grows old, does he? He only grew as old as he was until he died. So you always think of people … I don't know if you think of people at the last time you saw them. My aunt who died in her eighties, early eighties, I can remember her from all, at different ages, but obviously when perhaps I'd seen her most recently she was about eighty. I think I see her sort of almost like a sort of panorama, you know, at different stages in her life. My mother died when she was sixty nine and she was the youngest in her family, so her elder sister was fifteen years older than her, and I have to say I loved her very much, but I was very reluctant to go and see her after my mother died because I didn't want, I didn't want to see my mother as she would have looked if she had lived to her ninties. I mean, I wanted to remember my mother as she was when she died, which she was relatively young. Not that much older than myself. I thought if I see my aunt I'll think of my mother (they looked quite alike) at the same age.

Abigail describes the memory of her much loved dead aunt as a panorama—a composite, multifaceted picture of a life, but one to which there is nothing more to be added. Death's terminus might on the face of it suggest that it inaugurates a certain stability in the remembered relationship between the one who has died and those who remain. This is not necessarily the case. For Abigail, in respect of the death of her mother and the continued presence of her mother's surviving (and continually aging) sister, this proved emotionally and psychologically difficult, not simply in terms of sorrow at the loss of her mother but also because of having to manage the tension between her dead mother as a now unchanging reference point in her life and her mother's aging sister whose change over time served to underscore her mother's fixity in death. Despite their closeness, her reluctance to see her aunt after her mother's death stemmed from the sense that she would then be visually confronted with this tension. She wanted to remember her mother

as being relatively young, as she was at the time of her death, but sight of the older sister would have wrecked that wish because of the physical resemblance between them. Added to this, she did not want to be reminded that her mother would have aged, nor did she want the integrity of her own experientially derived memory of her mother compromised by a sense of what might have been. Rather than the likeness of her mother in the form of her aging aunt serving to draw Abigail's mother imaginatively into proximity with her lived experience in the present, she found the closure of the temporal gap unsettling, instead preferring to remember her mother as she was when she died. The complexity of feeling involved in all this was compounded by the way her memory of her mother at the point of death served to emphasize her commonality with Abigail, based on their proximity in age and looks. Seeing her aunt would have served also to emphasize her mother's likeness with her sister, visually highlighting *their* closeness as siblings, when what Abigail wanted to hold onto was the closeness between *her* and her mother. Somewhat paradoxically, death threatened the viability and continuity of a surviving close relationship rather than throwing into question the relationship with a lost loved one. The temporal stability that death brought to the meanings associated with her mother and her own relationship to her, along with the desire to maintain that stability, made those relationships which continued to evolve and change over time seem to have become problematic. Such are the difficulties which transition after death can heap in front of us.

The problems that death may pose for ongoing relationships are also limned by Dominic, whose account we discussed earlier in this chapter. The different ways in which people manage the arrested temporal flow in the life of a loved one in relation to the continuing flow in their own life and the lives of others around them can be a source of dissension and upset. As we have seen, the death of Dominic's wife induced a future-oriented as well as past-oriented response, with his quest to find a new partner matched by his determination to make this congruent with memory of his relationship with his wife, and with missing her presence in his life. Unfortunately, one of Dominic's daughters did not share in his approach to managing the change in his life wrought by his wife's death, as he explains:

> I've got two daughters, but the other daughter in Canada – I suppose it's not something that I'm happy with but it's not something that I'm prepared to do anything about – we've completely split. We don't have

> anything to do with each other at all. I don't like it but she was incredibly rude to C [his new partner]. She was incredibly rude to her when she met her here, and I just couldn't forgive her for it. Looking back on it, maybe it sounds trivial but it certainly wasn't at the time. Then when she, when we were talking about it afterwards, she accused me of trying to hit her with milk bottles and things like that when she was a child, and it became very, very difficult, and it's all printed in email form, which I've still got. I've kept it, but she was always a very, very difficult child anyway, and I'm not prepared to grovel and try and put it right only for the risk of it all going wrong again. That maybe a very negative attitude, but history has made that even more consolidated.

While it is only possible to speculate on the meanings of his wife's death to his daughter and on her own mnemonic management of her mother's death, it is evident that, whatever it entailed, it badly rubbed up against, and remains in tension with, her father's long-term response. For Dominic, the meanings that he has attributed to his wife and his relationship with her has, as we saw previously, stabilized around a narrative of luck, with this being conceived in a twofold sense: his good fortune in sharing his life with her, and his good fortune in finding a new partner. The dual sources of this good fortune are consecutive and mutually constitutive. The deeply appreciated continuity in this is profoundly at variance with his bad fortune in falling out with his daughter. A further upshot of this is that their estrangement has necessitated a reconfiguring of his memories of her in light of her accusation of mistreatment at his hands. In his account, this is presented as in keeping with her being 'a very, very difficult child', so placing the severance in their relationship as continuous with a long-term pattern of behaviour rather than being occasioned by his new conjugal relationship, for which he may feel responsible despite her rudeness to his new partner. As Dominic acknowledges, such rudeness may not be considered by others as sufficient warrant for such a complete breakdown of familial relations. He notes the passing of time has cemented these two narratives more firmly in place—on the one hand his own luck at having had two intersupportive intimate relationships, and on the other his daughter as a 'difficult child', and by implication a difficult adult. The disparity between these two narratives makes it increasingly difficult for the mnemonic imagination to do its work in moving Dominic between firsthand and secondhand experiences of his wife's death: his own experience and that of his daughter. It impedes his ability to generate a productive synthesis

of past and present that can accommodate both his own happiness and his daughter's continued pain. As with Abigail, even where the meanings of death and loss can be stabilized in the story of a life and lead to creative engagements with the present and the future, tensions in existing and ongoing relationships arising from opposed ways of remembering and managing postdeath transitions may erode what has already been achieved and sully at least some part of what is remembered.

