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The Totemic Use of an Author in Psychology: A Century of Publications of the Work of F. C. Bartlett

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We have tried to retrace the contributions and dissemination of the work of the famous British psychologist F. C. Bartlett through various authors who have been inspired by his work, to a greater or lesser extent. To investigate these questions, we have chosen to carry out a bibliometric work. We were interested in the scientific articles available via the electronic library services (offered by the university and via Google Scholar). The only criterion that guided us in the inclusion in the corpus was the explicit nominative reference to Frederic Charles Bartlett on the whole article. The corpus collected ($n = 731$) concerns a period of almost a century (1920–2019). The results reveal two periods of increased publication, in 1985 ($n = 20$) and 2019 ($n = 137$). Nevertheless, while the name of the author is increasingly cited, most of the time it is only once in the body of the articles. A form of scientific automatism manifests itself in the form of a brief, systematic and automatic citation of the first edition of only one of his books. This “mystified” usage may well extend beyond this author, since Lewin is subject to the same stereotypical quotations and paradoxical marginalization in French-language social psychology textbooks (Pétard et al., 2001).

Keywords: bibliometrics, Bartlett, memory, social psychology

The work of Frederic Charles Bartlett, the most influential and distinguished psychologist in the United Kingdom (Welford, 2003), marks a turning point in the study of memory in psychology (Johnston, 2001). And yet, like all social, cultural, or scientific histories, there’s no such thing as narrative linearity.

Bartlett’s work seems to go through the same turmoil as the stories: there are several strands to the narrative. The idea Bartlett expounded that memory is entirely reconstructive is an official version of his work, yet “in practice, he also held a partially reconstructive account of recall” (W. F. Brewer & Nakamura, 1984, p. 15). As we shall see, Bartlett’s work is a kind of plot-twist in the study of memory, as it enables us to adapt to our environment. Remembering becomes an active process, requiring an effort of reflection, as information and memories are interpreted according to the social tendencies of the group

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Pauline Mercier served as lead for data curation. Nikos Kalampalikis contributed equally to resources. Pauline Mercier and Nikos Kalampalikis contributed equally to methodology, writing—original draft, writing—review and editing, and validation.

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(W. Brewer, 2003). This effort after meaning is the tendency of individuals to connect the old with the new (Wagoner, 2017). Therefore, for many years, only a small part of his work has been highlighted. Indeed, he proposed this schema idea in 1920, when the intellectual framework dominating psychology was behaviorism, and this current was striving to remove all mental entities from scientific psychology (W. Brewer, 2003).

For these reasons, we decided to launch a study of the traces left by authors who quote Bartlett, and thus of the scientific memorial material that can be seen when one seeks to learn about the work of the British psychologist. To deconstruct these story-theories, we had to articulate several questions: how Bartlett marks a turning point in memory studies; how this turning point allows us to consider memory and forgetting as dynamic products constructed by the social; how this turning point leads us to investigate the scientific memory of a work, with the same principles as memory reconstruction. Our questioning will therefore be based on Bartlett's work, and the ways in which it has allowed us to question its scientific rebounds.

The Injunction to Remember

Any theoretical consideration of thinking must deal with problems of the storage of information and its recall. (Bartlett, 1958, p. 87)

Memory is a social object, the subject of tensions, controversies, and discussions, be they scientific, political, professional, or familiar. As a social object, it is itself subject to representations that make it meaningful. Memory, for the bright side of the piece, is something to be treasured; remembering has positive characteristics. Forgetfulness is the darker side of the piece, the villain of history who constantly attacks the preciousness of memory, transforming and damaging it. Worse still, forgetting comes to impunity the process of remembering, which nonetheless tries to carry out its work of traceability: "In this way, the conflict about the treasure of the past takes on still another dramatic dimension: it becomes a struggle for truth" (Brockmeier, 2002, p. 15). From one of the highest human capacities, according to Plato, to the ultimate goal of Artificial Intelligence, where the search is on for perfect memory (see Brockmeier, 2002), memories are also one of the favorite objects of clinical psychology. A large part of the work consists in finding the forgotten, falsely taciturn object. The practice of clinical psychology allows these symptoms to be interpreted in such a way that they can be transited, on a return journey, towards the reacknowledgment of an event. Whatever happens, we can detect an injunction to remember, even in public discourse, where the celebration of memories is commonplace.

In fact, today's public memory discourse is all about the celebration of the struggling hero Remembering. Countless symbolic and material practices of commemoration, remembrance and historical self-reflection have taken on the forms of societal rituals, carried out by specialized professions and institutions. (Brockmeier, 2002, p. 17)

Memory can be expressed in multiform commemorative spaces that become witnesses of a past thought in the present, or put another way, "the past might be objectified by 'capturing' it through photos and videos or it may be represented through other media such as commemorations and memorials" (Beckstead, 2017, p. 124). In this, and because few pasts can be described exclusively in glorious terms, the group can act on its material and symbolic spaces through which shameful meanings may have resurfaced (see Haas, 2002). Nevertheless, as Bresc  and Wagoner (2019) point out in a study of modern memorials:

We set out to explore the intertwined relation between collective grief and collective memory by studying how people experience modern memorials which, *unlike classic ones*, do not deliver a

straightforward message with regards to how one *should* remember a collective loss. (p. 230, we emphasize)

This brings to light the duty to remember together, but the injunctions of certain monuments are less clear-cut as to how to do so, and thus leave room for different expressions of collective loss.

Making Forgetting and Remembering a Team

Thus, in the twentieth century, even if this still partially persists today, memory was approached from the angle of flaw or inaccuracy (see Wagoner, 2017). Behaviorism partially engendered a mechanical view of memory and learning, and this makes the production of cognitive models of memory prosperous.

