

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

Bernard Eric Jensen: Harald Welzer's Approach to Memory Research

An analysis of the approach to memory research found in the writings of Harald Welzer is presented. At the present time, Welzer is head of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Memory Research at Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut in Essen, Germany. He has contributed both empirical surveys and theoretical analyses to memory research during the last decade. At a first glance, Welzer's approach appears to belong neatly within the tradition of memory research that was originally founded by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, and which Aleida and Jan Assmann have been seeking to revive and develop since the 1980's by introducing concepts such as "communicative and cultural memory" as well as "storage memory" (Speicher-Gedächtnis) and "use memory" (Funktions-Gedächtnis). On closer inspection, however, it transpires that Welzer's approach cannot be characterised as a mere refinement of the approach taken by the Assmanns. This is partly because Welzer is attempting to develop an interdisciplinary approach, focused on the intricate relationships between biological, psychological and social factors in ongoing memory work. Apart from focussing of the work of Welzer, this article also seeks to highlight the state of "terminological anarchy" that characterises memory research at the present time, making it next to impossible to make direct comparisons between different theoretical approaches. This state of anarchy becomes transparent as soon as one begins to scrutinize the meanings of those adjectives, which nowadays are fixed to the term memory – for instance, "communicative", "cultural", "historical" and/or "social" memory.

Nicolette Makovicy: Material Memories: On Remembering with Object and Body

We live surrounded by cultural objects, either of our own making, or appropriated from other sources through purchase or gift. This article is an exploration of how our interaction with material culture can affect how we remember, and inquires into the wider implications this has on knowledge and memories which circulate in social relations and across generations. The specific object of study is handmade bobbin lace, its production and circulation in the central Slovak provincial town of Banská Bystrica and its surrounding villages. The author takes a critical stance towards the conventional notion that objects can act as analogues for memory, as illustrated by Aristotle's *memoria*. Instead, the author attempts to explore what an approach which underscores memory as a spontaneous recall. The article first deals with the relationship between skill, an embodied form of knowledge which relies on the physical training of the body to perform precise movements, and the product of this knowledge, the lace, as a means of transferring craft knowledge between makers. It is argued that the body and the senses are indispensable

to this transfer, the key to the understanding and memorization of knowledge being physical reproduction. The second part of the article deals with lace articles as an element of household décor. It is shown that lace articles, while all being spoken of as making permanent memories through their materiality, most often have shifting meanings attached to them determined by a frequent circulation between households. Finally, it is suggested that the emphasis on materiality is used by the informants as a discursive device in their attempts to ground themselves socially and historically.

Helle Ploug Hansen: “My Memory is Like a Sieve”: On Women, Cancer and Chemotherapy

Empirical data from my research project about women, cancer and rehabilitation are used in this article to explore loss of memory in relation to a severe disease. First I describe how women experience loss of memory in the case of cancer, and how they interpret this as a side-effect of the chemotherapy treatment. Hereby they reproduce a part of the dominant health discourse, where loss of memory is understood as cognitive impairment. Second, I explore how the women through their stories of illness experiences show that they remember quite well and with a lot of details – they just remember something other than they thought they should remember. Third, I argue that people experiencing a severe disease concentrate a great deal of their attention on the body, forgetting acts and experiences outside their own living body. As Scarry has said: “What is remembered in the body is remembered well.”

Katinka Fjeldsø Villemoes: “We Are a Nation of Immigrants”: On Collective Memory Practices, and Immigration Mythology in Contemporary United States

In this article, I investigate practices of collective remembering and forgetting in the United States of America. I take as my starting point a certain period in the history of the USA, namely the extensive flows of immigrants who came to the USA in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and I demonstrate how this historical period is celebrated, represented and remembered in a particularly interesting manner. I argue that the romanticized tale of “the immigrants who created America” plays an important role in defining what American national identity is. The common sense representation of the immigrants who came to the USA in search of freedom and opportunity fits perfectly with today’s political and intellectual climate in the USA, because within the framework of this immigrant mythology, the individual citizen is given the opportunity to celebrate his national identity as an American, but he is also given the opportunity to celebrate his country’s ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity.

Anna Bohlin: Memory, Forgetting and the Production of Locality in the New South Africa

This article explores remembering and forgetting as a social and cultural process by focussing on the memory of forced removals, carried out during apartheid, in Kalk Bay,

a small fishing town in Cape Town, South Africa. Among those who live in the town today, the memory of these removals has largely disappeared. The article argues that the “forgetting” of these events is related to the construction of Kalk Bay as a particular kind of locality, shaped by the fishing tradition, which is characterized by a certain form of tolerance and multiculturalism, as well as by the absence of apartheid. This image of Kalk Bay, along with its denial that forced removals took place, has allowed for a shifting set of responses to contemporary issues in the new democratic South Africa. Meanwhile, those who were forced to leave the town, and who have resettled in townships in the outskirt of Cape Town, construe a memory of Kalk Bay which serves as a critique of their current area of living. In both places the memory of Kalk Bay and its history are thus represented in social portraits that emphasize certain aspects while downplaying or omitting others. The article argues that such social portraits are created and maintained as part of a larger project of locality production.

Hanne Veber: Memories of Ucayali. Accounts by the “People Without History”

Ucayali is a river and an Amazonian region in eastern central Peru. It is also the scene of killings and atrocities including traffic in women and children in the recent past as part of a strategy to secure indigenous labor for the rubber barons during the infamous rubber boom in the Upper Amazon in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Based on autobiographical narratives recorded from contemporary Asháninka leaders the article discusses how this historical background is recalled differently in oral traditions handed down from within families from parents to their children. These narratives build exclusively on local and contextual references and appear to be functions of individual needs and interests. Hence, Asháninka memories of the Ucayali come out in the plural as discontinuous personalized accounts associated with a multitude of juxtaposed temporalities. The article considers the way these varied recollections take on meaning in the context of forging a consciousness of an indigenous collectivity based on shared experiences – real and reconstructed. Considering that the incorporation of past events into discourse is always a reformulation of the events, the author points to the ongoing efforts of the Asháninka to secure control of their own social reproduction in the face of continuing efforts by outsiders - multinational companies and national society - to appropriate Asháninka territory and socio-cultural space. As memory is forged in a dialectic between individual interests and collective strategies in response to certain needs, the constitution of shared identity and collective memory becomes both a means and a result of political activism. Taking account of the fact that the Asháninka memories refuse to homogenize into one singular “history of the oppressed”, the article points to the way Asháninka historical narratives take meaning from the structure of their telling and provide the members of the collectivity with a sense of agency. The textual structures of the narratives indeed constitute cultural encodings of the basic process of social reproduction. Through the record of things their ancestors did, the Asháninka may recognize their ability to make their own world through personal and collective action. Through remembering they take possession of their own history and through its telling they take charge of the present.