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## Introduction: Textured historicity and the ambivalence of imperial legacies

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### ABSTRACT

In pursuit of a novel perspective on legacies of empire in the present, this introduction addresses prominent debates related to post-imperialism, collective memory, and the construction of historical knowledge, while also reviewing recent trends in post-Habsburg and post-Ottoman studies. First, I examine the insights and limitations of ‘memory studies,’ ultimately proposing a more capacious model of post-imperial ‘ambivalence.’ I then recapitulate Walter Benjamin’s dialectical approach to historical knowledge in order to anchor the signal conceptual contribution of the volume, ‘textured historicity.’ This discussion is followed by a meditation on the role of metaphors in conceptualizing post-imperial legacies and a roster of the most common metaphors for post-imperial legacies. Finally, the introduction briefly summarizes the volume’s constituent essays and the rubrics that unite them.

### KEYWORDS

Empire; memory; historicity; ambivalence; negative dialectics

## Memory, duress, ambivalence

And on the pedestal, these words appear: My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings; Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair! Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare, The lone and level sands stretch far away. – Percy Bysshe Shelley, ‘Ozymandias’ (1956, 107)

Duress, as I shall argue, has temporal, spatial, and affective coordinates. Its impress may be intangible, but it is not a faint scent of the past. It may be an indelible if invisible gash. It may sometimes be a trace but more often an enduring fissure, a durable mark. – Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress* (2016, 6)

The empires that once defined the political geography of continental Europe are no more. One cannot meet a Prussian, Habsburg, or Ottoman today; such dusty categories of affiliation have yielded to myriad national identities. Yet it would be mistaken to assume that Europe’s bygone empires have become mere relics of history. Imperial pasts continue to inspire nostalgia, identification, pride, anxiety, scepticism, and disdain in the present. Material remnants of empire, both monumental and mundane, are cues and canvasses for reflection and refraction. Successor nation-states, their citizens, erstwhile subjects, and antagonists extoll and vitiate imperial legacies. Indifference, by contrast, is nearly impossible to sustain. Consequently, the afterlives of empires as objects of memory exceed historical knowledge precisely because these afterlives reshape and recast the present and the

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future. Such present- and future-oriented imperatives accentuate imperial pasts in selective ways, yielding new constellations of post-imperial amnesia as well as memory.

Post-imperial memories and sentiments are especially prominent and contoured across the post-Habsburg and post-Ottoman terrain of Central and Southeast Europe and the Middle East. As a host of writers, ranging from historians and anthropologists to novelists and memoirists, has insisted, the past is somehow more *present* throughout this politically-fraught geography.<sup>1</sup> ‘Ozymandias,’ Percy Blysshe Shelley’s (1956) meditation on the fate of imperial hubris at the hands of implacable time, strikes a dissonant chord on the banks of the Danube, the peaks of the Balkans, and the steppes of Anatolia. Past empires refuse to be forgotten, as their memories are ceaselessly retrofitted and deployed to new ends. And where post-imperial amnesia does prevail, it is not the whimsical outcome of time’s shifting sands, but a deeply-entrenched political project – as the persistent denial of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey so vividly, and tragically, illustrates. Equally often, former Habsburg and Ottoman lands exhibit a sort of post-imperial *hyperthymesia*, an exhaustive memory of specific events that strangles narration with an excess of detail. Jorge Luis Borges’ Funes the Memorious would be at home here (Borges 1999). And between the poles of amnesia and hyperthymesia, the variety of memories of imperial power testifies to the post-imperial power of memory across central Europe, the Balkans, Asia Minor, the Levant and North Africa.

