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Group-level Cognizing, Collaborative Remembering, and Individuals

Robert A. Wilson

1. Introduction

From within the disciplinary confines of psychology, collaborative remembering represents a relatively new phenomenon, one both to be incorporated into existing frameworks and that, in turn, holds promise for further interdisciplinary integration, rethinking, and adjustments to our explanatory toolkits. In this chapter I would like to step back from the important, normal science work on collaborative remembering that occupies the core of the present volume to take up some broader questions about the place of memory in Western cultural thought, both historically and in contemporary society, offering the kind of integrative and reflective perspective for which philosophy is often known. In particular, I hope to shed some light on the relationship between collaborative memory and the other two topics in my title: group-level cognizing and individuals.

Much of the broader relevant work done here appeals to the notion of *collective intentionality*, and I will begin with the relationship between collective intentionality and collaborative remembering. And since little attention has been directed to the *politics* of collaborative remembering, I shall conclude with some brief comments on that topic, drawing on recent work that I have undertaken working with eugenic survivors in Canada (Wilson 2015).

2. Collective Intentionality and Collaborative Memory

Our individual mental lives are suffused with activities—believing, desiring, imagining, remembering, pretending, fearing—that are representational or intentional. In this sense, remembering is one of a range of mental activities that are directed at, about, or represent how things are, were, or might be, in the world: it has *intentionality*.

The primary ground for thinking that individuals have mental states with intentionality is epistemic and explanatory: such states are required for us to systematically grasp why human agents do what they do. Challenges issued to the claim that individuals have mental states with intentionality, such as behaviourism and eliminative materialism, lost out as viable alternatives in the philosophy of mind and cognitive science, which long ago made peace with an appeal to the intentionality of mental states as an integral part of the explanatory toolkit needed to understand human behaviour and action (Wilson 1999). More recent attempts to articulate computational and dynamic approaches to cognition without ascribing intentionality or representational content to those states (e.g., Chemero 2011, Hutto and Myin 2013) have more promise, yet remain controversial and have been developed for only a fraction of cognitive processing and face a host of other challenges (Shapiro 2014). In any case, the battleground here is squarely epistemic and explanatory: fine if we can do psychology without intentionality, but it appears that we can't.

Collective intentionality is “the power of minds to be jointly directed at objects, matters of fact, states of affairs, goals, or values” (Schweikard and Schmid 2013). Arising more recently from the same kind of epistemic and explanatory grounds within the theory of action (Searle 1990), collective intentionality from the outset faced, and continues to face, the same challenge that individual intentionality has bettered over time. This continuing challenge to the idea of collective intentionality is reflected in the more tentative way in

which collective intentionality is often introduced into discussions of collective human action: might we need to posit intentionality that goes beyond the familiar forms of individual intentionality in order to explain at least some human—even non-human (Wilson in press)—social behaviours and actions?

More particularly, much human social behaviour is cooperative, shared, or joint. We do things *together*: we work and play, we walk and talk, we celebrate and mourn, we laugh and cry. There seems little reluctance to view ourselves as undertaking such behaviours or actions together, to accept collective action, in addition to individual action. Even though collective action requires (and has received) further philosophical analysis, those who want to deny that there is such a thing as collective action face an uphill battle. Collective actions, such as building a fire together or holding hands, are no more ontologically dubious than the corresponding individual actions.

Not so with the underlying states that explain such collective behaviour or action itself. Collective psychology, group minds, shared and joint cognition of various kinds—memories, commitments, beliefs—all seem to invoke a mental ontology that goes beyond that of our common sense thinking about minds and intentionality, and beyond the comfort zone that individual intentionality has found for itself in contemporary philosophical thinking about the mind.

For this reason, a major issue permeating the collective intentionality literature is whether one can provide an adequate account of the phenomena to be explained while restricting oneself to what Schweikard and Schmid (2013) call the *individual ownership claim*: “collective intentionality is had by the participating individuals, and all the intentionality an individual has is his or her own”. If the individual ownership claim is true, then we seem at

least primed to reduce collective intentionality to individual intentionality, plus some other non-intentional remainder.

