CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WOMEN, MEMORY AND FAMILY HISTORY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND*

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History, broadly conceived as the recording and preserving of knowledge of the past, is one of the oldest and most universal of disciplines. The terrain of the historical, however, is less stable: what kinds of knowledge are perceived as valuable, what questions are worth asking, what records are worth keeping, are all subject to transformation. The seventeenth century was a period when history, along with much else, was in transition, with new boundaries emerging alongside new professional practitioners of the discipline. The wide range of genres potentially encompassed by earlier understandings of history—chronologies, accounts of political and military events, individual lives and family pedigrees, localities and antiquities, even fictional and poetic accounts of the past—was under pressure from an increasingly self-aware and assertive body of writers keen to establish new hierarchies of knowledge. By the end of the century a familiar version of the historical was emerging as dominant, one which valorised the political and the military, while downgrading antiquarianism and family history as of merely local interest.¹ Proper history, increasingly, addressed itself to the public world.

This was also, to a great extent, history not only about but written by men. In so far as history is a written discipline, of course, women's participation in it has always been limited, as their levels of literacy and access

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¹ The timing of this shift is debated. Daniel Woolf argues that the new hierarchy was well-established by the mid-seventeenth century, although definitions of 'history' remained unstable: Daniel Woolf, *The social circulation of the past. English historical culture 1500–1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

to education were lower. Seldom taught Latin, and with little access to the archives and muniment rooms where records were stowed, women were restricted in their ability to engage in direct archival research or to write scholarly histories of public events.² The tightening of the boundaries of history in this period also defined as non-historical many of the ways in which the less formally educated—men as well as women—might engage with the past. Much of what was excluded by the new history of the seventeenth century, indeed, would today be understood as memory rather than history: oral traditions, family history, local lore. The pre-modern oral cultures through which community knowledge and stories were transmitted were also memory cultures, in which women often played an important part. Recollecting the floods or land disputes of fifty years earlier, or the complex sequence of intermarriages shaping kinship networks and determining inheritance rights; telling stories or ballads passed down through generations of great events beyond living memory, or myths explaining the features of local topography; such elements contributed to a shared memory culture which in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was increasingly discounted as knowledge. The association of local memory with women further devalued it; the old wives' tale figured as the superstitious and unreliable opposite of the new empirical history.³

But despite the long dominance of this professionalised academic history, the boundary between history and memory remains a porous one; the delimitation of the historical is always problematic, and its terms and limits are constantly revisited. Family history in particular highlights the instability of the memory/ history boundary. As a private and domestic form of knowledge, focused on family relationships, often transmitted orally, and important above all for its immediate resonance and meaning

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² Natalie Zemon Davis discusses the obstacles to women researching and writing history, and critiques the 'hierarchy of genres, in which general or national history is at the top': Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Gender and genre: women as historical writers, 1400–1820', in Patricia Labalme (ed.), *Beyond their sex. Learned women of the European past* ([1980], New York: New York University Press, 1984) 174. Megan Matchinske argues that seventeenth-century constructions of the past reveal 'the uneasy relationship between a masculinist history just coming into its own and the host of unacknowledged and extra-disciplinary discursive forms surrounding it', suggesting that we need a broader definition of history to engage with women's historical writing: Megan Matchinske, *Women writing history in early modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2, 1. See also Daniel Woolf, 'A feminine past? Gender, genre and historical knowledge in England, 1500–1800', *American Historical Review* 102: 3 (1997) 645–679.

³ See Adam Fox, *Oral and literate culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 176, and on women and oral culture see chpt. 3.

to those alive, family history can helpfully be understood as a memory practice. But at the same time, the gathering and transmission of knowledge about the past is central to the process of constructing a family history, involving research, recapitulation, and a sense of the place of individuals and families in the wider world. It is also an activity often associated with women.⁴ The accounts I discuss in this paper, family histories by gentry women, are (like so much seventeenth-century personal writing) generically mixed and complicated; but all of them involve some kind of recourse to the past, and draw on knowledge of periods and people outside the direct experience of the writer. Embedding their own stories and those of their husbands in accounts of previous generations, and shaping the narrative of the past out of memories and anecdotes as well as archives, these women position themselves in a relation of past and future that implies a historical perspective on their own lives. While they do not generally refer to their work as 'history', their stories engage with a broader concept of the historical than the notion of 'family history' as private might allow, unsettling the relation of memory and history; and a more inclusive understanding of the historical may allow us to recognise the diverse ways in which women in this period (as well as men) remembered and engaged with the past.

