

Introduction

THE LONG AFTERMATH OF THE LONG SECOND WORLD WAR



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This edited volume investigates the cultural legacies of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War in Europe from 1936 to the present. It brings together scholars from across the arts, humanities and social sciences. They include historians, political scientists and sociologists, but given our emphasis on culture it is hardly surprising that most contributions come from scholars in literature, film and cultural studies.

The Second World War represents a major watershed in the history of humanity. Whilst it is impossible to give an exact figure, scholars tend to agree that it caused between fifty and seventy million deaths between 1939 and 1945.¹ Europe was the continent most affected by this war, with around forty million people killed, soldiers and civilians, the latter being far greater in proportion than in the First World War. Technical and industrial progress, turned to military uses, made mass destruction possible on an unprecedented scale. Not only was the Second World War responsible for far more casualties and material damage than the First, it shattered the humanistic values that were at the very basis of Western thought. Paradoxically, whilst the subsequent Cold War divided Europe into two blocs, it also contributed to bringing back together Western Europeans, to move them closer in a new and ever-evolving supranational European political entity that, to this day, has managed to avoid direct conflict between its member-states. More recently, the end of the Cold War has seen Western and Eastern Europe moving closer. This, however, does not mean that the sense of belonging to a nation has decreased; on the contrary, nation-states remain the most 'natural' political entity for most Europeans.

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The Europe of the *Ancien Régime*, endowed with large states that were often multinational, collapsed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries under the weight of nationalist feelings that raised the nation-state to the status of a political ideal, the 'national community' being often depicted as a natural extension of the family, as the etymology of the word *nation* (from the Latin *nascere*, to be born) suggests. Subsequently, the number of recognised nation-states has grown considerably in the course of the previous century, particularly in Europe, after the dismemberments of the Austro-Hungarian, Turkish and, more recently, Soviet empires. The nation-state is still today the dominant political regime in Europe and in the world, one that seems to us the most natural and the most consonant with democratic ideals (Breen and O'Neill 2010). Within many states, however, minorities consider themselves to be nations, even though they do not (or not yet) have their own independent state. Many of them – the Basques, the Catalans, the Flemish, the Scottish, not to mention many other complex cases such as Cyprus and Northern Ireland – are challenging situations established centuries ago. This is not merely a symbolic question for it is independent states, as recognised and politically governed entities, rather than nations – those large groupings of people who share a common history and sense of belonging – that have an international voice. The United Nations, created in the aftermath of the Second World War with the aim of preventing another world conflict, is based on this premise.

This situation, however, raises a paradox in the context of the European Union, namely that the construction of a supranational or supra-state entity and the sense of belonging to a wider community do not defuse tension within member-states. This paradox can be explained to a certain extent by the fact that the nation is a powerful 'imagined community' – to use Benedict Anderson's terminology (1991) – that is emotionally charged and justified by a cherished and binding past, discovered, rediscovered, interpreted and, in Europe, often partly invented in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.²

The European Union: An Imagined Community in the Making?

Like the nation-states, the European Union is both an anchored and a contested entity. Being an ever-evolving project, the European Union is to some extent a sort of vacuum in which anyone can project his or her ideas and ideals but also fears. It may sometimes be perceived as a protective shield against globalisation, a phenomenon that outstrips the powers of the nation-states and, consequently, threatens national identities. For

others, on the contrary, the European Union contributes to the globalisation process, for example in terms of its rather uninspiring economic and fiscal policies, and perhaps also because of its fast-track enlargement that seems to diminish a sense of belonging. Many 'old' Europeans – those belonging to states that have been members of the European Union for decades – probably find that they have little in common with the 'new' or 'aspiring' Europeans.³ And when supranational or supra-state institutions are seen as being imposed on people, when the nation is perceived as being in danger and weakened, nationalist feelings are intensified. Obviously, the current economic downturn does nothing to ease these tensions, and the continent-wide crisis is giving rise to xenophobic feelings across Europe. Extreme right-wing parties in Austria, Norway, Finland, Greece, France, Switzerland and other countries have all been on the rise in the last few decades, gaining more than 20 per cent of the total number of votes in local or national elections on certain occasions (Walker and Taylor 2011; Mammone, Godin and Jenkins 2012).

