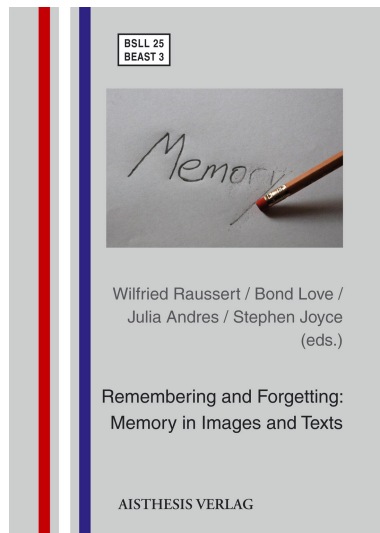


Leseprobe

Wilfried Raussert / Bond Love /
Julia Andres / Stephen Joyce
(eds.)

Remembering and Forgetting: Memory in Images and Texts



AISTHESIS VERLAG

Bielefeld 2010

Illustration on the Front Cover:

“Memory in Process” by Bond Love and Katharina Schaumburg

Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in
Der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliographische
Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

© Aisthesis Verlag 2010

Postfach 10 04 27, D-33504 Bielefeld

Druck: docupoint GmbH, Magdeburg

ISBN 978-3-89528-778-7

www.aisthesis.de

Table of Contents

Introduction

Julia Andres, Stephen Joyce, Bond Love, Wilfried Raussert, and Alethea R. Wait	7
---	---

Tú eres mi otro yo – Your Story is my Story.

Caramelo: Strands of Memory woven into a Universal Pattern

Julia Andres	21
---------------------------	----

Mneme, Anamnesis and Mimesis:

The Function of Narrative in Paul Ricœur’s Theory of Memory

Ridvan Askin	31
---------------------------	----

Re-Membering the Terrorist Spectacle:

*Medial Discourses, the Shaping of History and Collective Cultural Memory
in the Wake of 9/11*

Marcel Fromme and Alethea R. Wait (with Carolin Kirchhof)	47
--	----

The Limits of Postmodern Analysis:

Penelope Lively’s Moon Tiger and its Academic Response

Marcus Hartner	63
-----------------------------	----

The Sea of Memory:

*Cultural Memories and Postmemories of the Japanese Occupation in
Korean American Literature*

Stephen Joyce	79
----------------------------	----

Heritage Cities and the Trauma of Coloniality:

*Postcolonial Conflicts about Space, Identity, and Memory in Historic City Centers
in the Americas*

Olaf Kaltmeier	93
-----------------------------	----

“So I will have to see him”:

Resisting Cultural Memory in William Faulkner’s Go Down, Moses

Bond Love	101
------------------------	-----

Working Through Ground Zero

László Munteán	115
-----------------------------	-----

Call Me Ishmael:

Melville as Archaeologist of Body and Text

Wilfried Raussert	137
--------------------------------	-----

Table of Contents

Between Obligation and Empowerment:

Negotiating Cultural Memory, Past and Present:

Luis J. Rodríguez, Always Running. La Vida Loca. Gang Days in L.A. (1993),

Luis Alberto Urrea, Nobody's Son: Notes from an American Life (1998),

Oscar Casares, Brownsville (2003)

Annette Rukwied 149

Introduction

JULIA ANDRES, STEPHEN JOYCE, BOND LOVE, WILFRIED RAUSSERT, AND ALETHEA R. WAIT

What We Talk About When We Talk About Memory

In a book of essays devoted to the representation and politics of memory in cultural texts, it would be fitting to begin with a working definition of what memory is. One could, for example, cite the Oxford English Dictionary's pithy description of it as "the capacity for retaining, perpetuating, or reviving the thought of things past," or point to Merriam-Webster's less assured "the power or process of reproducing or recalling what has been learned and retained especially through associative mechanisms." But to really explain what memory is requires explaining how it works – how it "retains," "perpetuates," "revives," "reproduces," "recalls," etc. – and a task like this quickly sends us hunting for metaphors. Historically the most well-known metaphorical models range from imprintable wax tablets and seals (Plato, Socrates, Descartes, et al.), to treasure houses (again Greek) and storehouses (Locke), to computers in the twentieth century and networks from the 1980s onward.¹ All these models have been employed to shed light on what David Krell calls the "enigma of memory": the inscriptive process and location of memory (i.e. how objects, people, events, etc. are passively or actively recorded; and the seat of memory, be it heart, mind, soul, or brain), and the recollective nature of memory (i.e. the problematic metaphysical and epistemological character of both recollection and the memories recalled) (Krell 3).