The essays collected in this volume pursue a multivalent, comprehensive reckoning with the braiding of post-imperial memory and amnesia in post-Habsburg and post-Ottoman lands. We are especially attentive to the politics of memory and forgetting and the multiple mediums through which images of imperial pasts are filtered and formed. In this, our collection builds on and extends recent ground-breaking work on post-Ottoman and post-Habsburg memory and legacies,<sup>2</sup> as well as a broader current of critical scholarship on empire and nostalgia (Rosaldo 1989; Boym 2002; Stoler 2013, 2016). Accordingly, we insist on a capacious, comparative perspective on post-imperial memory and the manner in which memories of multiple empires mediate and configure one another. While much has been made of the effects of national(ized) collective memory on images of imperial pasts (for example, Argenti 2017a), the mutual figurations and reconfigurations of multiple, cohabiting post-imperial memories have received scant attention.<sup>3</sup> Our essays focus especially on the way in which discourses about the Habsburg and Ottoman pasts condition each other, but they also have occasion to consider the impact of other, temporally and spatially adjacent empires, including the Byzantine, French, Prussian, Roman, and Romanov.

More panoramically, our volume takes root in the fertile soil tilled by the recent ‘turn toward memory’ in anthropology, history, and the social sciences broadly (Krause 2007; see also Hawlbachs [1941] 1992; Huyssen 2003; Assmann 2012; Hirsch 2012; de Cesari and Rigney 2014; Palmié and Stewart 2016). Pierre Nora’s (1989) concept of ‘sites of memory,’ with its emphasis on the antinomy between historical knowledge and memory and its attention to the contextual embodiments of collective memory, is a beacon for many of our essays.<sup>4</sup> Yet we also remain vigilant concerning the limitations of memory as a rubric and concept for comprehending multi-scalar processes of social, cultural and political duration, transformation, diminishment and disappearance over time. Ann Laura Stoler’s recent remarks on memory are apposite here:

'Instability' of the past is a good starting point for thinking about what is mobilized of the past and what features of earlier relationalities are requisitioned for new projects and thereby rendered more durable than others. 'Memory' may be inadequate to account for these quixotic regroupings. Memory suggests that the past resides predominantly in how we find to remember it, rather than in the durable and intangible forms of its making (2016, 34–35).

Stoler insists that the myriad of relations – material, discursive, epistemological, ontological – between past(s) and present(s) is irreducible to memory in a strict sense. In the case of the colonial genealogies that she interrogates, the ongoing impact of 'imperial formations' (Stoler et al. 2007) cannot be captured by a mere focus on individual memories or collective memory. Indeed, imperial duress undoes the very distinctions between imperial and post-imperial, colonial and post-colonial, past and present.<sup>5</sup>

Drawing on Stoler's critique, our volume approaches memory as a medium and discourse that embodies and entails the effects of past powers on and in the present. In this context, ambivalence is a productive conceptual supplement, and Freud's pioneering study ([1917] 1964) of ambivalence as a constitutive feature of melancholia is instructive. For Freud, the melancholy subject suffers from 'an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness' (Ibid, 245); concomitantly, the subject comes to identify with 'the abandoned object' (Ibid, 249). Crucially, this identification is not a matter of conscious memory, but unconscious, ambivalent repression. The ambivalence of melancholia implies a simultaneity of love and hate, desire and disdain, toward the lost object (Ibid, 251) – but these ambivalent emotions are not immediately accessible to conscious recollection on the part of the subject.

One must tread carefully when applying the Freudian model of the psyche to collective social formations and historical transformations, of course. Individual pathologies generally make poor metaphors for collective concerns. Nevertheless, Freud's analysis of ambivalence as a symptom of repressions that persist beneath the surface of consciousness offers provocative insight into the anatomies and grammars of imperial legacies and post-imperial political cultures. Empires of the past are objects of memory in the present, certainly, but they are also instigations to a swath of emotions, ranging from passionate approbation to equally passionate condemnation, which resist and extend beyond conscious memory and its sublimations. Ambivalence is the most capacious term to capture this spectrum of affect. Nor is it surprising that post-imperial legacies in the present often register an 'uncanny' effect as something 'terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, *once very familiar*' (Freud [1919] 1955, 220, emphasis mine). This ambivalent knotting of the familiar and the strange, and the uncanny atmospheres that this ambivalence materializes, occupy us across the post-imperial sites of memory and amnesia we traverse.<sup>6</sup>