The memory researchers Elizabeth and Geoffrey Loftus (1980) asked psychologists to choose between two theories of remembering and forgetting. One theory claims that everything that happens is permanently stored in the mind; in consequence, all details of past experience can eventually be recovered with the right technique. The other theory (while sharing with the first one the same basic assumption of memory as a warehouse of the past) states that there are experiences that may be permanently and irrecoverably lost from this warehouse of memories. (Brockmeier, 2002, p. 17)

Since forgetting is sometimes conceived as a memory aberration, or as its absence, it's because pure memory is seen as a stock, or as Jodelet (2015) proposes to call it, an attic. Like a reservoir of information and memories, where information would be frozen, waiting to be retrieved. The analogy with the technological object of the external hard drive is explicit enough here. As if our memories were locked away in tins, ready to use, available and protected from time. Recorded once and for all, there would be very little interaction between the memory, the individuals who carry it and the world around it. According to Brockmeier (2002), most psychologists would have chosen the first option in the above quotation, and this would have led to forgetting being regarded as a neurological problem, to be combated, an object of struggle. Indeed, this vision, which is the most dominant, tends to compare the human mind to a computer, and memory is seen as a performative tool (Wagoner, 2017). What we're trying to say here is that the way we think about forgetting depends on the way we think about remembering, and vice versa.

By being more welcoming with oblivion, by lifting the veil on the obscurity that defines it, we observe that it is a plural object. This new perspective, which is not our own, but the fruit of years of scientific struggle to ensure that collective forgetfulness is no longer silenced (see Haas, 2014; Haas & Levasseur, 2013), is not without influence on the way we look at memory. Memory and forgetting thus become inseparable, they are each other's crutch, they are the two acolytes who work so that the human who borrows them can adapt to the world around him. This brings us to the second memory metaphor proposed by Jodelet (2015), that of the generator, now seen as interacting with present experience. Memory assimilates new things and, in so doing, organizes, or rather reorganizes, the past for our present needs and anticipations. It is these interactions between present, past, and future that bring to light conflicts, compromises, and areas of forgetfulness (Haas, 2002). Yesterday's forgetfulness can become tomorrow's memories: "You never know what yesterday will be made of" (Klein et al., 2004, our translation). In the case of a difficult history, forgetting sometimes enables groups to improve by reconstructing their past, sometimes to live better (Haas, 2002).

The first concerns of this second approach to memory date back to a few years before the Second World War (Haas & Jodelet, 2007). A scientific plot twist, in which the villain can

become the hero, if forgetting makes for a better life, then remembrance can become the villain of history. Social groups can thus physically intervene in collective memory (destruction of buildings, presence in common places) to bring about changes in social space. Social psychology proposes to consider the cultural and social aspects of this form of thinking, thus differentiating itself from the behaviorist model that dominated the previous century. This flexibility, which enables us to adapt to our environment, gives pride of place to memory reconstructions, which involve both remembering and forgetting (Bartlett, 1932/1995; Wagoner, 2017). Forgetting can manifest itself in the unspoken, because we don't want to, can't, or don't know how to say: "In the act of speaking, some subjects choose not to say, preferring to 'keep silent'" (Haas & Masson, 2006, p. 83).

To the Scientific Plot-Twist: Infallible Memory Is a False Memory

From 1914 to 1939, Bartlett focused on the observation of perception and memory under controlled conditions, while trying to break away from purely experimental conditions. In his seminal, even totemic book, remembering three concepts come to the fore: schema, image, and attitude. It is above all, almost exclusively, the schema that found an echo in psychology (Larsen & Berntsen, 2003). This pioneering work was widely criticized, probably because it was too far ahead of its time (Welford, 2003), or rather because it failed to adapt to the immediate needs of the historical context. From 1939 to 1952, he studied the operational skills of military personnel for the army and developed new methods of analysis. This time, his studies were adapted to the context of war and military communication. After his retirement (1952), he published the book *Thinking* (1958) to review his experiments in thinking.

Memory had often been considered in terms of performance, with forgetting playing a negative role. This preponderance of work on individual memory processes has led to a lack of understanding of the global work of certain authors, such as the British psychologist Bartlett, who opened doors as early as 1920 to the social and cultural character of thought and memory. Some of his conclusions have been widely used in cognitive psychology, with the notion of schema. But over time, his influence on collective and social memory became significant, both in terms of content and the processes at work in the reconstruction of memory.

Memory and its companion, oblivion, are social objects, and are therefore subject to the representations conveyed by common sense and science. In fact, we can observe a tendency to focus on particular approaches to memory, most certainly because the sociohistorical context required it. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a recognized interest in the normal functioning of memory. Traumatic events caused memory to fall from stability to instability (Ribot's law). At the same time, Ebbinghaus tried to experimentally approach pure memory using meaningless syllables (Saito, 2003). His aim was to reduce the complexity of the materials and then generalize this result to more complex forms (W. Brewer, 2003). Along with Binet, he made it possible to quantify the memory span (± 7 words), which is still used today, for example in television productions (e.g., the TV game *Burger Quiz* in France), or through the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve, which is offered to anyone wishing to "better" remember.¹ Although Binet is often cited for his work on span, or intelligence tests, he also worked for a broader understanding of memory. He worked on the influence of expertise on memory capacity, of suggestion on the memory itself, of the accuracy of a testimony given alone or in a group, and of the temporal transformation of a memory (images) (see Nicolas, 2014).

¹ Just type Ebbinghaus into a search engine and you'll come across videos/blogs offering help with memory performance.

Differing from Ebbinghaus (1885/2010) and his concept of the trace, by emphasizing the active role of attitudes, interests and values in memory, and by being more concerned with changes in recall than with the number of correct recalls (Saito, 2003), Bartlett marks a turning point in the study of memory (Johnston, 2001): memory is reconstructed.