What is true of intentionality in general is also true, I think, of remembering more particularly. Our paradigm of remembering is *individual* remembering, with investigations of individual memory--its dizzying, bifurcated forms (episodic vs semantic, short-term vs long-term, declarative vs procedural) and limits--constituting one of the most heavily trafficked areas of psychology and the cognitive sciences. Collective remembering, by contrast, takes the activity of memory to be distributed between or across agents, rather than simply being neatly contained within the bodily envelope of each agent. Although the distinct genealogy that the notion of collective memory has (Wertsch 2002, Wilson 2005, Abel et al. this volume) precludes simply equating collective and collaborative remembering, the two concepts both explore interpersonal and social dimensions to memory in ways that challenge some traditional views of individual memory and the role that memory has been thought to play in the life of individuals.

3. Memory, personality identity, and the self

Contemporary discussions of memory in philosophy, psychology and the cognitive sciences have followed a tradition of thought in ascribing memory a special role in the mental life of an individual, a tradition often anchored in John Locke's discussion of personal identity introduced in the second edition of his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690, Book II, ch.XXVII). Our memories are what make us who we are as individuals, and the special form that remembering takes in our species, narrative or autobiographical memory, is what makes us who we are as a species. Autobiographical memory is the memory one has of oneself and one's experiences over time, processing the raw materials available to episodic

memory. It allows one not only to recollect events long past but also to reflect on them, to integrate those recollections and reflections into how one thinks of oneself now, and how one intends or plans to act in the future.

Autobiographical memory thus plays a critical role in our *rational agency*, where this is more than simply acting in accord with one's present beliefs and desires or in response to immediate challenges posed by one's environment. Rather, rational agency is acting in accord with who one is and how one self-consciously realigns self and world in light of that broader awareness of one's agency over time. Consider how this special role for memory has played out in philosophy in discussions of personal identity and the implications of this within the cognitive sciences.

Following Locke, dominant views of personal identity in philosophy over the past 50 years--sometimes called *neo-Lockean* to acknowledge their origin--take some kind of psychological continuity or connectedness over time to be criterial for the identity of a person over time (Shoemaker 1963, 1984; Schechtman 1996, 2014). That continuity or connectedness will typically involve a whole suite of psychological states that convey one's feelings, thoughts, and values, but the continuity or connectedness over time is brokered by the activity of remembering. For neo-Lockeans, as for Locke himself, what is required for there to be the *same person* over a period of time is not there being the *same substance* present in that person over that period of time, but (in Locke's terms) the *same consciousness*, where consciousness is understood in terms of memory-brokered awareness of oneself.

On such views, narrative or autobiographical memory has special importance in thinking about what persons are, an importance that is culturally widespread enough to generate reactions of regret, loss, and even horror at the all too real prospect of the dwindling of memory that is part of increasingly common conditions, such as Alzheimer's or

other forms of age-related dementia. Although the psychological losses associated with such conditions and diseases are more extensive than simply the loss of autobiographical memory, it is that loss in particular that is typically taken to remove one's capacity for a cohesive mental life, calling in to question the relationship between one's self at distinct times, whether they be past and present, present and future, or past and future (cf. DeGrazia, ch.5).

Likewise, autobiographical memory plays a critical role in the conceptualization of disorders of the self, the most prominent of which are dissociative disorders, although that role has shifted over time. Consider the condition that was called multiple personality disorder in the second (1968) and third (1980) editions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Building on the popular idea that a given human body may well possess more than one personality, and that these personalities can govern bodily behaviour in different, even competing ways, the conceptualization of multiple personality disorder embedded in DSM II and III complicated the neo-Lockean view of persons and personal identity by seemingly offering scientific support for there being "two persons in one body" (cf. Wilkes 1988, Braude 1991). The existence of two (or more) chains of autobiographical memory in one body alternating for bodily control suggested the *multiplication* of the self, from one to two (or even to many). When multiple personality disorder was reconceptualized as *dissociative identity disorder* in DSM-IV (1994), emphasizing the ways in which distinct personality traits were separated or isolated from one another in one body, it seemed that *disintegration or fragmentation of the self*, rather than its multiplication, was at the heart of the condition (cf. Hacking 1995).