Krell highlights the profound influence that linguistic principles and processes and metaphors of writing have had on Western notions of how memory works. He maintains that most conceptions of memory are:

Typographic: persons, objects, and events make their mark on the mind, impressing their characteristic signs as presences which ... we remain on call [to] recall at will. Iconographic: because these persons, objects, and events are now absent, hence ... their presence in and to the mind must be accounted for by a certain likeness. Engrammatological: because likeness or verisimilitude itself announces a fatal incommensurability or difference, a gap in both time and space between the (present) image and its (absent) original, the icon is from the outset translated into a medium that effaces itself and promises to close all the gaps. (165)

At the same time, the metaphor of the storage house has also loomed large in Western notions of memory, with clear consequences for how we conceive of memory's processes. We can consider today's version of this metaphor, the computer. When one

¹ See Krell for a detailed progression of the history of memory. For an interesting account of how such models have often changed in response to emergent technologies, see Draaisma.

saves data in a computer, it is placed in an electronic receptacle or file for later retrieval; likewise, experience is entered into memory and stored there until one needs it at a later time. Barring some damage to the physical “hardware,” saved items within memory never disappear and remain unchanged. Memory thus becomes a passive repository in which memories are stored separately as discrete items, which makes remembering a straightforward process of selection and retrieval. If only it were that easy.

Spatial metaphors are tempting when we talk about memory because of our sense that what we remember resembles our original experience, which occurred at an earlier time. Something from this experience must have *persisted* with us, making it logical to say we have *retained* something of it, and anything that is retained must be retained *somewhere*. Indeed, the brain seems to give memory a physical location. Yet the specific metaphor of the storage space (computer, warehouse, treasure house, etc.) leads to untenable claims about recollection, the second aspect of memory’s “enigma” for Krell. Thinking about memory as a work space, on the other hand, enables a more complex view of remembering that is more in keeping with general consensus among contemporary memory researchers. In this model memories are no longer stand-alone things that are stored; instead, they exist as traces (Descartes), icons (Krell et al.), or some other form of partial neural information – not items “put into” memory but the results of a long, complex pathway of interconnections. Remembering occurs when an event triggers a resonance path. Rather than an act of retrieval, remembering is a process in which an event or instant is recreated or *re-membered* by means of the various connections between it and other memory fragments. As a memory is triggered, reconstructed, and reevaluated in each case of remembering, a memory is highly dynamic and prone to change.

Because the storage-space and work-space models of memory have very different implications for the possibility of accuracy in remembering, they produce different real-world consequences. For example, they justify opposite stances on the reliability of eyewitness testimony in a court of law. From the standpoint of the storage-space model, with its presupposition of stable memories, eyewitness testimony should provide highly accurate, if person-specific testimony to an event. A witness’s memory should be an exact reproduction of what he or she experienced and should have changed little over time. Although the witness could have perceived the original event inaccurately, or might offer testimony that inaccurately represents his or her memory, the accuracy of that memory itself is unquestionable.

By contrast, the work-space model entails that the witness’s memory is always recreated, a reproduced representation of a historical trace. Changes in the trigger event (such as a question prompting deliberate recall or a random occurrence that stimulates a passive flashback), redirected recollection pathways (caused by changes in anything from the person’s temperament, experience, age, mood, etc.), and shifting recombinations of varying fragments make a memory suspect, no less constructed and mediated than the verbal account of it (Young, *Memory’s Edge* 15). In this case neither memory, nor memory reproduced in testimony, can be considered truly objective. Nor, we could add, can memory that is reproduced in historical texts, insofar as they rely on the documented testimony of a past event’s witnesses or participants. This

model demands, in James Young's words, that while "historical inquiry might remain a search for certainties about substantive realities," it must be "broadened to encompass the realities of history's eventual transmission."

Extended backward into the notion of history 'as it happened,' such a conception includes as part of its search for verifiable fact the search for verifiable, yet highly contingent representations of these facts as they unfolded. (*Memory's Edge* 11)

The models informing how we talk about memory have important implications for how we talk about the past.

Memory and the Body

Memory becomes even more complicated to discuss when we consider that it is not a single system, but multiple ones – multiple memories, as it were. Beyond the familiar trio of perceptual memory (attention), short-term memory, and long-term memory, there are forms of long-term memory researchers call "semantic memory" (the memory of facts and concepts, such as who the president of the United States is, what scissors are used for, etc.), and "episodic memory" (the memory of events we have experienced). Further distinction is made between "explicit memory" and "implicit memory," i.e. a system involving conscious recollection versus one in which the past influences our present actions without our awareness (e.g., the hunger we might feel five minutes after seeing a fast-food billboard we never consciously noticed) (Foster 39-42).