Women and Genealogy

Family history, emerging as a popular interest in Britain in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, drew in a great variety of people: men and women at many different levels of society were keen to record and transmit their family stories.⁵ But for the gentry in particular, genealogy was highly significant.⁶ Both established and aspirant gentry families affirmed their status through the construction and reconstruction of family trees, connected ideally to continuous possession of land, displaying connections to prominent families, and asserting the merits and gentility of progenitors; and women, as zealous in the pursuit of

⁴ See Woolf, *Social circulation*, 116–117; Davis, 'Gender and genre', 161–162. Davis also looks briefly at differences between family histories written by men and by women.

⁵ See Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Ghosts, kin and progeny. Some features of family life in early modern France', *Daedalus* 106.2 (1977), 87–114.

⁶ On gentry interest in genealogy see Woolf, *Social circulation*, esp. chpt. 3; Jan Broadway, 'No historie so meete.' *Gentry culture and the development of local history in Elizabethan and early Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

pedigree as men, increasingly became family genealogists, remembering and recording the familial and domestic past. The appropriateness of this in many ways seemed self-evident. Family was a woman's domain, and family remembrance an act of piety to the dead. The 'private' space of family history, tangential to the grand sweep of public affairs, was a territory in which women might legitimately operate—'particular history' as Margaret Cavendish called it; a place of memory, rather than of history, in a more recent idiom.⁷ However, as many writers have noted, the division between private and public, which locates 'family history' in the private sphere, is inadequate as a tool for understanding either family or history in this period.⁸ Family, both materially and ideologically, was a matter of public and political concern, even when rhetorically positioned as private. As microcosm of the state and exemplar of godly order, the family was not a private space, any more than marriage and childrearing, through which wealth, property and power are channelled, were purely domestic and intimate affairs—especially for the landowning classes. Gentry family history describes among other things the positioning of powerful family groups on a shifting political ground, and genealogies in the seventeenth century register those political shifts and transformations, as family fortunes rise and fall.

Family stories thus summon up the gentry past of reputable forebears in the context of wider historical and temporal transformations, locating the self within both lineage and national stories; different temporalities and histories shape the relation between past and future articulated in these accounts. When seventeenth-century family historians—women and men—mark the importance of lineage by locating their stories in a longer historical narrative, they construct a self in which family and history overlap—as Daniel Woolf describes it, a 'personal historical domain'.⁹ This paper explores the nature of that personal domain in the writings of three seventeenth-century gentry women—Anne Clifford, Lucy Hutchinson, and Anne Fanshawe. The term 'gentry' here of course masks substantial differences. Anne Clifford, descendant of earls on both sides, married to another, and frequenting the courts of kings, was a member of the

⁷ Cavendish is quoted and discussed by Davis, 'Gender and genre', 163–165.

⁸ On conceptions of private and public in relation to women's political and literary activities see Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and virtue. Women, writing and politics in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁹ Woolf, *Social circulation*, 117. Woolf uses the phrase specifically of women, presumably because they are restricted in their ability to construct other, more extensive historical domains.

aristocratic elite even before she inherited the vast estates which would make her one of the most powerful landowners in the country; Anne Fanshawe was a woman of rank, married to a baronet who was an ambassador under Charles II; Lucy Hutchinson, although (as she was keen to point out) well-bred, had neither title nor any strong connection to the royal courts. But the word also reminds us of what they share, in their concern to assert two important elements of gentry prestige: lineage and connection to place. Not all gentry families were in a position to claim such pedigrees, of course (though some might invent them), and the lack of lineage was no serious bar to status or influence. Nonetheless the deployment of family history in these women's writings is a reminder both of its cultural importance and also of its mobility as a cultural signifier; the meaning of lineage is shaped by a range of social and personal factors, from gender and political affiliation to intimate family relationships, births and deaths.