I had received abundant information about the brilliant work of Herman Ebbinghaus and his successors. (...) Apart from certain formal rules which had to be observed, there was no reason why any syllable in any list should not change place with any other syllable. These were not the sorts of sequence which my perceiving experiments had been using, and for that and various other reasons I decided to avoid any such approach. (Bartlett, 1958, p. 142)

In his view, memory had to be studied in a more ecological and socially grounded way. By reducing the complexity that characterizes memory, this amounts to not studying it for what it is, nor for what it serves, or for what it represents. While the quantitative laws of memory (Wagoner, 2017) may have internal validity, they cannot be applied, and therefore generalized, to everyday objects and situations. Links between the theory of social representations and his work (Saito, 2003) demonstrate the close relationship between memory and social representations. Bartlett himself had established links with the collective memory proposed by Halbwachs (on page 294 of *Remembering*). Moscovici expressed the link between the theory of social representations and conventionalization very clearly:

I very much appreciated Frederic Bartlett's work [...] He had a more "social" approach to thinking, compared to many of today's social psychologists. [...] I felt he was in tune with my own scientific method. This encounter prompted me to read his book *Remembering* (Bartlett, 1932). At the time, I was working on the theory of social representations, and his analysis of conventionalization helped me to better understand the process of objectification. (2013, p. 260, our traduction)

But these ties with the theory of social representations also show us the links between conventionalization and nomination (Kalampalikis, 2002, 2007; Saito, 2003), or between anchoring and effort after meaning (Wagoner, 2017). And we have to admit that Bartlett's words appeal, indirectly, to what Moscovici will observe.

In several of the perception sequences it seemed that there came a stage when something like a stored pattern or standard representation took charge of the observer's response and principally settled what he was to allege that he had perceived. Moreover, observers from much the same social group were very likely to use the same stored standard representations. (Bartlett, 1958, p. 143)

Bartlett's work has had an impact on a social psychology that works to take culture into account and has been reinvested by many authors interested in the links between culture and psychology (Bangertner & Lehmann, 1997; Bruner, 2000, 2002, 2015; Jodelet & Haas, 2019; Johnston, 2001; Kalampalikis, 2019; Kashima, 2000; Moscovici, 2012, 2013; Roediger et al., 2003; Saito, 2003; Wagoner, 2017; Wertsch, 2002).

Ideological and historical elements contribute to the reconstruction of memory: through exchange, we arrive at a version that is sufficiently complete to act upon. Group, time, or circumstances in which we are inserted shape memory in such a way that the same event can contain different meanings (Halbwachs, 1925/1997). Because remembering is not mining, this activity involves a reconstruction and not a reproduction of the past (Bartlett, 1932/1995; Jodelet & Haas, 2019; Wagoner, 2017). Moreover, what is remembered is not the result of a passive attitude to events: it is the result of a reality filtered through social

representations, interpretative percolators through which the meaning of an object will be assigned by anchoring it in an existing system of thought (Moscovici, 2013). Our memory depends on a social group and its associated framework (Halbwachs, 1925/1994), and if culture influences group memories, the same group in turn has an effect on that culture (Duveen, 2007).

Memories are recorded and recalled through “social shoring” (Pétard, 2007, our translation). In other words, through communication and a shared cultural background. We memorize information selectively, and when we go to recall it, we select portions of it according to present needs, that is, according to how useful it will be in the context. But this puncture is not without effect on the portion and on what has not been selected. Contrary to the ambitions of AI, we can’t retain everything, and certain events can take precedence over others, such as what makes us laugh (Bartlett, 1932/1995), or what provoked strong emotions.

We find ourselves in a paradox when we try to define memory in terms of its accuracy (Ricoeur, 2000), even though it is the process that enables us to represent an absent content. It can only account for an imaginary aspect of the information “recalled.” While memory is not history, and each group constructs its own memories, social representations of history “contain descriptive components. [...] In general, there seems to be a broad consensus among ethnic and regional groups as to which events and figures are important in constituting the history of their nation” (Liu & Hilton, 2005, p. 3). Remembering is to maintain longitudinal, and therefore temporal, continuity, and lateral, and therefore interactional, interaction between groups (Brockmeier, 2002). These two aspects have been studied at length, notably by Bartlett, when he studied verbal and pictorial transmission over time and within groups to highlight the sociocultural and historical aspects of thought (1920, 1932/1995). In this way, memory has the function of enabling individuals to share, discuss, and negotiate meanings (Bruner, 2002), necessary in the construction of identity (Todorov, 2001).

Methodology

Description of Selection Criteria and Corpus

To enable this theoretical environment to become concrete, we chose to carry out a bibliometric study. We did not want to focus on impact or evaluative bibliometrics, but rather on descriptive bibliometrics, which attempt to “account for a researcher’s production in a given field over a given period, based on what other researchers have published in the same field over the same period” (Peltier, 2013, p. 3).

We were interested only in scientific articles from peer-reviewed journals, available in their full version on university electronic library services² and via Google Scholar. Although this format is not necessarily the most preferred by researchers in the humanities and social sciences (Archambault et al., 2006; Gingras, 2008), these articles were aimed at an expert audience. We conducted this search using our university’s electronic library and Google services, with the keyword: “Bartlett.” The only criterion for inclusion in the corpus was explicit reference by name, and at least once, to the British author throughout the article (title, abstract, body, bibliography). For each of these articles, we referenced the date,

² The electronic library offers 98 databases that allow onsite and remote consultation of books, journals, dictionaries, manuals, and studies. For the most successful in our case: Cairn, HAL-SHS, Open Edition, Oxford University Press, Persée, PsycArticles, PsycINFO, Sage.

language and medium of publication, title, authors, number of citations (excluding bibliography) and publications cited by the British author.

Seven hundred and thirty-one articles were identified over a period of approximately one century (1920–2019³), of which 89% ($n = 650$) were available in full text. Articles for which the body text was not available were considered only for the treatment of titles, languages, authors, journals, and publication dates (Figure 1).⁴

As much as 94.80% of the articles were from peer-reviewed journals. The corpus is overwhelmingly composed of articles written in English (88.8%), followed by French (9.71%). Since 2017, new publication languages have appeared, including Spanish, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Italian.

