Performing Memories

Performing Memories:

Media, Creation, Anthropology, and Remembrance

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

GABRIELE BIOTTI

This collection of essays focuses on how a certain number of languages and disciplines have approached, processed, and elaborated memory. Different researchers from various backgrounds and fields of study have analysed peculiar experiences of memory telling in texts and society. The book provides an interdisciplinary approach to memory and, more widely, time experience, starting from the background research idea that memory studies have become more and more interconnected with other scholarly areas, and a research activity on interdisciplinary practices of remembrance emerges as a scientific field with rich and promising developments. *Performing Memories: Media, Creation, Anthropology, and Remembrance* analyses the importance of an interdisciplinary research framework concerning writing practices, testimony documents, narratives focused on past time, audiovisual works on remembrance, and different places of memory.

The contributions gathered in this book share a focus on practices of memory constructing, elaborating and performing in specific social and cultural contexts. In this research space, some questions were proposed and itineraries established. Researchers from the scholarly fields of literary studies, film and media studies, historical studies, sociology, architectural studies, geocriticism, art theory and history, and anthropology develop an inquiry space on remembrance from many approaches, by opening many doors and tracing various paths of analysis, in an open field of intersections. The book's main topic, memory, is examined in strict connection, and dialogue, with other fields of knowledge. A dynamic between different theories and disciplines shows what can be considered as the real nature of memory studies: a growing interdisciplinary field in which many questions, and some answers, find their place. In this sense, memory studies, as they can be approached in the contemporary research context, reveal a space of multiple connections. One of the aims of this collective work is to propose itineraries of thought in a hyper-determined research perspective, where any intellectual rigidity can be averted by moving towards an interdisciplinary richness of research developments.

Memory is everything behind us, in any context. And memory is relevant as an object of analysis and research not just for the theoretical crossings it allows but also because of two questions of great relevance: how do we position ourselves with respect to our past? And, in which ways do past time still haunt our present life? Not only does memory show the centrality of a relationship with the past but it also produces different readings, focuses, perspectives, and works in the spaces of social discourse, theory, and artistic expression. These research contributions stress the importance not only of memories elaborating through codes and forms of expression but also of the deep anthropological significance of a multilayered, and often polyphonic, performance of different ideas of memory.

Societies, in different historical contexts, appear to be obsessed by memory from many points of view. This position, this feeling, this consciousness concerning memory originated mostly in the period between the 19th and the 20th century. In the contemporary context, memory is involved anytime we analyse social dynamics, historical questions, and different relationships with past time, and it is a crucial topic in debates on civil rights violations, reparation justice, trials, and the construction of democratic societies. Memory has been one of the main tools to assure that crimes during past dictatorships could be punished. It is also what assures a link between different generations in society; for example, in communities such as families or small groups. This is related often to more personal memories: the family, the small community, or the village. Memory reveals the history of traditions, of social habits, but it has also become a space for artistic and cultural elaborations. Memory is, finally, transmission and communication: the pivotal point of many discursive intersections and elaborations in the actual context.

One of the peculiarities of the actual scholarly field of memory studies is the fact that it is reshaping other research paradigms. This complex research field has progressively proposed a wide range of new questions to humanities and the media research area. This book analyses a group of such topics and questions, aiming to explore interdisciplinary intersections in thought: this enables researchers to create questions and meditate on existing ones in a space where new possibilities are being shaped. Memory studies allow different ways of thinking, the development of new methodological questionnaires, and the generation of new subjects of analysis. Cross-disciplinary research strategies are made possible by following the different possibilities coming from the study of memory according to specific geographical, historical, social, and anthropological contexts.

Astrid Erll focuses attention on the fact that it is definitively correct to study a discipline called cultural memory studies; in her words,

> Over the past two decades, the relationship between culture and memory has emerged in many parts of the world as a key issue of interdisciplinary research, involving fields as diverse as history, sociology, art, literary and media studies, philosophy, theology, psychology, and the neurosciences, and thus bringing together the humanities, social studies, and the natural sciences in a unique way.[1]