The question of what history and what family constitutes one's personal historical domain is thus not transparent, especially for women, whose relation to lineage is by definition oblique. Lineage traces not merely antiquity, but antiquity in the male line; blood, in the lineage sense, is male blood. An old family is one in which generations of sons have lived to beget more sons; a family that begets only daughters will shortly be defined as extinct. Sons inherit the property that secures continuity in one place; they not only inherit but transmit to their own children the family name.¹⁰ Wives, as the early seventeenth-century guide *The Lawes Resolutions of Women's Rights* explains, have no legal identity: 'When a small brooke or little river incorporateth with Rhodanus, Humber or the Thames, the poore Rivolet loseth her name . . . it beareth no sway, it possesseth nothing . . .'¹¹ Women are the bearers of lineage, not its possessors; their birth identities are subsumed in their marital identities. This suggests that women's investment in genealogy should not be taken for granted: why dedicate your energies to the maintenance of a family history from which you are excluded? Another perspective, however, might suggest that women have more options than men in identifying their families, and that their early prominence in the field of family history may reflect

¹⁰ Women did of course have some property rights in English law; widows and single women could own both land and money, and wives could retain rights over their own property subject to legal agreements. See Amy Erickson, *Women and property in early modern England* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1993).

¹¹ T.E., *The Lawes Resolution of Womens Rights* (London, 1632), 124.

not only their more domestic preoccupations but also their less fixed possession of family identity. Genealogically speaking, they may belong to birth or marriage family; they may focus on maternal or paternal pedigree. And if women have a choice about what their family history is to be, their diverse engagements with lineage, history and posterity raise questions about how they position themselves in their families, and in time and history more generally.

For Anne Clifford (1590–1676) the paternal inheritance, literal and symbolic, is of paramount importance, and her assertion of her claim to place in her family (as heir of her father's lands) is supported by the extensive genealogical investigations recorded in her 'Great Book', as well as by her diaries and memoirs; having eventually succeeded in her claim, she spent her last decades ruling over the lands of her inheritance in the north, distanced from political upheaval. For the other two writers considered here, by contrast, the Civil War is the defining event of their lives. Anne Fanshawe (1625–80), the widow of a royalist baronet, wrote a long account of her life with him, prefaced by an account of his family history, for the information of her only surviving son; while on the other side of the Civil War Lucy Hutchinson (1620–81) wrote a life of her husband, the Parliamentary governor of Nottingham Castle, similarly intended to inform her children about their dead father and his family history as well as her own lineage and upbringing.¹² Their narratives are constructed in the context of inheritance disrupted and stability lost, and the family past is summoned up to assert continuity despite these challenges.

In their writings these women can be seen as keepers of family memory, transmitting the past through the present for the use of the future. But they also share a troubled and melancholic relation to that future,

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¹² For Anne Clifford's journals see D.J.H. Clifford, *The diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990). See also, *The diary of Anne Clifford, 1616–19. A critical edition*, ed. Katherine Acheson (New York: Garland, 1995). Clifford's Great Book of family history and genealogy is transcribed in Hilda Smith, Mihoko Suzuki and Susan Wiseman (eds.), *Women's political writings, 1610–1725* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007), vol. 1. Anne Fanshawe's narrative is published in John Loftis (ed.), *The memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979). For Lucy Hutchinson's memoirs of herself and her husband see Neil H. Keeble (ed.), *Memoirs of the life of Colonel Hutchinson* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000). There is an extensive body of scholarship on these writers. Among works focusing on history and memory, see e.g. Mary Beth Rose, 'Gender, genre, and history. Seventeenth-century English women and the art of autobiography', in Rose (ed.), *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Literary and history perspectives* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Kate Chedgzoy, *Women's writing in the British Atlantic world. Memory, place and history, 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Matchinske, *Women writing history*.

governed by loss—of husbands, of land, of children and grandchildren. Family history may assert ideals of continuity and stability, but war, displacement and mortality constantly threaten those ideals. History and memory both must deal with conflicts, alliances, gain and loss, and the family cannot be isolated from politics. Anne Clifford's account of her long struggle with husbands, courts and king to inherit the vast properties of her father's estate is no less political than Lucy Hutchinson's analysis of the causes of the Civil War; Anne Fanshawe's narrative excludes politics as a topic of address, but the story she tells is determined by the royalist affiliations of her husband. The choices these writers make about what to commemorate, and the sources they draw on to construct their accounts of the past, show the making of family memory as an active and creative process. Rather than a site of patriarchal piety, in which dutiful wives and daughters preserve and memorialise approved lineages for future generations, family history is a complex and shifting territory, invoking contradictory loyalties, bringing memory into play alongside history, and the future alongside the past.