Making sense of death's terminal arrest of experience with and in relation to close others in the present is not necessarily marked by such intractable tensions. Collaborative remembering may well produce consensual, shared ways of recollecting the dead and finding ways of accommodating their increasing distance from our ongoing experience, both individual and shared. This is perhaps most necessary when the experience of loss exceeds our everyday understanding. For Linne, this exceptional quality related to the historical circumstances of World War II; eventually her remembering activity could draw on relevant social and cultural frameworks of memorialization. However, in other cases, the exceptional nature of a death, such as that of a child due to accident or illness, has no historical status and is not one afforded any ritualized, collective remembrance. The struggle to manage the radical attenuation of a child's life with the continuation of one's own and that of others arose in the account given by Douglas and his wife, a couple in their early sixties living in a North Midlands ex-mining village. They lost their grandson at age 25 in the late 1990s.

Wendy: We lost our grandson. He died the year after Princess Diana. He had a brain tumour when he was 11 and, well, he had a crash on a go-kart and he was never really right after that.

Douglas: Well he appeared to be all right but …

Wendy: He had bouts of ups and downs.

Douglas: You took him to the pantomime, didn't you? And he kept saying he couldn't see out of one eye.

Wendy: He could only see half the stage.

Douglas: He could only see half the stage. So we took him to the doctors up here. I mean, they live down in Southampton, but he was staying up here. I took him to the doctors. Eventually they found out he got a brain tumour.

Wendy: It was the optician that found he's got a brain tumour.

Douglas: He was 11 when the operation was done – he lived till he was 25 after that. But it wasn't a very good life at all.

Wendy: No, it was a terrible life. Dreadful life. Well, there you are.

Douglas: When you see those [photos], it brings back memories. Whenever we hear that [laughs]–

Wendy: One more star in – one more star in heaven – one more angel in heaven, one more star in the sky, from *Joseph*.

Douglas: They played that at his funeral, didn't they? Because that was one of his favourites.

Wendy: It does bring back dreadful memories. Oh, he was a lovely lad before he was ill. You'd never have believed it could have happened, really. Bright, intelligent, you know, handsome, you know, you – you can't believe – well, he was handsome until he died, really. He wasn't a bad-looking lad. No. But that's one of the most awful things that could happen to you. I mean, we always say it's awful to lose your children, but to lose your grandchildren is even worse. As a baby, it wouldn't have been so bad. But when you get to that age, it's stressful and it split up a marriage. It was all very, very sad, but that's all in the past now. If I go into a cathedral, I always light a candle for him. I can never, ever forget him. I used to go down to Southampton and I used to get a – a bus or a train into London, and I used to go down to Southampton and pick him up at the bus station and bring him back [laughs] in a day. But I did that a lot. But that was before he was ill. He couldn't have done it when he was ill.

Interviewer: When you see the photos of him, does it bring back good memories?

Wendy: Oh yes, yes. You can never – because he really was a swine when he was ill. He was awful. I mean, he – he used to have these bouts of–

Douglas: We had double locks on the kitchen door. Because he used to come in and break into the cupboards to get food and he couldn't have it either, because his diet was strictly controlled

Wendy: He'd have bouts of eating. I mean, it's laughable really, but it wasn't funny at the time – bouts of eating loads of Marmite sandwiches. And he wouldn't eat anything else

> but Marmite sandwiches. He just lived on Marmite sandwiches. And then he'd eat nothing, and then he'd go onto something else and – but he used to get violent, very violent. All part of the illness. All part of the illness. It was very, very sad. And he had the best consultants and doctors you could wish for. Just one of those things. It wasn't to be.

Douglas and Wendy work together in conversation to corroborate and mutually reinforce their remembering. They jointly locate the moment at which their grandson's illness begins (or is first brought to light) on a visit to the theatre, marking this as the key turning point in his life, at age 11. In their account they describe him as a bright, happy child and bracket off the preillness period from the period when he suffered from his brain tumour. However, the dominant mode of remembering their grandson is nevertheless through the prism of his illness, when his life was, in their assessment, 'dreadful'. The photographs of their grandson only index the terrible memories of his declining quality of life and the trial of his deterioration. The attenuation of his life thereafter is what becomes most remembered, as for example is betokened by their reiterated claim that his violence was 'all part of the illness' and attributable only to that. For Wendy and Douglas, the inability to disentangle the pre- and postillness phases of their grandson's life means that his death marks a not unwelcome turning point. In saying 'that's all in the past now', it is not only to his illness or the impact it had on their family life that they refer; it is also to the pain of being unable to extricate their grandson from his illness during his lifetime. Death provides the opportunity to begin the process of dissociating their loved grandson, this 'bright', 'intelligent' boy, from the 'swine' that the illness made of him.

The process is hardly straightforward. It cannot be characterized by a neat separation of before and after their grandson's illness. Instead, it requires these stages of his life to be teased apart and then realigned in ways that speak meaningfully to their continuing experience of his absence. In doing this Douglas reflects on the exceptional nature of his grandson's death with reference to generational expectations. He describes the death of a grandchild as an exacerbation of losing one's own child; it totally reverses the socially expected order of deaths in a familial context. It is even suggested that his death as a baby would not have been 'so bad' in the sense that his death then would have spared

him and them such a protracted period of illness and decline. This period was made all the more devastating after knowing him as a happy, healthy child, and the contrast must have been starkly apparent to him as well. There are also accepted cultural repertoires for mourning stillborn children and some social recognition of those who have lost children to cot death (SIDS), but prolonged degenerative illness is not associated with children; it is generally regarded as the unhappy preserve of the elderly. In this sense the continuation of their own lives in the face of his loss, along with its contravention of norms of generational succession, seem to defy any available explanatory frames.