The discipline of memory studies has developed in close relationship to different types of cultural productions and codes. Erll stresses the importance of the confederating strength of memory as a strategic point at which many aspects of contemporary society converge. She also argues that the scholarly work on memory in the last twenty years or so, has assumed "a decidedly cultural and social perspective."[2] Society and culture are directly and strongly involved in this process: society as a dynamic place of memory elaboration; culture as a highly complex context where memories are recorded, written, expressed, coded, performed, filmed, and screened. In social groups and organizations, culture is the result of social interactions. To speak about cultural memory is also to speak about society and social dynamics: cultural memory is a collective and social memory as the result of interactions and a constant dialogue between single elaborations and practices on one side, and more general reconfigurations of various series of codes and forms of writing on the other. This brings us to the topic of the institutionalization of memories: what vector forces, today, make memory in its various forms possible? And how can they be shared? To approach cultural memory in this sense is also to understand how memories are or have been coded, carried, and transmitted. Different cultural practices, such as media (tv, cinema, painting), performances (theatre and related forms), narratives (historical novels, memory writing and telling), as different forms of cultural memory provide different codes to approach memory. This is an interdisciplinary research area in which scholarly questions from different fields converge towards new discursive forms.

Jan Assmann adequately shows the difference between communicative memory and cultural memory. According to him,

> Communicative memory is non-institutional; it is not supported by any institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation; it is not cultivated by specialists and is not summoned or celebrated on special occasions; it lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this very reason, has only a limited time depth which normally reaches no farther back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations.[3]

Assmann stresses the difference of cultural memory having a much more institutionalized nature; it

> is a kind of institution. It is exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms that, unlike the sounds of words or the sight of gestures, are stable and situation-transcendent: They may be transferred from one situation to another and transmitted from one generation to another. […] Our memory, which we possess as beings equipped with a human mind, exists only in constant interaction not only with other human memories but also with 'things', outward symbols.[4]

Places, interactions, representations, institutions, and texts form the symbolic space in which our memories are elaborated, coded, stored, presented, and made public.

Different disciplines, practices and discourses, media, myths, monuments, historiographical writing but also rituals and rituality and socially-oriented practices of remembering, have shaped distinct, but sometimes related, configurations of memory. How can we differentiate distinct memory discourses or texts according to specific disciplines? And how is memory confederating different approaches, theories, texts, and forms of expression? Interdisciplinary work on remembrance involves a series of productive shifts between theories and discourses. Cultural memory has an active dimension; as Aleida Assmann claims, such a dimension

> supports a collective identity [...]. It is built on a small number of normative and formative texts, places, persons, artefacts, and myths which are meant to be actively circulated and communicated in ever-new presentations and performances. The working memory stores and reproduces the cultural capital of a society that is continuously recycled and re-affirmed.[5]

Cultural memory depends on both collective elaborations and personal, individual practices of remembering. This leads us to a complex question: how are these two types of memory practices, the collective and the individual, related? When are they in conflict and when do they interact? This is not unproblematic because collective memories are difficult to find indeed; any crucial historical happening has left memories but it is always difficult to establish a collective memory of that event. Oral history methods, which can be connected to the memory studies field for some of its characteristics, have shown, for example, that different, and often divergent, memory narratives coexist. Or we can think about the many ways in which memory has been described, told, or presented as a community myth through the elaboration of literary works.

Some research questions can be formulated concerning the position of memory studies as a meaning-producing discipline. Erll defines cultural memory as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts;"[6] her definition can be intertwined with what Susannah Radstone and Katherine Hodgkin write: "it would be impossible to think about memory simply taking it as a given: to work with memory must entail asking questions about memory itself, how it is conceived in different cultural and historical contexts, and how to understand its extraordinary discursive prominence today."[7] Radstone and Hodgkin stress the fact that "memory as a concept throws light on the unquestioned assumptions and the internal workings of the various disciplines in which it comes to be positioned"[8] and in this sense, different specific methodological problems arise and develop. Not only is it possible to explain how present and past interact in society and culture, we can also evaluate the richness of the multiple interconnections between historical facts, memorial narratives, the narrative dimension of history writing, and the elaboration of different experiences of past time. Radstone and Hodgkin warn of the "risks of making essentialist, universalistic or monolithic claims about memory;"[9] this can be clarified by investigating what they define as "regimes of memory". Regimes of memory have their primary concern with the "outside" of memory rather than with the "inside" of it, with epistemological and not ontological questions, and it is appropriate to focus on memory not as an object but more as a concept. In the authors' words, the perspective of regimes of memory "discusses the 'work' memory has done and continues to do in, amongst other things, the production of subjectivity and of the public / private relation."[10] How do regimes of memory change over time? In which ways? Starting by which formulations and elaborations? And in which contexts? And again, how do forms of memory and commemorations differ? In which ways are such differences related to specific historical events, social contexts and differentiated receptions, and cultural products?

Starting from this group of questions, *Performing Memories: Media, Creation, Anthropology, and Remembrance* proposes the definition of an epistemological space of interpretation in which it is precisely the variability of elaborations that provides a hermeneutics of the different regimes of memory.