Remembering the Past: Lineage and History

Anne Clifford's life, with its dramatic shifts of fortune and positioning and its exceptionally extensive archive, has made her an iconic figure in the study of early modern women's lives and writing.¹³ More than any other woman of the period, her life's work is defined by her struggle over what she did and did not inherit from her birth family. Passed over in the will of her father, the Earl of Cumberland, in favour of his brother as heir of both lands and titles, she fought unsuccessfully for many years to overturn the will, outliving two husbands in two not very happy marriages, and finally inheriting her father's properties following the deaths of her uncle and cousin. Clifford's long battle to assert her rights against husband, king and uncle can invite a reading of her life as one of struggle against patriarchal authority; but this is counterbalanced by her uncompromising identification with her paternal lineage and with aristocratic power.¹⁴ Her memorial

¹³ Mihoko Suzuki (ed.), *Anne Clifford and Lucy Hutchinson* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), gives a selection of the most influential essays. See also Matchinske, *Women writing history*, chpt. 4. Chedgzoy, *Women's writing*, discusses Clifford's life and writings in relation to memory.

¹⁴ See for example Barbara K. Lewalski, 'Re-writing patriarchy and patronage. Margaret Clifford, Anne Clifford and Aemilia Lanyer', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991)

and genealogical activities in a sense articulate these contradictions: her overriding aim is to assert herself as the true heir of her father, and she takes little interest in her maternal lineage (despite her mother's importance in her life) and even less in her marital families. She is a Clifford, and the centrality of this to her identity does not admit other blood.¹⁵

Clifford's indifference to the lineage of her first husband, the Earl of Dorset, is perhaps surprising, given that it relates not only to herself but to her daughters. Since her two surviving children were female, her husband's title and estate, like her father's, went to his brother; their situation thus mirrored her own, confirming the exclusion of the daughter from the father's inheritance. But whereas her response to this situation in her own life was ferocious denial, legal contestation, and detailed genealogical reconstruction of her paternal lineage, she made no claim on the Sackville inheritance on behalf of her daughters; she seems simply to have written their father out of their life, identifying them instead as the wives of their husbands and the heirs of her family, and their children as eventual inheritors of the Clifford line. Clifford's historical domain is centred on herself, and variously matrilineal or patrilineal according to context. Her formal record of genealogy, the Great Book, gives priority to the male pedigree, though inserting women into it as legitimate heirs. But her positioning of her own children and grandchildren offers a more ambiguous genealogy, in which paternal blood is displaced by maternal, and by marriage.

Clifford's preoccupation with lineage might imply a sense of time as linear; but in both her writings and her life, history seems to be governed by repetition rather than by progress, and by an urge to undo the changes of linear history. She lives in a time structured by repetition and recurrence, cyclically connecting her to the near and the distant past.¹⁶

87–106; Mary Ellen Lamb, 'The agency of the split subject: Lady Anne Clifford and the uses of reading', *ELR* 22 (1992) 347–368; Mihoko Suzuki, 'Anne Clifford and the gendering of history', *Clio* 30 (2001) 195–229.

¹⁵ On Clifford's maternal family see Lewalski, 'Re-writing patriarchy'. Stephen Orgel notes that after marrying the Earl of Pembroke she signed herself Anne Pembroke, implying at least some identification with the title: Stephen Orgel, 'Marginal maternity. Reading Lady Anne Clifford's *A Mirror for Magistrates*', in Douglas A. Brooks (ed.), *Printing and parenting in early modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 267–289.

¹⁶ Debates over culturally variant temporalities, both in relation to gender and to modernity, are too large to address here, but see the discussion of time and autobiography in Ronald Bedford and Philippa Kelly, *Early modern English lives. Autobiography and self-representation 1500–1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). For a discussion of cyclical and linear time in relation to memory and ritual, see Stephan Feuchtwang, 'Ritual and memory', in Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (eds.), *Memory. History, theories, debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