Yet, most European countries have a rich history and a long-term heritage in common. It is interesting to note that Anthony D. Smith writes of a 'family of cultures' when discussing the existence of a European culture, indulging in a comparison of Europe with the family:

These patterns of European culture – the heritage of Roman law, Judeo-Christian ethics, Renaissance humanism and individualism, Enlightenment rationalism and science, artistic classicism and romanticism, and, above all, traditions of civil rights and democracy, which have emerged at various times and places in the continent – have created a common European cultural heritage and formed a unique culture area straddling national boundaries and interrelating their different national cultures through common motifs and traditions. In this way an overlapping family of cultures has been gradually formed over the centuries, despite many breaks and schisms. (Smith 1991: 174)

Nevertheless, it is often the differences, breaks and schisms to which Smith refers that claim the limelight. The inherited memories of which he writes overlook the fact that this common history is often military and bloody and usually constitutes a justification of the existence of the nation. Commemorations of victories confirm the greatness of the nation while those of defeats evoke its suffering; all of them consolidate the legitimacy of its past, present and future struggles. Naturally, most conflicts were waged against neighbours since, until relatively recently, a sustained war against a more distant nation or state would have been difficult if not impossible. And here we find another paradox: this neighbour who often resembles us most closely is also the one who, in the past, represented the greatest threat to our identity. Sigmund Freud gave to this phenomenon

the term 'the narcissism of minor differences' (1961: 114). In contributing to the causes of wars, however, perhaps these differences were not quite so minor as Freud allowed.

Challenged but surviving (surviving *because* openly challenged?), nation-states are still celebrated in terms of their great men and women: politicians, scientists, philosophers and artists are all invoked to illustrate the greatness of their respective nations. With the rise of nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe, historians, encouraged by the political leaders of their time, became privileged vectors of memories, responsible for demonstrating and, often, even constructing or 'enhancing' the singularity and the grandeur of a particular nation's past (Berger, Donovan and Passmore 1999). Could it be that a nation must be exceptional – to its citizens – or it ceases to exist? As far as nations are concerned, exceptionality may well be the rule. Hayden White, whose arguments can be somewhat controversial among historians, is nevertheless certainly right when he states:

Now what is striking in looking at the foundation of history as a discipline is that until the nineteenth century, history was an amateur activity [in Europe]. Anybody could practice it. It wasn't even taught in the university; universities taught antiquities but they did not teach history. It's only in the nineteenth century that they turned history into a discipline and put it in the curriculum, in the 1830s and 1840s. And its function, primarily, was to serve the state and to provide a genealogy for the nation-state, because throughout Europe when the nations were being formed, there was resistance to the idea of the centralization that it was incumbent upon the sovereigns to impose upon these various national entities in order to transform, let's say, Burgundians into Frenchmen.

So the professional historians were employed by the state in the universities, and the universities were all run by the state, they served the state. Insofar as there was political diversity in the electorate, they served one or another of the parties – all under the guise of being objective, or, if not objective, at least neutral. (Rogne and White 2009: 72)

The construction and justification of the nation goes beyond the strictly political domain. In a continent or subcontinent where traditional religions are steadily losing ground, the nation functions as a transcendental entity that makes sense of the world; it functions as a 'super-family' (Smith 1991: 161). One could even go so far as to say that the nation *is* religious in the sense that it binds (*religare*, in Latin) its members together. It has in fact often been said that commemorative ceremonies, both military and civilian, borrow from religious rituals, reminding people that they belong to a community not only of the living, but also of the dead. Wars are also such nationally founding events. And because of its intensity, its duration and its brutality, the Second World War remains for Europeans a major event whose impact is still felt strongly today.

The dates 1939–1945 define the armed conflict but not the latent conflict that preceded the Second World War. They do not account either for the Spanish Civil War, which, as a number of historians have argued, can be perceived as a dress rehearsal for, or a grim prelude to, the more generalised European war that broke out in September 1939 (see Pablo Sánchez León's nuanced view, *infra*). The terminology 'the long Second World War' is now used with increasing frequency.⁴ Yet even an extension of the chronology from 1936 to 1945 does not allow for the memories that followed the conflict: the long Second World War was followed by a very long aftermath. As Patrick Finney put it, 'the Second World War still shapes our lives' (2016, forthcoming). The past may be 'a foreign country', as L.P. Hartley defined it (1953), but it is also very much 'present' and always with us. This is hardly surprising since history is always narrated to contemporaries to inform them about the present through their past; or, as R.G. Collingwood put it, echoing the thought of the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce: 'all history is contemporary history' (Collingwood 2005: 202).

