



Memory and Imagination

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Introduction

The present book compiles articles dealing with the interplay between memory and imagination, two themes that have long intrigued researchers across disciplines. In literature and the humanities in general, memory is not considered as a passive process or act of retrieval, but as an active and powerful process of reconstruction that shapes identity and contributes to meaning-making. In the same vein, Paul Ricoeur insists on the imaginative dimension of memory in his book *Memory, History, Forgetting* where he “considers memory the province of the imagination” (5). Although Ricoeur seeks to clarify the connection between the two concepts, he acknowledges that their relationship rests on a tension as memory is tied to the recollection of real events, while imagination is associated with fiction, the unreal, the impossible. Imagination, in many articles of this volume, is in no way a form of departure from history but rather an interesting tool of reworking it.

In his article “Towards a Poetics of Black Diasporic Memory in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*”, Jawhar Ahmed Dhouib examines how the writer patchworks the memory of slavery from the perspective of Black diasporic poetics. While focusing on Gilroy’s theory and Hartman’s concepts of “archival silence” and “critical fabulation”, Dhouib reads *Beloved* as a catalyst transforming the experience of Middle Passage into a symbolic site of collective memory. The article attempts to foreground the silenced voices in the story through focusing on fragmented narratives and polyphonic storytelling and the trope of “rememory” to emphasize memory as a communal act of cultural survival.

Asma Chahed, on her part, provides a comprehensive reading of memory and trauma as well as the representations of war in Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*. Through the experience of Frederic Henry, as a war damaged fictional character, and Catherine Barkley, a volunteer war nurse, Chahed traces the grim

reality of war and the serious psychological damage and “war neuroses” on both characters whose love story is meant to attenuate the insanity and violence of war. The article attempts to read Hemingway’s novel as both a reference to “a traumatized memory” and a “memorized trauma”, showcasing resistance to the harsh reality and the devastating effects of war.

In her paper, Haifa Mohdhi investigates the dual role of women as both oppressed and oppressive figures in Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*. Mohdhi focuses on how collective, imaginative memory empowers marginalized girls to challenge dominant societal norms. She maintains how, by reconstructing a version of the past, these girls create a space for both resistance and erasure within a rigid, patriarchal framework. This shows how the Salem witch trials become a stage for expressing long-suppressed voices, trauma and memory interplay to rewrite history. Mohdhi concludes how female characters in the play use trauma and mimicry to reshape collective memory and subtly subvert dominant narratives.

Focusing on the tension between memory and imagination, Hajer Dhifallah’s article explores the theme of racial passing in literature. It argues that passing involves hiding one’s true identity and suppressing painful memories of racial discrimination in order to adopt a new, imagined identity. This shift creates psychological and emotional conflict, especially for African Americans who find themselves caught between two identities without fully belonging to either. Using Jessie Fauset’s novel *Plum Bun* as a key example, the article analyzes how this conflict complicates identity formation for African American women and examines how the interplay of memory and imagination shapes their personal journeys and self-conceptions.

In a similar vein, Khaoula Ouni’s paper “Death Memory and the Grandiose Parody of Conventional Male Elegy in Anne Sexton’s Poetry” discusses Anne Sexton’s *All My Pretty Ones* as a powerful work where memory and imagination blend to confront personal

loss. Ouni explores how Sexton, influenced by Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*, investigates mourning through poetry. The article contrasts modern and traditional elegies, highlighting how Sexton parodies and evolves the genre. It also emphasizes how reconfiguring memories of death can serve as a kind of therapeutic "pharmacy" for emotional healing.

Maryem Bouzid attempts to bring to fore how Tennyson's poetry is deeply shaped by memory and nostalgia for a lost past. She showcases that Tennyson's portrayal of nature reflects a growing sense of loss brought on by industrialization, which stripped nature of its former awe. His use of the "landscape of retreat" reveals a longing for a vanished world and culture, imbuing his work with a melancholic tone that fuels his poetic imagination.

Shifting focus from historical trauma to linguistic perception, in "Memory of the Future: Linguistic and Translation Analysis of 'Story of Your Life'", Alice Ray and Gilles Cloiseau analyze Ted Chiang's *Story of Your Life*. They focus on the book's unique portrayal of time through language in which the protagonist, by learning the alien Heptapod language, is able to perceive time non-linearly—experiencing past and future simultaneously. The authors explain how the story blends these timeframes using unconventional grammar and tense usage, therefore challenging traditional narrative structure.

Finally, building on this narrative complexity, Christakis Christofi provides a reading of *Hiroshima mon amour* which connects the personal memories of a French woman and a Japanese man to the collective memory of World War II. The film overlays a love story onto a major historical event, emphasizing the importance of remembering the past to prevent it from being erased by forgetting. Through revisiting historical places and personal experiences, the film illustrates the way memory can heal emotional wounds. The article explores the tension between memory and forgetting, presenting memory as powerful, revealing, and capable of embracing even confusion and pain.

This book contributes to current scholarly conversations in memory studies, literary criticism, and cultural theory by offering different perspectives on how memory and imagination intersect as narrative tools for meaning-making, resistance, and identity formation. The articles demonstrate the power of artistic expression to revisit and sometimes resist dominant narratives of the past. By examining a wide range of genres these contributions reveal how memory is not only preserved through language but also continually transformed by it.

Abdelhamid Rhaïem and Yassine Najjar

Editors