As I have argued elsewhere (Wilson and Lenart 2015), despite the departure of neo-Lockean views from a substance-based account of persons and personal identity, their focus on consciousness and memory shares with such accounts a ratio-centric conception of what

persons are and what distinguishes them from nonhuman animals, plants, and non-living things. Much like Aristotle's appeal to a "rational soul" as being what demarcates human beings from other beings, the appeal to psychological continuity or connectedness over time gives rationality a special role in the conception of human nature, as well as promoting a certain kind of individualism about the nature of persons and their identity over time. Neo-Lockean conceptions of persons and personal identity posit the so-called "autonoetic" (literally, *self-perceiving*) function of episodic memories (Markowitsch and Staniloiu 2011, Prebble, Addis, and Tippet 2013), and their formation within and integration into life narratives, as critical to personhood (Schechtman 2014). Such memory formation and integration require certain rational cognitive capacities, where these are thought of as depending solely on aspects of the individual herself.

In short, the memory-focused views of persons and personal identity that are dominant in philosophical discussions and that are presupposed in empirical work on age-related mental disorders and psychiatric disorders are both ratio-centric and individualistic. Those features of these views are relevant for any extension or reconceptualization of memory from being located inside individuals and critical to who they are, to being something shared between and generated by pairs or larger groups of individuals, as has been done in the recent work on collaborative memory and group-level cognition. But before taking up that issue, consider how ratio-centricity and individualism pervade more detailed models of memory.

4. Metaphors and Models of Individual Memory

The dizzying bifurcation of memory that I made passing reference to at the end of Section 2 in terms of forms of memory persists in the conceptualization of the activity of

remembering. Consider the long tradition of thinking of the activity of remembering a past event one has experienced as being divisible into two distinct activities. In his *Principles of Psychology*, William James describes this division in terms of what the “complete exercise” of memory presupposes: “(1) The *retention* of the remembered fact; (2) Its *reminiscence, recollection, reproduction, or recall*” (1890, vol.1, p.653). As is clear from James’ broader discussion, these two activities—storage and retrieval, or retention and recall—are not simply the activities of a particular individual, but activities that do not themselves crucially involve anything beyond the boundary of that individual.

James himself attempted to ground the sort of associationism that was prevalent amongst British empiricists, who held that memory operated through the association between mental objects retained and recalled, in an “elementary law of habit in the nerve-centres” (p.654). But this neuro-reductionism is not the only form that individualism has taken in the history of thinking about memory, cast in terms of retention and recall. Retention has been fundamentally conceived as a type of internal storage, with that storage taking the form of an *impression* of some kind, with the mode of storage literally bearing the marks of the method by which the memory is encoded—like a stamp. Recall is the systematic retrieval of such internally stored items, typically perceived or read in some way.

As Mary Carruthers argued in her masterful *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (1990), individual memory played an important role in medieval culture and was conceptualized via two major metaphors that directed thinking about these two parts of remembering. According to the first, memory is a tablet or writing surface upon which certain items are inscribed or impressed, an idea that is, says Carruthers, “so ancient and so persistent in all Western cultures that it must, I think, be seen as a governing model or ‘cognitive archetype’, in Max Black’s phrase” (1990, p.16). Plato draws on this metaphor for

memory when he has Socrates, in the *Theaetatus*, asking us to imagine “that our minds contain a block of wax” and that “whenever we wish to remember something we see or hear or conceive in our own minds, we hold this wax under the perceptions or ideas and imprint them on it as we might stamp the impression of a seal ring” (191D-E). This conception of memory finds its way into early modern philosophical thinking in various ways, perhaps the most influential of which is the idea of memories as *mental images*, with retention being a matter of forming an accurate mental image, and the activity of recollecting being the calling up, inspecting, and manipulation of those images.