For a variety of reasons (mainly psychological, social and political), memories do not all surface at the same moment. At any given time, certain memories appear to be hegemonic while others remain marginal. Often Manichean in the immediate post-war period, fault lines in the composition of each and every nation's dominant narratives emerge with the passage of time. Enjoying a greater freedom of expression, countries in the West saw such conflicting memories emerging more rapidly, whereas most of Eastern Europe languished under the influence of the Soviet Union that sought to stifle memories of its pre-war, geo-strategic wheelings and dealings, particularly the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 by which, less than a month before the beginning of the conflict, Germany and the Soviet Union divided up the countries of Central Europe along a line that ran from Finland to Romania. This, of course, explains why Russia still focuses on the 'Great Patriotic War', which began in 1941, when the Soviet Union was attacked by the Axis powers (see Markku Kangaspuro, *infra*). It also explains why, in many Baltic and Eastern European countries, it is often said that the Second World War did not end until the 1990s when they regained their independence (Droit 2007).

But matters are of course even more complex since, within each European state, war memories are written in the plural, both in time and space. In France, for example, the memories of the 1.5 million French prisoners of war in Germany have little in common with those of the 130,000 '*malgré-nous*' (literally, 'despite-ourselves') Alsatians and Lorrains who were forcibly incorporated into the German army, and little in common either with the French in exile during this period, not to mention those

who collaborated and those who resisted. In the same way, the memories of the Channel Islanders, whose territory was occupied by the Germans, have little or nothing in common with those of the British on the mainland, and little in common either with those in Northern Ireland (see Daniel Travers and Paul Ward, *infra*). The number of such examples is vast because, ultimately, collective memories are located in the minds of individuals whose perspectives on the past also evolve with the passage of time.

Where is *Homo Europeanus*?

Historians do not resuscitate the past: they construct a discourse that strives to remain free from their own prejudices and from those of their time. This is why they are often perceived as searchlights illuminating the past and why they have acted as witnesses in court hearings of various kinds (Golsan 2000 and Evans 2002). Historians inform citizens, that is to say the members of a politically organised community. In fact, they also play a major role in forming them: history is, in Henry Rousso's words, the 'citizens' instruction manual' (1990: 58). In doing so, historians reinforce patriotism and sometimes, for some people, even nationalism among the citizenry. Many definitions of the concepts of patriotism and nationalism have been proposed, but few of them are as clear and straightforward as that offered by the eminently 'European' writer Romain Gary, who wrote that patriotism is 'the love of one's own people' while nationalism is 'hatred of others' (1956: 246).

However, as is implied in the previous quotation from Hayden White, historians themselves cannot fully be free from their own subjectivity; they simply have to strive to be as objective as possible. They are in fact in thrall to the (often partial or partisan) sources that they have at their disposal and on which they base their accounts; and facts, contrary to general opinion, never speak for themselves. Furthermore, even if the facts can be established, it is much more difficult to explain the motivations of the different people who may only have had a partial grasp of them themselves. Historians' subjectivity is evidenced by the constant rewriting of history and in the controversies that often arise from historians' debates, such as the famous *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s in West Germany, for example (see Harold Goldberg, *infra*). Given the importance of political ideology in the Second World War, it is hardly surprising that, in this particular debate about Germany's recent past, historiography became a subject of controversy in itself. What is really at stake is less the past than the present and the future. This is why these debates often come to resemble political

debates, a fact which caused Mikhail Pokrovsky to state that 'History is politics projected on to the past'.⁵

Even though historians are trained (and therefore methodologically equipped) to interpret historical events, they remain rooted in their time and cannot entirely escape the dominant memory discourse of that specific time. 'Men resemble their times more than they do their fathers': thus runs an Arab proverb, quoted by the great French historian Marc Bloch (1952: 9). Historians, too, are influenced by the collective memory of their time, by what Maurice Halbwachs called, at the beginning of the twentieth century, 'the social framework of memory' (1925). Individuals do not exist in isolation but in society that imposes on them its language, its cultural, spiritual, intellectual norms, and its mindset. In other words, memory and history are not completely separate entities: the one nourishes the other. Historians, like all individuals, are also 'cultural subjects':

All individuals are part ... of a great number of different transindividual or collective subjects ... [T]he cultural subject is constructed in the psychic space of a single individual, a fact which does not mean that one should ignore collective phenomena that, in the framework of institutional practices, offer models of uniformity to those who participate. (Cros 2005: 19 and 41)⁶

If most historians refuse to accept Hayden White's most extreme views on the 'linguistic turn' – that is to say the reduction of history to a form of fiction – all of them nevertheless acknowledge that there is a certain degree of subjectivity in their discipline, if only because the writing of history necessarily implies a narrative. The historian Paul Veyne articulated this by calling history 'a true novel':