Her later years were dedicated to the building of both stone and written monuments commemorating her progenitors, and to repairing the castles abandoned by her ancestors and ravaged by the passage of time.¹⁷ Her historical reference points mingle monarchs, ancestors, wars and rebellions ('since one thousand five hundred sixtie nyne, a little before the death of my Grandfather of Cumberland, when the roof was pulled down in the great Rebellion time in that March . . .'), affirming the continuity of family and place.¹⁸ Repetition and recurrence also govern her personal memories. In the diary of the last few months of her life, she recalls the events of her youth, day by day: 'I remembered how this day was 59 years my first Lord & I & our first child the Lady Margaret went out of Great Dorset House in London towne to Knowl house in Kent . . .'.¹⁹ Events, in Lady Anne's inner calendar, do not happen only once; they are repeated, remembered and relived on an annual basis. The insistent patterns of cyclical remembrance suggest it was habitual with her to live in a merging of temporalities, erasing the difference between past, present and future. Rather than seeing the Clifford family story, or her own life within it, as one of rise and fall, she represents it as one in which she repeats and remains in place, both in her own remembered life and in that of her ancestors.

Fanshawe in certain ways shares this time of cyclical repetition; but for her the stability of place has been disrupted, and her account of lineage can be seen as an attempt to repair the breaches of war. Her single volume of memoirs, addressed to her only surviving son, is designed to tell him about 'the most remarkable actions and accidents of your family, as well as those of more eminent ones of your father and my life'.²⁰ Her narrative of her son's paternal lineage begins with his great-grandfather, who rose to prosperity in the reign of Henry VIII, detailing marriages, and the associated financial transactions; children born and children surviving; cousins, especially in the eldest branch of the family; characters of long-dead relatives ('a very worthy, valiant, honest, good natured gentleman . . . yet cholerick and rash'; 'a very good wife, but not else qualified extraordinary in anything').²¹ She barely mentions her own birth family—unlike Clifford, she has identified herself completely with the marriage lineage. What she transmits to her son is his patrilineal inheritance, and along with it his

¹⁷ On building as an act of memory see Chedgzoy, *Women's writing*, 16.

¹⁸ Clifford, *Diaries*, 110.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

²⁰ Fanshawe, *Memoirs*, 102.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

potential allies, supporters and friends. Standing in for the absent father, she passes on his family memories not to her daughters but to her son, their rightful inheritor, whose identification with the Fanshawes as 'your family' is uncompromised.

The information Fanshawe records is based on personal knowledge, apparently drawing on oral tradition, in which stories, anecdotes and characters are passed down the generations. Women figure in these family memories as they cannot in pedigree genealogy—in particular for their contribution to the success of the lineage. 'I must here with thankfulness acknowledge God's bounty to your family,' she remarks, 'who hath bestowed most excellent wives on most of them, both in person and fortune' (presumably including herself).²² Fanshawe's narrative reinserts women into the story of lineage, on condition that the wives incorporate themselves fully into the family, as she has done. And yet, as her characterisation of the Fanshawes to her son as 'your family' and their wives suggests, however completely she has identified her interests with those of her marriage family, she is not one of them. Like the excellent wives of previous generations, she offers herself and her capacities up to sustain the genealogical enterprise; but she herself remains on the family margins, the place of anecdote rather than inheritance. Her historical world is domestic and familial, constituted by story and memory rather than by written documentation.

Temporality for Anne Fanshawe, too, is above all familial and domestic, linked to place, and repeated through the generations of new wives and children. But in her own life, this temporality might be said to have failed her: the difficulties of Fanshawe's life are political and historical in their causes. Throughout the years of war and Commonwealth she was in exile and constant movement, often separated from her husband, and always short of cash; the Restoration brought rewards, but more travel, on ambassadorial assignments. The public world of politics is thus the frame of her narrative. But it is a frame that remains largely unspoken; Fanshawe's narrative defines her place as strictly bounded. This creates a curious absence of explanation or causality. The war years are repeated flight and loss; the years of peace are an endlessly repeated cycle of grand occasions, spectacular court receptions, gifts and compliments, listed in detail, and interspersed with more losses and deaths. Fanshawe lives in a cyclical and repetitive temporality, in which explanation is superfluous, since she has no power to effect substantial change.

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²² *Ibid.*, 107.

Lucy Hutchinson's narrative could be seen as a mirror of Fanshawe's from the other side of the political divide. Like Fanshawe, she opens with an account of her husband's lineage, although unlike Fanshawe she also describes her own. Hutchinson's family narrative is also constructed from oral sources—family stories and ancient locals—and shaped by anecdote and example, rather than by politics (or even by the iteration of dowries and alliances). Here too, notwithstanding the apparently patrilineal agenda of family history, in her account of her husband's lineage women briefly appear in history. Thus she tells the story of a talented, virtuous and beautiful woman who went mad after a difficult childbirth, but whose husband remained faithful to her in her 'pretty deliration' to the end; the underlying thought here is presumably that men of her husband's kin are loyal husbands, even in desperate circumstances.²³ She also tells at length the romantic story of her own courtship. In recording these stories Hutchinson, like Fanshawe, is converting memories into histories: reproduced as written text, such anecdotes change the status and meaning of such women in their family histories.