### Dialectical thinking, past futures, textured historicity

That was how things were back then. Anything that grew took its time growing, and anything that perished took a long time to be forgotten. But everything that had once existed left its traces, and people lived on memories just as they now live on the ability to forget quickly and emphatically. – Joseph Roth, *Radetzky's March* ([1932] 1995, 111)

How, then, might we approach the ambivalent legacies of empires in the present with attention to imperial duress, the interventions and partitions of memory, the repressions of amnesia and the uncanniness of unanticipated durations? This is a methodological

dilemma, inherent in the relationship between the subjective sensibilities of the scholar-researcher and the construction of objects of inquiry. Although the essays collated by this volume do not share a single explicit method, an implicit ethos and sensibility envelopes and integrates them. The principle and practice of 'dialectical thinking,' pioneered by Walter Benjamin, inspires and buttresses this common ethos.

As befits a thinker of eclectic passion, Benjamin developed his vision of dialectical thinking in a piecemeal fashion over the course of various monographs, essays, and meditations. His 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' offer the most programmatic statement of dialectical thinking as a philosophical-historical method:

Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical. It became historical post-humously, as it were, through events that may be separated from it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. *Instead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one* (1968a, 263, emphasis mine).<sup>7</sup>

Benjamin's commitment to 'grasp the constellation(s)' between present(s) and past(s) – the benchmark of dialectical thinking – is a thread that runs through his oeuvre, enlivening essays such as 'Berlin Chronicle' ([1978] 2007) and 'Unpacking My Library' (1968b). His disjointed opus, *The Arcades Project* ([1982] 1999), is a pinnacle and exemplar of dialectical thinking. Throughout this omnibus, Benjamin interprets the material culture and built environment of nineteenth century Paris as 'dreams' that the previous era dreamt of the early twentieth century capitalist present in which he lived: 'From this epoch derive the arcades and *intérieurs*, the exhibition halls and panoramas. They are residues of a dream world. The realization of dream elements, in the course of waking up, is the paradigm of dialectical thinking' (Ibid, 13).<sup>8</sup> By 'grasping the constellation' formed by the City of Lights of his own era and that of the nineteenth century, Benjamin casts the wakeful illumination of dialectical thinking on the 'dream elements' of the past.

For Benjamin, each present moment and contemporary era must be comprehended dialectically as a 'past future.' That is to say, if each era 'dreams' its own future,<sup>9</sup> then each present moment is also a former future 'dreamt' by a previous era, when this era was itself 'present.' *In the past, this present was the future*. Simultaneously, each current era also projects – dreams – its own future. Which implies that each present is also a 'future past' (see also Kosseleck 2004). *In the future, this present will be the past*. So: *The present is a former future in relation to multiple pasts and a coming past in relation to multiple futures* (Walton 2019). In Benjamin's oneiric vocabulary, each present era is both 'wakeful' in relationship to the past and 'asleep and dreaming' in relationship to the future. To misconstrue the present as the simple outcome of previous events ('like the beads of a rosary') is to deny and to obscure the dialectical condition(ing) of the present: both a 'past future' (the dream from which one has awoken) and a 'future past' (the dream that has yet to end). Furthermore, because the future itself necessarily remains contingent, undetermined and plural, dialectical thinking is resolutely negative (see also Adorno [1966] 2007).<sup>10</sup> *Contra* both Hegel and Marx, no teleological synthesis or fixed, utopian destination structures the dialectical mediation of the present as a past future (Buck-Morss 1991, 13).