Results

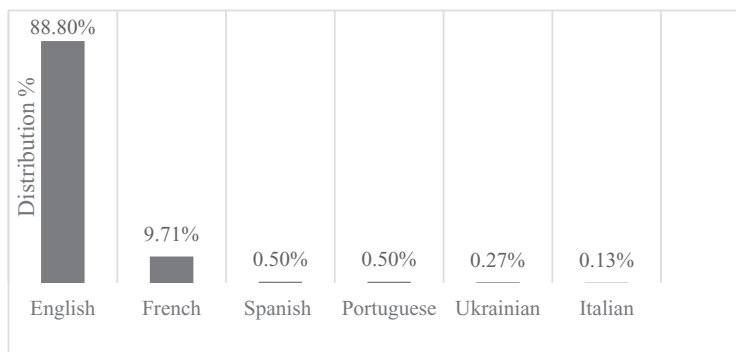
Focus on the Temporal Evolution of Publications Citing F. C. Bartlett

This frieze (Figure 2) represents the temporal evolution of the number of articles that cite the British psychologist at least once between 1920 and 2019. On average, 15 articles are published per year, but with a significant standard deviation ($\sigma = 18.55$). It highlights three temporal phases (defined by their significant differences between phases, and similarities within phases)

- a long period of 60 years (1920–1979) characterized by a small number of articles (average number of articles per decade = 5.5), a very slight standard deviation in publication inside each decade ($\sigma = [0; 1.53]$) and a small standard deviation between decades ($\sigma = 5.5$)
- a second period of 10 years (1980–1989) characterized by the first sharp increase in the number of articles ($n = 74$), with a sudden peak of publications in 1985 ($n = 20$) and a little standard deviation inside those 10 years ($\sigma = 5.97$).
- a third 30-year period (1990–2019) characterized by a significant and continuous increase in the number of articles (average number of articles per decade = 207), a slight standard deviation in publication inside decade 1990–1999 and 2000–2009

Figure 1

Distribution of the Articles According to the Languages of Publication

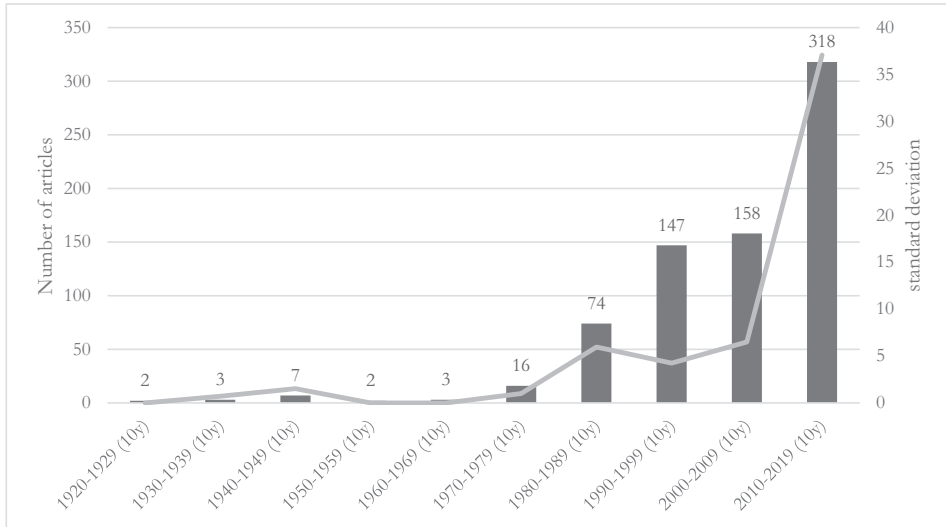


³ We have arbitrarily stopped 100 years after Bartlett's first publication.

⁴ Thus, Figure 5 and Table 1 concern only the full-text articles ($n = 650$ articles); Figure 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 concern the whole corpus ($n = 731$ articles).

Figure 2

Time Trend in Articles Citing Bartlett, F. C., From 1920 to 2019 Split by Decade



Note. N = number of articles.

($\sigma = [4.24; 6.49]$), and a high standard deviation for the last decade ($\sigma = 37.08$). Indeed, 2019 stands out as an “anomaly” in the data, accounting for 137 articles on its own. The commemoration of his birth seems a valid hypothesis to justify this spike in publications. Indeed, the 2010–2018 period shows a low standard deviation in article publications ($\sigma = 3.1$).

Focusing on the last half century (1970–2019), this increase is continuous. Between 1970–1979 and 1980–1989, the number of articles quadruples ($n = 16$ vs. $n = 74$). This effect remains important in the following 10 years (1990–1999), although it is less pronounced. Between 1980–1989 ($n = 74$) and 1990–1999 ($n = 147$), the number of articles referring to Bartlett doubled. After these 30 years of intensification, this trend persists and the number of publications per year doubles in the period 2010–2019 ($n = 158$ vs. $n = 319$). We can conclude that there was a sudden increase in the number of references to the British psychologist’s work in scientific articles in 1985 and permanent intensification since (Figure 3).

Which of F. C. Bartlett’s Publications Are Mobilized?

If there is a strong increase in publications, can we conclude that the author’s complete work is being read? The Bartlett archive⁵ lists 183 publications by the author, of which less than 1/3 ($n = 55$) are cited in our corpus (Table 1).⁶

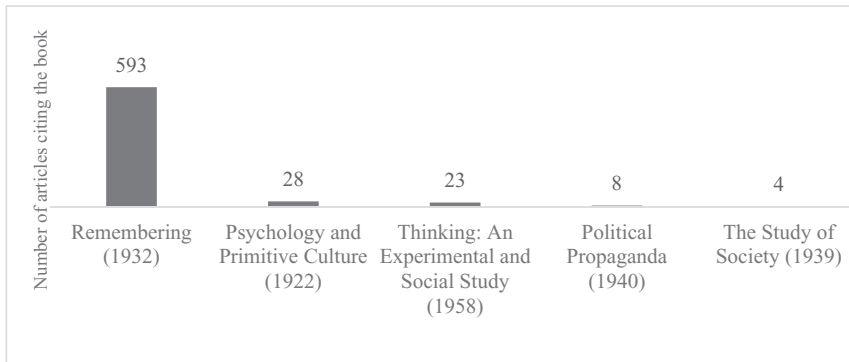
If we see that F. C. Bartlett’s books had the most readers (81.81%),⁷ which books are they?