Despite these similarities, however, Hutchinson is a very different figure to Fanshawe, a political and religious radical whose account of her husband's life is primarily a history of the Civil War. While her radicalism does not prevent her from attaching significant value to gentle descent, once she has got through the ancestral stories which declare Colonel Hutchinson's gentility other concerns push the family domain aside. Her story is one of battles, negotiations, deceptions, failures and successes; above all of the great failure of the revolutionary cause with the Restoration. Hutchinson took her role as historian very seriously, offering overviews and analyses of the course of events on a national stage alongside detailed commentaries on the local situation, and the political world is fully present in her narrative.²⁴ But alongside her historical narrative, she is wrestling with the question of causality, and in particular God's intent: if providence is behind all events, why did the Commonwealth fail?

To the extent that Hutchinson finds a way of coming to terms with her losses, it is by locating her personal story not just in lineage but in

²³ Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, 35.

²⁴ On Hutchinson as historian, see David Norbrook, "But a Copie". Textual Authority and Gender in Editions of "The Life of John Hutchinson", in William Speed Hill (ed.), *New ways of looking at old texts* III (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004) 109–130; Robert Mayer, 'Lucy Hutchinson. A life of writing', *Seventeenth Century* 22 (2007) 305–335. Hutchinson's main external source is Thomas May, *The history of the Parliament of England* (London, 1647).

the larger frame of national and providential history, and in a dynamic and chronological sense of time. In her brief account of her own life, after a historical sweep through the valorous ancient Britons, the stout warlike Saxons, and the violent and deceitful Normans, she places herself in this history, through her father's Saxon descent and her Norman mother. England, in a familiar rhetoric, appears as a specially chosen nation for the working through of God's providential designs—'Whoever considers England will find it no small favour of God to have been made one of its natives'—and English Christianity as of higher quality than anyone else's, 'God having as it were enclosed a people . . . to serve him with a pure and undefiled worship'.²⁵ This providential historical perspective serves to locate her very specifically in time and place: her own lineage is woven together with the history of England, bringing her into existence at a high point of spiritual growth. Her account thus locates the specificities of lineage and gentility in the grand narrative of the nation, both as extended history and as recent political upheaval. Moving between family, historical and providential time, Hutchinson's mixed temporalities offer at least the potential to accept change and defeat as a stage rather than as a final outcome.

Memory and the Future: Continuity and Loss

Ancestors, in lineage terms, are significant because they have descendants; family history remembers previous generations for the future. Children, above all the sons who are crucial to continuity and transmission, are the linchpin of the family story. This patrilineal urge is registered in Anne Clifford's particular interest in her male descendants, although she could not pass on her father's titles.²⁶ In 1659, with the birth of a grandson and a great-grandson in the same year, she notes, 'this yeare I had the Blessing to have two male children borne into the world of the generation of my Bodie'; both died within eighteen months.²⁷ In such remarks Lady Anne may be in part recollecting her four dead sons, none of whom survived beyond infancy. But she is also registering the forces that work against

²⁵ Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, 5.

²⁶ Clifford's grandson Nicholas (third Earl of Thanet) claimed the barony of de Clifford after her death, becoming the fifteenth Baron; the title was held by women several times in subsequent generations. However the Earldom of Cumberland became extinct.

²⁷ Clifford, *Diaries*, 143.

continuity: families become extinct not least because children die. Year after year, her diaries record the births and deaths of her posterity: she was predeceased by five out of six children, eight out of fifteen grandchildren, seven out of fifteen great-grandchildren.