Remembrance has become a turning point in contemporary society in which history plays a crucial role. But we also live in a hypermediated and connected world, and cinema and the media have profoundly modified our knowledge, consciousness, and transmission of memory itself. To study memory is also to study possible scholarly intersections and sometimes create new ones, allowing us to develop articulated forms of thought in the

contemporary context. In the dynamic space of memory studies, this is possible and desirable. In this book's sections, relevant research perspectives such as the anthropology of memory, narratives of memory, uncanny and unrest memories and aesthetics, social memory, and mediated forms of remembrance are explored. These areas of inquiry have been approached by scholars aiming to read different aspects in the memory debate in a plurality of voices showing the rich articulations of this area. Knowing human groups in their symbolic processes is a contextual experience, a process clarifying relations within societies, where symbols and their elaboration can produce social actions. For this reason, it is strategic to devote critical attention to experiences such as representations, narrations, documentaries, audiovisual products, life stories, case studies, biographies, and accounts; to works thought and produced by groups or individuals in specific contexts, aiming to develop and represent the nature of memory processes as well as their internal tensions and contradictions.

Performing Memories: Media, Creation, Anthropology, and Remembrance explores the rich intersections between memory practices and discourses, social interactions, and the anthropological focus on social and memory processes and works of art. In society, and especially in a complex society like the contemporary one, memory also measures our strategies of building subjectivities, and of making experience of the multiple connections between past and present, in order to decipher them as they deal with persons and the different processes of subjectivity construction. Memory is not only about commemorations or recalling the past; it is also about the multifaceted tensions in our relationship with the past that can be analysed and questioned.

In Astrid Erll's words, what makes the memory studies field distinct

> is not the infinite multitude of possible *topics* which characterizes cultural memory studies, but instead its *concepts*: the specific ways of conceiving of themes and of approaching objects. […] What we need is to take a survey of the concepts used in memory studies and, in doing so, cross intellectual and linguistic boundaries.[11]

Not being a field defined through an ontology of the discipline but rather multiple spaces of writing and research, memory is what allows us to appreciate specific ways and methods of conceiving and approaching ideas and objects, experiences, and practices.

No discipline has a privileged standpoint or approach to the research concerning memories, commemorations, past times and their elaboration. Different discourses contribute, with specific methodologies and perspectives, to creating a terminological richness. Interdisciplinary research must be

capable of discriminating concepts from different disciplines but, at the same time, can work to develop a symbolic space of constant reformulation of codes, canons, paradigms, and theories. In this sense, this book analyses how memory is strictly connected with the aesthetic work but also with social concerns and historical matters in the shaping and discussing of memories. *Performing Memories: Media, Creation, Anthropology, and Remembrance* aims to show how different forms of expression, and different representations, develop or have developed experiences around memory and memory practices, but not only. In parallel, it proposes research directions coming from a broad series of cultural forms, codes, and canons. The book explores a range of significant moments in approaching, defining, shaping, institutionalizing, and processing memory in texts and art forms, in a series of dialogues between commemorations, trauma elaborations, discourses in society, politics of remembrance, academic disciplines, and art and media practices. Memories are approached not only in their fundamental contents but also as opportunities to further interrogate certain forms of artistic expression and specific social practices and tensions.

The book is organized into four sections: *Collective Memories*; *Narratives of Memory*; *Heritage, Architecture and Places of Memory: Writings and Experiences*; and *Remembrance and the Image: Cinema, Fragments of Images and Pictorial Representation*. The authors develop their research itineraries through artwork analysis, textual readings, theoretical works, or chapters showing the strict relationships with the debate on memory and its cultural elaborations. This is not only related to texts of artworks; it also deals with historical, social, cultural, and geographical issues that have shaped in decisive ways our relationship with the past time and the articulated work for remembering it.

In the section *Collective Memories*, contributions examine the relationship between social collectivities, memorialization, collective memories of events, and the definition of different memory paradigms.

By exploring the relationship between marriage, diaspora, and national identity in ethnographic terms, Shira Pinczuk analyses the memory and identity construction processes of the Druze minorities in Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. The Golan brides are young Syrian Druze women who have married into the Druze community of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights; upon their passage through the checkpoint between Israel and Syria, they are stripped of their documents and are de-facto forced to re-invent themselves in a new land and society. They must rebuild their personal and national identities on the basis of cultural memories inherited from their

ancestors and personal memories from their previous lives. Pinczuk investigates how personal and cultural memories and traditions underpin essential senses of identity.

The commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland, with a research focus on how women have long been forgotten in the Irish national memory process, is the topic of Ryan Nolan's research work. The centrality of trauma and martyrdom to the Irish collective are apparent in the story of the Rising. This small rebellion, lasting only a week in Easter 1916, has been woven into Irish memory and its story transcended to mythic status. However, the group that lost the most in the 100 years since the Rising have been marginalized from the narrative: the forgotten women of 1916 signal some contradictions that encapsulate the modern Irish state. Two hundred and fifty women fought alongside their male counterparts under the republican women's rights organisation Cumann na mBan but in the years after the Rising, their role was downplayed and their contribution to Irish freedom forgotten. The feminist and socialist ideologies of the Rising were supressed and their involvement whitewashed from history. The chapter evaluates the recent achievements of women's movements in Ireland whilst highlighting there is still a long road to travel to fully honour the ideals of the women and men of 1916.

Rebecca Young studies how a thriving tourist industry in London's East End, based around Jack the Ripper's murder sites, has developed, showing a social process: memory, myth, and history are becoming entwined, creating a vortex of symbolic investment where historical and myth-based narratives, constructions, and expectations feed into one another and construct a contested site of memory. Based on original fieldwork and drawing on existing academic theories in memory and tourism literature, Young examines the process that has allowed these tourist spaces to become sites of memory where myth can be presented as fact, resulting in visitor memories that are constructed out of repurposed myths rather than historical events. In this mixing of distinct categories, the unique nature of these sites allows visitors to pick through the representations that help support their chosen narrative, allowing legends to flourish. Thus, a contested site of memory is created based not on history but on fragmented mimetic readings of the Jack the Ripper narrative.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the post-World War II construction of its didactic narrative in the context of US history have been analysed by David Worthington. The author argues that knowledge advancement and dissemination, memory preservation, and the raising of moral and spiritual questions are problematized by the successful rhetorical intersection of the ideology of American exceptionalism and US

national identity. The relationship between victimage, national interest, and self-reflexivity is addressed: the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum advances overly simplistic frames of victim, perpetrator, and rescue that solidify public perceptions of these roles and confound broader questions about US history and memory. The implications of the museum narratives interpellate visitors with the story of the Shoah, and such interpellations make it more difficult for the US to consider its culpability in perpetrating atrocities.

Maria Georgiou's chapter is based on the scholarly approach to traumatic memories and their implications at both the collective and individual levels; her emphasis is on the repercussions of suppressing and silencing past memories for the younger generations. Through a dialogue between hauntology, communicative memory, and the uncanny, and by drawing on an autobiographical transgenerational evocation of the traumatic past of Cyprus, her chapter shows how the persistence of the troubled past of war and violence in divided Cyprus is central to understanding a haunted past still asking for contemporary elaboration. In a context where the suppression, erasure, and belatedness of past trauma shadow the present, the author warns of a never-ending haunting of the past which, by swallowing the future and filling it with ghosts, eventually becomes future past.

Valeria Stabile reconstructs and analyses the Tlatelolco massacre in Mexico City, where, on October 2, 1968, around 300 young students were killed by snipers during a massive protest that took place six days before the official beginning of the Olympics hosted by the city. The site of the massacre was *Plaza de las tres culturas*, the historical, cultural, and political heart of the Mexican capital; the author establishes a dialogue between the historical happenings that characterized life in Tlatelolco by retracing its history, its cultural values, and the impressions it gives nowadays as a traumatic space of intersected Mexican memories. A literary and socio-cultural definition as a place of memory in Mexico is shown through a comparative reading of the work of writers, poets, and intellectuals such as Rosario Castellanos, José Emilio Pacheco, Octavio Paz, and Elena Poniatowska.

The section *Narratives of Memory* contains contributions on literary works about memory and remembrance, with references to space, trauma, and time elaboration.

By analysing William Henry Hudson's *Ralph Herne*, Raúl Ianes examines the fictional representation of the mechanism of memory as presented in an English novel intended for young readers. Hudson narrates the life and adventures of a young British physician who arrives in Buenos Aires and lives through the yellow fever epidemic that decimated the Argentine capital

in 1872. He emphasizes the importance of vision and memory in his narrative (memory as an image, a concept coming down from Baruch Spinoza and asserted more recently by Paul Ricœur in *Memory, History, and Forgetting*) and presages other, more layered references to observations of his memory and intentional recollection. Both the fictional depiction of the plague as well as its pictorial representation are drawn from Hudson's past experiences and presented in the novel as he remembered them himself or as remembered by others.