The second conceptualization of memory that Carruthers identifies in medieval culture is as an *internally organized storehouse* of some kind, a metaphor one also finds in the *Theaetatus* via the comparison of items in memory to pigeons that are kept in a pigeon coop. On this conception, both retention and recall are a function of having one’s storehouse in order, allowing both for the easy placement of memories in a particular location and for their ready retrieval. The metaphor of a house of memory, complete with its discrete and distinctive rooms, underwrote what is often called the “arts of memory”, the variety of techniques used to attain the recollection of large amounts of material, whether they be textual, visual, or oral in the form in which they were retained.

That metaphor has remained very much alive in recent studies of memory (see the critique of Koriat and Goldsmith 1996), perhaps mediated in part by James’ own invocation of it in articulating and defending the view of his we have already recounted. As James says,

we make search in our memory for a forgotten idea, just as we rummage in our house for a lost object. ... [w]e turn over the things under which, or within which, or alongside of which, it may possibly be; and if it lies near them, it soon comes to view.

(James 1890, p.654).

5. Group-Level Cognizing and Extended Cognition

While memory has been conceptualized predominantly as an individual capacity in the cognitive and biological sciences, in the contemporary social sciences memory has most commonly been construed as some kind of collective phenomenon, something tied to group identity, to human sociality, and to various practices of memorialization (Connerton 1989). This work on collective memory comports with a wider range of appeals to group-level cognition, such as to collective intentionality (Jankovic and Ludwig in press), group-level remorse (Neier 1998), the collectivization of reason (Pettit 2003), and the role of technologies of memory, such as museums, cemeteries, and ceremonies in publicly shared memories (Forty and Küchler 1999, Le Goff 1992). As these examples may suggest, there is an overt *politics* to collective memory relating to human rights, to nationalism, to culturally important origin stories, to the ethics of forgetting, a point to which I shall return in concluding.

The broader idea that groups of individual organisms, including human agents, have a psychology of some kind was once widely accepted in the social sciences. To capture a broad set of views that one might argue are found in the works of such figures, I characterized the corresponding view as follows:

Group mind hypothesis: groups of individual organisms can have or can be thought of as having minds in something like the way in which individual organisms themselves can have minds (R.A. Wilson 2004, p.267; cf. R.A. Wilson 2001, p.S263).

In the context of his defence of group-level cognitive adaptations, David Sloan Wilson argued that group-level adaptations included not only physical activities but cognition, since “groups can also evolve into adaptive units with respect to cognitive activities such as

decision making, memory, and learning” (D.S. Wilson 1997a, S128). Here Wilson took himself to be advocating a form of the group mind hypothesis with respect to both human and non-human animals. Wilson also pointed to a number of the founders of sociology and anthropology, such as Emile Durkheim and William McDougall, as proponents of the idea that human groups, as well as human individuals, could literally have minds of some kind (D.S. Wilson 1997a).

In exploring both the kind of claim that Wilson makes about the history of the social sciences and the contemporary revival of that tradition that he was himself advocating, I have argued that such revivalist enthusiasm is somewhat misplaced (R.A. Wilson 2001, 2004, ch.11-12). This is because much of the relevant literature here is more plausibly viewed as advocating not the group mind hypothesis but what I called the *social manifestation thesis*:

social manifestation thesis: individuals have properties, including psychological properties, that are manifest only when those individuals form part of a group of a certain type (R.A. Wilson 2004, p.281; cf. R.A. Wilson 2001, p.S265).

According to the social manifestation thesis, it is individuals rather than groups that have psychological properties and thus minds, but the social groups to which those individuals belong play some kind of important role in the possession of those properties. That role is not simply as a background condition or as a causal trigger for cognition, but partially constitutive or realizing of the manifestation of cognition itself.

The import of the social manifestation thesis can perhaps best be understood in terms of the context in which it was embedded in *Boundaries of the Mind*. Having offered, in the previous chapters in the book, a sustained—some might say prolonged—articulation and defense of the idea that individual cognition was *extended* (Wilson 2004, ch.4-10; see also

Wilson 1994, Clark and Chalmers 1998, Clark 2008), the social manifestation thesis was intended to be read as a particular form of the hypothesis of extended cognition:

hypothesis of extended cognition: individual cognition sometimes (regularly, often, always?) involves the operation of systems that physically extend beyond the body of the individual cognizer (see also Adams and Aizawa 2008, Rupert 2009, Wilson and Clark 2009, Wilson 2014, and Michaelian and Arango-Muñoz, this volume).