The bibliographies of the articles in the corpus show that the references to the work of the British psychologist converge on the same object: his book *Remembering* published in 1932.

⁵ <https://www.bartlett.psychol.cam.ac.uk>.

⁶ The Appendix lists all Bartlett’s publications cited in the collected corpus.

⁷ This is not the case for his articles (26.56%), book chapters (21.42%), and other types of publications (16.66%).

Figure 3*The Five Most Cited Books by F. C. Bartlett*

While this work is massively cited (in 593 articles), the others are cited in a much lower proportion.⁸ We wanted to know in which magazines Bartlett was most quoted (Figure 4).

The 10 journals that published the most articles in which the British author is cited are all specialized in psychology.⁹ There is a strong presence of the famous journal of experimental psychology. Half the journals in this top 10 are generalist psychology journals (*Psychological Review & Bulletin*, *American Psychologist*, *Review of General Psychology & Contemporary Psychology*). There is a significant presence of journals specializing in social psychology, and sometimes in cultural psychology. This is interesting insofar as this result is representative of the previous ones, namely that the investment of his work in its cultural and social component is relatively low compared to his investment in experimental and cognitive psychology. French language articles citing him occupy only a small place in our corpus (9.71%). These French language journals are specialized in psychology (e.g., *Bulletin de Psychologie*, *Les Cahiers Internationaux de Psychologie sociale*,

Table 1*F. C. Bartlett's Publications Used in the Articles in Relation to His Complete Works*

Typology of FCB's scientific output	Total number of FCB publications	Type of FCB publications cited in the corpus	Percent of mobilization of FCB publications
Books	11	9	81.81
Articles	128	34	26.56
Chapters	14	3	21.42
Other (letters, foreword)	30	5	16.66
Nominal reference ^a	—	4	0
Total	183	55	30

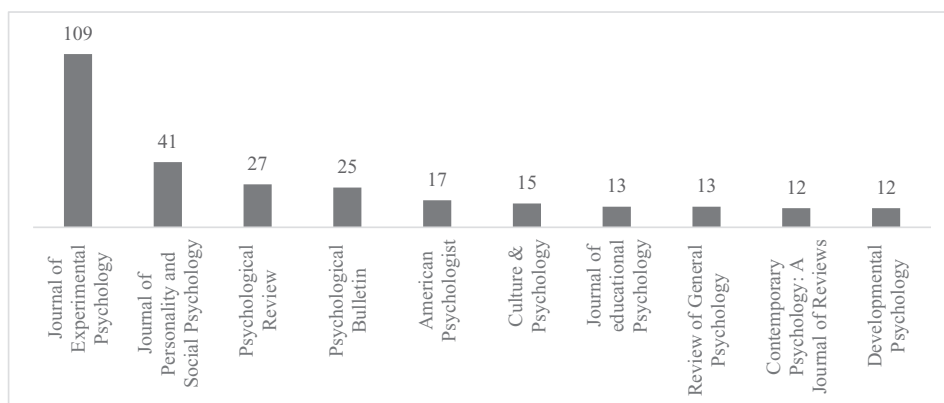
Note. FCB = Frederic Charles Bartlett

^a Some authors cite nominally in the body of the article, without date and without listing it in the bibliography.

⁸ Thus, 91.2% of the articles in the corpus cite *Remembering* (1932) and only 31 articles, or 4.7%, cite the reissue (1995). It is interesting to observe that so few authors cite the reissue (1995) even though the first peak of articles citing Bartlett was in the 1990s.

⁹ To determine the discipline(s) present in the articles, we took into consideration the journal in which they were published. Once these parameters had been considered, we noted the disciplines mobilized in the article. Some articles are not just part of one discipline; sometimes disciplines are combined, and this explanation does not reveal the co-occurrence of disciplines.

Figure 4
Top 10 Journals That Published Articles Citing F. C. Bartlett



Revue de neuropsychologie), although some of them are more transdisciplinary (*Connexions, Diogenè, Terrain*).¹⁰

The Different Ways of Quoting Bartlett

We wanted to see how often the British author's name was cited in the articles. This indicator could be useful in capturing the degree of frequency attached to the author or to these concepts (Figure 5).

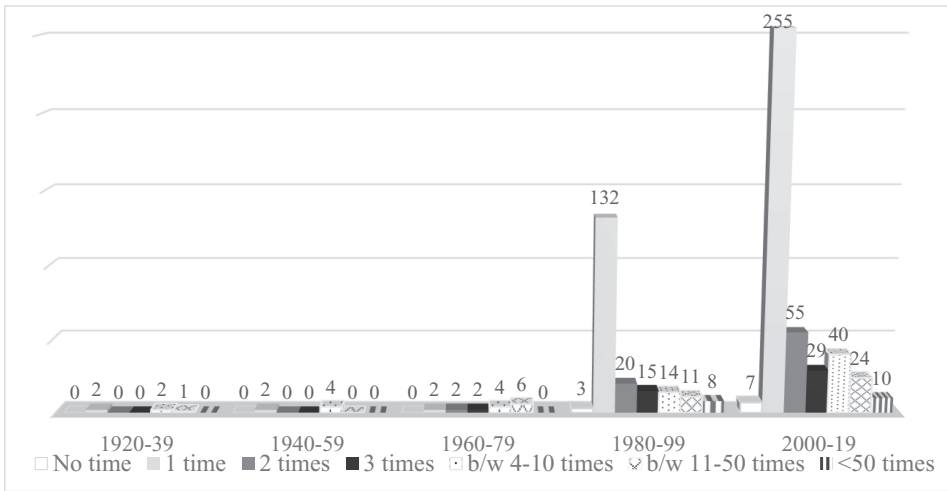
Many authors who quote F. C. Bartlett in their articles do so mostly only once (60% of articles, $n = 393$). Indeed, once we enter the content of the articles, we see that the citation is brief and succinct. Some articles ($n = 10$) cite Bartlett in the bibliography, but do not mention him in the body of the text. Furthermore, there are relatively few verbatims from his publications and the publisher of the main reference cited (*Remembering*, 1932) is randomly indicated (Oxford, Cambridge, New York); finally, Bartlett is often cited within a chain of authors ([...] concerning reconstructive memory [Bartlett, AuteurB, AuteurC]). As Figure 6 illustrates, the author is increasingly cited from the 1980s onward, but only once in the body of the article. This suggests that a scientific reflex was initiated in the 1980s that has continued to increase over time. Nevertheless, over the last 40 years there has been a slight increase in articles that cite it more than once in the body of the text. If the number of times an author is cited and the depth of his or her work are linked, we can assume that Bartlett is increasingly being studied in depth in scientific articles since 1980, but that this proportion remains discrete until the period 2000–2019.