*The Arcades Project* renders the abstractions of dialectical thinking concrete. Benjamin interprets the iron cathedrals of nineteenth century Parisian arcades as ciphers that encase

the incipient logic of capitalist modernity, a logic that effloresces more fully in the twentieth century. The persistence of earlier material forms and objects in the present allows Benjamin to 'demythologize' the ersatz verities of historicism, modernity's hegemonic 'regime of historicity' (Hartog 2015). Susan Buck-Morss captures this point with subtlety:

In the era of industrial culture, consciousness exists in a mythic, dream state, against which historical knowledge is the only antidote. But the particular kind of historical knowledge that is needed to free the present from myth is not easily uncovered. Discarded and forgotten, *it lies buried within surviving culture*, remaining invisible precisely because it was of so little use to those in power (Buck-Morss 1991, x, my emphasis).

The aim and intervention of Benjamin's negative dialectics of history is to fracture 'mythical' reifications of the present era by seizing objects and sites that reveal the present as a 'past future,' a 'constellation which ... (this) era has formed with a definite earlier one' (Benjamin 1968a, 263). The practitioner of this negative dialectics of history is an archaeologist who excavates the 'discarded and forgotten' modes of knowledge that reside 'buried within surviving culture.'<sup>11</sup> Again – the point cannot be overemphasized – there is no telos to this dialectical movement, precisely because we cannot anticipate what sort of past(s) the present will become in its constellations with future eras.

In a recent essay (Walton 2016), I grappled with the challenges of dialectical thinking in relation to contemporary memories of the Ottoman Empire across an extensive post-imperial geography.<sup>12</sup> As I argued, recent, reified memories of the Ottoman era – Benjamin would call them 'myths' – silence the heterogeneity of the Ottoman past and its equally heterogeneous legacies in the present. Whether at a miniature theme park in Istanbul, a former mosque in Thessaloniki, or a Sufi tomb in Budapest, my approach to Ottoman sites of memory has been to pursue distinctive 'constellations' of the Ottoman past and the contemporary era. In this earlier context, I designated this method 'disciplined historicity': 'The technique of subjective engagement – simultaneously conceptual and affective – that ... requires navigating between the rigid objectivity of arid historiography and the naïve subjectivity of idle, fleeting curiosity' (Walton 2016, 516).

With this longer exposition on Benjamin as a backdrop, I now prefer to think of this method, grounded in a negative dialectics of history, as *textured historicity*. The *textured* aspect of this mode of scholarship and knowledge emphasizes the distinctive, embodied encounter between the subject in the present and the objects that convey the past in the present.<sup>13</sup> Textures – rough, gritty, smooth, porous, variegated – emerge at the site and surface of this encounter. The subject of textured historicity embraces the present, but not on its own terms. She insists that objects, discourses, and material culture in the present achieve meaning dialectically as facets of a 'past future.' Beyond mere memory, these epochal 'constellations'<sup>14</sup> give voice to the spaces and places we visit throughout this volume: muscular monuments, musty museums, renovated mausoleums, decorous cafés, ruined ramparts.<sup>15</sup>

### In search of better metaphors (on stewardship)

He is capable of turning everything into something else – snow to skin, skin to flower petals, petals to sugar, sugar to powder, powder to drifting snow again – as long as he can make it out to be something it is not, which may be taken to prove that he cannot bear to stay in the same

place for long, no matter where he may find himself. – Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities* ([1978] 1995, 146)

Texture, like many of the motifs that orient historians, historically-inclined anthropologists, and other pupils of pasts and presents, is a metaphor. As Stoler has emphasized, the role of metaphors in ‘concept work’ (2016, 3) is indispensable, precisely because they encourage the scholar to traverse uncharted, potentially treacherous intellectual and political terrain:

In the absence of ready concepts, metaphors speak to the non-spoken and to sensibilities that escape consolidated conceptualized forms. Metaphors are anything but seamless versions of that which they present. They are ‘disturbances’ ... that are and must be discrepant, askew, and suggestive of something more than, different from, that to which they refer. It is here that new political critique becomes more available, as new analytic space and the associations they afford are differently opened (Ibid, 339).

