Our Virtual Families:
Toward a Cultural Understanding of Modern Family Life

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I believe it is safe to say that the two most frequently used words in this year's presidential campaign have been "family" and "dream." They are key words in every politician's vocabulary today, precisely because they have so much resonance in contemporary culture. The conjunction of "dream" and "family" is not accidental, however, for this reflects the character of modern family life.

"The Family is a highly important and useful imaginary," writes Donald Lowe, "More than a sign, it is an image that can arouse culturally constructed nostalgia and longing...The family is an integral part of the culture of late capitalism."[1] There is a considerable literature that supports Lowe's point, showing how "family" has become a means of selling everything from political platforms to burgers. There is scarcely a business that does not deploy it in its advertising, if not in the brand name itself. A quick finger walk through my Yellow Pages yielded the following uses: Family Buffet, Family Carpets, Family Dentistry, Family Dollar Stores, Family Game Rooms, Family Pet Veterinary, and more.

But today I am more concerned with the uses that families themselves make the image of The Family. As I will try to demonstrate, a substantial dimension of family life today is experienced through imagination, in a dreaming state, if you will. This dreaming takes two forms -- one directed to the future, the other to the past. Dreams can be anticipatory; they can also be memorial, but, of the two, memory has become the more important, for our sense of the future has become increasingly impoverished.[2] The past has become by far the more capacious space of the family imaginary, making memory the dominant muse of our times. It is where we find the safest place to dream and the safest storage for the virtual families on which contemporary

families have become so reliant. I want to explore the reasons why virtual family has become so central to family life by examining the history of the imaginary itself, locating both its origins and functions in real time and space.

I

Most of the familial memory practices we take for granted today do not predate the mid-nineteenth century. Apart from aristocratic and patrician elites, few Europeans or Americans bothered about ancestors or origins before 1850. When the seventeenth English cleric Ralph Josselin imagined his family tree it had branches but no roots. Most of his contemporaries would not have known where or when their forebears were born or buried. Anniversaries were rare and family reunions unknown. When family members came together it was for practical purposes. Time spent together was work or pastime, and devoid of ceremonial. Baptisms, weddings, and funerals were not family but communal occasions; and notions of "family time" and "family place," so central in our day, had no meaning for most people.

To understand the indifference to family past, one must understand that until the mid-nineteenth century family was identical to household, and included persons unrelated as well as related to one another. High mortality and fertility, accompanied by scarcity of resources, meant that a nuclear family was unable to sustain a viable household without the addition of strangers. Fatherhood, motherhood, and childhood were all socially rather than biologically defined. Most people spent a large part of their childhoods and adolescences in households other than those of their natural parents. It was a person's place in the household rather than chronological age that determined whether he would be considered a boy or a man, or she a girl or a woman.

The timing of leaving home, getting married, having children, and retirement varied widely; and there was no sense of a normative life course as we know it today.[3] As a result, familial relationships -- parent/child, husband/wife -- were understood differently than they are now. Neither aging nor death affected them in quite the same way, because household members were, like the members of any socially or economically constituted institution, seen as replaceable. The nest was never empty for long. When a child grew up and left the preindustrial household, it was replaced by another through apprenticeship or informal adoption. Widows and widowers remarried with a haste that we would find unseemly, but this was necessary to the survival of the household.

Defined by its economic, social, and cultural functions, the household as family was, like any other institution, a thing of the moment. The typical household had a profound sense of being, but little sense of becoming. Its past did not run deep; and its future did not extend much beyond tomorrow. In an era where a sense of place was far more important to identity than a sense of time, memory was not an asset but an obstacle to a household's successful functioning. It is little wonder that before the middle of the nineteenth century forgetting was regarded with greater favor than remembering. "The things and relationships of this life are like prints in the Sand, there is not the least appearance of remembrance of them," wrote Thomas Hooker. "The King remembers not his Crown, the Husband the Wife, the Father the child."[4]

II

But all this was to change with the onset of the industrial revolution, which not only separated family from household, but made time itself the basic constitutive element of familial identities. Families ceased to be thing of the moment and acquired both a past and a future. From

this point onwards, remembering became the central cultural practice of family life.