Offering a more deflationary alternative to the group mind hypothesis, this version of the social manifestation thesis has been explored in the contexts of human remembering (Barnier, Sutton, Harris, and Wilson 2008; see also Harris, Keil, Sutton, Barnier, & McIlwain, 2011; Harris, Barnier, & Sutton, 2013), moral psychology (Sneddon 2011), and more general discussions of human collective intentionality (Huebner 2013, Rupert 2014, Theiner 2014).

Note how the social manifestation thesis so conceived sits with respect to the individual ownership claim articulated by Schweikard and Schmid (2013): “collective intentionality is had by the participating individuals, and all the intentionality an individual has is his or her own”. The social manifestation thesis accepts the first part of this claim—collective intentionality is possessed by or belongs to individuals—but rejects the second part of this claim—an individual’s intentionality is not all “his or her own”, insofar as it depends in part on that individual’s social environment. For this reason, the social manifestation thesis is not reductive about collective intentionality vis-à-vis individualism but it also stops short of positing groups or other collectives as the subjects of intentionality. Although one might be initially puzzled by this combination, many *social properties* have precisely this mixed status. An individual is married, has children, is a bank teller, is Canadian, or has lots of friends, but having such properties depends not just on him or her, but on that individual’s social environment.

But what of extended cognition itself? Extended cognition occurs when internal and external resources become fluently tuned and integrated so as to enable the larger system--typically parts of the biological agent plus specific items of external cognitive scaffolding--to engage in new forms of cognitive behaviour. As I have suggested elsewhere (Wilson and Clark 2009, Wilson 2014), one of the key argumentative strategies for defending the hypothesis of extended cognition begins with recognition of the variety of forms that extended cognition can take. Cognitively extended systems can vary in their temporal duration and reliability: they might be relatively temporary (even one-off assemblages of internal and external resources). And they can vary in terms of the kinds of resources that are recruited to form part of the extended cognitive system: these can be parts of natural environments, or technological or social in nature.

The same is true of extended memory systems. Merlin Donald (1991: ch.8) has argued that the incorporation of what he calls the *external memory field* into our practices of remembering played a critical role in the evolution of human cognition and culture, where this field is constituted chiefly by visual symbols and the devices that generate them. Michael Cole (1996) has advocated the Vygotskian view of cognition as a mediated activity that relies as much on external as on internal symbols that are to be understood in terms of their location in a broader cultural system that one develops in. But although technological and cultural innovations play a key role in some forms of extended memory, others rely more directly on *other people* as the relevant cognitive resources that structure the extended memory system. This part of the extended memory ballpark is where we find collaborative remembering, and distributed and shared cognition, a point to which I'll return in the next section (see also Wilson and Foglia 2015).

The basic idea in positing the social manifestation thesis, especially when married with the hypothesis of extended cognition, was to pose a challenge to those who viewed an ontology populated by group minds and collective psychology as having a kind of explanationist justification: group minds and collective psychology are warranted because they ineliminably feature in our best social science explanations. By accepting an enriched view of individual cognition—seeing it as embodied, embedded, extended, and enactive, and recognizing the social dimensions to this “4E” view of human cognition—and showing that such a view could account for at least paradigm cases of putative collective psychology, the challenge to the proponent of group minds was to identify phenomena that require, in addition or instead, human *group-level* cognizing. That challenge has been taken up, both directly and indirectly, in recent defences of the group mind hypothesis (e.g., Theiner 2014, Huebner 2013).

The final point to make here is that since the 4E view of human cognition makes intentionality in general very much something that is neither contained within nor bounded by the head of the individual cognizer, it sits at best uneasily with the project of providing a reductive account of collective intentionality (cf. Rupert 2005). On this view, individual cognition itself is *constitutively social*, and so there is no reductive pathway leading, either ontogenetically or evolutionary, from pre-social individual intentionality to collective intentionality to sociality. The same is true, derivatively, of any account of collaborative remembering that is developed from a 4E standpoint (cf. Michaelian and Arango-Muñoz, this volume).