As a result, Douglas and Wendy undertake two interrelated efforts to construct meaning in the face of the disjuncture between their grandson's illness and death and their own continued experience. They emphasize their active participation in their grandson's life and their struggles to respond to his illness. Wendy explains her lengthy efforts to travel the long distance to the south coast to see her grandson before his illness. She makes clear that they were the ones who took him to the doctor when his illness initially presented itself, and that they modified their home to manage his increasingly disturbed behaviour while he was ill. In doing so, Douglas and Wendy reaffirm their love for their grandson. They did not give up in the face of the overwhelming adversity that his illness posed. At the same time, they interweave this with a narrative of fate: a fully fledged life for their grandson 'wasn't to be'. Despite their efforts, his illness and death was 'just one of those things' beyond their control. They do not at any point in the narrative claim to have wished the long-term continuance of his life. Implicit in this is a sense that his death was a blessed release. The fact that this is not openly articulated signals its unacceptability: to lose a grandchild runs against the social norms of generational succession, but to wish for his death, even under such terrible conditions, is, for Douglas and Wendy at least, intolerable. In light of this, the reference to their own practical care for him in spite of his debilitating illness and his awful behaviour serves an important purpose: it communicates to others that they did not wish for his death, that they were not indifferent to it regardless of the diminished quality of his life. Along with this, the rhetoric of fate which accompanies it allows them to elide an explicit reflection on whether his death was welcome or not. It is instead presented as simply inevitable.

For Maahir, an Indian man in his seventies, making sense of the death of a child has also been a central feature of his life. Throughout the time

since, this has involved trying to assimilate the death in a manner that can accommodate his own continued life. In the following extract, he told us of his brother's death as a young boy during the time he and his family lived in Kenya in the 1950s:

> That's me and my younger brother. I'm missing him a lot. He was in standard two, which means he must be about six or seven years old. But the way he was killed. At that time I was off sick. I was asthmatic and I didn't go to school that day. We had a company bus, you know. We used to live out far away from the city down in Mombasa. Where the hydro-power station was, it was away from the town. So we were provided a house from the company. Everything was free, even the bus. It was a Volkswagen. So that was given to take the staff's kids to school. Just the whites and browns. The blacks were deprived. They said, 'You walk if you want to'. It was very bad. But I can remember all these things. We were privileged, so we used to go with the white students. Together, we used to go together. He parked here and the kids – all the kids – he parked like this. This is the road, a very narrow road, and the houses are here on the hill. The kids started going like that instead of coming like that, in the front, and my brother was last. And there was a South African, a white, and he came full swing – it was a hill like that, about a hundred feet, and the whole van was smashed. And instantly, like a death scene. Oh, traumatic. My parents, I don't know how they survived; they still miss him. The way he died so tragically. He was such a nice and quiet chap. Really, I was naughty, very naughty, but he was the best. Very big tragedy. My parents had to go through a lot. As far as the children were concerned, they were not lucky. A lot of suffering.

Use of the term 'tragedy' and its derivatives recurs throughout Maahir's account. Framing his brother's death in that way is crucial, and very different from the way Wendy and Douglas talked about the death of their grandson. For Maahir the death itself was the cause of great suffering for his parents, and his own sorrow persists into the present day, whereas for Wendy and Douglas, their grandson's death marked the conclusion of suffering. That noted, Maahir's emphasis on the accidental nature of the tragedy aligns with Wendy and Douglas's reference to fate in explaining the death of their grandson. Both ways of enframing the children's deaths are significant for them in helping to make sense of the their own survival in symbolic opposition to the end of the life of a much-loved child. For Maahir the horrible good luck of his asthma preventing him

being at the scene of the accident, and his self-effacing emphasis on his brother's good behaviour in contrast to his own lays stress upon his brother being undeserving of the death he met. The cause of his death could not possibly be seen as the result of his behaviour in any way, and therefore his brother was not responsible for it. By implication, this means that Maahir is not responsible for his own survival. The historical detail that Maahir provides concerning the experience of living in East Africa, particularly in relation to the racial discrimination which underpinned their social experience and which he describes in clearly negative terms, serves to provide a context for the tragedy. Enjoying a privileged social status along with white children was precisely the reason that Maahir's brother found himself on the school bus and therefore at the scene of the accident.

The difficulty that Maahir faced in the wake of his brother's death was bearing the weight of his parent's expectations and their somewhat claustrophobic attachment to him, which he attributed to death of his brother and that of a number of other siblings:

> First of all, I'm the oldest son and I've got one sister and I was born after eighteen years of their marriage. So they were very possessive. They didn't want to lose sight of me. Very much so. That's why they were, all the time, wanting me to come to them. That's why, after two years, I left again and went back to them. Then after two years, I came back again … We were nine in total. Only two survived. Only two! Very tragic. That's why they didn't want to lose me from their sight. 'Stick with us'. I said, 'Look, I have to live my life, my future. I've got a family. You know, I have to move out, you know, and look after my family, to make progress in my life. I mean, you left your mother country. You went to Kenya. What about me now and my family?' Otherwise, they'll start blaming me. 'You didn't come out of the poverty. You didn't move out'. So then they said, 'Okay. Now you can go'.

