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# Remembering and memorialising : the social aspects of MEMOREV

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## **MEMOREV/ Remembering the English Revolutions in the British Isles, Europe and North America from the 17th to the 19th century.**

This interdisciplinary project, at the intersection of history, literature and digital humanities, focuses on the memory of the English Revolutions. It aims to study how the first English Revolution (1640-1660) and the « Glorious Revolution » (1688-1689) were remembered, forgotten, contested and reinvented in the British Isles, Europe and North America from the 17th to 19th century. The aim is twofold: to expand the historiographical canon of the English revolutions beyond the grand narratives (Hyde, Hume, Gardiner, Guizot) and to highlight the contribution of women to the history of the English revolutions”

- 1: MEMOREV/ Remembering => MEMOREV/memorialising => remembering and memorializing as processes.
2. Revolutions => *civil wars?*
3. Interdisciplinarity: literature, history, DH => *social sciences? neurosciences? physiological aspects of remembering both then and now? And how can we use DH?*
4. Memory => *or memories?*
5. remembered, forgotten, contested and reinvented => *by whom? when? and in what form?*

**=> can we explore the articulations between remembering and memorialising, between personal and collective memories and could (French) social sciences be helpful to situate MEMOREV within the broader field of memory studies?**





-How to memorialise a revolution/civil war? Can we learn about contemporary, sociological studies on the memorialisation of traumatic events?

'Revolutions' as wars, not simply intellectual, political debates : torture, killing, mutilation, destruction, rape, famine, loss of property and estate... « de-sanitizing » the revolutions and focusing on their legal frameworks (war *crimes*, Barbara Donagan). Especially acute in civil wars.

-memories or representations of the past by individuals linked by a common experience and shaped by collective, official and public acts of memorialisation (trials, monuments, commemorations, literature, etc.)

-relationships between personal memory and collective memory

-the social construction of personal memory when individuals are replaced within the social group to which they belong = « the social frameworks of memory » (, « cadres sociaux de la mémoire », Maurice Halbwachs)

-interdisciplinarity: literature, history, **social sciences** and neurosciences, « la sociologie de la mémoire ».

## I. FORGETTING?

Precedents: e.g. « An Act of general pardon and oblivion », 1652, « and being most desirous that the Mindes, Persons and Estates of all the People of this Nation, might be Composed, Setled and Secured, and that all Rancour and Evil Will occasioned by the late Differences **may be buried in perpetual Oblivion** »

**Restoration: Declaration of Breda** « We desiring and ordaining, that henceforward all Notes of Discord, Separation, and Difference of Parties, **be utterly abolished** among all Our Subjects, whom We invite and conjure to a perfect Union among themselves, under Our Protection »

and « **An Act of Free and Generall Pardon, Indemnity, and Oblivion** »





MEMOREV starts with seminal political gestures of pardoning and collective compulsory forgetting.

1. « Desire to **put an end to all Suites and Controversies** that by occasion of the late Distractions have arisen and may arise betweene all His Subjects »
2. « And to the intent that noe Crime whatsoever committed against His Majesty or His Royall Father **shall hereafter rise in Judgement or be brought in Question** against any of them to the least endamagement of them either in their Lives Libertyes Estates or to the prejudice of their Reputations by any Reproach or Terme of Distinction »
3. « **And to bury all Seeds of future Discords and remembrance** of the former as well in His owne Breast as in the Breasts of His Subjects one towards another »



« That all and all manner of Treasons, Misprisions of Treason, Murthers, Felonies, Offences, Crimes Contempts and Misdemeanors...[committed by authority] be Pardoned Released Indemnified Discharged and put in **utter Oblivion** »

### **Exceptions**

Persons excepted by name who were concerned in the murder of King Charles I

Persons Plotting and Designing the Irish rebellion

Person that have traiterously held intelligence with foreign state

*But also*

Piracy

Buggery (« with Mankind or Beast »)

Rapes, and wilful taking away any Maid, &c.

Conjurations Witchcrafts Sorceries Inchantments and Charmes...

Embezzling the Goods of the late King, Queen, Prince, &c.

Jesuits and Romish priests

Etc...



### 3-year compulsory silence: short-term oblivion vs 'perpetual' oblivion

XXIV. Persons, within Three Years, **using any words tending to revive the Memory of the late Differences**; if a Gentleman, or above, Penalty £10; if under that Degree, Penalty 40s.

And to the intent and purpose that all names and termes of distinction may likewise be **putt into utter Oblivion** Be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid That if any person or persons within the space of three yeares next ensuing **shall presume maliciously to call or alledge of, or object against any other person or persons any name or names, or other words of reproach any way tending to revive the memory of the late Differences or the occasions thereof...** »

=> link between remembering and narratives: **words and names, seditious words**

\* **Personal memories and personal anxiety**, e.g. Samuel Pepys [1 November 1660] dining at Sir Williams's Batten:

« Here dined with us two or three more country gentle men; among the rest Mr. Christmas, my old school-fellow, with whom I had much talk. He did remember that I was a great Roundhead when I was a boy, **and I was much afraid that he would have remembered the words that I said** the day the King was beheaded (that, were I to preach upon him, my text should be "The memory of the wicked shall rot"); but I found afterwards that he did go away from school before that time ».