Clifford's insistent commemoration of the past, in relation to this burden of loss, seems a melancholic mode of memory. Death is the common end of old and young, remote and near relations; daughters and granddaughters grow, give birth and die. Grief at the loss of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren is also grief at the passage of time and the extinction of families. Thus she records the death of her cousin in the Great Book as a loss for the family, since he was 'the last heir male of that house', and with him died the Earldom, even though it was only through his death that she was able to inherit.²⁸ It is paradoxical that this most insistent of family chroniclers should be left to record what is for her the end of her family. But just as she identified herself as the true Clifford heir in defiance of lineage criteria, so she also identified her daughter's sons as continuing that family history. In her later diaries, kept during the decades she lived in the north, the significance of the visits of her descendants is marked as above all the moment when the child or grandchild enters the land of inheritance: 'the first tyme that this first Childe of mine or her Lord or any of mine owne Children came to me into Westmerland, or into any part of ye Lands of mine Auncestors'.²⁹ If in relation to her own inheritance she sees her lineage as paternal, as far as her descendants are concerned her focus is almost entirely matrilineal. She herself is the point of transmission through which the great history of her father's family would pass to her daughters and their children—or at any rate their sons—even though the family was formally 'extinct'.³⁰

The loss of children also pervades Anne Fanshawe's narrative. Her account of the family history emphasises stability: the bond to place is established by the centuries-old tombs in the family chancel in Ware. In contrast to the geographic stability of the family history, however, the narrative of their marriage is one of constant displacement and travel,

²⁸ Clifford, 'The great book', 105. There is ambivalence here; as Suzuki notes, she refers to the tenure of her uncle and cousin as a 'digression', and describes her lands as 'unjustly detained' by them, Smith et al., *Women's political writings*, 3. But the extinction of a title is nonetheless a loss.

²⁹ Clifford, *Diaries*, 119.

³⁰ In an irony worth noting, the family tree provided in D.J.H. Clifford's modern edition of the diaries gives the names of all Anne's daughter Margaret's sons, and adds '5 daughters', unnamed (Clifford, *Diaries*, 272).

accompanied by constant childbirth and death. In the twenty-three years of their marriage, Lady Fanshawe gave birth to fourteen children, and miscarried a further six (including triplets). By the time of Sir Richard's death nine of these children had died. Throughout the narrative travel is complicated by pregnancy or lying in; she gives birth in random places, leaves infants with wetnurses to be retrieved later, buries them where they die, moves on. Fanshawe seldom dwells on the emotional impact of these losses. Only one death leads her to record deep emotion, that of a daughter who died at nine, of whom she says briefly, 'We both wished to have gone into the grave with her'.³¹ The son who dies of smallpox even though she neglects his two sick sisters to nurse him also elicits sorrow, in rather shocking terms: 'it pleased God they recovered and he dyed, the grief of which made me miscarry [...]'.³² These deaths offer an uncanny parallel to the importance attaching to place in Fanshawe's account of lineage. Counterbalancing the various family members who lie 'buried with their ancestors' she enumerates the burial places of her children:

My eldest daughter Ann lyes buried in the parish church of Tankersley in Yorkshire, where she dyed. Elizabeth lyes in the chappell of the French Hospitall at Madrid, where she dyed of a feavor at 10 days old. My next daughter of her name lyes buried in the parish of Fotts Cray in Kent . . . my fourth daughter Mary lies in my father's vault in Hartford with my fourth son Henry. My eldest lyes buried in the parish church of St John's Colledge in Oxford, where he was born; my second Henry lyes in Begey Church in Hartfordshire, and my second Richard in the Esperance in Lisbone in Portugall [...].³³

This recapitulation of deaths through burial location identifies Fanshawe's own places of memory. Her wandering life has scattered the remains of her posterity across England, France and Portugal, tracing her journey as one of loss and death; and her careful recollection of the dispersed bodies of her children, with their repeated names (two Anns, three Elizabeths, two Henrys, three Richards), represents this recurrent scene of loss.³⁴ The untold story of mortality has been transferred to the story of place: to

³¹ Fanshawe, *Memoirs*, 136.

³² *Ibid.*, 139. Rose notes the 'complete identification with male superiority' implicit in this account, though Fanshawe's great sorrow at the loss of her daughter complicates this view (Rose, 'Gender, genre', 256).

³³ Fanshawe, *Memoirs*, 106–107.

³⁴ On magical beliefs about children's graves, see Jacqueline Simpson, 'The folklore of infant deaths. Burials, ghosts and changelings', in Gillian Avery and Kimberley Reynolds (eds.), *Representations of childhood death* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

name the location of the dead body is a way of containing and acknowledging death. But the dislocations of war have disrupted the connection between family and graveyard, and the work of retrieval struggles against the weight of death and displacement.