6. Collective Memory and Collaborative Remembering

The basic contrast between the group mind hypothesis and the social manifestation thesis is relevant to understanding what collective memory is and how it relates to both collaborative and individual remembering. When Maurice Halbwachs (1980, 1992) introduced the term “collective memory” in work originally written in 1925, he drew a contrast between individual, personal, or autobiographical memory, on the one hand, and collective, social, and historical memory, on the other. Halbwachs takes the former to be memory of things that happen *to me*, and the latter to extend the scope of these memories by incorporating information about the world that goes beyond one’s own experience. Historical memory, for Halbwachs, is the memory of an individual person, but its content draws on more than experience that is first-personal.

Part of what Halbwachs sought to argue was for the priority of historical memory over individual memory, with historical memory constituting a kind of social framework for the functioning of individual memory. This part of Halbwachs’ argument can be readily understood in terms of the social manifestation thesis: it is a claim about two kinds of memories that individuals can possess, and the relationship between them. It is less clear whether other parts of Halbwachs’ views of collective memory can be so understood, particularly as he turns, in “The Social Frameworks of Memory” (1992), to examine the collective memory of particular groups, such as the family (ch.5), religious groups (ch.6), and social classes (ch.7). Here it is more natural to read Halbwachs as offering a version of the group mind hypothesis, for here it is the group that is not simply the context in which individual remembering takes place, but the subject itself of those acts of remembering.

Collaborative remembering is a kind of joint or shared remembering, involving multiple agents who together implement both the global functions that memory has, such as planning and decision-making, and at least some of the subfunctions through which memory

operates, such as storage and retrieval. As such, collaborative remembering might be understood in either of these two ways in which Halbwachs' notion of collective memory can be understood.

To fix on a simple case, consider a pair of individuals who are recalling an event that transpired the previous year, with each telling part of the story of what happened where the sharing here is roughly equal and mutually collaborative. Neither of the two can recall the whole event, and the contributions of each are readily adjusted and revised in light of the contributions of the other. We might conceptualize such an instance of collaborative remembering as involving two individuals, each engaged in a socially manifested chain of remembering, where the other's contributions form part of the social context in which each remembers. Here the remembering is done *by individuals*, albeit individuals who are in a particular social context, one created by their collaboration. By contrast, we might view *the pair of individuals* as being the subjects or agents of this activity of remembering, where the pair is a kind of group, and so collaborative remembering a group-level activity. Given the association of collaborative remembering with the broader collective memory tradition, this second alternative corresponds to how a number of contemporary researchers characterize their own work. The first of these interpretations exemplifies the deflationary ontology of the social manifestation thesis; the second, a version of the group mind hypothesis.

Although talk of "group-mindedness" also occurs in the collective intentionality literature, there is more circumspection about group-level cognizing than the mere appeal to that phrase and its kindreds might suggest, and one sees the same kind of ambivalence we have just outlined with respect to collaborative remembering. For example, Michael Tomasello's *A Natural History of Human Thinking* (2014) defends a particular, two-step evolutionary trajectory for the rise of collective intentionality that links it tightly to the

origins of human culture. Although individual intentionality is shared between humans and our closest living relatives in the primate order, Tomasello takes what he calls *joint attention* to be distinctively human, resting on forms of sharing or small-scale collaborative behaviour between restricted numbers of individuals. Joint attention, in turn, becomes extended as “group life as a whole became one big collaborative activity, creating a much larger and more permanent shared world, that is to say, a culture” (2014, p.5). This new collaboration, together with the conventional, institutional, and normative forms of communication it involves, are what Tomasello calls collective intentionality, a kind of *group-mindedness* (pp.5-6) that only human beings and their recent ancestors possess.

Tomasello expresses the role he thinks that social context plays in modern human cognition by drawing an analogy to a riffing jazz musician, saying that “[h]uman thinking is individual improvisation enmeshed in a sociocultural matrix” (2014, p.1). Starting from self-contained individual intentionality, Tomasello’s shared and collective intentionality are elaborations on such head-bound cognition, elaborations that are shaped by and shape new emerging forms of human sociality marked by heightened cooperativeness. Stopping short of what I’ve been calling the group mind hypothesis, such a view of “group-mindedness” is compatible with both the social manifestation thesis, and perhaps even strictly individualistic views of cognition.