Historians relate true events in which man is the actor; history is a true novel History is a narrative of events: everything else flows from this. Since it is from the outset a narrative, it does not help us to relive any more than does a novel. Like novels, history sifts, simplifies, organises and covers one century in a single page. (1971: 10–14)

The philosopher Paul Ricœur, whose work has been translated into many languages, also insists on the fact that history cannot exist without a 'plot' (*'mise en intrigue'*) or a narrative, and stresses the dynamics and links between 'history, memory and forgetting', in the terms of his most often-cited book, *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* [Memory, History, Forgetting] (2003). Through another important essay, *Histoire et vérité* [History and Truth] (1955), he also contributed towards placing human beings once again at the centre of the preoccupations of historians who were at the time more concerned with structures and institutions. Historians have acknowledged his concerns and have turned their attention towards

representational subjectivities with, since the 1960s and 1970s, the development of a history of mentalities, cultural history or what is sometimes called 'new history'.

Researchers and critics increasingly seek to identify the mindset of a period in cultural artefacts including, of course, works of art such as paintings, sculptures, music, films and novels. For, like historians, artists are also men and women of their time. Their successes reveal the expectations of their time and the prevailing *Zeitgeist* (spirit of a time). Conversely, silences too are very telling: to express something involves choice, and choice implies exclusion. And, of course, the public too has the choice, which is why artistic and cultural failures are also very telling. It is well documented that, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, many Europeans found their personal sufferings difficult enough to deal with and so paid little attention to the horrific stories told by the Holocaust survivors, whose voices remained largely unheard until the 1960s or 1970s.⁷

Artistic and cultural artefacts are of course not only – and not mainly – documents, sources or objects to be analysed or consulted in order to understand their era; they are also autonomous creations that, although invented, often convey better than historical studies the emotions and subjective motivations or representations of people in the past. Emotions interfere with the historian's objectivity and, for this reason, are often excluded from his/her narrative. This explains the reproach frequently levelled at historians, namely that they remain impassive in their analyses, even when their subject is intrinsically emotional like the Holocaust. 'History misses the pain', remarked Robert Eaglestone (2000: 103). Aharon Appelfield managed to put it more positively: 'only art has the power of redeeming suffering from the abyss' (1994: xv). This is probably because artistic and cultural representations do not claim to explain but to represent; they present over again and retell the story from different perspectives. These re-presentations allow us to relive painful events in mediated form or vicariously, in what psychoanalysts call an abreaction. For, unlike historians who have to write blandly in order to remain as objective as possible, artists enjoy a greater freedom of expression. Beyond the facts, they draw on and elicit a fictional truth, set up emotional resonances through empathy, fear, doubt or uncertainty and create or recreate states of mind which historical accounts struggle to convey.

Beyond these valid distinctions however, the reality is more complex since historians and artists address individuals, and any representation – historical, cultural or artistic – can move its readers, provided that it strikes a chord with their own memories. What should be stressed, however, is that history and art should not be seen as functioning in opposition

one with the other. On the contrary, allowing for their different registers, constraints and goals, they both facilitate our understanding of the past through different perspectives. As Colin Nettelbeck puts it, 'only an inclusive approach to sources – audiovisual as well as written, fictional as well as factual, high culture as well as popular culture, religious as well as secular – combined with a rigorous use of archival materials, will satisfy our double need for scientific exactitude and affective understanding' (2012: 63).

Both approaches, therefore – those of the historian and the artist – are necessary to the continental focus of this volume, since understanding other perspectives and understanding the other are essential to the Europe of tomorrow. This is why the contributors to this volume were asked to reflect on the dynamics of identity and otherness through national perspectives. This may seem to be going against the grain at a time when transnational perspectives are receiving increased attention from scholars.⁸ Without denying what wider perspectives bring to our understanding of national viewpoints, we nonetheless believe that national approaches remain pertinent because, whatever form the new Europe takes, it can only find solidarity through a better understanding of the reasoning, the fears and the pains that haunt our neighbours. And these emotions are still very much anchored within national perspectives. Understanding these will also help us to understand each nation's specificity for the concepts of identity and alterity are both inseparable and complementary: it is the Other, by contrast, that enhances the Self's awareness of its own identity. Only a better understanding of the past of this Self/Other dualism can foster empathy or sympathy and create a common will to share a peaceful future. This, however, is not facilitated by the fact that the Other is often the one who, threatened, still threatens or is perceived to be threatening one's nation and identity. Nor is it facilitated by the fact that Europe, unlike its different component nations, possesses none of the powerful symbols or myths that have shaped nation-states for centuries. Nor will such a 'European feeling' – as the French writer and ardent Europeanist Jules Romain dubbed it (Bogain 2013) – be achieved by complex financial policies that are only understood by technocrats and, rightly or wrongly, often perceived by the Europeans as a threat to their nation and to their identity (Chebel d'Appollonia 2002).