\* **Restoration reconstructions of the civil war past (Hutchinson)**: « seditious memories », « a republican response to Restoration politics » (Gheeraert-Graffeulle 2022, 21)



## II. How to place the project within *memory studies*?

*Within French memory studies? Within French social sciences?*

### History

- Academic discipline
- Facts
- Objectivity
- Truth
- Authority
- Masculinity

### Memory

- Social phenomenon
- Experience
- Subjectivity
- Emotions
- Minorities
- Femininity

A. History as an academic discipline attached to reconstructing the past as *it was*, memory as « **presence of the past** », not as it was but as the *impression* it has left and its *evocation*. See also François Bédarida, « La mémoire de l'histoire »

History vs. memory (Pierre Nora, 1978), « La mémoire collective », Jacques Le Goff (dir.), *La nouvelle histoire*, Paris, Retz-CEPL, 1978.

## B. « Sociologie des souvenirs » et « sociologie de la mémoire »

-French memory studies have their specificities: at their core, is the concept **collective memory** as **a social fact** theorized by Maurice Halbwachs after Durkheim and Mauss, by Roger Bastide, Marie-Claire Lavabre, Pierre Joutaud, Denis Peschanski, etc.

-Lavabre: « sociology of memories » (« *sociologie des souvenirs* ») and « sociology of memory » (« *sociologie de la mémoire* »)

« Sociologie des souvenirs »: studies the social conditions of the emergence, the representations, the narration of **individual** memories.

« Sociologie de la mémoire »: studies the identities and practices of **social actors** (victims, governments, partisan groups...) using memory as a political tool: legal, artistic, medical and charitable, scientific uses of memory (and international memory) to heal and repara societies of their violent past: « socialisation mémorielle »/ « reparation »/ « indemnity » / « pardon », etc.



## C. Collective memory

In French social sciences

1. 'lieux de mémoire' (**Pierre Nora**). Emerged 1970s among historians. Often accused of setting up a nostalgic, consensual, national approach to memory, linked to national identity.

2. « Travail de mémoire » (**Paul Ricoeur**). 1990s Fractured societies have to face collective trauma to heal => « devoir de mémoire »: *memory as a collective duty*; focus on victims, on violence, and the memories of conflicts. Appearance of memorial museums. Therapeutic uses of memory. Memory becomes more intimate, more fragmented, and emergence of rival narratives, mémoires concurrentielles (winners/losers)

3. « Cadres de la mémoire », « social framework of memory » (**Maurice Halbwachs**). Articulation between collective and individual memory, and how memory can be influenced. « One never remembers alone ».

=> « The first is based on the premise that the political uses of the past and the strategies we now call memorialization influence the memory of individuals. The second expresses the political concern for reconciliation or democratic coexistence, and considers ways of influencing memory. The third examines the social conditions of evocation and formulation of memories of lived or transmitted experience, and thus appreciates not only individual identifications with public narratives of the past, but also resistance, the failure of political will and the multiplicity of re-appropriations » (Lavabre, 2016)

Lavabre sees « collective memory » as the intersection of several concepts:

-history (academic discipline and science, knowledge of the past)  
-memory:

-historical memory: usages of memory not for the development of historical knowledge but for political or partisan aims, for instance, with a focus on group identity and witnesses = « MEMORIALISING »