7. The Politics of Collaborative Remembering: Canadian Eugenics

In discussing collective memory and alluding to its longer history in the social sciences, I briefly gestured at the political dimension to collective and social memory. Since collective remembering has played a key role in discussions of commemoration and memorialization, of human rights and the ethics of forgetting, of nationalism and culturally important origin

stories, it is no surprise that there is a politics to collectively remembering. I want to conclude by suggesting that the same is true of *collaborative* remembering.

My starting point here is community-university research and outreach that I have undertaken over the past ten years working together with eugenics survivors in Alberta, Canada. Alberta had sexual sterilization legislation in place and actively enforced from 1928 until 1972 as part of publicly supported, government sponsored eugenics policy. Relatively few Canadians know about even the outlines of this history, much as until relatively recently, few Canadians knew about the history of residential schools and the treatment of Indigenous Canadians in them. Incorporating that knowledge into the Canadian collective memory is, in part, a political project. Collaborative remembering has formed a key part of that process and carries with it its own politics.

At the core of the work we have completed here is a series of autobiographical stories told by survivors of eugenics and those who continue to face the pressures of “newgenics” in their attempts to parent with disability (<http://www.eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/our-stories>). Our work with eugenics survivors has been facilitated through community-university partnerships to collaborate extensively with survivors in constructing their own stories about their experiences as people classified, institutionalized, and sterilized because they were deemed to be “feeble-minded” and “incapable of intelligent parenthood”. Initially conceived as short interviews with eugenics and newgenics survivors, these interviews became more extended collaborations not only between interviewer and survivor, but between survivors themselves as they worked both together and apart on the stories that each of them wanted to be told. Each interview stands as a complete individual story, and they have served as the basis for a collective story from the survivor perspective, told as a documentary film (Miller, Fairbrother, and Wilson 2015).

Collaboratively remembering was not incidental to the telling of these stories, but core to it, from the outset, whatever our own naive, early views. For people whose social marginalization and personal shame centre on and derive from the very experiences that they are trying to remember, and to make sense of themselves in terms of, providing a social context in which that activity of remembering can safely occur is an early form that this collaborative remembering takes, sometimes the first of many steps. This begins with recognizing that someone cares about what happened to you, that you can tell a story, and that that story provides a valuable insight into much broader issues. Creating a trusting relationship over an extended period of time that underlies a model of *shared authority* for the oral history that results is another political dimension to collaborative remembering in this kind of context.

A third dimension to the politics of the collaborative remembering of eugenics and newgenics survivors is facilitating the connection between the very personal stories that are told and the broader story that we tell ourselves, as a society, about the history of eugenics, particularly in Canada but more generally. Elsewhere (Wilson 2015) I have suggested that we may well be in the middle of telling the story of eugenics in Canada, a story told in the past chiefly by two kinds of authorities. On the one hand, it has been told by historians and other academics interested primarily in reproductive control, the history of medicine, case law, mental illness, or Canadian history (Strange and Stephen 2010, McLaren 1990, Dyck 2013); on the other, it has been told by journalists, filmmakers, and others creating a story for popular audiences via the corresponding media (Harris-Zsovan 2010, National Film Board of Canada 1996). The collaborative remembering of survivors provides not only new information about how people came to be institutionalized, classified, and treated after their deinstitutionalization, but conveys that information in a particularly powerful way. Part of

that power, I believe, is in raising a range of large questions--about who can tell their own story, about what one's own story is, about whose story counts as part of "our story" (Miller, Fairbrother, and Wilson 2015).

Although these concluding comments are relatively brief and discuss only one single case, they perhaps open up some space for future discussions of the politics of collaborative remembering that continue to do more than remind us that, as with other forms of remembering, even if the laboratory provides us with some precise instruments for testing particular claims about collaborative remembering, collaborative remembering itself very much has its home in the wilds of human sociality, good and bad.

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