Culture, in its broadest sense, represents a unifying force that can bring Europeans closer together. It is commonly believed that Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of post-1945 Europe, said: 'If we had to do it all over again, I would begin with culture'. Even though he probably never said this, it is significant that people believe that he did since this appears to be the missing link between individuals, their respective nation or

nations and Europe. A better knowledge and understanding of the cultures of others tends to reveal that they are neither rivals nor harmful. The 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy does not make much sense in contemporary Europe: not only do 'they' resemble 'us' closely, they are already part of our own culture to a large extent. Europe may signify different things to different people and may have generated many myths, but Europe itself is not a myth: the common history of its different nations has contributed to shaping a common culture. Mozart means something to most Europeans. And so do Shakespeare, Homer, Beethoven and, in completely different genres and registers, Sherlock Holmes, Tintin, Brigitte Bardot and many others.⁹ In this regard, the conundrum of the European continent may be that whilst art has no particular homeland, artists do. Every artist and every work of art are anchored in a certain territory and in a particular nation. And, of course, the language barrier itself inhibits exchange, quite apart from the problems that arise from identity politics.¹⁰

One solution to this conundrum might be to encourage transnational initiatives. Many are already in place. The recent introduction of a Franco-German history textbook (Defrance and Pfeil 2013) and the developing trend of travelling cultural exhibitions – such as the 'Vichy posters' in 2002 (Wlassikoff and Delanghe 2002) – are to be welcomed. The mini-Europe theme park in Brussels may not be everyone's ideal of promoting European culture (Lähdesmäki 2012), but it is conveniently located and offers a glimpse of European culture to as many as two hundred thousand tourists each year, including children for whom the park appears to be principally designed. Similarly, town twinnings, cycling events like the 'Tour of the Future', European sporting competitions and so on are also to be welcomed. Yet, realistically, because they are often very mundane and chronologically or geographically very limited, such events and initiatives cannot by themselves create a 'European feeling', a sense of belonging. Quite significantly, and for whatever reason this may be, Europe Day, created in 1985, remains little known (Rousso 2007b: 33–34). Noting that 'the European Union offers little that can inspire collective enthusiasm', the historian and political scientist Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia argued that it is necessary to create strong symbols to 'ground a real European identity':

Beyond the political and economic problems created by the possible enlargement of the European Union lies the necessity of creating strong European symbols, strong enough to transcend self-regarding local identities. Since the eighteenth century, political nationalism has used culture and cultural symbols to legitimate institutions and governments. Today, however, European nationalism is very far from its symbols. Apart from a flag, a hymn and a few festivals that occur only intermittently, the European Union offers little that can inspire collective enthusiasm. It takes longer to accept a symbol than a Brussels regu-

lation, if it is accepted at all. But it is the only way to ground a real European identity and, perhaps, to limit the upsurge of aggressive national nationalisms. The European Union must become a visual and compelling identity. It needs myths as strong as those that sustain the individual nations of which it is composed. As Condorcet observed, 'Citizens are not born; they are created through instruction.' *Homo Europeanus* is still waiting to be made. (2002: 189–90)

There is no doubt that myths and symbols can foster a sense of belonging. The danger here is that of creating a 'European nationalism' of the bad kind (that Chebel d'Appollonia calls 'national nationalism' in the quotation above) which would be exclusive, a nationalism which would be synonymous with a 'hatred of others', in the words of Romain Gary's definition. The Internet – which deterritorialises information and renders it easily available to everyone at the same time – will no doubt have a major role to play in the development of a common European culture, and one can only regret that scholars and policymakers have been quite slow to endorse this relatively new means of communication to cascade their findings and connect or reconnect Europeans. In a global context of political and economic crisis, rising nationalism and Euro-scepticism, it is more important than ever to debunk stereotypes, national myths and fears, and to find common forums to discuss some of the more painful and divisive memories in order to move forward. In a modest way, this is what this edited volume aims to offer through multidisciplinary perspectives on the bloodiest events of the last century, our common scar.