If asked to specify the location of these memory systems, most people would say the brain. In the case of one type of implicit memory called "procedural memory," however, it seems more appropriate to speak of memory as being rooted in the body itself. This form of memory involves

long-trained patterns of movement and perception ... embodied as skills or faculties that we practice as a matter-of-course in our everyday life – the upright gait, the ability of speaking, reading or writing, and the handling of instruments such as a bicycle or a piano. (Fuchs, "Memory" 1)

Habitual procedures like these have been repeated so often that they have sunk deeper and deeper into the subsurface structure of the body, to the point that the body performs them automatically. For this reason psychiatrist and philosopher Thomas Fuchs labels procedural memory "body memory." Body memory can also manifest itself in physical postures, learned primarily through imitation when we were young, that we habitually assume in certain social situations, as well as types of physical comportment ingrained in us through institutional regimes of discipline. Such corporeal memory makes it clear that the body "is not only a structure of limbs and organs, of sensations and movements. It is a historically formed body whose experiences have left their traces in its invisible dispositions." Here the past is not recalled, as in explicit, episodic memory, but is *contained* in every living moment, inscribed in the fiber of our muscles (*Leib* 38).

A physical counterpart to autobiographical memory, which consciously situates the "I" in a series of past moments (see below), body memory is a vital component of identity construction. The elements of a skill or way of carrying ourselves that we no

longer think about specify our bodily presence and performance, and as such our make-up of attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. Thus “what we have forgotten ... has become what we are” (Fuchs, “Memory” 3). And what we are, of course, shapes what we perceive. With the concept of body memory Fuchs expands on Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notion that “my body is my point of view on the world”²:

By inserting itself into every situation, the body carries its own past into the surroundings as a procedural field. Its experiences and dispositions permeate the environment like an invisible net that projects from its senses and limbs, connects us with the world and renders it familiar to us. Each perception, each situation is permeated by implicit bodily recollections. (“Memory” 8)

Not only is the body intimately involved with implicit memory, but explicit memory as well. Anyone who has ever returned to his or her old grade school has probably had the experience of smelling the peculiar odor of sponges and chalk or of hearing the shuffling of many small feet and feeling immediately like a child again. Past and present coincide for a moment in a visceral, affective response to sensual stimuli. This experience then spurs numerous episodic memories of experiences with friends and teachers. Explicit memory has been prompted by a kind of corporeal recollection. It should be noted that this initial physical recollection seems more visceral and less cognitive than these later explicit memories, yet on the other hand entails more conscious awareness than the examples of implicit body memory Fuchs gives, because it produces affect, a feeling (of being our child selves) that we consciously experience. Following Jill Bennett we might use the term “sense memory” to distinguish this affective memory rooted in the body.

The body-generated affect that characterizes sense memory poses problems for representation. If we had a friend with us while visiting our old school it would be fairly easy to recount to him or her one of these remembered events that happened there, but far more challenging to describe that immediate, instinctive sense memory we had upon encountering the building’s familiar odors and sounds (other than by saying simply that we felt like a student again). Such a memory eludes narrative, perhaps even language itself. This problem becomes especially pronounced in the case of people trying to represent past trauma, as Bennett explains in her essay “The Aesthetics of Sense Memory.” She points to the example of French poet and Auschwitz survivor Charlotte Delbo, who believed no historical narrative could ever do justice to sense memories of the concentration camp like hers, and thus to the traumatic experience of being there. For Delbo,

the writing of history in the language of common memory, its processing and presentation within an intelligible narrative framework, is of vital social importance. But at the same time, she realises that something integral to the experience of the Holocaust is lost when an essentially traumatic experience is consigned to history, when the imposition of a temporal frame establishes a distance from the present and effects a stripping of affect ... (29)

Bennett posits the visual arts as a more promising medium for conveying this affective dimension of trauma. Where words fail, images may fill the gaps to convey the inten-

² Qtd. in Carman 81

sity of an event that has left its imprint on the individual. Given the experience encoded in our own bodies, as well as those instinctive abilities we relied on as developing children to physically mimic others' attitudes, emotions, and behavior, we as viewers can respond viscerally, before "the inscription of narrative, of moral emotion or empathy" hits our conscious mind (32). If the artist remembers with his or her body, we can bear witness to that memory with our own.

The Need to Forget

It becomes clear that investigating the body's role in memory not only complicates the idea that memory is located in the brain, but provides new challenges to the Cartesian mind/body split that has historically conditioned much of Western cultural discourse. Another traditional binary that the study of memory troubles is that between remembering and forgetting, which turn out to be different aspects of the same process. We tend to see them as the reverse of each other, when in fact they are complementary actions. If remembering is not simply the recall of an image *wie es wirklich gewesen ist* but the construction of that image, then to realize this is to understand that an image in our memory is constructed through forgetting extraneous details. If we imagine our experiences as a solid block of marble, then our memories are formed by whittling away the excess to leave a clear statuesque image, a form realized as much by subtraction as by creation.