Because metaphors announce their discrepancy and excess in relation to their objects, they are ‘lively’ concepts. Stoler’s cardinal metaphor of duress exemplifies this ‘liveliness’ and animation. Metaphors resist reification and the collapse of the distinction between concept and referent – but only if they are articulated explicitly *as* metaphors.

From ambivalence to texture, several metaphors sustain the concept work that I have broached in this introduction. A host of further concept-metaphors inspires and emerges from the essays to come. Each of these metaphors seeks to illuminate the ambiguities and specificities of the post-Habsburg and post-Ottoman contexts that we navigate. A preliminary roster of these metaphors will serve as a key – in the sense of a map key or legend – for our excursions. Metaphors for imperial decline: decay; rot; eclipse; ruination; dereliction; dilapidation; oblivion (Augé 2004); desuetude; corpse; death. Metaphors for imperial continuities: survival; inheritance; bequest; legacy; memory; palimpsest (Huyssen 2003; Aksamija et al. 2017); patina (Dawdy 2016); trace; echo; scarification; shadow; fossil; sediment; debris (Stoler 2013); ghost; zombie; afterlife; revenant; haunting. Memories for post-imperial absences: erasure; erosion; silencing (Trouillot 1995); amnesia; aphasia (Stoler 2016, 122 ff.); occlusion (ibid.: 10); repression; whitewashing. Metaphors for violent political transformation: beheading; dismemberment; shattering. Metaphors for the simultaneous variety of post-imperial effects: friction (Tsing 2005); fusion; ambivalence; duress (Stoler 2016).

This partial catalogue invites several immediate reflections. First, metaphors are by no means mutually exclusive. A trace may also signal a moment of erosion or erasure; (post)-imperial whitewashing may equally be an imperial bequest, as Miloš Jovanović argues in his contribution to this volume. The silencing of the past is also a matter of friction and duress, as both Michel Rolph Trouillot (1995) and Stoler (2016) insist. And the same imperial remnant – itself a metaphor – may be interpreted as a fossil, echo, or ghost depending on the context. Secondly, not all metaphors are equally metaphorical. A zombie is more clearly a metaphor than legacy or memory. Certain post-imperial contexts warrant more concrete, specific, even untoward metaphors, whereas others lend themselves to abstract metaphorical concepts that may not register as metaphors at all. Finally, metaphors suffer from overuse, precisely because familiarity dulls their metaphorical impact. Memory itself is exemplary here. When Maurice Halbwachs ([1941] 1992) first proposed the concept of collective memory, the metaphorical transposition from individual to mass was startling



and radically suggestive, but the subsequent vernacularization of the phrase has leached it of metaphorical force.

A guiding ambition of this collection is to advance novel metaphors for imperial pasts as they exist in the present.<sup>16</sup> This labour unfurls over the course of our essays, but for the moment one particular metaphor is worth underlining. In her sensitive ethnography of the persistence of Ottoman-era modes of caregiving toward street animals in Istanbul in this volume, Kimberly Hart points out that the bourgeois notion of ownership of animals as pets fails to comprehend the relationships that many denizens of the city cultivate with street cats and dogs. Rather than ‘ownership,’ she proposes ‘stewardship’ as a model for capturing these modes of attention, care, and affection. Unlike ownership, which commodifies and objectifies that which is owned, stewardship is an open-ended relationship that aspires to treat its objects as ‘ends’ in their own right, rather than means to other ends (‘use values’ in Marxian vocabulary). Moreover, stewardship is socially and temporally indefinite in a manner that ownership is not. The relationship of stewardship may lapse, and one steward may take the place of another.

With its indefinite, open temporality, stewardship resonates with our leitmotif of textured historicity. As such, stewardship deserves pride of place as a guiding metaphor for our volume as a whole. While no single metaphor can seamlessly unite our inquiries and investigations, in a certain sense we are all stewards of the past futures and future pasts about which we write. We cannot predict the constellations, reconfigurations, and entailments of imperial pasts yet to come, but as their stewards in the present, we cultivate an ethic of responsibility that demands attending to both their textured variegations and persistent effects of power.