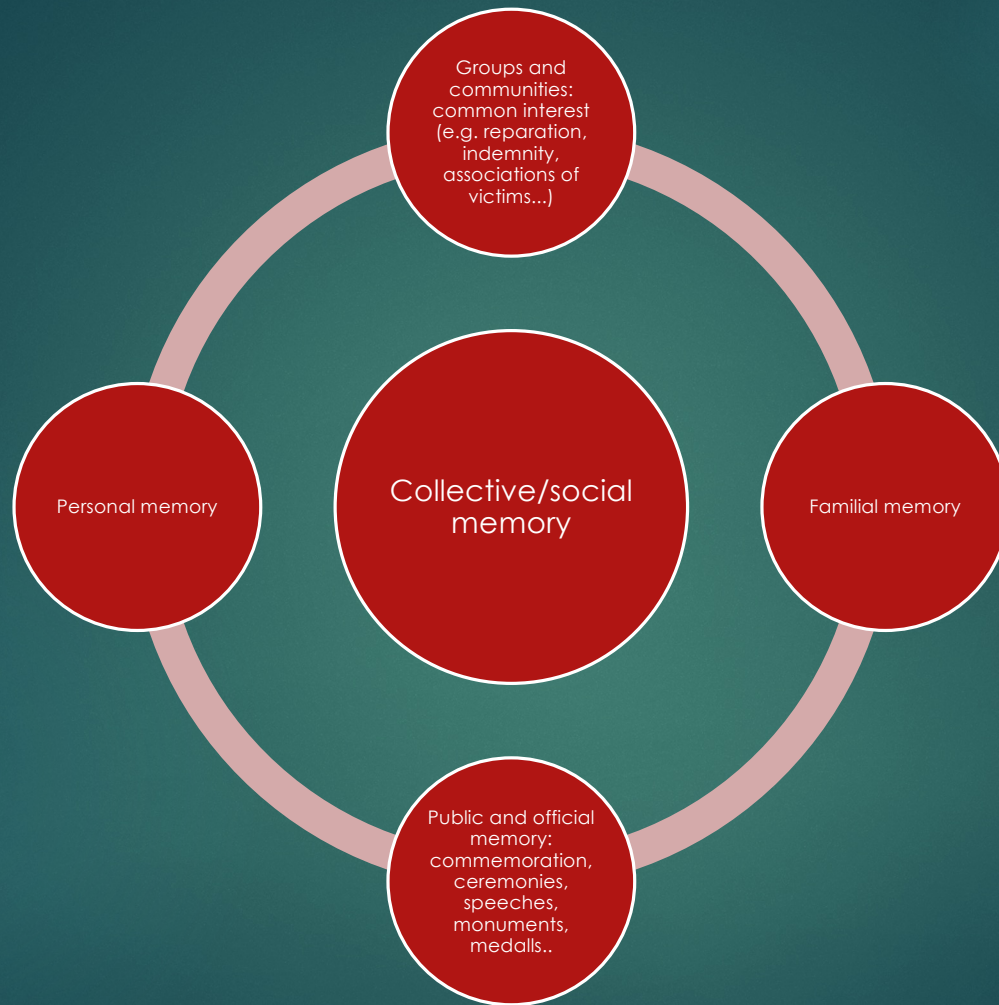
-common memory: of what has actually happened, « lived » memory (*mémoire vive*) of individuals who are themselves influenced by the sociological groups to which they belong (professional, confessional, familial...)  
« REMEMBERING »

***Collective memory is neither history, neither historical memory, neither common memory***

***= it is situated at the intersection of historical memory and common memory, between « remembering and memorialising »***

Collective memory has sometimes be replaced by « social memory ».





### III. A few examples

- **Remembering**: articulating memories and memory, the external rendering of inner, personal, emotional 'events'
- **Collective, public, social, shared, cultural, memory** (what are differences?). Memory as a SOCIAL fact, when individuals can remember events that they have not lived through and as an SOCIOLOGICAL object
- Commemoration and remembrance
- Cultural memory and heritage
- Catastrophe and trauma
- Nostalgia
- The politics of identity, nation building
- Partisanship: memory as defining the identity of a particular partisan group or groups



## « Memorial spaces » and material culture

- Biography , autobiography, elegies, *mémoires*, narratives, historical narratives, but also could we have a look at the **conversation narratives given in gathered churches? « Witnesses »**
  - Printed ones (Walker, Petto, Rogers...) and manuscript one (Shephard): the voices of the 'common people'
  - But also in those churches' records => is 'recording' another word we should inject into MEMOREV (*L'Expérience puritaine. Vies et récits de dissidents*).

Also, notion of contested territories of memory:

- Natural territories, landscapes (battlefields, places where « things » happened...)
- Cemeteries, mass graves, exhumation, exposure of bodies...
- Architectural heritage (castles, towns, country houses, prisons, churches...)
- Artistic artefacts (monuments, funeral monuments, statues, paintings, engravings, songs, tapestries,...)
- Objects and relics (medals, coins, books, death masks, personal objects, arms, clothes...)

# Conclusion

- ▶ MEMOREV could:
- ▶ Expand its perimeter to include the social sciences
- ▶ Work on the conceptual frameworks that sociologists, and French sociologists in particular, have provided, to define « collective » or « social » memory
- ▶ Seek contacts with larger groups, such as the GDR Mémoire (axe « Mémoire, individus et sociétés »), Observatoire B2V des mémoires, etc.
- ▶ Include material and immaterial heritage: a database of civil war « sites of memories »/commemorative artefacts? etc.

The image shows two overlapping screenshots. The top one is the homepage of the Observatoire B2V des Mémoires website, which features a navigation menu with categories like 'Découvrir les mémoires', 'Comprendre sa mémoire', 'Préserver sa mémoire', and 'Publications thématiques'. Below the menu is a diagram with 'axes principaux' (Organisation, dynamique et fonctions de la mémoire; Bases neurales de la mémoire; Mémoire, Individu et Société) and 'axes transversaux' (Pathologies et dysfonctionnement; Phylogénèse et ontogénèse de la mémoire). The bottom screenshot is a Hypotheses article titled 'La mémoire à l'épreuve de l'interdisciplinarité', dated 12/12/2022, with a sub-header 'Carnet des équipes AMU / ALLHS du GDR 2013 Mémoire'.