

INTRODUCTION

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Where does an intellectual inquiry begin? In the late 1990s, I taught a graduate seminar at the University of Washington that dealt with Nordic literature and World War II. Is there such a thing as a Scandinavian war novel? We read literary works in the original Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish, such as Pär Lagerkvist's *The Dwarf* (1944), Vilhelm Moberg's *Ride This Night* (1941), Sigrid Hoel's *Meeting at the Milestone* (1947), Knut Hamsun's *On Overgrown Paths* (1948), and Isak Dinesen's *The Angelic Avengers* (1946). Connections to hardcore war literature seemed remote. My interest in the period was sparked by Thorkild Hansen's controversial documentary novel *Processen mod Hamsun* (1978; *The case against Hamsun*), about the postwar trial of Norwegian Nobel Laureate Knut Hamsun (1859–1952), which was the subject of my research at that time (Stecher-Hansen, 1997; 1999). The graduate seminar led to a course development grant from the Center for West European Studies in 2001; since then, I have regularly taught a course on “War and Occupation in the Nordic Region” at the University of Washington that has attracted many students from the Department of Scandinavian Studies and the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, particularly European Studies majors.

The project that began as an intellectual inquiry with graduate students coincided neatly in the 1990s with the emergence of a second (and eventually third) generation of World War II scholars in the Nordic countries, a tide that swelled with the *Historikerstreit* (historians' debate) on the European continent and a turn toward a “moral narrative” in revisionist approaches to World War II history. Since 2000, and simultaneous with increasing revision-

ism in World War II scholarship, the field of memory studies has flourished. These two paths of inquiry in history and memory studies are in many ways interconnected and related to a generational cycle in terms of the aging and passing of war witnesses, victims, and survivors.

From this generational perspective, my particular intellectual inquiry of the past two decades holds a connection to a parental past, because I belong to “the generation after” or *postgeneration* of World War II. As a first-generation American (born in Canada) of immigrants from Europe, I have some relationship to experiences of trauma and displacement as “inherited memory,” “received history,” or perhaps “postmemory,” to use Marianne Hirsch’s term; I am the daughter of a generation of people who experienced the war and occupation with varying degrees of intensity and trauma. My parents were young adults while Denmark was occupied by its southern neighbor and historical foe, Germany. My late father spent the last year and a half of the war in military training in neutral Sweden, where he had fled by boat at night as a twenty-two-year-old engineering student and underground resistance member—and there he became a refugee soldier. This communicative memory became a clouded but indelible imprint in my childhood memory; the circumstances surrounding my father’s escape to Sweden lacked a complete context.

These reflections are a point of departure for this collaborative scholarly project that seeks to investigate cultural memory of World War II as represented in various media, particularly in the historiography, literature, and cinema of the five Nordic countries. With the Nordic region serving as the geographic and political parameter, this study concerns the shifting preoccupations of collective and cultural memory of World War II, as evident in certain media: “nonfictional” media (historiography and travel writing) and fictional media (literature and cinema). I have made use of the opening reflections as an introduction to this study in order to illustrate the memory shifts and gaps about the war that occur over several decades. According to Jan Assmann, *communicative memory* “has a limited time depth which normally reaches no farther back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations” (2010: 111). While communicative memory is not the primary concern of this book, the passing of the war generation that stored, silenced, and selectively transmitted memories certainly represents an intense climatic change in the evolving field of cultural memory study.

This edited collection is primarily concerned with historiographical, literary, and cinematic narratives that represent forms of *cultural memory* that depend on public institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation. In other words, it explores texts and mass-mediated expressions of cultural memory that sustain greater longevity and influence than the intergenerational *communicative memory* that lives in everyday conversations and inter-

actions. At the present moment, communicative memories of World War II no longer inform the perceptions of the majority of individuals living today. Indeed, the oral communications that constitute a collective memory of the events of the war are largely extinguished. While a few war children, veterans, and survivors are still alive, the vast majority of individuals who were young adults or the age of military service have passed away. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the memoirists, politicians, filmmakers, journalists, intellectuals, literary writers, and veterans who published or produced work during the postwar decades, and thus disseminated and ritualized their war memories, have contributed to the formation of the institutionalized memory cultures of World War II over the past three generations.