Maahir's own survival, set against the seven deaths of his siblings, creates a conflict between his parent's expectations of him to remain close to them and his own desire to migrate to the UK to build a new life for his own family. These two alternative imagined futures chafe against each other, but it is his brother's death that constitutes the major turning point in both their lives and his own, and that provides a reference point for the reconciliation of their divergent futures. He is able to recognize his parents' loss but at the same time, through his use of the trope of

tragedy as we saw in the previous extract, to extricate himself from any responsibility for it for the sake of his own alternative future. Reference to his parents' own past as featuring migration in the interests of attaining a more prosperous standard of living then serves to legitimate his own obligation to create the conditions for the future prosperity of his own nuclear family by migrating to the UK. Use of his mnemonic imagination enables him to move between his parents' experience, both of the death of his siblings and their consequent desire to keep him close to them, his parent's past migration, and his own past and future in such a way that neither exacerbates his sense of fraternal loss nor compromises his own sense of personal destiny. This was not easy to achieve and evidently required careful negotiation and renegotiation, as Maahir made a number of departures and returns to his parental home before finally migrating permanently. His parents' suffering and his filial obligation to them were keenly felt.

In sum, then, we can say that when faced with a premature or unexpected , what characterizes remembering it well is the reconciliation of the abrupt and undeserved curtailment of a life with the longer-term continuation of another life, and then with many other lives, however these are identified or chosen, in ways that enable those who survive to act on a sound existential basis in the present. That may be the start, but it is not the finish. The death of a loved one doesn't only demand that we make sense of our own continuing experience in the wake of their loss, for it can also throw into relief the finitude of our own experience. The death of close others implicates a further and more definitive transition. It requires us to confront and make sense of our own inevitable death.

A View Towards Death

In this chapter we have seen how those burdened with grief somehow have to find ways in which to rebuild their lives and bring past and present once more into dialogue. The process can be desperately hard. This explains at least in part the abrupt impatience sometimes felt at what others say after a loss as they reiterate trite phrases and hackneyed sentiments: '"Get over your loss," "find closure," "move on"—all those ridiculous phrases people use when they're urging you to endure the unendurable' (Tyler 2013, p. 10). Those more familiar to you may be moved by sympathy and concern at your distress, and they may think

carefully of helpful ways of advising you, but you stand unreachable in the fastness of your grief:

> You're going to look back and say, "I can't believe now that I ever thought my life was finished". I could have told her that I worried more about my life stretching on and on. But I didn't want her going all compassionate again (p. 181).

In the face of such insouciance or misplaced identification of our preoccupations, some way forward must somehow be found, and in light of that, we have also explored at least some of the diverse ways that this is achieved: comparing our own experience of loss with the experience of loss among those close to us, or adopting a macrohistorical frame of reference in trying to make sense of something more directly personal, and perhaps still difficult to resolve in its cross-temporal relations. In this final section we return to an intimate experience of death, but it is bracketed as an experience because it exists only in the future tense.

At some point we all consider our own death. We wonder what will happen afterwards and how we will be remembered. Among many other things, we speculate about how long we will be remembered and what will be forgotten about our lives. We may also attempt to draw together the ways in which we remember others with the ways in which we wish to be remembered in an imagined future. In the following two extracts we see how our own death can be a stimulus for two very different kinds of remembering. In the first, Maahir experiences this as disruptive of his narrative identity, throwing him back into the past in unpredictable and harrowing ways which are only partially managed through everyday practices of remembering. In the second, Abigail describes a more strategically managed remembering process inspired by a reflection on her own death. Through this she is able to situate the story of her own life in a longer intergenerational context, reconceiving her own sense of belonging in order to remain relevant to close others even after the event of her death.

Maahir vividly describes his recent experience of being haunted by his childhood experience and by his dead loved ones who frequently return to him in his dreams as well as in his waking memory. This haunting is characterized by their intimate proximity. The sudden collapse of temporal distance felt in this haunting seems to abrogate their deaths, creating a desire to return to their shared past and to turn away from the ever-continuing present.

Maahir: Quite recently I've start dreaming now. All these dreams that come out of my childhood, especially of Kenya where I went to primary school, secondary school, all the friends and all the activities in which I engaged. I used to play soccer and go swimming and, you know, playing on the beach and that kind of thing. My younger brother, who was killed in a road accident, is one thing that has started haunting me now. Maybe the reason could be because, all these years, I've been working hard. All the time, work, work, work and I didn't have any chance to pursue my personal interests and hobbies as such, you know. But now, since I was made redundant, I have the time to think, relax, whereas before I used to just think of the next morning's work and what I'm going to do. So maybe that's the reason … I've started wondering myself: why is it happening? And I keep asking my friends, the elderly ones, and they say this is what happens. It's a natural thing to happen now because we are in the last stage our lives now, the last leg. Vivid. More and more.

Interviewer: Do you talk to people about them?

Maahir: Well, I talk to people generally, but in detail to my family, my daughters and grandchild …

Interviewer: This is obviously a really precious photograph [of his parents].

Maahir: It is. It's in my wardrobe upstairs because the thing is, you know, if I see it, you know, it spoils my day. And then I get completely choked up. I say, 'Oh, I must go and join them. I am leaving. I must go now. I must go and meet, you know, my parents and my first wife'.

Interviewer: So it's something that you only look at occasionally?

Maahir: Oh, very occasionally. I try to avoid it, but then I feel compelled to see it again. Its human nature, isn't it?