We can see this happening first among the Protestant middle classes of northwestern Europe and North America in the mid-nineteenth century. They were the first to see themselves as part and product of a linear time, of processes which came to be called "development." Like the nation, the family was now understood in terms of becoming, constituted through time rather than, as the household had been, through place. As such, these families were undergoing what Martin Kohli has called "chronologization." They became subject to ever more rigid temporal norms that dictated the time to marry, to have children, to retire, even to die.[4] In turn, these rigidly calibrated age markers separated generations and worked to separate family members.

Middle class families acquired both a future and a past, but in doing so they found themselves exposed to what David Harvey has called modernity's "time-space compression," an experience of vastly accelerated rates of change and radically shrinking distances "so that the world sometimes seems to collapse inward upon us."[5] The imposition of standards of mechanical time and abstract space on family life has been both disruptive and alienating, but it also has its constructive side. "The experience of time-space compression is challenging, exciting, stressful, and sometimes deeply troubling, capable of sparking therefore a diversity of social, cultural, and political responses," notes Harvey.[6]

Anthony Giddens is pursuing the same line of thought when he writes that, while the separation of time and space is the essential characteristic of modernity, effectively terminating the ancient sense of place that had previously united them, "the severing of time from space provides a basis for their recombination in relation to social activity."[7] Against those who see nothing but the terrors of modern linear time compounded by the agoraphobia associated with

"empty" modern space, both Harvey and Giddens urge us to look more closely at the dialectical process which has produced a host of new times and new places, many of them virtual.

And on close inspection, we find that it was from the mid-nineteenth century onwards that families began to construct new family time(s) to cope with their experience of a shrinking present.[8] It was also then that memory was first deployed domestically as defense against the centrifugal forces of modern time and space. The great scholar of collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs, assumed that strong memories were an expression of strong group solidarity, weakening or disappearing as that solidarity eroded. But memory can just as well create as reflect a sense of togetherness; and this has been the case with the nuclear family, whose commemorative activity has increased even as the day-to-day interaction of its members has decreased. Today, the times that families <u>live by</u> are not the same as those they <u>live with</u>. Today's families live by what they like to call "quality time," which is by no means the same as the time they actually share together. Understanding this distinction is crucial to understanding the way memory functions in contemporary family life.

III

We usually think of family as passive, responding to change, not as a creative force in its own right. Yet modern families have taken up the challenge presented by the alienating powers of modern time and space, and turned both to their own purposes. Mechanical linear time and empty abstract space undermined pre-existing communal and religious understandings of place and occasion, but in doing so opened up new possibilities for the creative use of both space and time to restore that sense of being that had been so rudely disrupted. The same means of rapid communication that tore the household asunder made it possible for people to remain in touch

with and to visit relations who in earlier periods would have been out of sight and therefore out of mind. The modern triumph of time over space has made it possible for us to think of ourselves as "close" to persons not only at ever greater spatial but temporal distances.[9]

One of the novel features of modernity is the possibility of combining presence with absence, bringing the distant near and drawing the past and future into the present. Modern technology, beginning with the telegraph and culminating in the internet, allows persons to be intimate at a distance. Photography and now video erase barriers of time as well as space, so that contemporary family life depends no more on propinquity than it does on contemporaneity. Family has long since ceased to mean the same thing as the household even though the official census continues to act on the assumption that persons present in a certain place at a certain time constitute family. But this is not what most of us mean by family, a set of relationships which have undergone what Giddens calls a disembedding process, "the `lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of social interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space."[10]