Certainly, the experience of the Nordic countries in World War II (1939–45) belongs in a wider twentieth-century frame that includes World War I (1914–18). The constitutional monarchies of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden had maintained neutrality during the “Great War”—the centennial of the armistice was commemorated worldwide on 11 November 2018. The end of World War I and the international Treaty of Versailles of 1919 brought about territorial and political reconfigurations that healed some old wounds but also opened up new vulnerabilities—and eventually, and inadvertently, fueled the aggressive imperialist agenda of Hitler’s Reich. In the Nordic region, the political outcomes related to World War I were also consequential. The outbreak of the Russian Revolution paved the way for the establishment of the Republic of Finland in early December 1917; however, the founding of the nation was immediately followed by a bloody civil war in 1918, in which approximately thirty-six thousand Finns perished—a traumatic experience of national disunity and class struggle that carried over into World War II. Also following World War I, Iceland became an independent state in 1918 after a long period of Danish rule (Iceland celebrated this “national centennial” in 2018); however, Iceland’s new status meant a “monarchical union” with the Kingdom of Denmark and a shared foreign service (until the Republic of Iceland was founded in June 1944); however, when Iceland was occupied by the Allies in 1940, its ties with Denmark were, practically speaking, already severed by Germany’s occupation. Also in the wake of World War I, the northern half of the Duchy of Schleswig (part of the Danish kingdom conquered by Prussia in 1864), populated by a Danish-speaking majority, was finally reunited with Denmark in 1920; however, often forgotten in national history are the thirty thousand Danes under German rule from this region who had been conscripted to fight in World War I for the German armed forces—Denmark’s archenemy at the time. Such territorial and political reconfigurations—as well as others in the Nordic region—had significant bearing on political actions during the period as well as an impact on the subsequent formation of cultural memory of World War II.

The War in the North and Cultural Memory

How do some histories become and remain “active” in the working cultural memory of a nation or social group? Certainly, all memory is highly selective. “In order to remember some things, other things must be forgotten,” states Aleida Assmann (2010: 97). There are blank spaces in the mental maps of the war—one needs to dismiss some things in order to make room for other things. What is actively disregarded or forgotten? The global conflict of 1939–45 led to distinct political consequences and postwar destinies for each of the five Nordic countries. The scope of this study is limited to five small countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. In fact, these were neutral nations in the northern periphery of Europe when the war broke out (and Iceland was still formally tied to the Danish kingdom).

The outbreak of the world war in September 1939 led to a “Race for Northern Europe” by the warring powers in order to control strategic positions and mineral resources (Häikiö 1983). Within just a few months, the entire Nordic and Baltic Sea region was clenched in the tight fist of a strategic power play between two totalitarian dictatorships: the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Since Stalin’s Russia had engaged Finland militarily in late 1939, and Germany had occupied Denmark and Norway in early 1940, Sweden was sandwiched between these two warring powers with little wiggle room. Through a strategy of military preparedness and diplomacy, Sweden became the only Nordic state to maintain neutrality throughout the war. A fierce Nazi-Soviet grip around the entire Nordic region (excepting the territories of Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands) largely severed the Baltic Sea region from Allied aid or intervention during the war. The “War in the North” was a product of German and Soviet military aggressions, although due to the naval battles in the North Atlantic, there were also strong Allied interests in the region.

Of tantamount significance to the course of the war in the Nordic region was the German-Soviet Treaty of Nonaggression (often called the “Nazi-Soviet Pact”) of 23 August 1939, which included a so-called “secret protocol” (signed by the Russian and German foreign ministers, hence called the “Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact”) that delineated territorial spheres of influence; Hitler’s Germany would take the western countries and Stalin would have free reign in Eastern Europe, including Finland and the Baltic states. The treaty was famously broken two years later by Hitler’s massive, surprise advance into the USSR in late June 1941, called Operation Barbarossa (Häikiö 1983; Keegan 1989; Snyder 2010). It is less widely appreciated that the Nordic foreign ministers (with Denmark representing Icelandic foreign policy) issued a joint declaration of neutrality in May 1938 in the event of war. The Nordic countries had maintained neutrality in World War I, therefore most political



Map 0.1. “Will Hitler Pick Sweden and Finland for Summer Fronts?” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 May 1943, Charles H. Owen. The American press speculates and solicits public support for the Allied war effort, as the tide of the war begins to turn against Nazi Germany. In the spring of 1943, neutral Sweden remains in a state of military preparedness while Finland is militarily allied with Germany in a grinding battle against the Soviet Union on its eastern border. Courtesy of David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, University of Washington Libraries.

leaders assumed that neutrality would be respected in the impending conflict. The following April (over four months prior to the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact), Hitler's Germany offered nonaggression treaties to Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden; only Denmark felt compelled to sign the nonaggression treaty with Germany in May 1939, whereas the other Nordic nations politely declined (Nordstrom 2000: 297).