## The itinerary ahead

Only those who could look forward with confidence to the future enjoyed the present with an easy mind. – Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* ([1942] 2009, 24)

The itinerary ahead consists of three sections, each composed of three essays. In the metaphorical spirit of this introduction and the volume as a whole, I have dubbed them ‘Palimpsests,’ ‘Proximities,’ and ‘Persistences.’ Metaphors themselves, these rubrics are not exhaustive, mutually exclusive, or settled. Most of our essays might fit within any section; different taxonomies are imaginable. This particular constellation simply aims to encourage thematic and conceptual resonances among the essays.

*Palimpsests.* As a metaphor, palimpsest highlights the manner in which the same surface or space encapsulates multiple histories, none of which is entirely erased or defaced (Huysen 2003). Each of the three contributions here approach post-imperial cities as palimpsests of multiple pasts. Gruia Badescu surveys two doubly post-imperial urban contexts – the Ottoman-Habsburg cityscape of Sarajevo and the Ottoman-French cityscape of Beirut – in relation to the more recent spatial and social effects of post-war reconstruction in each city. Giulia Carabelli explores the ambiguous atmospheres and affects of Habsburg heritage in the ‘historic’ cafes of Trieste, where commodification of the imperial past resides uneasily with both a rejection of nostalgia for the Empire and the co-presence of Italian Irredentist memories. Finally, Dunja Resanović unearths largely forgotten Ottoman infrastructures in Belgrade – former city gates – in order to



lend depth and texture to evaluation of hegemonic Serbian national memory and cartographies of the city in present.

*Proximities.* To varying degrees, all of our essays foreground the ambivalent relationship between spatial proximity and temporal distance that saturates post-imperial spaces. The forms of proximity enacted by sites such as museums and monuments aspire to bridge temporal gaps, yet they also deepen the fissure between present and past. The three contributions in this section are especially attentive to the temporal effects of space and the spatial effects of time. Emily Neumeier's tale of two museums in contemporary Greece illustrates how different sites within the same national domain enunciate imperial pasts according to divergent post-imperial and local logics. Behar Sadriu examines recent transformations in the discursive and spatial practices surrounding the Sultan Murad I tomb and shrine complex in Kosovo, which has recently become a site of nascent Neo-Ottoman memory and the crucible for a robust Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans. Finally, my own essay traces the myriad genealogies of the Battle of Szigetvár (1566) as a site of memory in both the present and various pasts, and attends to the ways in which post-imperial nationalist memory sanitizes bygone imperial antagonism.

*Persistences.* One of the overarching arguments of our volume is that the simple, binary periodization of imperial and post-imperial obfuscates modes of continuity, moments of duress, and ongoing effects of empire throughout former Habsburg and Ottoman lands (see also Stoler 2016, 30). Our final trio of essays punctuate this contention. Kimberly Hart guides us through the cul-de-sacs, alleyways, and thoroughfares of Istanbul, where Ottoman-era habits of care for street animals persist in today's megalopolis. Miloš Jovanović conveys the fraught politics of 'whitewashed empire' in Vienna's Kaiserforum, where vigorous celebration of Habsburg glory both occludes imperial histories of violence and reinscribes this violence in the present. Finally, Piro Rexhepi's interrogation of the fraught genealogy and contemporary politics of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina juxtaposes and connects Habsburg-era colonial-imperial governance of Islam with European Union efforts to monitor and discipline Islam in the Balkans today.