William Soares dos Santos analyses the construction of a narrative of religious conversion in a Brazilian evangelical church, which he locates in a process of understanding the transformation of social identity through narrative, as part of a process of apprehension of the religious discourse on the part of the narrator through time. The author argues that the narrative construction of a past with personal difficulties involves the construction of a more balanced identity in the perspective of the present. Through the concepts of web of change and stream of change, a narrative dimension of time is the perspective by which it becomes possible to understand the rich relationship between narrative and social identity.

August Wilson's collection of ten plays *The American Century Cycle*, trauma, and remembering and forgetting about slavery are approached in Sînziana Popescu's chapter. The African American playwright's work is analysed as a representation of the traumatic history of the African Americans in order to show, through his plays, the continuing injustices to which this minority has been subjected and is still being subjected to. Wilson's plays deal with the traumatic journey of the Africans brought to the United States as slaves, the personal traumas of the characters, either former slaves or the first generation born into freedom, and the collective trauma of the slavery that seems to affect the community even years after slavery has been abolished. The author has his characters remember the past in order for them to find the power to move forward: by focusing on trauma and memory theories and on how forgetting is seen as relevant when discussing memory and remembering, the analysis shows August Wilson's position is against forgetting the traumas of his community's past and how he wants his characters to remember.

The traumatic post-memory of perpetrators in Rachel Seiffert's novel *The Dark Room* is the object of Alicja Lasak's analysis. Her contribution concerns the burden of guilt passed down through generations so that it overwhelms the descendants of the perpetrators. By approaching *The Dark Room*, a novel about traumatic memory, Lasak defines an analysis of traumatic post-memory concerning the grandson of a Waffen-SS officer, obsessed with his grandfather's participation in the Second World War and

aiming to reconstruct his involvement in murdering Jews in Belarus. The chapter explores how the descendants of perpetrators may be haunted by the memories of traumatic events in which older generations were implicated. Furthermore, the author depicts how visiting a historical site might trigger the post-memory of the events that took place there.

Ted Chiang's speculative fiction narrative stories about memory, narrative, technology, and the self are approached by Jo Alyson Parker. She analyses how Chiang explores in his fictional literary production the possibility of a world wherein millions of people wear personal cameras that can capture continuous videos of their lives – a situation that is already occurring. Chiang introduces in his narrative a new piece of technology, "Remem," a precise search tool that can take the place of natural memory. The narrator must confront the fact that his organic and fallible human memories are at odds with the accurate external memories that Remem enables him to access. Parker also explores the meaning of another story, intertwined with the main one, dealing with the introduction of writing into the oral culture of West African Tivland, which spurs a confrontation between what is written on paper over what was said. Parker's chapter explores how Chiang provides insights into the connection between memory and the narrative construction of the self, as well as the impact of technology upon that construction, through stories addressing both individual memory and cultural memory.

The notion of collective memory as represented by overlapping imaginary places in the literary output of Miguel Ángel Asturias is Irmina Szubert's research topic. The merging of different historical periods and spatial areas in the poet's works – inseparable signifying realities-imageries such as Christian churches and monasteries erected by the Spanish conquistadors on the ruins of indigenous temples and palaces – provides the architectural metaphors elaborated through Asturias' highly expressive language of poetic prose. Szubert approaches the harmonious superposition of narrative elements from both pre-Columbian oral traditions (deeply buried layers of cultural remembrance) and European literary models, fictionalized and distorted cities-palimpsests. Her analysis shows how coexisting temporal planes and stratified spaces, structured into an apparently coherent organic whole, not only annul logical perspective but also embody the complex interplay of Mayan cosmological conceptions (myths and legends) and Catholic beliefs.

The third section, *Heritage, Architecture and Places of Memory: Writings and Experiences*, proposes contributions focused on heritage, architecture, and urban spaces in their relation to memory.

Ewa Grajber analyses the place of symbolic memory in the architectural works of Antoni Gaudí, explained as a series of material signs of memory expression and cultural and linguistic belonging. Grajber argues that in the case of architecture, memory should be understood as the historical events or elements of the past preserved in material form. An architect, like any artist, creates in a definite place and time, and their works can conserve the memory of historical moments of a community. When, in the 19th century, the Catalan movement *Renaixença* made an effort to restore or renew the Catalan language and culture by also recovering a sense of national consciousness, Gaudí, starting from the idea of an identity of buildings, showed that we are the chroniclers of the times in which we live, whose meaning not always becomes obsolet but can sometimes stand the test of time thanks to the universal dimension of art.