Notably, the war in the Nordic region is marginalized in general accounts of World War II. John Keegan, for example, in *The Second World War* (1989) makes use of five succinct pages to cover the Russo-Finnish War and the German Campaign in Norway (Keegan 1989: 47–51). Nonetheless, the “War in the North” involved substantial military operations, large numbers of German military troops (particularly stationed in Norway and moving through Finland), and massive Soviet military offensives into Finland, which aimed to occupy the country (Overy 2013: 15). Why was the Nordic region pulled into the global conflict? The region held strategic naval ports (Norway's long coast and Finland's Arctic port in Petsamo) as well as the valuable mineral resources (particularly the iron ore mines in northern Sweden as well as nickel mines in northern Finland), significant for the warring powers and of strategic interest to both the Allied and Axis powers. In the west, the Norwegian coastal ports were significant for naval operations in the North Atlantic (the port at Narvik, which was vital for the flow of iron ore to Germany in the winter months, was destroyed by the British in April 1940 in the naval battle at Narvik). An Allied (Anglo-French) intervention plan in the winter months of 1940 failed to gain control over the iron ore mines in northern Sweden (the plan was actually never executed), leaving the region open to occupation. Finally, the German occupation of Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940, including the territorial waters, ultimately left the entire Baltic Sea region cut off from the west.

Obviously these factors of war history are not the primary object of this project, but they serve as historical scaffolding and indispensable groundwork. Of greater interest is the working or active cultural memory that is conveyed by media and textual representations that have become the narrative “artifacts” of these varied national experiences. The study at hand investigates how histories are conveyed, contested, and mediated in national historiographies, literature (wartime and postwar), and cinema (particularly recent film). As will become evident in the chapters of this volume, the 1990s—given the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War—marked the beginning of the widespread scholarly *Historikerstreit* in Europe and the emergence of a “moral narrative” regarding World War II among new generations of historians; these historical debates have not yet subsided (Keegan 1996; Snyder 2010). The tendency since the 1990s toward historical revisionism also holds true for the study of national historiographies in the Nordic region (Ekman and Edling 1997; Stenius, Österberg and Östling 2011; Gilmour and Stephenson 2013).