Ever-Evolving Memories of the European Wars of 1936–1945: A Multidisciplinary Approach

These memories, as stated above, emerge also through the mediums of fiction and art that, in a sense, reflect but also contest other memories. Here, we touch on another of the principal aims of this volume, namely to provide a dialogue between scholars working in different disciplines all over Europe and beyond. Although there are many volumes on the Second World War, few are as truly multidisciplinary as this one, and none, as far as we are aware, contain as many different national perspectives.

Among the predecessors to this volume, some are purely literary¹¹ while others are exclusively historical, historiographical¹² or sociological.¹³ Other volumes of interest not already mentioned in this introduction include: *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* edited by T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (2000), even though it offers a somewhat uneven coverage of Europe (UK, Portugal and Finland only)

as well as other countries elsewhere in the world; Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth's co-edited *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (2010), whose chapters track and analyse the recent shift of interest from history to memory in both Western and Eastern Europe; and *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, edited by Karine Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter (2010), which stresses, as might be expected from the title, the performative nature of history, memory and identity in a very broad and eclectic cultural sweep, but which focuses neither on Europe nor on the Second World War. One of the most original recent publications on Europe is Johan Fornäs's *Signifying Europe* (2012), in which the author offers expert coverage of the semiotics and symbolism of Europe (mottoes, flags, anthems, currencies and so on). It focuses on the founding myth of Europa and very competently illustrates the recurrent themes of hybridity, dislocation and decentredness in the various types of discourse on Europe. Finally, the recently published *Dynamics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, edited by Eric Langenbacher, Bill Niven and Ruth Wittlinger (2013), offers very interesting theoretical contributions, together with case studies, on cultural memories from national (mainly German) and transnational perspectives in contemporary Europe. It should be added here that this brief review of the relevant literature is by no means exhaustive.

The present volume offers a different approach. First, it has a broad European scope since it deals with the seven demographically most populated countries of Europe, namely Spain (for reasons explained previously), the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, Poland and Russia, which were also the major European players in the long Second World War. Second, each of these countries is the focus of a specific section, itself divided into three chapters. In this tripartite structure, the first chapter presents a recent development in the historiography of the country discussed. Since most readers, including specialist researchers, will not necessarily have a clear or complete overview of the history and historiography of the seven countries discussed, particular attention has been paid to the historical contextualisation to which the Foreword by Richard Overy and the Afterword by Jay Winter substantially contribute. Following the initial historical or historiographical chapter, each section contains two further chapters that deal either with an aspect of that country's 'low' and 'high' cultures or with two different cultural approaches or genres. Special attention has been given to popular culture since it is more widely shared across classes, genders and communities (Billig 1995; Edensor 2002; Heinich 2005).

This introduction will conclude with a brief overview of the sections and chapters that follow. In the first section, on Spain, Pablo Sánchez

León's chapter looks at the current state of the Spanish Civil War's historiography and, regretting the deontological flaws and ideological bias of many recent accounts, argues that historians should learn from the attitude, sensibility and rigour of the documentary filmmaker Carlos García-Alix who recently reconstructed the complex profile of an anarchist, Felipe Sandoval, who perpetrated dozens of crimes against civilians in besieged Madrid between 1936 and 1939. In the second chapter, Jean Andrews compares the lives and the work of three female Spanish poets (Carmen Conde, Lucía Sánchez Saornil and Pilar de Valderrama) from different backgrounds who lived through the Civil War. Examining the responses of these three poets to the war, Andrews raises significant issues concerning the role of gender in the conflict and in their representation of the war. Coming to terms with the aftermath and the long-term socio-political implications of the Spanish Civil War is also the focus of the chapter by Alison Ribeiro de Menezes on Cristina Fernández Cubas's memoirs, *Cosas que ya no existen* [Things that No Longer Exist], published in 2001. Using Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, she finds that this memorialist moves beyond the traditional focus on women in the intimate domain of the family in order to represent their position in a nexus of transnational cultural memories.

The section on the United Kingdom begins with Daniel Travers and Paul Ward, who examine and analyse the Churchill-inspired myth of the People's War and British unity in the face of the Nazi menace. They show how the official version – adopted by the majority of accounts, exhibitions and museums until relatively recently – depended on the silencing of regional and unorthodox variations in attitudes and opinions throughout the British Isles. Robert Murphy then surveys a wide range of British films about the Second World War in order to analyse the various representations of the Germans from the immediate aftermath of the war to the present. His analysis of examples and illustrations reveals a surprisingly complex variety of types from the most human to the most barbarous. Finally, Mark Rawlinson highlights the complexity and richness of war narratives in British fiction from 1945 to the present. While they offer varied perspectives, Rawlinson questions to what extent they really challenge other vectors of memory and traditional views on history.