The relationship between memory and architecture explained through the example of childhood house and to the multiple interdependencies of memories of places and the experience of known places, is the subject of Gulcin Pulat Gökmen and Nilüfer Öymen Özak's chapter. They explain the dynamic relationship between memory and architecture by focusing on the childhood house, which is an important space in an individual's past. Since housing images reflecting a traditional lifestyle play an important role in allowing people to establish a strong relationship with the past, the concept of memory is examined within the framework of a model built on what part of an individual's recollection is spatial, and what aspects of a space are recollected. The childhood house is selected as the space for the relationship between memory and architecture. The model proposed in their chapter is assessed by interviews with individuals who have lived in various cities and urban fabrics of Turkey and the transfer of the spatial richness within recollections to architecture is accepted as one lending value in the creation of quality environments.

Alina Cojocaru's chapter examines the multifarious shapes of memory whose contemplation becomes a pivotal element in Jeanette Winterson's *The Gap of Time*, a literary work focusing on displacement and spatializing memory in the form of a rewriting of William Shakespeare's geographies of displacement. Through a geocritical exploration of the reimagined mythical and historical geographies of *The Winter's Tale*, Cojocaru investigates the transfigurations of Sicily and Bohemia into modern-day London and New Bohemia, a location reminiscent of New Orleans, as well as the use of virtual spaces that mimic the Shakespearean manipulation of spatial and temporal logic. The theoretical tools of memory studies and geocriticism are used to explore the construction of a literary work; the displacement of protagonists and the metamorphosed realities are

scrutinized by stressing the spaces of intertextuality and the intertextuality of space.

Florian Brody and Egbert Steiner base their essay on the relationships between memories, places, images, and the sense of place and experience. Starting from the consideration of space and time in defining our ways of being, they emphasize the strategies by which we define our experiences based on places that are familiar to us, where we feel like home, or those that we have visited and that made a strong impression on us. As much as the traditional *ars memoriae* relies on places and images, the authors define the concept of "moulding sorrow" to explore the changes in perception of emotionally loaded places over time. For the fact that the sense of longing and belonging is moulded by experiences in both places – the place we are in and the place we are no longer or not yet – exploring these relationships allows access to the sense of belonging as well as the opposite: the feeling of displacement. The authors propose a conceptual framework to explore these binary relationships and a more profound description of conditions (and consequences) of multi-locality and the sense of alienation, belonging, and home: the way our feelings and sorrows are moulded remain connected to the places we visit or we care for.

Nikica Mihaljević's contribution approaches the plurality of memories created as a result of confrontation between past and present time, individual and collective memory, in the hermeneutic context of an encounter between space and memory. Through a critical reading of the collection of short stories *Genova d'autore*, the author focuses on how the urban structure of the Italian city of Genoa is perceived, described, and lived through the individual memory of different characters. The city's collective memory features as the complex and multi-layered dynamics of different individual memories that converge in the space of social and cultural memory. This intersection of historical and personal events is the point at which the urban space becomes fundamental: it allows us to discover the transformations of a complex city. The presence or the absence of different specific "cityscapes" in the delineation of the urban structure is at the centre of a chapter studying the dialogue and the coordination of time and space.

The fourth section, *Remembrance and the Image: Cinema, Fragments of Images and Pictorial Representation*, analyses memory occurrences in cinema and visual arts.

In his analysis of memories of the military dictatorship in the recent Uruguayan documentary cinema, Gabriele Biotti investigates the multiple connections between documentary cinema, memory elaboration, oral history, and the anthropology of memory. Approached as moments of symbolic elaboration of traumatic memories through the act of telling and

representing, two Uruguayan documentaries, *Prohibido pisar las flores* (2003) by Luis González Zaffaroni and *Memorias de mujeres* (2005) by Virginia Martínez, are analysed in order to bring to light how, through the forms of documentary cinema, the context of the dictatorship that oppressed Uruguay between 1973 and 1985 has been told and elaborated. Through his analysis of the recent social moment of memory elaboration in the forms of documentary film practice, Biotti also focuses on how haunting, as a strong contemporary pattern of interdisciplinary thought, deals with the process of memories elaborating and shaping, giving shape to a scholarly paradigm where theories, disciplines, and artistic elaborations interact to define a process of memories elaboration through images and words.