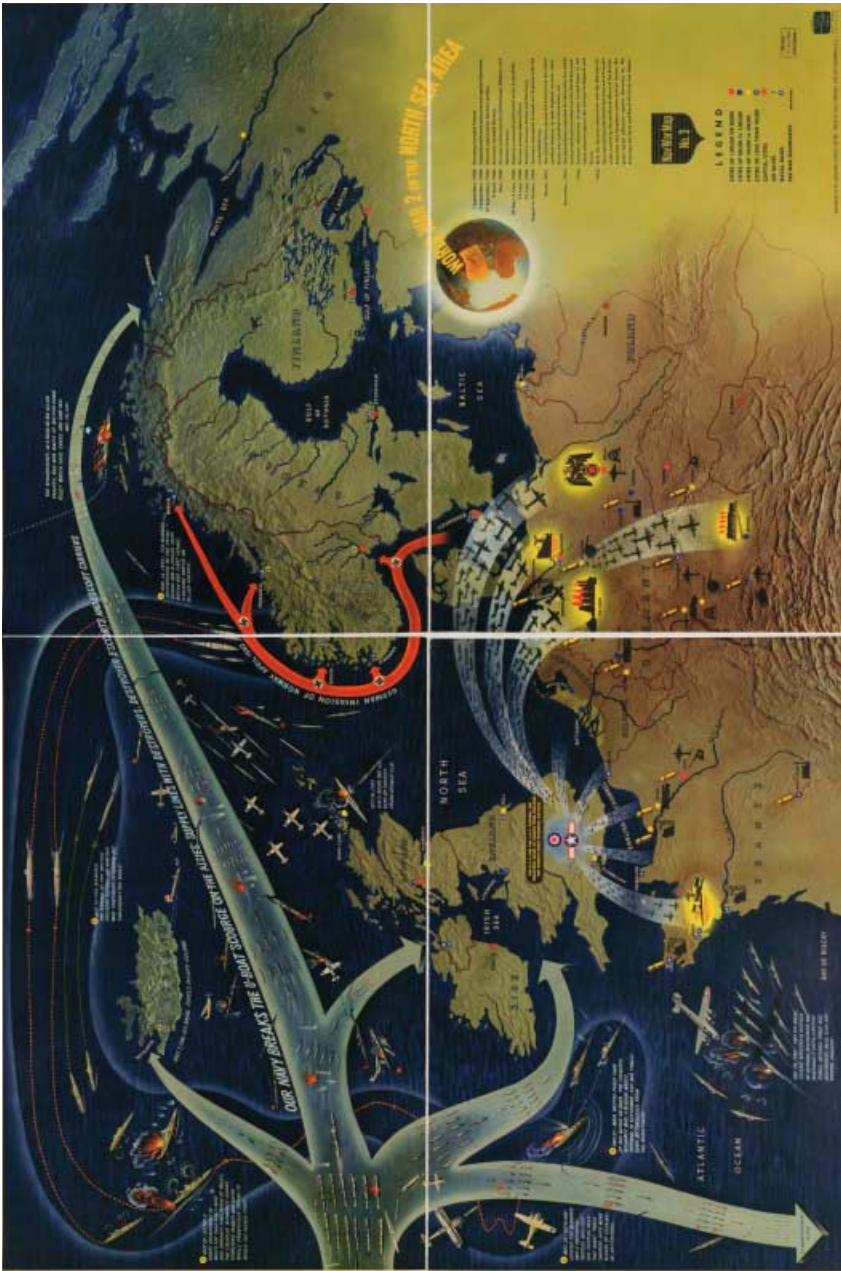
In this endeavor to pursue various approaches to historical narrative and cultural memory study of the Nordic region in World War II, there is also a place for the perspectives of New Historicism. Such an approach involves situating *texts* (historical/literary/cinematic) that are estranged from memory, or forgotten in the archives, in close proximity with historical contexts and reading them side by side with other discourses of the epoch. I propose that the narrative theory of Hayden White is relevant to a study of the master narratives of World War II in the Nordic region. White argues that historiography is *narrative* (he provocatively calls history “verbal fictions”) and asserts that the historian makes use of “literary imagination,” and, furthermore, that histories—and historiography itself—is subject to literary “emplotments”: for example, romance, satire, comedy, or tragedy (White 2018). In other words, *emplotment* of narrative is not limited to literary fiction but also characterizes historiography. Here I refer to an influential 1978 essay by White, “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact.” This is not to say that history is *fiction* (made-up facts), but it is to say that histories or historical narratives employ some of the features of literary fiction. For example, John Keegan implies that White’s notion of “emplotment” applies to the established western narrative of World War II in his essay, “Do We Need a New History of the Second World War?” (Keegan 1997). Here Keegan suggests that World War II, as depicted by Anglo-American historians, has been “emplotted” as “a drama, its theme is that of heroic epic” that has been seen and studied in a certain “Churchillian one-way direction,” and that “the war, under Churchill’s playwright pen, became a drama in four acts” (Keegan 1997: 82–84). Indeed, such an one-directional *Churchillian* view (to borrow Keegan’s term) of the victorious Western (i.e. British-American) powers in World War II is still very much present in cinematic productions; for example, in *Dunkirk* (directed by Christopher Nolan, 2017). Even though the motion picture depicts Allied forces trapped in a total military fiasco, the dramatic enactment becomes yet another narrative of heroic Allied victory. The Western democracies (mainly the United Kingdom, France, and the United States) often conveniently or passively forget that Stalin’s Soviet Union, the archenemy in the Cold War period, was among the Allied forces and paramount to defeating Nazi Germany in the European theater of World War II.