Maahir offers two potential reasons for his increasing preoccupation with his past. Firstly, he has more time to reflect because of his retirement from the workplace, and secondly, the is experiencing the sense of entering the last stretch of his own life and approaching his own impending death. This generates an imperative desire to look back over the whole of his life and reflect on how it all hangs together in some sense or

other, but there is an anxiousness in this, a feeling of disorientation that he tries to avoid, as for example with the picture of his parents and first wife (who died at the age of 42). This means so much to him and makes so many feelings well up that he feels an intense wish to join them, to be with them again. The only way he can manage this unconscionable wish is to limit his engagement with such photographs, but even this is only partly achieved. Unlike Abigail, whom we will turn to shortly, the radical losses that Maahir has suffered make it difficult to see himself cross-temporally in a stable narrative of intergenerational succession. The personal experience of premature loss (his brother and his first wife, among others) continues to disrupt the possibility of drawing continuities between the death of his loved ones and his own, which will now inevitably come in old age. Dislocation from his familial homeland where his brother, wife and parents died only serves to exacerbate this difficulty. He is able to mnemonically imagine the past he shared with his loved ones, but he is unable to place himself in a broader historical narrative in relation to them which will persist into the future. The result is a sense of being out of time and space.

Following on from a discussion about a family party she had organized in order to launch the publication of a book based on letters that her late uncle had written to his mother from the front during World War I, Abigail, whose account of her mother's death we discussed earlier, describes the anticipation of her own death as a motivation to remember what she describes as 'her roots':

> It's interesting, isn't it? I suppose it's your roots, you feel … as I get older I feel you're getting closer to the grave so you, so it's a kind of cyclical thing. You find you feel you need to know your roots before you … it's a sort of a closing thing, isn't it? It's closure, for me anyway. I think your family, your extended family, also become much more important as well. Well, I haven't actually done a family history. My husband did for his family on both sides…. My grandmother wrote her own memoirs, not that she was a very grand lady but she did write a memoir, so it's sort of recorded her life.

For Abigail, remembering and engaging with her extended family past is a kind of return. As she nears completion of the life cycle, her parents and grandparents become imaginatively important again, as they would have been during childhood. This is explicitly described in terms

of providing narrative closure. It stands in stark contrast to Maahir's account in which the integrity of the temporal distance between lost loved ones and his present life has collapsed, throwing his narrative sense of self into disarray. His alternative conception of return is rejoining them in death, whereas Abigail relocates herself within a stable intergenerational narrative which can accommodate the terminus of her own death but does not lead her to feel ineluctably drawn to it.

The anticipation of death in Abigail's account combines two distinct mnemonic moves: firstly the distillation of one's own life into a firmly established set of meanings which will endure beyond one's own death, and secondly the positioning of that life in a longer cross-generational, historical narrative, allowing for the attribution of meaning to a life which goes beyond the intimate relations which characterize it while it is being daily experienced. The death of distant relatives such as her uncle, whom she never knew, has stimulated her not only to engage in intensive cultural mnemonic work in the publication of his letters but also to communicate this to living members of her family in the present, thus highlighting a familial (rather than personal) sense of succession in which she can place herself, and by extension imagine being placed by others after her death.

Like Helen's immediate experience of the death and departure of her husband, the anticipation of one's own death in the future has the potential to paralyse us in the here and now, the former disrupting a hitherto serviceable life-narrative and the latter rendering it obsolete. What is evident from Abigail's account is that this is not inevitable. Anticipation of one's own death can be a creative stimulus when mnemonically imagined in a cross-temporal realignment of past, present and future, and in a symbolic rapprochement between one's own finitude and intergenerational continuities and linkages over the longer term. This generates a fertile space in which the relevance of individual lives can be reconceived in broader historical terms, thus ensuring that their significance is not utterly dissipated by what is cut off and curtailed by death. It is then with a firm conviction that we can say, alongside John Donne, death be not proud.

This makes demonstrably clear that as a transitional experience, suffering loss through death can eventually be not only endured but also turned into a source of creative renewal. The significant pieces of the past we have gathered and sewn together hitherto are thrown into disarray by the finality of death, but however arduous the process, they can be

reassembled and their interactional meanings reconfigured for the sake of a future freshly imagined. Moving to this point from the initial paralysis of our grief is crucial, not least in helping us rehearse what we will never personally experience: our own transition from being a remembering subject to the one being remembered. Death and our experience of it does not necessarily close down processes of creative remembering once and for all. The mnemonic imagination is our assurance of this. As we hope to have shown, the mnemonic imagination is of critical importance for the ways in which we manage to integrate an event as absolute as death into the continuing stories of our lives, even though, in our experience of death, grief and mourning, it can seem at times utterly unbearable to be the one who is living inside those stories.

Notes

1. As this is expressed, conjugal separation in the wake of a child's death may seem inevitable, but that is of course not invariably the case, however, testing of an intimate relationship the experience of losing a child may prove to be.
2. See, for example, Olick's (2007, pp. 4–5) discussion of the debate over the position of the National Socialist past in German cultural memory in the 1980s.
3. We may of course wish to reconsider the relative durability of this principle in light of the relatively recent success of right-wing populist administrations in the United States and India, and of similar political movements in the UK and across Europe.
4. For the methodological implications of an interscalar approach, see Pickering and Keightley (2016).
5. The application of the concept of trauma to collective remembering processes is something we have critiqued elsewhere. See Pickering and Keightley (2009) and Keightley and Pickering (2012), Chap. 6.
6. In one of her always satisfying, finely observed novels, Penelope Lively (1988, p. 61) has a somewhat different perspective on the same fear: 'I have this nightmarish feeling that if I don't clutch on to everything I remember of Steven [her deceased husband] he will disappear completely. That I am responsible for him and that if I forget anything his memory will be cancelled entirely'.
7. Goldie (2012, pp. 57–61) discusses the unfolding of grief over time rather than as a mental state.
8. For a more detailed discussion, see Pickering and Keightley (2013).
9. L'Arpeggiata is an early music group led by Christina Pluhar which she founded in the year 2000.