A world mapped by a single set of abstract universal coordinates empties all places of their original meaning, but this modern mental feat also makes available to us places we have never seen and may never visit, opening up to the imagination places beyond the horizons of our ancestors. "In conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly <u>phantasmagoric</u>," Giddens notes.[11] And for almost two centuries Americans and Europeans have been in the process of creating a whole new set of imagined places that now constitute their mental, if not their physical worlds. Nowhere is this more evident than in the changing meaning of "home," which is now less a physical location than a mental construct, a thing of dreams as well as memories, present

even in its absence, no less real even if it is rarely, sometimes never, actually inhabited.[12]

Having thus been disembedded, we have gained a much larger measure of freedom to place ourselves in the world. Our families are no longer confined to those we live with. Our potential circle of kin has been vastly expanded to the point that we can begin to imagine ourselves a part of a "family of man."[13] In reality, the circle of those with whom we are on familiar terms is much more constricted, yet the boundaries of family are no longer limited by physical place. Because family can now take place virtually anywhere, it has become incumbent on families to make their own sense of place, another one of the peculiar features of our modern age.

IV

Modernity has also disembedded us from older meanings of time with the result that it too has become phantasmagoric. However much we may be subject to the dictates of the modern clock and calendar, modernity's separation of time from space has allowed us a greater opportunity to create new modes of temporality that serve to calm the terrors of linear time through the restoration of cycles of events (such as birthdays and anniversaries) that provide for us a sense of continuity and permanence. Even as those who live together feel they have less and less time for one another, the number and variety of special occasions set aside for family continues to grow at an astonishing rate.[14] Just as our mental maps are filled with family places, so our mental calendars are crowded with the anticipations and memories of family occasions.

In fact, most of the time we spend on family gatherings is in anticipation and remembering rather than on the actual moment itself. When it comes to family, the modern imagination works overtime, producing a plethora of dream and memory, compensating for the

short supply of time with which to experience other family members as complex human beings. Unfortunately, in our contemporary family times we are more apt to encounter parents, children, and kin their most stereotypical roles, thus producing a terrible yearning for an intimacy that cannot be. Here idealization can lead to disappointment, frustration, even violence.[15]

Modern family life, like modern society more generally, operates in two quite different time zones. Today's families live with a monochronic time, perceived as external and objective, which is relentlessly linear and irreversible, separating men's and women's time, adult and children's time, the time of the young from that of the old. The families we live with today are small in size and short in duration, and especially prone to fragmentation. They are also voluntary, consciously planned and (with modern divorce) consciously terminated, with much more sharply defined beginnings and endings than was the case in earlier forms of family life. Supposed to proceed by developmental "stages," nuclear family life has discontinuity built into it from the very beginning. A nuclear family is said to begin when children arrive and understood to end when they leave home, something quite different from families in the past when the household existed prior to birth and endured beyond death.[16] As a prime example of planned obsolescence, the nuclear family in uniquely vulnerable among the institutions of modern society to discontinuity and sense of loss, accounting for the perpetual sense of crisis attached to it.

Ironically, parents work very hard at inculcating a time and age consciousness that will ultimately produce distance and separation between themselves and their children. They teach children that the date of their birth is destiny, ensuring that childhood, then adolescence and youth, are ultimately things to be left behind, "lost" as it were. "The family relationships through which most of us emerge as selves...are inherently vulnerable to the passage of time," note

Andrew Weigert and Ross Hastings. "Within the family, time is 'normally' experienced as aging, and aging ends in death..." The ultimate sense of loss is produced by death, but modern family life is a series of little losses or little deaths. At the heart of the modern family is a paradox: "to succeed as a parent is eventually to lose the present identity as parent; to succeed as child is inevitably to lose the identity of child."[17] Modern families produce the very notions of generational difference that are the cause of so much discomfort to themselves. While other modern institutions manage to survive the aging and death of their members, the nuclear family is unique in its unwillingness to find substitutes for missing members. Institutions survive by forgetting; only family relies so heavily on remembering. It is where that other sense of time -- cyclical and memorial -- enters in.