While there are numerous historical facts and truths in the “Churchillian” history of World War II, it becomes an entrenched narrative and a cultural memory that both actively and passively ignores many episodes in the complex history of the period (Churchill 1948), including the Finnish military alliance with Nazi-Germany in the Continuation War of 1941–44; the Danish government’s collaborationist policies, 1940–43; the role of Quisling’s National Socialist Party in occupied Norway; and the profitable Swedish iron ore trade with Germany that lasted until January 1945 (Gilmour and Ste-

phenson 2013; Nissen 1983; Rings 1982). Such World War II history indeed represents a master narrative that is lacking in “subplots to the main action” and is in need of “more secondary characters that widen the stage” (Keegan 1997: 84). According to John Keegan, this one-directional view ought to make room for the study and understanding of World War II as a series of regional conflicts within the greater global conflict. In other words, in the terms of war history and historiography, the present cultural memory project is elucidated by this concept of subplot and regional conflicts rather than by the neat bilateral lines of a global conflict that is illustrated by the following US naval training map of 1944.

In the context of the ongoing historical revisionism in the study of World War II, this project is broadly situated within the ever-growing field of memory study. The chapters in this volume employ a variety of approaches to critical theory and cultural memory study. In the following paragraphs, I sketch out a few of the key conceptions of cultural memory. By no means is this intended as a survey or overview of the field of memory study; I have attempted to draw out some of the critical perspectives that are relevant to this particular work.

In terms of organizational framing of the chapters of the volume, the Assmanns’ critical apparatus has proved very useful; Jan Assmann offers a methodical illumination of Maurice Halbwachs’s influential concept of *collective* memory by distinguishing between *communicative* memory (embodied, witnessed, intergenerationally transmitted) and *cultural* memory (archived, institutionalized, ritualized, mediated). More specifically, Aleida Assmann’s definition of active and passive cultural “remembering” and “forgetting,” as formulated in *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (2011: 123), which distinguishes between “functional memory” and “storage memory,” underlies the thinking behind the organization of this study. Further, Aleida Assmann’s discussion of cultural memory in her essay “Canon and Archive” is employed in this volume by emphasizing the *active* and *passive* dimensions of both “remembering” and “forgetting” (Aleida Assmann: 2010: 99). Her observations are especially useful in sorting, examining, and reframing Nordic narratives about World War II that have been reiterated, repeated, commemorated, and institutionalized in the postwar decades. Further, in the context of the study of World War II, Assmann’s understanding of “forgetting” is useful in situating those events and pasts that have been “passively forgotten” (that is, neglected, disregarded, or dispersed) as well as those events and materials that have been “actively forgotten” (that is, negated, destroyed, or censored). However, in the Assmanns’ theory of memory, the family unit is the primary and privileged site for the transmission of embodied, communicative memories that are later institutionalized as cultural memory—this conceptual assumption is problematic as it does not



Map 0-2. *World War II in the North Sea Area/US Naval Personnel Training Aid*, distributed 1944. North Sea region including Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and northern Russia, Germany, northern France, and intervening land and sea areas. Shows aircraft invasion routes from the United States and United Kingdom, as well as German invasion route of Norway; also includes principal areas bombed by the Allies, principal areas of naval engagements, Allied air bases, Allied naval bases, and German targeted facilities. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

account for the displacement, disruption, or erasure of family units that is inflicted by war on individuals and social groups.

Because this collaborative study employs varied approaches to historical narrative, cultural, and collective memory study—and, because this material deals with war trauma, military aggression and occupation and therefore histories of the displacement or victimization of different national (or social) groups—I draw attention to Michael Rothberg’s notion of “multidirectional memory” as laid out in his influential study *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009). Rothberg’s study serves as a corrective to popularized notions of the relationship between a collective memory and political, national, or ethnic identity, as one-directional or hereditary; Rothberg proposes instead that “we consider memory as multidirectional; as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing, as productive and not privative” (2009: 3). Rothberg argues for a rethinking of our conceptions of memory, particularly as they are relevant to postwar questions of “representation and recognition” in the modern world after the Holocaust, a world caught up in an ongoing process of decolonization (2009: 310). His insights on the interactive or “multidirectional” nature of cultural memory are applicable as well to this collaborative study of the particular memory formations of national identities in postwar Nordic narratives, especially when they rely on representations of nationally distinct World War II experiences.