In *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History* Friedrich Nietzsche has brilliantly outlined the value of forgetting for life in a parable that illustrates the chaos that would occur if our memories were perfect.

Imagine the extremest possible example of a man who did not possess the power of forgetting at all and who was thus condemned to see everywhere a state of becoming: such a man would no longer believe in his own being, would no longer believe in himself, would see everything flowing asunder in moving points and would lose himself in this stream of becoming: like a true pupil of Heraclitus, he would in the end hardly dare to raise his finger. (103)

A perfect memory would thus silence us forever; in the time-lag between our observation of the object and our attempt to describe it in words lie innumerable slight alterations, each one of which renders the object different from what we wished to denote. Speech becomes impossible; only by forgetting the subtle changes continually taking place can language hold any concept stable enough for some kind of meaning to be communicated.

In "Funes, His Memory" Jorge Luis Borges explores the same idea of a man with a perfect memory, with the narrator noting that Funes, for all his incredible powers, "was not very good at thinking. To think is to ignore (or forget) differences, to generalize, to abstract. In the teeming world of Ireneo Funes there was nothing but particulars" (137). The existence of nouns baffles him. "Not only was it difficult for him to see that the generic symbol 'dog' took in all the dissimilar individuals of all shapes and sizes, it irritated him that the 'dog' of three-fourteen in the afternoon, seen in profile, should be indicated by the same noun as the dog of three-fifteen, seen frontally" (136). A perfect memory leads Funes into chaotic modes of thought; he constructs a number system in which random words stand for particular numbers. "I tried to

explain to Funes that his rhapsody of unconnected words was exactly the opposite of a number *system*. I told him that when one said ‘365’ one said ‘three hundreds, six tens, and five ones,’ a breakdown impossible with the ‘numbers’ *Nigger Timoteo* or a *ponchoful of meat*. Funes either could not or would not understand me” (136). Borges’ story highlights the importance for communication of systems, such as language or numbers, which can be understood to refer to the same general objects, because our memories are imperfect and the systems help us to process information that would otherwise be lost or unintelligible. Forgetting is thus an essential part of constructing meaning.

Memory, Narrative, Identity

For those of us who do not share Funes’s savantism, one could also say that meaning, in turn, is vital for remembering. Meaningful things are easier to remember than nonsensical things (e.g., we do better at remembering a sentence in our own language than a sentence in one we do not understand), and, in the words of memory researcher Frederick Bartlett, to remember is in fact to make an “effort after meaning”: we reconstruct past events in a way so that they make sense.³ This process, which demands forgetting extraneous details, often takes the form of narrative. We give past occurrences story form when we recall them, constructing a beginning, middle, and end, with actions that are imputed to agents, causally linked, and thematically coherent. In order to come up with such a story we must forget much that does not fit the plot. We also tend to rearrange elements or add new ones for the sake of coherence. Because narrative plays a profound role in shaping our remembrance of past events in our own lives, it fashions who we are. Personal identity “takes shape in the stories we tell about ourselves” (Hinchman and Hinchman xvii). These stories we might tell to other people, but first and foremost we tell them to ourselves continually in the form of private recollection or “autobiographical memory” – a subset of episodic memory that treats past experiences as points in one’s personal history.⁴ Our emotional investments in autobiographical memory’s stories of self particularly encourage artistic license.

Researcher Jerome Bruner illustrates this point by recounting a memorable event that occurred when he was a twelve-year-old boating enthusiast. Having learned from a dock owner how to caulk a leaky rowboat, the young Bruner put aside the tools he had bought with his own money and put the boat back in the water to “soak up” overnight. When he returned the next morning he swelled with pride to find the boat “bone dry.” The memory constitutes a story of boyhood achievement. Upon reflection, however, the more experienced adult Bruner points out that things could not have happened exactly as he remembers: newly caulked boats never dry so soon, and the slender, graceful craft he recalls must have really been just one more of the dock owner’s rickety boats for hire. “I apparently need a graceful and bone-dry wherry to go with my construction of a competent, agentive 12-year-old Self – a somewhat snobbish one at that,” he writes (46). Bruner hits on what is at stake in such autobiographical memories and why facts *should* be massaged for the story. The coherence

³ Qtd. in Foster 13.

⁴ Of course, our autobiographical memories can be shaped by our accounts of them to others.

of our personal identities depends on our narrative reconstruction of the past. In his case, his story allows him literally to characterize his 12-year-old self, and thus, indirectly, himself as an adult, since the boy presents a foil for the man he is now. The story of the boat repair is part of an overarching life-story that he, like each of us, is continually crafting, one that culminates in the person narrating it and which sets the stage for his or her future goals. As one's values, priorities, or aspirations change, the life-story must be revised, and therefore the autobiographical memories that comprise it.