V

Memory first entered into family life among the European and American middle classes in the mid-nineteenth century as a compensatory device to counter the centrifugal effects of linear time.[18] It was among this group that the living began to haunt the dead. Family graves, previously largely neglected, were now visited regularly as the Victorian cemetery was redesigned to make room for weekly and annual pilgrimages.[19] Never had mourning been so attenuated and the memory of the dead kept alive for so long, a task assigned mainly to women.[20] Women were also favored mediums in the spiritualist movements which were to become so much a part of middle class family life from the middle of the century onwards.[21]

Among the Victorians, every little loss also required the appropriate commemorative ritual. They were the ones to make of the birthday the memorable occasion it is today. The christening became for the first time a major familial gathering; and children's birthdays began to

be celebrated with regularity. Rites of passage, which had not been strongly accentuated prior to the late nineteenth century, now took on huge significance. Confirmation, bar mitzvahs, and graduations became major family occasions. But the most memorial event of all was the wedding, which grew even more elaborate at all class levels in this century.[22]

Inseparable from all these events was the photograph.[23] "Pho-tography becomes a rite of family life just when, in the industrializing countries of Europe and America, the very institution of the family starts undergoing radical surgery," writes Susan Sontag, whose insight into the role of images in family life is worth quoting at greater length:[24]

> As that claustrophobic unit, the nuclear family, was being carved out of a much larger family aggregate, photography came along to memorialize, to restate symbolically, the imperiled continuity and vanishing extendedness of family life. Those ghostly traces, photographs, supply the token presence of the dispersed relatives. A family's photograph album is generally about the extended family -- and, often, is all that remains of it.

From the 1850s family photography has focused on children, initially (as Catherine Robson has pointed out) primarily on female children, who symbolized for the Victorian males, who were the photographers, their own lost childhoods.[25] Today seventy percent of our Kodak moments are devoted to "cute" little boys as well as pretty little girls, but the psychological function of family photography has not changed. It remains compensatory, a kind of dreaming. Daniel Harris suggests that that "cuteness is every parent's portable utopia, the rose-colored lenses that color and blur the profound drudgery of child-rearing with soft-focused sentimentality."[26]

VI

In previous ages public space was people's aide de memoire.[27] In the course of the nineteenth century public spaces progressively lost the "placeness" that had allowed them to

serve as sites of memory. But Victorians created a new sense of place in the home itself, reconstructing the house in such a way as make it a space of memorability.[28] Memories abhor empty spaces, and, Victorian architecture served memory particularly well, for, in the words of Gaston Bachelard, if a house "has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges that are all the more clearly delineated."[29]

Closed domestic spaces would henceforth bear the weight of modern dreaming. By the late 19th century, the parlor had become "a kind of museum or sanctum -the repository of things which have, or which once had, an emotional significance: wedding dresses and other old clothes some belonging to the departed..."[30] The parlor was where the dead were laid out, but it was also the place for all those events -- courtships, weddings, christenings, and, of course, Christmas -- which were meant to be memorable, when the past was invoked as "tradition" and ritual brought the past imaginatively into the present.

In the twentieth century every man's and woman's home became both their castle and their palace of memory. Today, every home has become a museum and an archive filled with things that speak to that which is absent. As Eugene Rochberg-Halton puts it, homes and homey things "are the repositories of personal and collective memories, they embody kinship ties, they are valued as tangible evidence of friendship and family bonds, they are signs of our presence in a paradoxically material yet evanescent world."[31] In the late twentieth century, as modern domestic architecture has taken on some of empty functionalism characteristic of modern space more generally, memory has tended to migrate to summer or weekend houses. Today's dream house is more likely to be a second home, where, notes Marjorie Garber: "The lost origin and the future dream are both vanishing points where we imagine ourselves at peace, surrounded by

comfort and harmony."[32]