Additionally, I would like to mention the significance of Alison Landsberg’s pioneering study *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004), as it is relevant on so many levels to the analysis of contemporary cinematic media dealing with World War II, and as it is also employed in chapter 19, which examines recent adaptations of the Finnish war film. Landsberg argues provocatively that modernity (and mass-mediated visual technologies) make possible an entirely new form of public cultural memory, which she terms *prosthetic memory*, that “emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum” (2004: 2). Landsberg depicts this modern mediated experience as a sensuous “moment of contact” in which a person “sutures himself or herself into a larger history” and thus acquires a “prosthetic memory” that has the “ability to shape that person’s subjectivity and politics” (2004: 2), and that these artificially acquired memories, “like an artificial limb, are actually worn on the body; these are sensuous memories produced by an *experience* of mass-mediated representations” (2004: 20). Understandably—and considering Walter Benjamin’s prescient observations in “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproducibility,” particularly his cautionary remark in the epilogue of 1939 regarding cinema’s potential as a powerful medium of fascist propaganda—Landsberg

demonstrates that such prosthetic or mass-mediated memories may function in social and historical contexts that are enormously problematic. (Such considerations are touched on in chapter 6, in the exploration of Karin Boye's ambivalent spectatorship of Leni Riefenstahl's 1938 film *Olympia*.) That said, the prosthetic memory also offers modern individuals and collectives opportunities for empathy and social change; Landsberg concludes her work by exploring the ethical dimensions of prosthetic memories, which "have the ability to alter a person's political outlook and affiliation as well as to motivate political action" (2004: 24).

Similar to other scholarly inquiries concerned with cultural memory and national identities, this project is invested in the multiple ways in which World War II experiences have been and are interpreted, mediated, and disseminated in the public sphere. An excellent example of cultural memory scholarship applied to World War II is that of Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (2006), particularly the notion of "crisis in memory," which is employed in chapter 10 that reads Sigurd Hoel's occupation novel through the lens of Suleiman's notion of a crisis in memory that both problematizes the knowledge of the past and questions the self-representation of a group of people in the present. Furthermore, Suleiman's analysis of Jean-Paul Sartre's work as a memoirist of Occupied France is generally thought-provoking in the context of this study of Nordic writers and war narratives. In her words, intellectuals and writers in their "acknowledged role as interpreters of public events, contribute significantly to the shaping of collective memories" (2006: 14). Suleiman demonstrates how Sartre exercised a significant role in interpreting France's World War II experience for the immediate postwar public; after the liberation, American magazines, such as *Vogue*, published Sartre's essays written in 1944–45, depicting the philosopher as a heroic figure of the underground French resistance movement (a role he never played). The situation of postwar France was problematic, given its collaborationist policies under the Vichy government (in some ways similar to Denmark's wartime policies); nonetheless, France claimed a seat among the victors at the postwar negotiating table. As an interpreter of culture, Sartre's essays played a significant role in reframing France's national wartime past in a favorable Allied context.

Lastly, an important contribution to contemporary nuanced understandings of cultural memory in relation to textual and visual representations is the work of Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (2012). Hirsch defines *postmemory* as an experience of the "generation after" (World War II), who bear the "personal, collective and cultural trauma" of their parental pasts. She postulates that some individuals who are born after the Holocaust to traumatized survivors or witnesses affectively experience postmemory:

They “remember” by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. (Hirsch 2012: 5)

Thus, Hirsch’s compelling notion of *postmemory* serves as both a corrective and a further elaboration of the Assmanns’ typology of communicative and cultural memory, specifically because it accounts for the generation affected by displacement and war trauma—as Hirsch’s theory addresses “the ruptures in memory transmission that are introduced by collective historical trauma, by war, Holocaust, exile, and refugeehood” (2012: 33). Under the Nazi regime in occupied Norway, the lives of thousands of ordinary civilians—not least Norway’s Jewish citizens—were disrupted, threatened, and traumatized; families were displaced, and many individuals were forced into exile or deported to internment or concentration camps. Whereas in Finland (at war with the Soviet Union), the separation of young children from their biological families and evacuation to Sweden meant that an entire Finnish “generation after” (or *postgeneration*) has suffered acutely from the *postmemory* of the trauma of separation and displacement experienced by their parents as “war children”—a consideration taken up in chapter 16, which deals with the cinematic representation of the war child’s trauma of displacement and homelessness in Klaus Härö’s *Mother of Mine* (2005).