In light of the inaccuracies Bruner highlights in his memory about the boat, it is tempting to think of the revisions a person makes with increasing age as further steps away from the past as it really happened – falsifications, in short. But isn't to remember itself to falsify the past? Not only does the narrative structure we give our memories inevitably endow past events with a clearer meaning than they had for us at the time; more basically, we can look at the past only from the vantage point of the present, a perspective we lacked then. When one adds to this the fact that in order simply to make sense of what was happening during the initial event, we had to ignore extraneous details in our environment and forget those moment-to-moment alterations taking place in the objects of our attention, it becomes hard to say exactly what would constitute a "truthful" or "accurate" memory of that event. Then again, such reasoning implicitly defines "truth" as correspondence to what was, a notion Mark Freeman finds "limited and simplistic." His question in relation to written autobiography applies equally to autobiographical memory: "Can we not say ... that narrative reflection ... opens the way toward a more comprehensive and expansive conception of truth itself?" Precisely because autobiographical memory enhances the meaning of past events in our lives, and because in attributing this significance we help consolidate the selves we are today, one could say these memories are "*truer* than immediate experience" (32).

However one gauges the truthfulness of our autobiographical memories, there is no denying that the "internalized and evolving life story" they inform gives our lives "some semblance of psychosocial *unity and purpose*" (McAdams 188; his emphasis). Dan McAdams's use of the term "psychosocial" in this phrase highlights the fact that this process of identity-shaping via life story is not simply a psychological process. Through this story our identities are socially constructed as well. McAdams explains that around the time of elementary school, children "begin to internalize their culture's norms concerning what the story of an entire life should itself contain. They learn, for example, that a telling of a single life typically begins with, say, an account of birth and typically includes, say, early experiences in the family, eventual emergence out of the family, geographical moves, and so on" (192). By forming this internalized life story according to our understanding of the culture's biographical conventions, we construct identities that are legible to society. Furthermore, our life stories "often strike variations upon a repertoire of socially available narratives" that recruit us into socially recognized roles and thus "legitimize the community" (Hinchman and Hinchman xvii). This would explain the ideological power of cultural master-narratives such as "the American dream": by conditioning the stories many people make of their lives, it promotes identities – "interpellates subjects" in the language of Althusser – that

share values friendly to a capitalist society and act in ways that support it. On the other hand, much personal empowerment and self-transformation can be brought about by deliberately adopting certain narratives in the culture and taking inspiration from them to refashion the way we narrate our pasts to ourselves, as when abuse victims replace “tragic” life-stories with stories of “survival.” One can have a say in one’s social construction. Regardless, the point to be stressed here is that the narrative tendency of autobiographical memory effectively makes our private memories public, even if we never share them with anyone else.

Cultural Memory

This process of individual-identity construction that occurs via our storytelling autobiographical memory forms an analogy for how a community defines itself. But here “cultural memory” becomes the operative term. If autobiographical memory reconstructs life events, cultural memory can be understood as the communal effort to retrace the supposed original state or form of a cultural event or cultural object. Such act of restoration is a discursive construct that involves processes of discovery, selection, imagination, and reconstruction. Cultural memory refers to communal conceptions of heritage and history, and thus to more “public” forms of narrative such as (to name just a few examples) published histories in a popular or academic vein, historical films, and novels that form “narratives of community.”⁵ Cultural memory also consists in oral histories that members of a community share with each other, a fact that emphasizes that cultural memory and autobiographical memory are very much bound up with each other – these communal conceptions of history inform the way we recall our lives, and are in turn sustained by such recollection. Both forms of memory entail similar processes: just as individual identity emerges from the narrative shape one gives one’s life through recalling it, these historical accounts of a community foster a shared identity among its members. And like the individual’s past which changes to fit present circumstances, the community’s heritage and history are revised as the community moves in time.

In this case, however, the revisions are more obviously political. How cultural memory is created, preserved, or changed is always entangled in a network of power relationships. Put bluntly, who wins the war will write history and guard its memory. Such histories can be coherent (and favorable to those in power) only when certain elements are left out. Here too remembering and forgetting are but different aspects of the same process, yet this kind of forgetting reflects and promotes the disenfranchisement of particular social groups. Much work in cultural studies has therefore been devoted to recovering forgotten voices from the past and shining the spotlight on those traditionally marginalized elements of society. The rise of feminism, the explosion in ethnic studies and the rapid growth of postcolonial studies all emphasize the widespread desire to rewrite the traditional narratives of the past, to bring back that which has been forgotten. Marianne Hirsch states that “feminist scholarship has

⁵ Sandra Zagarella gives this name to a literary genre developed mainly by 19th-century women writers such as Sarah Orne Jewett, George Eliot, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. She points out that these narratives ignore chronological time patterns; instead, they prefer process over progress (249-78, 254).