In the third section, on France, a chapter by Kirrily Freeman examines the place of the town of Vichy in past and present French memories, Vichy being where the collaborationist French wartime government settled between 1940 and 1944. She analyses the various explicit representations of Vichy and the significance of its iconic symbols, together with the awkward, embarrassed silences on the subject in some quarters of officialdom. In the second chapter of this section, Peter Tame analyses

how the novelist Patrick Modiano uses places and spaces in the context of the Occupation to blur past and present boundaries in order to question what has been a grey and obsessive past for the French since the late 1960s. Finally, Cristina Solé Castells traces the development of thought in the work of Jean Bruller (Vercors) on the subject of Germany, Germans and their Nazi past as he expressed it in many fictional writings and essays published from the immediate post-war period to the beginning of the 1980s. She shows how the writer progressively managed to dissociate the Nazis from the Germans while also calling for a new humanism in which individuals, once aware of their weaknesses, would make remembrance a human duty.

The following section, on Germany, begins with a chapter by Harold Goldberg, who assesses the historical importance and memorial significance of D-Day from the 1980s onwards. He argues that two specific events, the Bitburg Cemetery controversy (1985) and the Historians' Dispute, the *Historikerstreit* (1986), were crucial in metamorphosing D-Day ceremonies from being commemorations of a decisive battle in the war in which the Allies were victorious to becoming celebrations of Franco-German reconciliation and unity in Europe. In the following chapter, Christiane Schönfeld presents an evolving cinematic history of German identity construction and reconstruction from documentary films produced for German audiences after 1945 to more recent films and television series, highlighting their pedagogical aims and values, but also their flaws. Memory and post-war exorcism of trauma feature also in the realm of literature, as represented in Ilse Aichinger's *The Greater Hope* (*Die grössere Hoffnung*, 1948), which, Marko Pajević argues, aims at raising the reader's awareness of the functioning of language and, in doing so, can provide a means of coming to terms with the irrationality of the past and an 'opening-up' to life where reasoned analysis and the logical approach of objective historiography may fail.

In the fifth section, on Italy, Richard Bosworth first examines the transformation of Italy's image in the Second World War from perpetrator to victim. He traces the development of the country's post-war image in the decades that followed the Second World War, giving examples of wilful distortions and omissions in the transmission of the (Fascist) past from one generation to the next. He shows how the echoes of past misdeeds and collaboration with Nazi Germany, along with the manipulation of iconic commemorative dates, are frequently muted, particularly in recent times in Berlusconi's 'infotained' Italy. By taking examples of Italian films produced after the Second World War, Daniela Treveri Gennari looks at the cultural influence of the Americans in Italy, particularly in terms of masculinity and femininity. She illustrates the way in which Italy reacts

to the Americanisation of its culture, both positively and negatively, often focusing on the moral implications involved, as well as the crucial issue of national identity. Her analysis of the wide range of female roles in post-war Italian cinema is particularly rich, from the iconic and seductive American heroines with their glamour and material wealth to the less sophisticated but more authentic Italian women who illustrate Italy's renewed self-confidence. Finally, Philip Cooke focuses on post-1990 fiction to demonstrate how the Resistance, despite its desecralisation, remains very much alive in Italian culture.

In the section on Poland, Andrzej Paczkowski presents a conflicted portrait of current Polish attitudes to the Second World War and the way in which the memories (in the plural) of this event determine contemporary politics in Poland. Basing his analysis on a recent survey, he shows that, whilst Poles still hold Germany responsible for the war, official German recognition of the Third Reich's atrocities have led to an easing of the trauma: hatred or resentment is in fact more in evidence towards many of Poland's other neighbours, especially Ukraine and Russia. Paczkowski also argues that narratives of victimhood and heroism still help the Poles to cope with the fact that they remain surrounded by their former enemies from the Second World War and the Cold War. Urszula Jarecka then develops the concept of 'wounded memory' to investigate how Polish media – the word is applied in its broadest sense to include films – have depicted the massacre of over 20,000 Polish nationals by the Soviet secret police (NKVD) in April and May 1940, mainly in the Katyń forest. She identifies several strategies or attitudes from the discovery of the mass graves in 1943 to the present day: firstly unbelievable, these crimes were consequently silenced and covered up for decades by the Soviet regime before resurfacing after the fall of Communism in 1989. Silence led to trauma and the Katyń massacre is now deemed unforgettable. It is an open wound in Polish collective memory, a wound so deep that to forgive contemporary Russia(ns) is still simply unthinkable in twenty-first-century Poland. Finally, Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż explores how the Second World War is depicted in recent Polish counterfactual or alternative histories and fictions. Whilst counterfactual narratives usually allow a better understanding of the past by showing how it could have been different, Sokołowska-Paryż argues that Polish alternative accounts have been somewhat disappointing in that they simply reaffirm traditional tropes.