The Wartime Fates of the Nordic Countries

A close inspection of the Nordic region during World War II reveals five distinct fates and postwar destinies. These were vastly differing fates for the Nordic countries in the periphery of World War II, including occupation, resistance, neutrality, and military engagement (Gilmour 2013; Nissen 1983; Nordstrom 2000: 291–320). The Nordic countries were neither military aggressors nor leaders among “the great powers,” obviously. However, neither were they passive. They (nation-states, political leaders, and individuals) were actors and agents; they made alliances, collaborated, engaged in combat as a belligerent (Finland), endured foreign occupations (Denmark, Norway, Iceland), resisted militarily (Norway), engaged in underground resistance and civil disobedience (Denmark, Norway), and acted as a neutral while also compromising that neutrality (Sweden).

The race for the north by warring powers largely ignored the pan-Nordic declaration of neutrality made in May 1938. When the war erupted in 1939, the cards fell as follows: Finland was engaged throughout the war as a belligerent (fighting three separate wars, two against the USSR—the second in alli-

ance with Germany—and a third, the Lapland War, to drive the Germans out of northern Finland). Denmark (which had quickly capitulated) and Norway (which had fought a sixty-day war against the Wehrmacht forces) remained occupied by Nazi Germany for five long years. Iceland and the Faroe Islands, which were both still tied to the Danish kingdom, were peacefully occupied by the Allies (the British and the Americans). Only Sweden, caught by the Nazi-Soviet grip on its western border (by German-occupied Norway) and on its eastern borders (by the Soviet-Finnish conflict) maintained neutrality; however, Sweden's neutrality proved highly compromised by a “policy of concessions” that appeased German demands, including the profitable trade of iron ore (after the destruction of Narvik, the shipments continued via the Baltic Sea route) for the production of steel and the sale of ball bearings that fueled the Nazi German armaments industry. Only in 1943—after the tide of the war turned against Germany—did Sweden reform its refugee policy and engage in humanitarian operations that saved the lives of tens of thousands of persecuted peoples (including seven thousand Danish Jews), and also allowed the training of Danish and Norwegian troops on Swedish soil with the intent that they would be prepared, if necessary, to come to the aid of the Allied forces in a military “liberation” of the occupied countries.

In short, these are five entirely distinct political scenarios and wartime experiences that also led to differing postwar alliances and relations—for example, membership in the transatlantic military alliance NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Denmark, Iceland, and Norway were among the twelve founding member states in 1949, whereas Sweden and Finland remained neutral and nonaligned, and still today they stand outside the thirty NATO member states. In the European Union, Finland and Sweden are among only six EU member nations who have declared nonalignment with military alliances, including the NATO bloc. The transatlantic alliance on the one hand and the policies of nonalignment on the other are determined by the various geopolitical positions and national experiences of the Nordic countries in World War II, which contribute to the shaping of war narratives and national historiographies during the postwar decades and which still reverberate today.

In other words, given how each of the five Nordic countries experienced in World War II a distinct national political reality and postwar outcome, I determined to maintain national categories as organizational rubrics for the content of chapters in this volume rather than employ trans-Nordic themes and concerns to organize this collaborative study. Nevertheless, there is an effort throughout the chapters to offer intra-Nordic comparisons regarding political circumstances, national historiography, and cultural memory.

There are four parts to the volume, ordered as follows: (1) War History; (2) War Literature: Archive; (3) War Literature: Canon; (4) War

Cinema. Each of these four parts consists of three to six original chapter contributions. Within the volume, I have provided “part introductions” that articulate the aim and content of each section and provide short chapter summaries. These short introductions also include the rationale for the internal ordering of chapters. Rather than order the chapters alphabetically by nation, as is often customary (for example, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden), I have determined to order the chapters according to the following principles. In *War Historiography*, the chapters are arranged chronologically according to the date of invasion or occupation (Finland, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden). In *War Literature: Archive*, they are also in chronological order, according to the date the text was originally *written*. Likewise in *War Literature: Canon*, the chapters are organized chronologically, according to the year the literary work was originally *published*. Finally, in *War Cinema*, the chapters are ordered according to the year that the films (or television series) were originally *produced*, beginning with the oldest and moving toward the most recent cinematic productions. I take full responsibility for any errors that were inadvertently introduced in the manuscript.

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