been driven by the desire to redefine culture from the perspective of women through the retrieval and inclusion of women's work, stories, and artifacts" (223). Women's voices, long subordinated to the authority of masculine histories, need to be recovered not to supplement official histories but to revolutionize our conceptions of the past and disrupt linear narratives of progress. This program is shared by historians seeking to insert ethnic voices into metropolitan histories in order to unveil the barbarism that so often accompanies "civilization" and "progress." Against the narratives of the Founding Fathers and Manifest Destiny come the counter-narratives of invasion and genocide, of slavery, of conquest and racial discrimination, stories that can be suppressed no longer from the narration of the nation. "The triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate" (Benjamin VII) has been thrown into chaos by the sudden uprising of the prostrate, and linear narratives descend into confusion. However, even as our histories are being re-membered, we are always aware of how much remains forgotten. At the juncture of feminism, ethnicity, and postcolonialism comes Gayatri Spivak's famous question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" which points out that some voices may be irrecoverable and the project of giving expression to everyone's voice may be impossible. Under pressure from all sides, the metanarratives of Western civilisation break down and the cultural systems, which had held certain concepts fixed by forgetting differences and changes, break down. The meaning of words becomes slippery rather than stable; fixed concepts become fluid as the focus turns from the objects themselves to the processes of their emergence. One could argue that Nietzsche's nightmare of a man "condemned to see everywhere a state of becoming" is now the goal of education.

In line with modern approaches to history, the depiction of forgotten historical events in contemporary artworks has been seen as an act of collective memory. "Memorials provide the sites where groups of people gather to create a common past for themselves, places where they tell the constitutive narratives, their 'shared' stories of the past" (Young, "Texture" 182). The intrusion of the forgotten past into modern culture is thus seen as an element of the wider rewriting of the nation, an act of construction that builds a communal consensus about present identity. Modern critics view art as having a critical role in the formation of the community; it creates a past and a heritage that offers oppressed groups a foundation from which to criticize dominant structures of power. The injunction to remember is thus a critique of the hegemonic discourses that ask us to forget.

However, such discussions often ignore the role of forgetting in the creation of art. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, Theodor Adorno famously declared that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," thereby articulating the feeling that not only are some events so terrible and profound as to be beyond expression but that to transform the Holocaust into art would in some measure legitimize it. However, since the release of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* in 1993, popular cinema has been inundated with films about the Holocaust, from Roberto Benigni's comedy *Life is Beautiful* (1997), to *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Mark Herman 2008) and *The Reader* (Stephen Daldry 2008), leading film critic A.O. Scott to say that "the number of Holocaust-related memoirs, novels, documentaries and feature films in the past decade or so seems to defy quantification, and their proliferations raises some uncomfortable

questions. Why are there so many? Why now? And more queasily, could there be too many?” (1). As opposed to Bennett’s view, mentioned above, of visual art as a means to preserve a survivor’s traumatic sense memory from historical oblivion, Scott concludes that this latter-day “burst of cinematic and literary interest” demonstrates the Holocaust to be “receding from living memory” (2). The spate of artworks depicting some aspect of the Holocaust is not an injunction to remember but an indicator of how much has been forgotten; those raw and burning emotions of horror, shame, and rage have dulled, those terrifyingly exact images have blurred in the collective memory, creating a sepia-toned elegiac mood that artists may manipulate for their canvases. There is nothing necessarily immoral about this – art has always appropriated the raw material of life for its own ends – but it illustrates that art may be less a memorial to the past than an indicator that it is being forgotten.

If art not only reflects the withdrawal of living memory but falsifies the past by ordering and familiarizing its chaotic, even terrifying immediacy through generic conventions and overall aesthetic form, the question arises as to how the past could be represented accurately in cultural memory, and indeed whether it can. How should we define accuracy, aside from the increased presence of previously underrepresented groups? These are difficult questions, no less so than that of what counts for accuracy in the case of our narrativizing autobiographical memory. What is clearer is the powerful influence of these representations of the past on our present-day cultural landscape. One could argue that Hollywood films about the Holocaust help maintain the relatively recent trend that anti-Semitic views are denied legitimacy in American popular culture, that they attune us to (if, sadly, they do not prompt us to respond to) contemporary acts of genocide, and that they offer contemporary reinforcement, however problematic, to a historical narrative of vital importance to Jewish identity. Or we can take the case of representations of African-American slavery, as discussed by Paul Gilroy. He asserts that the preservation of the memory of slavery “as a living intellectual resource in expressive political culture ... often through [African-American] spirituality ... helped to generate a new set of answers ... [and] to hold on to the unity of ethics and politics sundered from each other by modernity’s insistence that the true, the good, and the beautiful had distinct origins.” Artistic expression therefore becomes “the means toward both individual self-fashioning and communal liberation” (39). This despite the fact that artistic representations of slavery in, say, African-American spirituals and the literature of the Harlem Renaissance surely also “aestheticize away” much of the trauma that was involved in the actual experience of slavery, and in this way constitute forms of forgetting.

