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The After-Life of Memory

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
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Abstract

The After-Life of Memory

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The After-Life of Memory registers the widely held perception of a "memory crisis" in the latter half of the twentieth century. It asserts that this crisis is an historical and theoretical construct based on assumptions that need to be questioned. In their assertions that memory is sick, tired, or beyond repair, writers convey their anxieties about the future and reveal their participation in a long history of philosophical inquiry about the status and value of the past. Each of the factors that conspire to form the memory crisis have long histories of their own. It is not, then, the singularity of the memory crisis that recommends it to our attention. Rather, the reproduction of such a crisis in our cultural moment offers us the opportunity to analyze the role of memory in our lives. From the writers who survey the terrain of the memory crisis, we can gather that they believe memory is in some way essential. These writings try to find a vocation for memory in an era that threatens to make it obsolete.

Contemporary fiction participates in the project of rehabilitating memory as an individual faculty and as a social practice. That project has involved a variety of attempts to define something called "collective memory." However, in the context of our historical moment, both of those terms are problematic. In the fiction of writers like Toni Morrison, Italo Calvino and Salman Rushdie, we can see the struggle to define the two terms of "collective memory" and, at the same time, explore the complex inter-relationships between the two.

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Dedicated to the memory of

*Michael L. Quinn*

January 31, 1958 - August 27, 1994

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## Preface

As the century comes to its close, it becomes more and more difficult to write about memory without demonstrating all of the unseemly symptoms of a bad case of "mourning sickness." Around any analysis of memory in contemporary thought hover the adjectives of its undoing as "respectable scholarship;" the subject of memory lends itself all too easily to the lyrical, the nostalgic and the sentimental. In other words, memory is most familiar to us in its aesthetic modes and it abides in the enduring cliches of those modes. The challenge of this manuscript has been to separate memory from its aura of wistful regret, to think memory outside of a critical theory founded on the melancholic certainties of absence and loss, to widen the spectrum of aesthetics that memory is subject to. If I have tried to make memory less precious, I have done so to discover its extant values in contemporary culture.

Scholars often point to Walter Benjamin as the "the prophetic voice of contemporary cultural studies" (Dellamora 3). With his "angel of history," Richard Dellamora writes, "Benjamin bequeaths to postmodern culture its most apocalyptic representation of human civilization" (3). Contemporary culture and scholarship have not given up on memory as a topic of analysis and contemplation, and they have not eschewed the tragic and nostalgic potential of that subject, which Benjamin demonstrated so well in his own essays.<sup>1</sup> The memory that retains the highest credibility in the postmodern era is the memory of disaster. This we cannot seem to get enough of. To remember, commemorate or memorialize the horrors of the past, it seems, is a kind of sentimentality acceptable to scholarship, the mass media and the collective imagination. The year 1995 has occasioned an array of examples testifying to the dark focus of our commemorative energies.

In May 1995, The Nation magazine published an issue that declared "The Anniversary of Almost Everything: '45 at 50." The Nation was not alone in its production of a special

commemorative issue of this kind. On the contrary, similar issues appeared this past year in almost every major news magazine on the stands: Time, Newsweek, U.S. & World Report, Life. Waxing nostalgic and tragic at different turns, the commemorative issue has been a staple of 1995. We can gather that commemoration is in, at least insofar as government officials and magazine editors would have it. If 1995 has been a year to remember, it has also been a year to construct versions of the past to commemorate. Implicit in the international zeal for memorial services and speeches denouncing atrocities, war crimes and the collective guilt of nations, is the presumption that World War II and its conclusion in 1945 is the defining event of the last fifty years. As the editors of The Nation would have it, 1945 directed "the post-war narrative we are now living" (vanden Heuvel 658). The commemorative issue is only the latest evidence of what is a long-standing philosophical and historical perspective. For almost fifty years, we can say, the end of the Second World War has served as a handy dividing line, as a point of rupture, a moment of unprecedented and irremediable change. In the commemorative issue and in the solemn fanfare of public acts of remembrance and apology, the war is invoked to explain both our fears about the future and our anxieties about the past. But what is the good of all this commemoration? What is the good of memory?

In the three modes of history he outlines early in his career, Nietzsche provides us with three different answers. According to "Uses and Abuses of History," monumental history inspires us to great acts, antiquarian history provides us with a sense of continuity and critical history allows us to free ourselves from an enslavement to the past (Nietzsche, *Uses and Abuses* 14-22). Following Foucault, it has become standard to transform each of these modes of history into their ironic counterparts and for Foucault, monumental history is the prototypical ironic mode of history (*Language*, 161).<sup>2</sup> However, implicit in the very ubiquity of monuments to the victims of the Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima and the seemingly infinite array of horrors attached to World War II, is the resilience of

monumental history, albeit in a somewhat different form. It is difficult to see this monumental history as simply ironic; there is a solemnity about it, a sense that commemoration is a mode of contrition, a form of reparation. In this late twentieth century mode of monumental history, the monumental persists not in the heroic deeds of man but in the grotesque proportions of his crimes. We make monuments not to heroes but to victims; we commemorate not the great events of history, but the great mistakes and crimes of our century. In truth, we are more comfortable with Santayana's dog-eared dictum than the role-model theory of Nietzsche's monumental history. "Those who do not remember history are doomed to repeat it," the famous Santayana quotation reads, and if we still seek to learn from the past, we do so not for inspiration but for warnings, for indications of the traps that lay in store for us. In this way, we can say, we would like our *monumental* history to function as our *critical* history, that which frees us from the past. We remember in order to prevent and in so doing, we invest memory with a staggering responsibility.