Focus on “Typical” Authors

Our corpus is very polarized, with a large proportion of scientific articles in psychology quoting the British psychologist very briefly and a minority of articles quoting him extremely frequently. In 97 years, 1,010 authors have written at least one article in which they quoted him. To schematize these results, we have selected “typical” authors (see Pétard et al., 2001) on the basis of a minimum number of articles citing him ($n > 5$). Thus, Roediger III,

¹⁰ *Connexions* and *Diogenè*, created in 1972, are journals that declare themselves to be multidisciplinary, the subjects are diverse, but all focus on human sociality in its collective and relational manifestations with a cultural outlook. *Terrain* is a more ethnographic journal created in 1983.

Figure 5
Number of Times F. C. Bartlett Is Quoted (1920–2019)

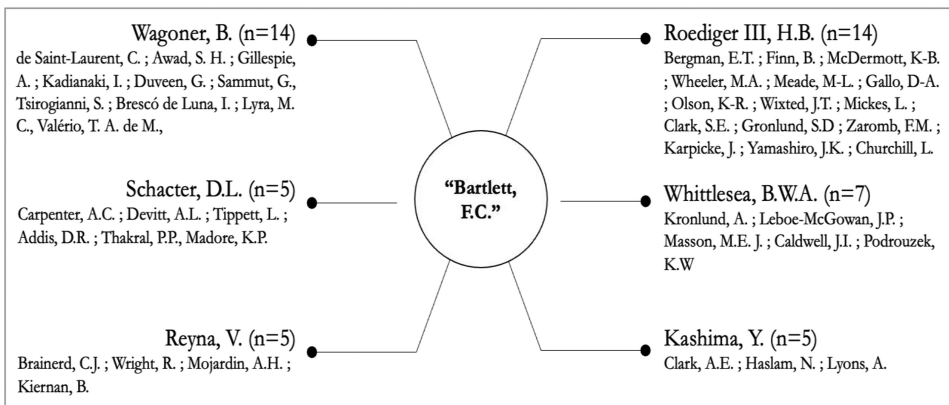


Whittlesea, Wagoner, Kashima, Schacter, and Reyna are the authors who have published the most articles citing him (Figure 6).

The first thing we notice is the absence of a link between these different “typical” authors, no joint publication of articles. On the other hand, among the “typical” authors we find three psychologists specializing in cognitive psychology or neuroscience (Whittlesea, Reyna, Schacter, and Roediger III) and two social psychologists (Wagoner and Kashima). These authors published articles citing Bartlett in the same period as the first peak of publications, according to the publication scale (1985–2019). These authors seem to devote part of their work to reinterpreting Bartlett’s work. But secondary networks, the authors with whom these typical authors have published, show that broader research networks are being built.

Some of these articles include Bartlett’s name in the title. This is the case for 10 articles, six written by Wagoner, two written by Roediger III, and one written by Kashima. These

Figure 6
Networks of Authors Who Have Published the Most Articles Citing F. C. Bartlett



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articles seek to propel Bartlett's work into a new area of research, as evidenced by these titles: "Can Bartlett's repeated reproduction experiments be replicated?" (Bergman & Roediger, 1999), "Bartlett in the digital age" (Wagoner et al., 2007), "Sociocultural mediators of remembering: An extension of Bartlett's method of repeated reproduction" (Wagoner, 2013), or "Recovering Bartlett's social psychology of cultural dynamics" (Kashima, 2000); some other articles focus on comparisons with other leading authors, "Disparate effects of repeated testing: Reconciling Ballard's (1913) and Bartlett's (1932) results" (Wheeler & Roediger III, 1992), "Notes on a social psychology of thinking: A comparison of Bartlett and Moscovici" (Wagoner, 2012). Finally, other articles rework elements of his work in depth: "Bartlett's concept of schema in reconstruction" (Wagoner, 2013); "Qualitative experiments in psychology: The case of Frederic Bartlett's methodology" (Wagoner, 2015); and "What makes memory constructive? A study in the serial reproduction of Bartlett's experiments" (Wagoner, 2017). These articles testify to a desire to position Bartlett as an author who can serve contemporary social and experimental psychology, despite the decades that have elapsed between his work and its reinterpretations in a societal social psychology.

Discussion

Our results show that there is a peak of publications citing the British author in 1985, that is, 65 years after the beginning of his publications, that for 30 years the average number of articles has been low ($n = 16$) and that in 2019 a new peak appears ($n = 137$ articles). However, although he is increasingly cited, most of the time he is only cited once by name in the body of the articles and in most cases in a journal of experimental psychology.