The Essays

In short, memory is a site of identity formation, empowerment, and resistance for individuals and communities. In the context of modern globalization these functions of memory take on new meaning and significance. Stuart Hall’s observation that identity is formed at the point where “the unspeakable stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history” has always been an insightful comment about how “private” and “public” memory intersect, but the context of increased global migration casts it in a new light, given that this intersection is nowadays frequently located in a transnational space. The growing internationalization of the circuits of mobility and capital, infor-

mation and labor, cultural practice and goods leaves individuals tied to differing and multiple cultural reference groups in a series of multiple positionings. In an ever more globalized space that suggests borderless multiplicities without unity, cultural differences, competing conceptions of memory, and conflicts of value seem omnipresent. Globalization creates productive dynamics but also tensions and contradictions that are worldwide in scale, which penetrate into the lives of communities and individuals. As the latter face an erasure of inherited cultural memories and the need to reconcile fragments of reminiscence with new experiences according to changing contexts, memory may serve them as “an atlas of the difficult world” (Rich 10). Put differently, memory speaks to them across ruptures of space and time and provides them with continuity, roots, and a sense of belonging in a rapidly changing world of time-space compression.

How individuals and communities use memory to navigate the current global situation is the subject of many of the essays collected in this volume, while other essays contextualize these strategies by examining functions and interrogations of memory in earlier geopolitical environments. Taken as a whole, they form a multifaceted exploration of how various forms of memory are discursively constructed and negotiated in literature, art, media, and other cultural modes of representation. The collection addresses a wide array of texts and cultural contexts:

Annette Rukwied analyzes the connections between ethnic autobiography and cultural memory. Drawing on the theories of Aleida and Jan Assmann and Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez among others, her paper explores Tomas Rivera’s ideas about the three core archetypes of *la casa*, *el barrio*, and *la lucha* in Chicano/a literature and examines the ambivalence of cultural memory, which may be a source of empowerment for ethnic minorities but also an essentialist narrative that risks marginalizing elements within the ethnic community.

Julia Andres addresses the construction of personal, familial, ethnic, and universal memory in Sandra Cisneros’ *Caramelo* and the ways in which memory becomes a source of empowerment and richness for both protagonist and reader. Symbolized by the metaphor of the *rebozo*, a traditional Mexican shawl woven of many strands, the narrative adopts the style of the *testimonio*, thus making not only the subjectivity but also the importance of first-person memory central to its themes. However, by interweaving this with images that tap Jung’s concept of the archetypal Mother, the novel creates patterns that link personal, familial, social, and universal memory into an interlocking design.

Stephen Joyce researches the connection between cultural memory and literary representation by studying the recurring motif of the Japanese Occupation in Korean American fiction. While most studies of ethnic fiction are quick to relate literary motifs to socio-historical events, this paper argues that such approaches gloss over their literary uses. Rather than seeing the Occupation as the traumatic return of a cultural memory, it may be more accurate to view it as a motif that heightens the particular feeling of tragedy (*han*) which is a traditional feature of Korean literature. Its frequent appearance in Korean American literature may thus have less to do with collective consciousness than literary utility.

Olaf Kaltmeier investigates the political power relations underpinning the spatial organization and struggle for control of the historic city centers of the Americas. By showing how these city centers have been recolonized by white and mestizo elites and transformed into areas of significant cultural and economic capital, he argues that traditionally oppressed communities have been pushed to the margins of the urban space in a way that replicates colonialism. The cultural memory of traumatization, rendered in oral narratives and literature, may help these communities cope with loss and develop strategies for effective resistance.

László Munteán explores the evolution of ideas for memorializing the 9/11 attacks in the debate over the debris of the Twin Towers and the planning for the new Freedom Towers. Drawing on theories from cognitive linguistics and studies of urban spatial organization, he critically examines the construction of various narratives designed to situate the attacks within different ideological worldviews and illustrates how the struggle for control of public memory is intimately connected with issues of power, nation, and social space.

Marcel Fromme and Alethea Wait, with Carolin Kirchhoff, work to link the influences of media on the processes of representation and cultural memory formation in contemporary traumatic contexts (namely the 9/11 terrorist event) via analyses of newspaper headlines, network news broadcasts, and popular images. They contend that once properly framed and propagated, a particularly suitable icon can transcend an initial event and become part of a novel discourse – a collective or cultural memory – which can continue to influence further retrospective examination of specific historical contexts.