Today most of us fasten on the place we call home, that one place where we feel we can animate meaningful, habitable worlds. There we gather our significant others, or, in their absence, their photos, momentos, and other cherished objects that connect us to them on the symbolic level. They speak to us, and we to them. As Rochberg-Halton has shown, "transactions with cherished objects are communicative dialogues with ourselves."[33] As more and more of us live alone, we fill our empty nests with things that allow us to connect with more people than our ancestors ever knew existed. It is even common for those who are wholly bereft to turn pets and stuffed animals into surrogate families.[34] Our fondness for things should not be mistaken for materialism, however, for without objects to symbolize ourselves and our significant others our world would lose all meaning.[35]

That one special place we call home has become equally virtual. We are so rarely at home these days; and our hurried existence means that the "homemade" and the "homecooked" is likely to be made anywhere but at home. As Margorie Garber has pointed out recently: "We have entered into a world of virtual home-owning and virtual design, seeking to create in days and weeks -- indeed on the Internet in seconds and minutes -- traditions in the absence of history."[36]

VII

Weddings, funerals, and birthdays are so much more than mere dateable and locatable "facts of life" that modern social science has managed to reduced them to. At those moments actual behavior is far less important than the accompanying symbolic activity. These are the precious moments we seize from fleeting linear time to break out of our present preoccupations

to imagine a past that will see us through into our imagined future. "The novelty of the very future demands a novel past," George Herbert Mead noted in 1902; and recently social psychologists have found that people whose pasts run deepest have the greatest faith in their futures.[37] It turns out that our ability to imagine the future depends very heavily on our capacity to create "images of absent events and believe in their validity."[38] We require the presence of things past to ensure the presence of things future, but, of course, when remembering becomes an end in itself, it becomes "mere nostalgia, it degenerates into a terminal bubble of past that both closes one off from the living spontaneity of the present and denies the possibility of a future."[39]

Nuclear families are prone to nostalgia, but they have no choice but to seize upon the ineffable passing moment, turning this into a symbol of duration and extension, defying time and space, even death, to create sufficient hope in order to be able to move on. In so-called future-oriented societies, ritual is supposed to disappear, yet it is through ritual that we make the future probable and possible. Ritual time differs from linear time not just in its repetitiveness, but in the way it erases the perceived distance between past, present, and future. As Barbara Myerhoff put it: "Ritual inevitably carries a basic message of order, continuity, and predictability.... By stating enduring and underlying patterns, ritual connects, past, present, and future, abrogating history and time. Ritual always links participants to one another and often beyond, to wider collectivities that may be absent, even to the ancestors and those yet unborn."[40]

Even as we speak, new rituals for the purpose of coping with losses, big and little, proliferate.[41] For example, in this age of the "hurried child," when children are not allowed to linger even in their infancy, the image of the "unborn child" has appeared as if to satisfy our craving for proof of the immortality of family relations. Viewing ultrasound images, existing

outside of real time and space, and thus exempt from the imperfections that birth itself may bring, has become the latest rite of family.[42]

VI

"Time's arrow is the intelligibility of distinct and irreversible events, while time's cycle is the intelligibility of timeless order and law-like structure. We must have both," writes Stephen J. Gould.[43] At the end of the twentieth century, more and more cultural critics have pointed to our need for a polychronic sense of time that will resolve the cultural contradictions which our commitment to notions of linear development have heaped upon us. Nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of the family. "Our ideology of what family time is leaves us in an unhappy present," notes Kerry Daly, "The past and the future maintain the dream of family time, but the present is the site of our disillusionment."[44]

The annual, weekly, even the daily cycles of modern life provide people who usually have precious little real time to share with a common past and future. Drawn together in anticipation and remembrance, families seek to find in this virtual interaction what they do not find in daily life. Often enough, the actual family meals, vacations, and reunions prove disappointing, resulting in what some have called modern "holiday trauma."[45] Yet this only seems to intensify the cycle, for what is experienced as painful and divisive is often remembered as joyful and comforting.