Adam Cichoń focuses on the importance of a method of cinematic *montage* for memory process elaboration. In a research constellation including Aby Warburg's atlas of images *Mnemosyne* and Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, he discusses the usage of *montage* in relation with two Polish films: *The Passanger* (1963) by Andrzej Munk and *Hear My Cry* (1991) by Maciej Drygas. The first is a film consisting only of a montage of frozen frames, and the second is a documentary that tells the story of Ryszard Siwiec – the man who set himself on fire in protest against military invasion in Czechoslovakia in 1968. After this act of self-immolation, only seven seconds of video footage were left, which the creators of *Hear My Cry* decided to use to create a full-length movie. Cichoń also refers to Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-98), as a cinematographic elaboration of a theory of memory through the use of images, to define how work on remaining footage is also a work of memory – saving it from oblivion by salvaging what has been disregarded by history.

Manuela Antoniu and Keiko Kimura's contribution is dedicated to the significance of the lack of memory time in Pedro Almodóvar's *Talk to Her* (*Hable con ella*, 2002). Through one of the film's characters, Benigno, Almodóvar spins a single continuous story of love that stretches from the origins of the world to our days. In a series of combinatorial romantic geometries and by resorting to magical cures, the film's plot points to other works such as William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* filtered through English composer Henry Purcell's adaptation of the play in his semi-opera *The Fairy Queen* and German choreographer Pina Bausch's piece *Café Müller*, itself set to Purcell's musical score. References to fairy tales (*Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White*, *Sun, Moon and Talia*) are also explored. The two authors analyse how the film expresses the strong leitmotif of doubling (visual, narrative, and thematic), acting as a persistent call to memory, in a tale also focused on the condition of lack-of-memory while in a coma: the situation of another character, Alicia, who then awakes

to start a new life.

   The elaboration of adolescent memories and subjectivity in the work of English artist Paul Housley is the topic approached by Elisa Oliver. For a given period, the artist's practice focused on the pop ephemera that constructed his 1970s', early 80s' adolescence. Housley returns to his teenage bedroom in the 1990s and the solo consumption of vinyl, cassette, and VCR as he re-articulates this moment. Oliver's chapter argues that this return, through the prism of technologies, re-creates a particular mode of subjectivity which connects not just to the loss of youth for Housley but also to the loss of a particular masculine identity intrinsic to this teenage moment and its backdrop of industrial North-West England. The pop culture, and the technologies that facilitate memories and representations of this moment, become a lens for Housley, through which broader issues around the period's loss of manufacturing industry and the masculine-defining labour attendant to it are negotiated as industry has transformed in the artist's home region. Addressing the foregrounding of daydreaming, pause and rewind, and the static body in these paintings, the author identifies the process of negotiation taking place in the artist's memories.

Notes

1. Erll, Astrid. "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction". In *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, in collaboration with Sara B. Young (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1.
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SECTION 1 –

« COLLECTIVE MEMORIES »

THE GOLAN BRIDES:
MEMORY, MYTHOLOGY, AND AMBIVALENCE

SHIRA PINCZUK

Introduction

Ambivalence about belonging to a homeland is a key topic in diaspora studies. This chapter explores the theme in relation to the Golan Druze, a community divided by new borders created after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. It investigates the Golan Druze as diasporic subjects and considers their attempts to overcome and repair this traumatic separation by maintaining the kinship and marriage relationships between the communities from both sides of the Israeli–Syrian border. It does so by focusing on the testimonies of Druze Syrian brides: young women married within the Druze community in Syrian territory who then relocated to the Golan, whom I visited and interviewed between 2015 and 2020. Within these stories, the women are constructed as sacrificial subjects whose personal journeys from Damascus to the Golan plateau fulfil the dream of the whole community to return to the homeland, but whose experiences of coming "home" are profoundly complex.

The collective memory and feelings about homeland among the divided Golan Druze account for those who remained rooted in the land of their ancestors on the Israeli side of the Golan Heights and those who were displaced, finding themselves across newly shifted borders and living under the governance of their new nation-state, Syria. This chapter reviews the real, and perceived, lack of rootedness among the Golan Druze informed by William Safran's model of "ideal" diaspora, and the views of James Clifford, Robin Cohen, and Stéphane Dufoix, who conceptualize diasporas in relation to the "host land" rather than to the "homeland". I argue that despite being divided between two areas separated by a mere two-hour drive, the Golan Druze are a diasporic society or at least a community that maintains and displays diasporic notions.