Marcus Hartner gives a critical analysis of the academic response to Penelope Lively's novel *Moon Tiger*, which drew widespread praise for its postmodernist themes of memory, history, and the fragmentation of narrative and the individual subject. Through a close reading of the text that draws on reader response theories, structuralism, and deconstruction, he shows how the novel's seemingly postmodern structure is held together by traditional notions of narrative, memory, and the individual, and argues that critics should be careful not to let the desire to embrace fashionable concepts and terminology override the traditional skills of close reading and textual analysis.

Ridvan Askin critiques Paul Ricoeur's concept of narrative in relation to his seminal work *Memory, History, Forgetting*. He argues that Ricoeur fails to pay sufficient attention to the importance of narrative within his own concept of memory; if narrative creates what is to be re-membered, then an understanding of narrative becomes essential to the processes of memory. Ricoeur's concept of narrative as a synthesis with intelligible wholeness ignores postmodern concepts of aporia and the open, unconcluded text. Ricoeur's concepts thus need to be re-evaluated in light of different concepts of narrative, with significant consequences for his conception of memory and history.

Bond Love locates in William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* a metaliterary critique of its author's failure to overcome the conditioning of his white, Southern cultural heritage in his visual descriptions of African Americans. This critique appears in scenes in which a black body is described through the eyes of a white author-surrogate

“blinded” by cultural memory, as well as in the author’s foregrounding and even satire of his attempts to make the black body readable with white Southern symbology. As a possible resolution to this crisis of representation, the text offers the reader formal devices that encourage him or her to transcend through character-*visualization* the limitations of cultural memory that ensnare the text’s representations.

Wilfried Raussert looks at the entwining of corporeality and signification in *Moby Dick*, arguing that Herman Melville’s frequent use of tropes such as “diving into the body” and “into the subterranean” establish the author as archeologist of body and text. In analyzing various layers of the whale’s body Melville links body and text as manifestations of cultural memory and 19th-century material culture in process. With other “grotesque bodies” such as those of Ahab and Queequeg narrating histories of their own, the whale hunt involving all three becomes an exploration of cultural difference and competing discourses of cultural memory, with literally no body getting the final word.

Works Cited

- Benjamin, Walter. “On the Concept of History.” *Marxists Internet Archive*. 15 Oct. 2009.
 <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm>>
- Bennett, Jill. “The Aesthetics Of Sense-Memory – Theorising Trauma through the Visual Arts.” *Regimes Of Memory*. Ed. Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. “Funes, His Memory.” *Collected Fictions*. Trans. Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin, 1998. 131-37.
- Bruner, Jerome. “The ‘remembered’ self.” *The Remembering Self: Construction and Accuracy in the Self-Narrative*. Ed. Ulric Neisser and Robyn Fivush. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 41-54.
- Carman, Taylor. *Merleau-Ponty*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Deutscher, Max. “Remembering, ‘Remembering.’” *Cause, Mind, and Reality*. Ed. John Heil. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989. 53-72.
- Draaisma, Douwe. *Metaphors of Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Foster, Jonathan K. *Memory – A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.
- Freeman, Mark. *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Fuchs, Thomas. “The Memory of the Body.” 2004. 8 August 2009.
 <<http://www.klinikum.uni-heidelberg.de/fileadmin/zpm/psychatrie/ppp2004/manuskript/fuchs.pdf>>
- . *Leib und Lebenswelt – Neue philosophisch-psychiatrische Essays*. Kusterdingen: SFG-Servicecenter Fachverlage, 2008.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
- Hinchman, Lewis, and Sandra Hinchman. “Introduction.” *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*. Ed. Lewis Hinchman and Sandra Hinchman. Albany: State U of the New York P, 2001.

J. Andres, S. Joyce, B. Love, W. Raussert, and A. Wait

- Hirsch, Marianne, and Valerie Smith. "Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction." *Theories of Memory: A Reader*. Ed. Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2007. 223-29.
- Krell, David Farrell. *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990.
- McAdams, Dan. "Identity and the Life Story." *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self*. Ed. Robyn Fivush and Catherine Haden. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003. 187-207.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." *Theories of Memory: A Reader*. Ed. Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2007. 102-8.
- Rich, Adrienne. *An Atlas of the Difficult World: Poems 1988-1991*. New York: Norton, 1991.
- Scott, AO. "Never Forget. You're Reminded." *The New York Times*. 21 Nov. 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/23/movies/23scot.html?pagewanted=2&_r=1&fta=y>
- Young, James E. *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2000.
- . "The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning." *Theories of Memory: A Reader*. Ed. Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2007. 177-84
- Zagarella, Sandra A. "Narrative of Community: The Identification of a Genre." *Revising the Word and World: Essays in Feminist Literary Criticism*. Ed. Vèvè A. Clark et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993. 249-78.
- "Memory." Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 10 Feb. 2010. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/memory>>
- "Memory." *Oxford English Dictionary*. 1st ed. 1970.