10. Dido's Lament, from the opera *Dido and Aeneas* (ca. 1689) by Henry Purcell, is the aria 'When I Am Laid in Earth'.
11. 'Hold On My Heart' is a single taken from Genesis's 1991 album *We Can't Dance*.
12. In this example, the person whose narrative we are following had time to prepare for her husband's death before its occurrence because of his stroke and period in a care home before he was felled by a second, decisive stroke.
13. For further detail on both these explanatory frames, see Hitchcock (2009) and Anonymous (2005).
14. Worden (1991) refers to this as the final task in the process of mourning.
15. We offered to terminate the interview at this point, but Derek insisted that we continue, and after a few moments he managed to start speaking again.

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Endnote

Change is constant. To say this seems immediately to plant centre stage a contradiction in terms, an illogical compound of two strictly opposed terms, but if we step back a bit from the usual commonsense opposition between these terms and are clear that we are considering change in the most general sense rather than in any particular form or feature of it, it seems impossible to deny that everything is always changing. Change is constant, ceaseless, without prolific pause. It is continuously at work in virtually anything to which we can point. What may at first sight seem a paradox soon becomes a readily acknowledged reality, so much so that it is often taken for granted.

Change and the constancy of change have been apparent in each of the preceding chapters. Intimate relationships emerge, blossom and at that point seem to promise lasting love, but through whatever concatenation of circumstances, they may and often do fade and diminish. People move from place to place, either voluntarily or involuntarily, with varying degrees of ability to find their best modalities of belonging, and places themselves are transformed over time, for even in a remote, sleepy village, day turns to night and summer turns to autumn, new trees appear, clocks wind down and people grow old. Adding to this incessant mutation, at some point, however predictably or haphazardly it may happen, those close to us pass away, their echoing absence in stark contrast to the tangible presence they once had in our lives: 'Behind the little wasted shell that lay there he remembered suddenly the warm brown face, the soft eyes, that once had peered down at him: like one who has

E. Keightley and M. Pickering, *Memory and the Management of Change*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies,
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been mad, and suddenly recovers reason, he remembered that forgotten face he had not seen in weeks, that strange bright loneliness that would not return' (Wolfe [1929] 1984, p. 62).

Change always happens: 'And when I think of this, I really wonder why so many hearts are sown with this sprig of illusion, when nothing is forever… and we should learn when we are children that the brightest sunrise is nothing but the prelude to nightfall' (Tremain [1979] 1999, p. 103). Yet if change always happens, with one thing leading inexorably to another, it always happens in greater or lesser degree. As we noted in Chap. 1, change is highly variable, ranging from severe ruptures in human lives, various examples of which we have discussed, to gradual modifications that are hardly apparent in the present and so only noticed over an indefinite period of time. We learn to assimilate and appreciate this variation, although there are occasions when we wish it was not so wide, so enormous in its scope, for some changes are too large and dramatic, and we find that the geography of an earlier life, 'its fixed points and certainties', become 'hopelessly out of date', and we are 'faced only with mutability and decay: to look back, to recall, only emphasises our awful fragility' (Boyd 1988, p. 312). This is very much in contrast with the small, slow-paced changes we unconsciously absorb, only recognizing them at a later date. For this reason, 'it's surprising how much of memory is built around things unnoticed at the time' (Kingsolver [1990] 2004, p. 280). In the face of such variation, it seems quite reasonable to say that both accommodating, and operating with, multiple forms, degrees and paces of change are necessary as part of the many ways of managing it, but the corollary of this is accepting that the constancy of change is inescapable, however much some may try to prove otherwise, or at times feel weighed down by wanted change failing to happen: 'it's the same old same old …'.

Against such constancy, it may seem that memory is a resource we can rely on to stay unchanging while everything else is subject to unceasing alteration. Surely this is what enables us to feel anchored when we need to feel so, rather than seeming to be hopelessly adrift on the river of an ever-rolling present. In all sorts of ways we daily rely on and return to memory, making it appear to be 'our only true home' (Keenan 2001, p. 171). We may acknowledge that it is not always reliable, or that what we want to remember is, at least temporarily, out of reach, but we know that when we need to, we can turn to certain memories as ballast against uncertainty; as a form of solace, a way of compensating for the constancy

of change; or as a source of consolation when times are bad, turning better times in the past into the possibility of their return in the future. This would seem to be particularly true of those memories that are still clear and strong, remaining strident in what and how they declare themselves as trustworthy testimony of specific instances and episodes in the past. All of this is nevertheless beguiling. It encourages us to forget too easily that any particular memory is not exactly the same, year after year, throughout the course of our lives. All memories are subject to time's alteration because when we do recall certain events, people or places at different points in time, we are not the same person who witnessed them, who engaged with them in a now receded present. We ourselves have changed, and because of this, what various memories mean to us, the value they have for us and the uses to which we put them also change, even if, because of the gradual process involved, this happens to go unnoticed. Understanding this may occasionally fill us with distrust as we grow to suspect the verity of what we remember, and while that is understandable, it should not allow us to overlook the necessary selectiveness of what we remember. This is complicated because we do not choose all of what we remember—involuntary memories are one form of evidence of this—but we do draw on only a portion of all that has happened in the past, and if this wasn't the case, we would be so burdened down by the past that we couldn't move forward more than an inch, and just as terribly, be open to fresh, uncharted experience.