Indeed, the corpus reveals only one facet of Bartlett's work, the one that centralizes his ideas on schemas, memory, and recollection is mostly treated by cognitive and social psychology through his book *Remembering* in its 1932 edition. His work on ergonomics, culture, anthropology, propaganda, and mentality, is not an indelible trace. In this way, the representation of his work is extremely stereotyped and short, making it very effective when quoted.

Our objective was to try to consider the role of this quotation on the deepening of his work. We like to borrow the expression of Bertin and Desclés (2007) who explain that this is more a matter of looking for "bibliosemantic" (p. 2) indicators than "bibliometric" indicators. Indeed, the citation of an author contains meanings that quantitative research alone cannot fully grasp. A qualitative study of the material and what is written in the articles would be particularly relevant. Nevertheless, we will try to place these data in a broader narrative, trying to put the quotation "Bartlett (1932)" into context.

One of the most salient results is the spike in publications citing Bartlett as early as 1985. The reasons for this reinvestment could stem from several factors. Movements in scientific production, and the constant increase in scientific publications worldwide (UNESCO, 2010), may partly explain the rise in the number of Bartlett citations. Indeed, if more articles cite Bartlett, it may also be because there are quantitatively more articles published.

On top of this, over 100 years, several events may have triggered spikes in publications: his death in 1969, the 50th anniversary of his best-known work in 1982, the centennial of his birth in 1996, the 50th anniversary of his death in 2019. These dates correspond to the increases seen in the timeline. In addition to these reasons, we sought to identify other key moments in the author's history.

A Reissue?

In the first place, we can understand this from the point of view of an external factor, namely, a reissue. As we noted earlier, one book was cited by most articles: *Remembering*.

The reprinting of this book could have allowed authors to read more of Bartlett's work and to take an interest in him or rediscover it through the prism of a changed scientific and social environment. However, the reissue of the book that is mostly cited dates from 1995,¹¹ thus after the peak of publications in 1985. If the reissue potentially allowed authors to have access to this work, it does not seem to be the reason for the 1985 peak, especially since it is the 1932 edition that is referenced in the articles of the corpus and not the reissue. While it does not explain this spike, it is highly plausible that this reissue has made the book much more accessible and is partly responsible for the steady increase in publications citing it.

A Meeting?

Bartlett may also have been (re)discovered through his meetings with other researchers. In 1956 a conference on cognition was held in Cambridge, organized by him and Bruner.¹² Jerome Seymour Bruner, one of the most important authors of the cognitive revolution and the new look, was considerably influenced by the work of the British psychologist (Greenwood, 2015). His book *A Study of Thinking* published in 1956 challenged the dominant behaviorist theories. In 1960, Bruner and Miller founded the "Center for Cognitive Studies" and this laboratory federated numerous works in these fields (Deleau, 2016). Since Bruner was very well known and quoted Bartlett very frequently in his landmark works (1956, 1990), this could have led to an increase in the number of publications that quoted him in turn. However, none of the articles in the 1985 peak cited Bruner.

In 1957, Bartlett met another important figure in social psychology, Serge Moscovici. On that date, Moscovici participated in Brussels in the International Congress of Psychology and met the British psychologist whose conventionalization process would inspire him (Moscovici, 2013). Moscovici proposed the theory of social representations from the 1960s onward (Kalampalikis, 2019), and like Bruner, he did not hesitate to quote Bartlett in his works:

I very much appreciated the work of Frederic Bartlett (...) He had a more "social" approach to thinking, compared to many of today's social psychologists. (...) I felt that he was in tune with my own scientific method. This encounter prompted me to read his book *Remembering* (Bartlett, 1932). I was working at that time on the theory of social representations and his analysis of conventionalization helped me to better understand the process of objectification. (Moscovici, 2013, p. 260)

Whether it is his encounter with Bruner or Moscovici, it is also the fact that events took shape around new themes of interest that may be relevant here. Indeed, it was also because the dynamics of memory were being reinvested scientifically that Bartlett's work was able to be reinvested simultaneously.

« Bartlett (1932) »: *The Hypothesis of a Scriptural Routine?*

The book *Remembering* and its 1932 edition (vs. its 1995 reprint) is the one cited by most articles in our corpus. Yet most of the scientific articles citing Bartlett are from 1985 to 2019. Did all these authors own the original 1932 edition? Although the scientific article tends to emphasize the present, it links directly with the past and the dialogs between the authors

¹¹ Further editions by other presses: 1950, 1967, and 1972.

¹² Conference on cognition in the summer of 1956, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation (see Greenwood, 2015).

place them in a form of “temporal connivance” (Boch et al., 2010, p. 12). In the corpus studied, Bartlett is very often quoted in the theoretical part. The scientific article conditions the theoretical presentation that is given, and there is little room for theoretical development. The theoretical framing section reconstructs a theoretical object, but not without bias. It must give an account of what already exists, position the study in a specific field and demonstrate the innovative nature of the approach. The theoretical framing part should give an account of what exists, position the study in a specific field and show the innovative character of the approach. Whether the creation of a “niche” allows the researcher to legitimize his or her position in relation to those of others, or whether it is a matter of self-promotion for the author as Bourdieu (2001) understands it, this raises identity and social issues in the writing practices. According to Boch et al. (2010), the author of a scientific article may also cite another author in recognition of his or her reputation.

Within these practices, it is possible to see “scriptural routines” (Boch et al. 2010, p. 3). These routines may be global (general outline of a theoretical part) or may be exercised at a more local level with relatively fixed formulations. In a desire for exhaustiveness and traceability of sources, authors can sometimes form chains of citations. Sometimes, even when many authors are cited one after the other, a rhetorical function appears which would transform proper names into “positional emblems” (Boch et al., 2010, p. 13), or what we propose to call a “totemic usage.” Quoting the British psychologist seem to have become a reflex when dealing with certain themes, this quotation being mostly brief and automatic.