In contrast to Clifford and Fanshawe, both in different ways preoccupied with the deaths of children, Hutchinson's narrative gives only the scantiest details of her childbearing and its results. Few children are named, and even their number is uncertain. She mentions miscarried twins, the subsequent birth of twin boys, and the birth and early death of a third son, John—'a very hopeful child, full of his father's vigour and spirit, but death soon nipped that blossom'.³⁵ A daughter was born next, but 'was so weak a child that it lived not above four years'; a subsequent pregnancy is mentioned only because the birth brings to a head the parents' disquiet over infant baptism, and no name or sex is mentioned.³⁶ Of the births, deaths, names and ages of her other (perhaps five or six) children there is no record. As Hutchinson decentres herself as a third-person narrator in her husband's war, the female world of childbearing seems equally decentred.

Despite her interest in ancestry, her concern is less with her children as bearers of lineage than of memory, perpetuating their father's virtues:

His memory will never perish while there are any good men surviving . . . By the gracious precepts he left with his children to transfer to their posterity he will preach truth and holiness to succeeding generations.³⁷

Her hopes rest in the future recognition of her husband's qualities. But his children are not sole possessors of his memory; the inheritance he leaves is intangible—moral integrity rather than name or property. (Literally, as it turned out; the family was left struggling and impoverished, and Lucy eventually sold the family estates to his half-brother.) Hutchinson's narrative reminds us that there is nothing essential in women's time; the repeated cycles of birth and death that in different ways govern Clifford's and Fanshawe's narratives are absent. Her account works in historical and in apocalyptic time: on the one hand the political and military events that constitute cause and effect; on the other the driving force of providence, God's will directing human events to their inevitable conclusion. Her act of recollection is melancholic because of two losses: her husband and

³⁵ Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, 53.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 91, 211.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 337.

their shared politico-spiritual project. Her dead children cannot be integrated into this romance. But her sense of the historical sweep of the past perhaps allowed her to envisage a future renewal, even if not for herself, which was focused on a future broader than her own posterity.

Memory, Family, History

The time of family memory looks to both past and future: it holds the dead in the minds of the living, and transmits the responsibility for remembrance forward to children and grandchildren. Clifford's claim to her inheritance, Fanshawe and Hutchinson's grief for and justification of their lost husbands, are framed by historical narratives that support their arguments with reference to the past: the assertion of lineage, the bond of gentry to the land, God's plan for England. At the same time, the passing on of the story is continually vulnerable; the death of children, the failure of the political project, the unpredictable fragility of the future, all threaten to disrupt or destroy the wished-for continuity. These family histories are thus marked by repeated loss, as memory moves from living recollection to written record.

But memory is only part of their work, and these accounts also suggest that we need a more complex understanding of the relation between history and memory in order to grasp the ways in which seventeenth-century women move between the two. Memory-keeping is an activity often associated with women, in ways which reinforce this divide.³⁸ Women figure as custodians of the familial or cultural past, transmitters of traditions, guardians of the flame; nurturing and channelling activities, rather than investigative and analytic.³⁹ But as family histories like these suggest, this view of memory-keeping is limited and limiting. Memory, as Raphael Samuel reminds us, is an active shaping force rather than a passive receptacle; and the memories recorded in these accounts are creatively and dynamically shaped, the outcome of research and interpretation, rather than simply transmitted.⁴⁰ If these writings link past generations to the

³⁸ On women's role in contemporary memory-keeping practices, see Anne Blue Wills, 'Mourning becomes hers. Women, tradition, and memory albums', *Religion and American culture. A journal of interpretation* 20:1 (2010) 93–121.

³⁹ For a case study of the gendering of 'historical' and 'memorial' research in modern Iceland, see Susan Tucker and Svanhildur Bogadottir, 'Gender, memory, and history. In one culture and across others', *Journal of archival organization* 6 (2008) 288–310.

⁴⁰ See Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of memory*, 2 vols, (London: Verso, 1993), vol. 1 *Past and present in contemporary culture*, ix–x.

present, and to those who will come after, they do so through a process of selection and ordering which identifies the significant strands of lineage and history for each writer, and maps out the variable networks of past and future connections. Both public and private in their scope, both historical and memorial, they are reminders that such distinctions are shifting and contingent, and that our relation to the past is shaped both as history and as memory.