As T.S. Eliot observed, "only through time, time is conquered"[46] We dwell so much on other times and other places because we feel we have so little time and space left. Even the affluent fear time famine and homelessness. And so we live vicariously by our "ghostly traces," relying more and more on imagination. Every day we move between zones of linear and cyclical

time, using dream and memory as compensation for the losses experienced through time and history.[47] It is when we stop moving between past, present, and future, when the past becomes an end in itself, that memory ceases to be a creative resource and becomes the paralytic condition diagnosed as nostalgia. It is important therefore, that we always remind ourselves that, as Edmund Bolles has put it, "remembering and imagining are of one piece," for we must learn to live with multiple temporalities -- history and heritage, linear and cyclical time, rationalism and ritual -- if we are to make for ourselves a world that is sustainable, but at the same time meaningful.

Our dreams can easily turn into nightmares. We have all had the experience of the perfect occasion becoming the ultimate disaster. Our ancestors knew that perfection was not be found in the midst of families; and they were careful to project onto gods and saints the virtues they despaired of finding closer to home. They found perfection in distant places, in nowheres, and ultimately beyond the world itself. But in our modern secular hubris we have dared to bring blessedness down to earth and close to home. As a result of the idealization of our homes and families, we find ourselves forever dissatisfied, forever air brushing our memories, perpetually reliving rather than simply living our family lives.

How can we get beyond this exhausting cycle? Toni Morrison has a radical suggestion:[48]

> At some point in life the world's beauty becomes enough. You don't need to photograph, paint, or even remember it. It is enough. No record of it needs to be kept, and you don't need someone to share it with or tell it to. When that happens -- that letting go -- you let go because you can.

This is an intriguing idea, but letting go means taking on, taking on all those powerful chronologic institutions that have made the moment so elusive. In this era of speedup and overwork, where everyone is becoming something else, we must also take on our own deeply

internalized fears of simply being. In the short term, perhaps the best we can do is remind ourselves that that the times of our lives that appear to us so unalterable are in fact historical constructions, subject to change if only we have the will to change them.

Notes

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1. Donald Lowe, The Body in Late-Capitalist USA (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 102.

2. Raphael Samuel has written: "In place of a better future, we use as our critical vantage point a more immediately accessible past, and it is to make-believe identities in the past rather than the future that we look to find a home for our own ideal selves. The return to history, under this optic, appears a displaced expression of contemporary utopianism." "The Return to History," in his Island Stories: Unravelling Britain (London, Verso, 1998), p. 221.

3. Thomas Cole, The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Howard Chudacoff, How Old Are You? Age Consciousness in American Culture, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

4. Quoted in John Gillis, A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values, New York: Basic Books, 1996, p. 18.

4. Martin Kohli, "The World We Forgot: An Historical Review of the Life Course," in Late Life: The Social Psychology of Aging, ed. Victor Marshall, Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985.

5. David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989, p. 240.

6. Ibid

7. Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, p. 19.

8. Juliet Shor, The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure, New York: Basic Books. 1991, p. 30.

9. Ibid, p. 142.

10. Ibid, p. 21.

11. Ibid, pp. 18-19. Emphasis is the author's.

12. Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, chapter x;

    Gillis, A World of Their Own Making, chapter vi.

13. Alex Shoumatoff, The Mountain of Names: A History of the Human Family, New York: Simon and Shuster, 1985.

14. Elizabeth H. Pleck, Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture, and Family Rituals, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000, chapter i.

15. On the "holiday blues," see Ibid, pp. 59-61, 266-68.

16. Surprisingly little attention has been given to the ways we construct beginnings and endings. See Joan Busfield and Michael Padden, Thinking about Children: Sociology and Fertility in Post-War Britain, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; Margaret Mead, "The Contemporary American Family as an Anthropologist Sees It," American Journal of Sociology, 53, nr. 6 (May, 1948), pp. 453-59; on beginnings more generally, see Eviatar Zerubavel, "In the Beginning: Notes on the Social Construction of Historical Discontinuity," Sociological Inquiry, 63, nr. 4 (November, 1993), pp. 457-59; on endings, see Michael Kearl, Endings, New York: Oxford, 1989.