Quoting the British psychologist has become a reflex when dealing with certain themes, this quotation being most of the time very brief, as we have seen. But this seems to extend to his book: it is “Bartlett (1932),” the author accompanied by his book, which seems to form a fixed, quasiobligatory, valorized, and valorizing block. It is as if the author and his book “had” to be cited, so that the narrative of the scientific article retains its coherence. We might even go so far as to speak of a mystified usage, revealed in a similar study on Kurt Lewin: “Perhaps this is the effect of a trivialization of the past, which is summoned only for normative, ritualistic, or hagiographic reasons (‘it must be mentioned’, ‘we cannot not mention it’)” (Delouvé et al., 2011, p. 3). This previous quotation, taken from the research on social psychology textbooks, shows that Lewin is both more quoted and more in-depth over time. Lewin went from a simple mention to a slightly fuller explanation of his work, especially from 1981 to 1990. Although Lewin is a leading figure in social psychology, his work is decontextualized and partially interpreted in textbooks. Our corpus, based on a different type of scientific material, does not allow us to make a direct comparison. What we can conclude is that the interpretation of her work in scientific articles is succinct and late, and like Lewin, she seems to be subject to stereotypical citation and paradoxical marginalization (Delouvé et al., 2011), more and more citations, poorer and poorer. Another point in common between Lewin’s and Bartlett’s usage concerns the rhetoric of the quotation, which has the power to “recreating Lewin as a mythic hero, not as a historical figure” (Billig, 2015, p. 715).

What we can conclude from our corpus is that the interpretation of Bartlett’s work in scientific articles is succinct and late, and like Lewin in the history chapters of French-language disciplinary textbooks, is subject to stereotypical citation and paradoxical marginalization (Delouvé et al., 2011), more and more citations, poorer and poorer. The reinvestment, past and present, of Frederic Charles Bartlett’s work, particularly in social psychology, shows us that the so-called ancient theories are “bearers of knowledge, ideas, and facts whose actuality is not tarnished by the passage of time. (...)” and “that it is not enough for the cuisine to be new, and the decoration abstract to increase the quality of the menus” (Moscovici, 1993, p. 544).

The aim is not to feed an obsession with an author, but rather to delve deeper into the ways in which he or she has contributed to the formation of a current. The aim is to move away from a passive attitude toward classical authors (Mucchielli, 1998) and “stop personalizing ideas to such an extent” (Mucchielli, 1998, p. 528, our translation). Indeed, scientific movements on this scale are never the work of a single individual; they represent the result of a current of thought. The shift from “he” to “they” to “when they” enables us to recontextualize ideas in their time and in the currents of thought that dominate a culture. If memory were to achieve the ambitions of artificial intelligence, it would no longer be of any use to us: “Knowledge is a field, but if it is neither ploughed nor watched over, it will not be harvested” (Peul proverb). It is because memories are modified, reconstructed, and reanimated that they are finally there. This is also the case with Bartlett’s memory, which guides us toward the fact that remembering is a connoted, represented and culturally linked act.

These results once again point to the fact that scientific narratives are subject to the same memorial processes as social and popular histories; and that, as with all stories, contrast issues, sometimes staged in art, are also discussed in scientific literature. Notably discussed by Halbwachs (1925/1997) through the notion of *clair-obscur*, we can relate the same phenomenon in different ways, depending on the group we are in. The group will illuminate a phenomenon from a certain angle, depending on the era and circumstances; it may focus only on one part of its story and omit another. In this way, the same past can lead to different results in the present, depending on how it is interpreted (Todorov, 2001). This dynamic vision (cf. generator) of memory involves two processes linked to social representations: objectification and anchoring. This representation of the past becomes a framework for interpreting the present and imagining the future (Brescó, 2017; Brockmeier, 2002). The articulation between collective and social memory in the theory of social representations is found in representing something that is absent and in updating these representations according to the past (Jodelet & Haas, 2019; Páez et al., 2016). This is why the way we look at the past, including the scientific past, is important for understanding the present of theory, and envisaging the future of these conceptions of memory and forgetting, which are so rich in that they enable us to understand the complex dynamics of social thought.

Conclusion

We have tried to trace how social memory is dependent on the sociocultural contexts in which it is embedded, and how this effect also applies to scientific narratives. Nevertheless, we note the need to go deeper into those articles that cite Bartlett, to analyze the content further, without remaining focused on the metadata. While we have tried to show the contours of Bartlett’s story, this type of analysis does not allow us to discuss the narrative framework, i.e., how he is inserted into the article, alongside which author, what his role is in the article. Indeed, memory is the subject of the social representations that make it meaningful, and we have seen that these have in turn influenced science. The focus on approaches of memory has meant that forgetting has been judged as negative, since memory has been studied from the point of view of performance. Once again, the struggle for recognition of the imperfect-memory-performance pairing has paid off, enabling the understanding of context-, history- and group-dependent *clair-obscur* phenomena. Bartlett’s research continues to inspire researchers, as witnessed by the recent study on the reconstruction of popular symbols in modern Egyptian society (Awad, 2016; see Wagoner, 2017), that on the recall of odorous materials (Cerisier et al., 2017), or the adaptation of the method of repeated reproduction in a French context to study proverbs and myths (Mercier & Kalampalikis, 2019).

When this author spoke of a partially reconstructive memory, ironically, it was the memory we have of his work that was only partial. This could argue in favor of a social psychology of science which states that “social factors and social interactions are crucial components in science” (Shadish & Fuller, 1993, p. 6). This perspective would make it possible to consider memorial movements influenced by culture, as well as editorial dynamics, valuing the recent at the expense of the old, and not necessarily leaving room for long, in-depth citations of less recent authors. Finally, the memory dynamics described here also apply to scientific narratives: “Everything we study is contained within a storied, or narrative, representation. Indeed, as scholars we are storytellers, telling stories about other people’s stories. We call our stories theories” (Denzin, 2015, p. xi).

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(Appendix follows)

Appendix

All Bartlett's Publications and the Number of Times They Are Cited in the Collected Corpus



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