That point aside, we do of course consciously adopt and weave together certain pieces of the past, and we do so inter alia as a way of offsetting the constancy of change. Even as we live with our knowledge of this constancy, we strive to establish and hold to what seem to us various strands of continuity that run across time and act as a counterbalance to change, or across time serve as lines of transmission through which we may make sense of change. In this, we find patterns and the meanings that these patterns bring to our lives and our interactions with others, the world around us and the cross-temporal relations in which we are constantly embroiled. Our sense of selfhood would be nothing without it. Our narrative identities would be nothing without it. Our symbolic lineaments of community and network would be nothing without it.

Throughout the trilogy of which this book is the final instalment, our leading concept in thinking about the establishment and maintenance of such patterns in our lives has been the mnemonic imagination. It is through the operation of the mnemonic imagination that past and

present are interanimated and brought into fruitful dialogue with each other for the sake of our constantly changing lives and the way that lies ahead of us into the future. The concept runs throughout the trilogy and provides us with the main way in which we approach reconstructions of the past in everyday life and analyse how cultural resources at our disposal are used for making those reconstructions. In this and the previous book we have shown how the mnemonic imagination is creatively realized through the two most salient resources of remembering in people's lives—photography and recorded music—and the diverse ways in which they are taken up and woven into the relations between past and present. We have seen how the mnemonic imagination is central to the day-to-day management and longer-term understanding of all the changes that happen both in the life course and in the continually developing contexts of families, communities and networks of friends and alliances. Our discussion of this has covered varying distillations of experience in memory formation and communication; key dimensions and modalities in the identity of the remembering subject; making our own—conceived as acts and attributions of localizing a broad array of mnemonic materials in vernacular memory and posited as a key process in its relations with the spatial and temporal scales through which the past is recreated; transitions and turning points in people's lives, and the repossession of the past that they entail; lost opportunities and sources of regret, along with the ways they subsequently aid or hinder the management of change; the intergenerational dynamics of memory transmission; and the mnemonics of loss and gain in a range of different milieus and circumstances. More specifically, in our case studies we have explored how the mnemonic imagination enables people to deal with the breakdown of intimate relationships and the consequences of this for their self-identities and life-narratives; how it relates to transitions between places and changes within places; and how it informs bereavement and the process of mourning, helping people reassemble, reconfigure and repossess pieces of the past in the wake of the absolute terminus that is death. In all these cases the mnemonic imagination enables past, present and future to be creatively grasped together in the interests of establishing a sense of pattern and continuity in face of—but not in opposition to—the inevitability of change. In doing so it transforms recall into actively concerted recollection, turns the past in its variegated landscape into fertile locations of aspiration and possibility, and sensitizes us to other people's modes and manners of recollection.

Such features are among the various ways in which the mnemonic imagination is vital for remembering well. There are a range of different aspects to this, but it is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the ways the past is creatively used in the interests of self-knowledge and self-renewal, with the mnemonic imagination helping us assess the past and establish lines of continuity and coherence across time; in the ways what is lost in one place and time becomes reconciled with what is found in another place and time, with the mnemonic imagination helping us connect acceptance of what has been lost to appreciation of what has been gained; and in the ways our own past and remembering practices interact with those of others, across history and across culture, with the mnemonic imagination negotiating the many varied ways in which they use and value what they hold in memory (past and present tenses being assumed). Remembering which enables us to manage our narrative selves under continuing if variously paced processes of change, and through different points of transition in our lives, is constitutive of remembering well. This is achieved by the mnemonic imagination making past and present transactional and aligning or realigning our pasts with the pasts of others, both our contemporaries and those from other periods than our own.

As we have seen throughout this book, bringing past and present into productive relation with each other is not always without pain. It can in some cases be shot through with feelings of intense loss, desire or regret, but to remember well means that these are accompanied by a new orientation to the future and a renewed intentional position from which to act. So, for example, while we may still feel the serpent's-tooth sting of a love lost, this does not preclude the mnemonic imagination working to create interactive links between the before and after of a relationship breakdown, so re-evaluating our past experience in a changed present in the interests of constructing a continuous self-identity which can traverse the disruptive change in circumstances and persist in a new and extended way into the future. There are, of course, times when the mnemonic imagination fails, or is at least belated in its work. For example, certain situations and circumstances may involve such a sustained degree of pain and distress that we are unable to fully come to terms with the end of a relationship and integrate it into a continuous life-narrative. The past remains unassimilable, always potentially disruptive, its meaning unstable. To cite other examples, a sudden break in a relationship with a parent, a child disowned or a mother abandoned disrupt not only our own

constructed, continuous narratives and sense of ourselves within them, but also the social and cultural conventions which inform our experiences and expectations of maternal relationships. This double dislocation strips past interpersonal experience of its ability to explain the present or inform the future, and we can then become trapped in an inflexible orientation to the past even as we search for stable references from which to make sense of an as yet unimagined future. These stumbling blocks have to be acknowledged, as does the fact that the success or failure of the mnemonic imagination is never fixed once and for all. It is always provisional, and any stability of meaning it achieves or leads towards is always a matter of degree. Likewise, all of us at times confront obstacles to remembering well, and that is why in our case study chapters we have deliberately worked through various examples of them in order to show how, in many but by no means all of them, the obstacles are overcome. At times, as we have seen, they are overcome at a price, as for instance in the way we move out of the process of mourning someone's loss by finding ways of leaving them behind, placing them in the past in such a way that we can remember them well without memories of them thwarting our movement into the future. We accept their absence without yearning for their presence.