Theorists like Bill Ashcroft (Ashcroft et al., 2006) and Vijay Agnew (Agnew, 2005) agree that the fundamental notion of diaspora includes not only the physical phenomenon of people's dispersion, scattering through

exile to many different locations from a source of origin, but also the traumatic character of that dispersion and its role in forging the collective memory of diasporic people. These ideas underpin my analysis of the Druze Syrian brides. Salman Rushdie (2006) compares diasporic memories of homeland to a broken mirror, where some of its fragments have been irretrievably lost. As we shall see, the Syrian brides who have returned to the Golan Heights have come to realize that their feelings of belonging and rootedness were based on their parents' and their community's fragmented memories and that this homeland is no more than the "imaginary homeland" to which Rushdie refers. As a result, they experience a diasporic notion for the second time in their lives – a kind of diasporic doubling – as Syria turns out to be their very own nostalgic homeland. In their longing for the "nostalgic homeland" on the lands of their ancestors under the Israeli government, they develop a new identity: from the "Druze girls of the Golan" in Syria to "the Syrian girls" among the Druze of the Golan.

Conceptualizing Diaspora and the Ambivalence of "Homeland"

One young Syrian bride confessed to me that her return to her father's village on the Israeli side of the Golan Heights "was like a dream come true… [but] I did not think of what I am going to lose." Seeking a connection to her father's (and therefore, her own imagined) homeland, she was disappointed to find that it was not the homeland she expected. This experience is one that I often encountered during my visits among the Syrian brides. While this bride's return to the Golan was the materialization of her father's desires, and indeed those of the whole Druze community living in Syria, it was an experience defined by ambivalence: one manifestation of a diasporic trauma that the Golan Druze – like many other ethno-religious communities in the Middle East – experienced in the wake of the 1973 war.

Marriage is a centuries-old mechanism utilized by the Druze to maintain their identity and uniqueness, and the idea of marriage is enthusiastically endorsed on the Syrian side of the border. An unintended effect for brides marrying and moving to the Golan, however, is the "foreignness" they feel in their parents' homeland, having moved from their own home in Syria. The paradox of feeling like a "foreigner" in what is supposed to be one's homeland on the part of the Syrian Golan brides, and the implications of this on their identities and lives, demands careful consideration.

Moshe Ma'oz pointedly noted that by 1999, the Occupied Golan Heights had been under Israeli control longer than they had been under Syrian control (Ma'oz, 1999). Nonetheless, the 1973 war continued to evoke raw

emotions and bitter memories among the Druze of the Occupied Golan, feelings which are just as strong today. There is an ongoing international dispute about the legality of the territory's annexation within Israel, while the Israeli–Syrian border is managed by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and is constantly monitored by international observers. The border is constituted by two lines (lines A and B, separated by a demilitarized zone, under direct UNDOF control) (figure 1).

Following the annexation, approximately 128,000 Syrian citizens found themselves living in the area occupied by Israel, between Line Alpha to the west and the current DMZ line to the east, a quarter of whom live in the city of Al-Quneitra and the rest in smaller villages and farms. An estimated 100,000 Syrians subjects fled or were expelled further into Syria, mainly to Jaramana, Sewida, and Sahnaya, near Damascus. As a 1982 CIA report shows (CIA, 1982), the Israeli Census, conducted in September 1973, enumerated only 6400 Syrians within Israel, most of them Druze. It also notes that since 1973, the Israeli government has worked incessantly towards annexation and the irreversible integration of the Golan into Israeli territory. To this effect, Israeli forces have razed at least 80 of the 190 villages and destroyed most Syrian private properties. Water sources and springs have been seized and in many areas the centuries-old stone fences and markers that outlined Syrian fields have been removed, effectively making any future individual Syrian land ownership claim nearly impossible. Moreover, the Israeli curriculum has since been taught, even in the few remaining Arab schools. Unlike the Syrian Arabs in the Golan Heights, the Druze in the area had the right to stay or later return to their homes in the remaining villages: Majdal Shams, Mas'ade, Ein Qiniyye, and Buq'ata (a fifth Druze village, S'heita, was destroyed and its population

Figure 1 (next page). Israeli settlements and Syrian villages as of 1989, following the United Nations Security Council Resolution 350 (1974). A complete ceasefire was implemented following Resolution 338 (1973), ending the Yom Kippur War. The area between Line Alpha (in red) and Line Bravo (in yellow) is the so-called buffer zone (green lines), a demilitarized area under the sole control of UNDOF (United Nations Disengagement Observer Force), where neither Israeli nor Syrian forces are allowed to enter. The buffer zone is about 80 km long, and between 0.5 and 10 km wide, forming an area of 235 km². Extending 25 km to either side is the Area of Limitation (AOL), where UNDOF and Observer Group Golan (OGG) observers under its command supervise the number of Syrian and Israeli troops and weapons. Between Israel and Syria, there is no official border crossing, but for the UN, one crossing point exists near Quneitra, called "The A-Gate". Modified from "CIA – 1989." Accessed at:
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