In the final section, on the USSR/Russia, Markku Kangaspuro focuses on the sixty-fifth Victory Day commemoration in 2010 and analyses the changing meaning of Victory Day in contemporary Russia. He shows how the attempts by Russian politicians to depict Russia as a traditional and natural ally of the West clash with the Great Patriotic War narratives

embedded in Russian collective memory, as they also clash with many post-Cold-War narratives that have emerged in former satellite countries. David Gillespie explores the exemplary nature of Soviet and Russian historical films, together with the way in which hitherto taboo subjects, such as collaboration, betrayal and cowardice, have been presented in more recent, controversial films such as Dmitrii Meskhiev's *Svoi* [Our Own] (2004) and Vladimir Khotinenko's *Pop* [Priest] (2009). Finally, Greg Carleton describes Russian/Soviet fiction as 'Janus-faced', its representation of the celebration of victory over Nazism being almost immediately challenged by more sobering reflections on the huge human loss suffered and the overall cost of the Stalinist legacy to the Soviet Union and to the newly 'liberated' territories in the context of the Cold War.

Two specific aspects of the organisation of this volume should be clarified here. The first concerns the use of translations: for reasons of length, the original language only appears in chapters that deal extensively with linguistic aspects (in the case, for example, of poetry or poetics). The second concerns the order in which the individual sections on different countries appear. The first section, on Spain and the Spanish Civil War as a 'curtain-raiser' to the Second World War, provides a chronological opening to the volume, whose focus then moves from west to east, in broad terms, to the other nations of Europe. This progression is intended to facilitate the Western European reader's 'voyage of discovery', from the familiar to the less familiar aspects of the long Second World War. Conversely, Central and Eastern European readers will appreciate the refreshing focus on what may be less familiar to them in the opening sections of the book that offer new readings and reassessments of the way in which the war is perceived and represented in Western European history and culture. Readers will, in any case, find that each section forms a coherent entity, appropriately framed by the Foreword by Richard Overy and the Afterword by Jay Winter that provide a broad historical contextualisation of the Second World War in the twentieth century. This format is intended to allow readers to proceed through the volume in whatever order they wish.

Notes

1. The higher estimate is given by Johan Fornäs (2012: 67).
2. There is an abundance of writing on this topic, including Benedict Anderson (1991), Anne-Marie Thiessen (1999), Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (2010), and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (2012).

3. See Cirila Toplak and Irena Šumi (2012).
4. Among many examples, see Bosworth (1993: 1–7) and, more specifically on the Spanish Civil War, Hurcombe (2011: 1).
5. Cited by Sergius Yakobson (1949: 123).
6. All the translations into English are our own.
7. It may be worth remembering that *Se questo è un uomo* [If This Is a Man] by Primo Levi sold fewer than two thousand copies when it came out in 1947. It only became a best-seller after its republication in the 1960s.
8. See, for example, Jarausch and Lindberger with Raumstock (2007), Rousso (2007a), and Iriye and Saunier (2009).
9. These names obviously also mean something to many outside Europe since culture knows no frontiers.
10. It also goes without saying that European languages do not all enjoy the same status demographically and strategically.
11. This is the case, for example, of *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II*, edited by Marina MacKay (2009), a fine reference work that comprises the great, the classic and the canonical literary representations of the period concerned. *European Memories of the Second World War*, edited by Helmut Peitsch, Charles Burdett and Claire Gorrara (1999), is devoted solely to memories as represented in the literature of three countries, France, Italy and Germany.
12. *Nationalizing the Past*, edited by Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (2010), and *Power and the Nation in European History*, edited by Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (2005), combine theoretical chapters and historiographical case studies. Most of the contributions in *Histories of the Aftermath*, edited by Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller (2010), and *Experience and Memory*, edited by Jörg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens (2010), are written within the paradigm of national histories and historiographies, although some chapters also deal with more cultural matters.
13. *Nation-Building and Identity in Europe* by Rodanthi Tzanelli (2008) and *We Europeans? Media, Representations, Identities*, edited by William Uricchio (2008), present sociological and media reflections on nationhood and European identity today.

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Filmography

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