Throughout our itinerary, we pause to accentuate a host of minor-key themes, secondary motifs, and lines of flight. We frequently have occasion to contemplate the multiple media and mediums through which imperial pasts are articulated today, from the literary to the culinary, the architectural to the televisual. The nationalization of imperial pasts for contemporary ends, and the cultures of collective memory that emerge from such nationalizations, constitute yet another shared focus (see also Argenti 2017a). In tandem with our questioning of nationalized and nationalist interpretations of Habsburg and Ottoman legacies, we also consider another braiding of proximity and distance: alterity as a condition of identity. Without fully rehearsing the indispensable lessons of Orientalism (Said 1979) and its offshoots – especially images and imaginings of the Balkans (Todorova 2009) and Eastern Europe (Wolff 1994) – we consistently gesture to the role of the bygone empires in contemporary constructions of Selves and Others. In each of these endeavours, we remain committed to the spirit and method of textured historicity: to hail the present dialectically, and to reconfigure it as a constellation with its multiple, ambivalent pasts. An elaboration of Mark Mazower's memorable *bon mot*, 'Other futures may require other pasts' (2004, 474), comes to mind: Other pasts may require other perspectives on, and of, the present.

## Notes

1. Among the prominent literary titles that stylize this 'presence of the past,' Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina* ([1945] 1977), Daša Drndić's *Trieste* (2012), Claudio Magris' *Danube* (1989), Jan Morris' *Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere* (2002), Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2004), Joseph Roth's *The Radetzky March* ([1932] 1974), Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* ([1941] 2007), and Stefan Zweig's *The World of Yesterday* ([1942] 2009) warrant mention.
2. The scholarly literature on post-Habsburg and post-Ottoman legacies is increasingly vast. Key works on Habsburg legacies include Alfonsin (2006); Arens (2014); Ballinger (2003); Judson (2016); Schlipphacke (2014); Schorske (1981); and, Wolff (2012). For the persistence and revival of the Ottoman era in the present, see Argenti (2017b); Bryant (2016); Carney (2014); Hart (2013); İğsız 2018; Meeker (2002); Mills (2010); Onar (2009); Taglia (2016); Tambar (2013, 2014, 2016); and, Walton (2010, 2016, 2017).
3. Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz' (2013) edited volume, *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman Borderlands* is a welcome exception.
4. The influence of Nora's argument can be gauged by the many criticisms levelled against it, especially in relation to its 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Schiller 2002) and the rigidity with which Nora distinguished between 'history' and 'memory.' See, for instance, Klein (2000) and Palmié and Stewart (2016, 208, n. 2).
5. Marc Augé's (2004) ruminations on 'oblivion' as a constituent feature of the passage of time suggest a parallel critique of memory and its privileging of conscious articulations between pasts and presents: 'Of course, one does not forget everything. But neither does one remember everything. Remembering or forgetting is doing gardener's work, selecting, pruning. Memories are like plants: there are those that need to be quickly eliminated in order to help the others burgeon, transform, flower' (17).
6. Yael Navaro-Yashin (2012) has invoked Freud's concept of the uncanny to interpret the legacies of war and the architecture of ruins in contemporary Cyprus with evocative effect. More recently, Charles Stewart (2017) has persuasively characterized history in the post-Ottoman world as uncanny.
7. Dipesh Chakrabarty's more recent critique of historicism, 'the mode of thinking (which) tells us that in order to understand the nature of anything in this world we must see it as an historically developing entity, that is, first, as an individual and unique whole ... and, second, as something that develops over time' (2000, 23), dovetails with Benjamin's thoughts here. See also Palmié and Stewart (2016) and Tambar (2014, 43).
8. Susan Buck-Morss' summary of Benjamin's insight in *The Arcades Project* is evocative: 'Corsets, feather dusters, red and green-colored combs, old photographs, souvenir replicas of the Venus di Milo, collar buttons to shirts long since discarded – these battered historical survivors from the dawn of industrial culture that appeared together in the dying arcades as 'a world of secret affinities' were the philosophical ideas, as a constellation of concrete, historical referents' (1991, 4, emphasis in original). See also Walton (2019).
9. One of the key epigraphs for Benjamin's essay, 'Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century,' is a quotation from the historian Jules Michelet, '*Chaque époque rêve la suivante*' ('Every epoch dreams that to follow') (1999, 4).
10. Adorno's notion of the 'yielding' of negative dialectics is pertinent in relation to *The Arcades Project*: 'If the thought really yielded to the object, if its attention were on the object, not on its category, the very objects would start talking under the lingering eye' ([1966] 1973, 27–28). *The Arcades Project* is a testament to Benjamin's 'lingering eye' for the minutiae of the Parisian cityscape, and a study in yielding to the object, rather than its category. I thank William Mazzarella for directing me to this passage.
11. A broader comparison and contrast between Benjamin's negative dialectics of history and Foucault's double method of archaeology and genealogy (see Foucault 1972, 1977) is beyond my purview here. That said, I strongly suspect that, despite the tendency to assign the two thinkers to disparate political-scholarly trajectories and camps, there is ample