Overall in the trilogy we have developed the concept of the mnemonic imagination, shown the numerous ways in which can be analytically applied and linked it to ways of remembering well in order to counter what seems to us an imbalance in the field of memory studies. Much of the work in this field has been preoccupied either with how memory is misused for political and ideological reasons, or with how memory can be damaged, disturbed or dissipated. There has also been excessive emphasis on the exceptional rather than the ordinary. It is in order to offset this that we have focused so much on remembering practices in everyday life as well as on remembering well and on creative uses of the past in an ever-changing present. We are by no means denying the value of a good deal of this other work or seeking to downplay how it has contributed to the field. That is not our point or purpose. In our scholarly development and activity, both of us are, along with our long-abiding involvement in the now firmly established field of media and communication studies, theoretically and methodologically steeped in oral history, cultural history and what has over the past half-century become known as history from below, dealing with the everyday lives of so-called ordinary people who so often are extraordinary in their ordinariness.

What we have been trying to achieve in the trilogy as a whole is an extension of this for the field in which we work now as much as in the field of media studies. Memory from below is what is missing from too much of what memory studies is devoted to, and while we share in the intellectual and analytical interests of a good deal of this work, we have wanted to redress the inordinate pursuit of these interests and develop instead a set of perspectives that operate from the bottom up rather than the top down.

In developing them, our concern has been to cultivate certain areas that have been overshadowed and neglected, such as the study of changing forms of selfhood and intimate relationships, so helping memory studies move to a more rounded scholarly identity. We have done so in this book by attempting to connect up disruptions to memory and remembering, whether through death and mourning or through migration and movement from one place to another, with ways of overcoming such disruptions and finding again positive ways of connecting with the past and creatively using it in the present. In all three case studies taken up in the book, we have shown how hindrances and impediments to mnemonic imagining are tackled and dispensed with, even if at times there are examples where this has only been partially achieved or not achieved at all.

Both this book and its predecessor have drawn extensively on interview transcripts and similar qualitative data that we gathered in our fieldwork. As we move towards the end of all we have set out, we want to make a few small but significant points about the material we have used. First of all, many people gave up their time to participate in our research, and they all engaged closely with what we were endeavouring to find out. In transcribing and analysing the interviews with them, we have been continually impressed by the quality of this engagement. Responses to the main concerns of our investigation have been astute, insightful, reflexive and often full of finely observed detail. Many of those who participated divulged a great deal about themselves, allowing us to be privy to sometimes sensitive, sometimes intimate areas of their past lives, and we are deeply grateful to them. It may be that they were at times prepared to disclose so much because we were strangers to them, not having met them before the interview and rarely meeting them afterwards. They may well have been more circumspect and wary in talking about such matters if we had been colleagues or neighbours. What they told us nevertheless exhibited a great deal of trust as well as acceptance of

the degree to which we were seriously undertaking our work. We have already noted the bias in memory studies to the exceptional and spectacular, and it might be thought that turning so concertedly to the everyday would lead to considerable banality, dullness and insipidity. For us at least, this has been far from the case, and the material we have been able to draw on in exploring the uses of the mnemonic imagination has been interesting in a myriad ways. It has also shown that the everyday, far from necessarily being routine and thin in absorbing detail, can have a heroic element to it. This is rarely acknowledged, certainly in memory studies, and we hope to have done justice to this heroic element wherever it has been readily apparent, precisely because so often it goes relatively unnoticed, instead being visible or tangible only to those who are its immediate agents, witnesses or recipients.

In the first book of this trilogy, we provided a theoretical framework for the analysis of the relationship of media and memory in everyday life. This, as we have said, was based around the key concept of the mnemonic imagination. We ended that volume by emphasizing that what counts in the end is how such a concept is applied in sustained empirical investigation. That is true of any key concept, regardless of how sophisticated or polished it may be. We also made the point that lack of empirical research is a weakness in memory studies. While that is gradually being rectified, it remains the case that the field continues to suffer from a paucity of detailed work of this kind. Though the voices of members of various social groups and categories are sometimes heard in the writings and other activities that make up the field, this happens all too rarely. It is the author's voice—or the coauthors' voices—that prevail. This is another unfortunate imbalance in memory studies. We have mentioned the fine quality of much of the material provided to us through the interviews we conducted, so any claim that asking people in everyday walks of life for their own takes on their experience, for their own descriptions of their remembering practices and for their own views on the many issues raised by our research is not worth the energy that would be expended on such questions would certainly not wash with us. The whole point of our research was to avoid grand claims or unwarranted assumptions about the close interactions of media and memory in everyday life, and to provide firm evidence for our analysis and argumentation. That is why, in the second two books of the trilogy, we have explored in extensive detail how two media in particular structure and inform how, when and why people remember, and how, when and why memory, mnemonic

media and efforts to repossess the past are integral to the management of change in people's lives, from day to day and from year to year. Overall, we hope to have shown, in our use of the data deriving from our research, the value of ethnographic approaches in examining memory and remembering in its manifold quotidian acts and activities, processes and practices. In the end, the value and significance of all that we have presented and set forth in the trilogy rests not only on the resilience and versatility of the concept of the mnemonic imagination but also on the richness and density of the qualitative fieldwork material at our disposal. Any lasting strengths in our analysis and argumentation ultimately derive from there.

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E. Keightley and M. Pickering, *Memory and the Management of Change*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies,
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Index

E. Keightley and M. Pickering, *Memory and the Management of Change*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies,
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