17. Andrew J. Weigert and Ross Hastings, "Identity, Loss, Family, and Social Change," American Journal of Sociology, 82, nr. 4 (May, 1977), pp. 1175-76.

18. There is a prior memorial practice of the European aristocracies. See Philippe Aries and George Duby, eds., A History of Private Life, iii, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

19. On the pilgrimages and family reunions, see Gwen Neville, Kinship and Pilgrimage: Rituals of Reunion in American Protestant Culture, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, chapters iii and iv.

20. Gillis, "The Cultural Production of Family Identities," unpublished paper, Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis, 1989, pp. 18-22; Philippe Aries, The Hour of Our Death, New York: Vintage, 1981, pp. 510-43.

21. Ann Braudy, Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America, Boston: Beacon Press, 1989, pp. 41-54.

22. For Germany, see Ingeborg Weber-Kellerman, Saure Wochen, Frohe Feste: Fest und Alltag in der Sprache der Brauche, Munich: Bucher, 1985; for France, Anne Martin-Fugier, "Bourgeois Rituals," in A History of Private Life, iv, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990, pp. 261-336; on Sweden, Lofgren and Frykman, Culture Builders, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983.

23. On this development, see Bjarne Kildegaard, "Unlimited Memory: Photography and the Differentiation of Familial Intimacy," Ethnologica Scandiavica (1985), pp. 71-89.

24. Susan Sontag, On Photography, New York: Delta, 1972, p. 9; also Eugene Rochberg-Halton, Meaning and Modernity: Social Theory in the Pragmatic Attitude, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 166-7, 170.

25. Catherine Robson, Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman, chapter iv. Forthcoming with Princeton University Press.

26. Daniel Harris, Cute, Quant, Hungry and Romantic (New York: Basic Books, 2000), p. 15.

27. Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in Thomas Butler (ed.), Memory: History, Culture and the Mind, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, pp. 101-4.

28. For a discussion of the changing notion of place, see Edward S. Casey, The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

29. Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, New York: Orion, 1964, p. 210.

30. Alywn Rees, Life in a Welsh Countryside, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975, p. 46.

31. Rochberg-Halton, p. 169.

32. Marjorie Garber, Sex and Real Estate: Why We Love Houses, New York: Pantheon, 2000, p. 204; Boholm, pp. 222-24; Michael Ann Williams, Homeplace: The Social Use and Meaning of the Folk Dwellings in South-western North Carolina, Athens: Georgia University Press, 1991.

33. Rochberg-Halton, p. 155.

34. Ibid, pp. 161, 178.

35. Ibid, p. 180.

36. Garber, p. 117.

37. Mead quoted in Thomas J. Cottle and Stephen L. Kleinberg, p. 12. A similar argument for the centrality of memory in modern life is made by Michael Young, The Metronomic Society: Natural Rhythms and Human Timetables, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988; and Paul Fraisse, The Psychology of Time, New York: Harper and Row, 1963, pp. 291ff.

38. Cottle and Kleinberg, p. 16.

39. Rochberg-Halton, p. 188.

40. Barbara Myerhoff, "Rites and Signs of Ripening: The Intertwining of Ritual, Time, and Growing Older," Age and Anthropological Theory, eds. David Kertzer and Jennie Keith, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984, p. 306.

41. For an account of new rites, see Ronald Grimes, Deeply into the Bone: Re-Inventing Rites of Passage, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

42. Gillis, World of Their Own Making, pp. 158-62.

43. Stephen J. Gould, Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 15-16.

44. Kerry J. Daly, Families & Time: Keeping Pace in a Hurried Culture, Thousand Oakes, Sage, 1996, p. 205.

45. Nils Arvid Bringeus, "Bitte, keine Feier, order Das Fest als Trauma," Hessische Blatter fur Volks- und Kulturforschung, 7/8 (1978), p. 39.

46. Quoted in Harvey, p. 206.

47. Fraisse, p. 292.

48. Toni Morrison, "Let Go," Utne Reader Almanac, Minneapolis: Utne Reacer Press, 1996, p. 93.