ground for commensuration and reconciliation between their models of history and historical knowledge.

12. More generally, Benjamin's 'off modern' (Boym 2002, xvi) sensibility and critique of historicism have lately inspired new currents in post-colonial, decolonial, and counter-Orientalist scholarship, especially in the Middle East. Particularly worth noting in this context is the workshop sponsored in 2017 by the Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien, titled "On the Ruins of History'-A Walter Benjamin Moment in Arab Thought?" (<https://www.eume-berlin.de/veranstaltungen/workshops/workshops-seit-2006/on-the-ruins-of-history-a-walter-benjamin-moment-in-arab-thought.html>, accessed 24 February 2019). I thank the anonymous reviewer for alerting me to this initiative.
13. Even more strongly, we might say that textured historicity directs attention to the mutual constitution of historical subjects and historical objects. Michel Rolph Trouillot grasps this dialectical process of mutual constitution: 'The collective subjects who supposedly remember did not exist as such at the time of the events they claim to remember. Rather, their constitution as subjects goes hand in hand with the continuous creation of the past. As such, they do not succeed the past: they are its contemporaries' (1995, 16).
14. Another comparison worth pursuing, but beyond the confines of my argument here, is the relation between Benjaminian 'constellations' of past and present and Bakhtin's (1981) concept of the chronotope. While both concepts gesture to the spatialization of time and temporalization of space, chronotopes are decidedly matters of discourse and narrative, while 'constellations' are better construed as 'infra-discursive.' See also Palmié and Stewart (2016, 218–221).
15. While beyond the scope of this essay, a few comments on the relationship between 'textured historicity' and the recent appeal for an 'anthropology of history' on the part of Palmié and Stewart (2016) are apposite here. Palmié and Stewart advocate 'the exploration of how history is conceived and represented to take in non-Western societies, where ethnographic study can reveal local forms of historical production that do not conform to the canons of standard historiography' (Ibid., 208). In light of the interstitial, mediating character of most of the sites discussed in this volume (see also Todorova 2009), I remain wary of the oil-and-water distinction between Western and non-Western that coordinates Palmié and Stewart's argument; in a comparable sense, our essays interrogate intersections of historiographic and non-historiographic practices (see, especially, my own contribution and that by Emily Neumeier). That said, the imperatives of textured historicity clearly resonate with Palmié and Stewart's project of 'identifying contemporary Western historiography and its 'historicist' philosophical underpinnings as objects of study in their own right' (2016, 209).
16. The quest for better metaphors has also fuelled a comprehensive reckoning with anthropological theory. In my view, da Col and Graeber's (2011) summons to return to 'ethnographic theory' and to abandon the theoretical scaffolding of post-structuralist and critical theory registers a pervasive exhaustion with the metaphors gleaned from these latter intellectual traditions. Rather than reactionary rejection of post-structuralism and continental thought – itself rooted in a false antimony – it seems to me far more productive to forge syntheses of 'ethnographic' and 'critical' theory, and the metaphors bestowed by each. William Mazzarella's recent *Mana of Mass Society* (2017) is exemplary in its pursuit of this endeavour.

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