And yet we need not look far to witness the failures of such a project. The front page of the newspaper daily discredits Santayana's assertion and reminds us of just how monumentally our memory has failed us. Perhaps more than any other event in recent years, the protracted war in the Balkans challenges the good of memory as practiced in our monumental mode of history. With its "ethnic cleansing" of Muslims and disregard for civilian enclaves, this war recalls both the genocide of the Jews and the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the two iconic horrors of World War II. At the dedication of the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., it was Elie Wiesel who brought to the attention of President Clinton that our commemoration of the genocide in Nazi Germany has not proven effective in preventing the atrocities committed in the Balkans.<sup>3</sup> We have remembered, commemorated, documented and memorialized. We have Holocaust museums, Viet Nam Memorials and museums dedicated to the Japanese-American conflicts of the Second World War. Yet, in the former Yugoslavia, we witness the absolute impotence of what we call

memory and the unequivocal failure of Santayana's dictum. So what is the good of memory?

In contemporary scholarship, crises are pervasive. Richard Terdiman bequeaths us the memory crisis, while Andreas Huyssen adumbrates the crisis in temporality. Fredric Jameson, among others, underlines our crisis in historicity.<sup>4</sup> All of these assorted crises rely on an unexamined assumption, the assumption that there is an obvious good to memory, to the construction of time it relies on, and to history as we have known it. Behind all the essays and books diagnosing and describing memory's pathetic demise, and behind all of the efforts to rehabilitate our ability to connect our presents to our pasts, lurks this unasked question. By assuming the altogether obvious good of memory, scholarship both naturalizes memory and renders it indispensable. If our capacity for memory is sick, then, it would follow naturally that our future will be, as well. The scholarship on the memory crisis confirms the same. Andreas Huyssen's comments are emblematic of the vehement and anxious tone of these inevitably dire predictions:

In that dystopian vision of a high-tech future, amnesia would no longer be part of the dialectic of memory and forgetting. It will be its radical other. It will have sealed the very forgetting of memory itself: nothing to remember, nothing to forget. (9)

Huyssen's dystopia is defined by memory's obsolescence; there is no good of memory. Further, the sudden lapse of critical distance in this fantasy of memory's demise is too striking to be passed over. My argument is this: Behind the memory-crisis looms the fear that our question is unanswerable. What is the good of memory? The writers of the memory crisis are simply not sure.

Why do we invest so much importance in the project of correcting, supplementing and challenging the narratives of history? In the past, memory has been linked to subjectivity, to imagination, to religion, and to the nation. It has thus been put in the service of ethics, aesthetics and politics. In our world of "posts," what is memory's vocation? In a postmodern, postcolonial context in which memory's traditional ends suffer their own

relentless interrogations, what is the good of memory? It is at this point that our discussion takes us back to the Balkans and to the point where the memory crisis is obscured by the crisis of the collective.

Just as the war in the Balkans has become the icon of the impotence of memory, it has become the model for social disintegration. From the very beginning, the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia has served as what scholars and the media both referred to as a "test case." It was seen as NATO's rehearsal for the real show: the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Long before the Western world responded to the crisis, the Balkans had been abstracted into a kind of trial run, a small scale simulation. How we handled the Balkans might tell us how to handle the threatening *balkanization* of the Soviet Union. Yet, even before the war erupted, this concept of balkanization had been the shadow that refused to settle behind the scrim of a postmodern and postcolonial world view. Insofar as those two terms collaborate to describe the rejection of metanarrative and the valorization of the local, the different and the disruptive, they court the tribalism ascribed to balkanization. Where postmodernism relativizes the meanings of memory, postcolonialism destabilizes the definition of the collective. Ultimately, asking what a postcolonial collective might be is no more easily answered than the question of what a postmodern memory might be. The problem of the good of memory resurfaces at precisely the same time as the question of just how local, different and disruptive we can get, without suffering balkanization.

These are the concerns that The After-Life of Memory takes up. It does so by bringing together a trio of novelists who have stitched the problems of memory to the problems of the collective in their own works. Toni Morrison, Italo Calvino and Salman Rushdie have been selected for attention here precisely because they are novelists that confront a crisis in memory and attempt to resolve it within their very different aesthetic practices. All of these novelists seek to dismiss the memory of the memory crisis and do so by constructing their own versions of what I will call "collective memory," a memory which constitutes and is

constituted by its collectives. In their diverse experiments, the good of memory is attached to collective identity in ways that make visible the uncertainty that surrounds both "memory" and the "collective" in our cultural moment.

While the writers of the memory crisis insist on the good of memory as a given, the manuscript that follows takes for granted the primacy of the collective; that is its enabling presumption. I have found it impossible to explore the good of memory in contemporary thought and literature without this prejudice. The After-Life of Memory makes no claim to offer a definitive and single answer to my original question. Rather, it bases its studies on the premise that the good of memory is an invention of the social groups who invoke it, and it is as various and mutable as those groups.

-- Robin Blyn, February, 1996

## Notes to Preface

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<sup>1</sup>For a fuller analysis of Benjamin and nostalgia, see my discussion in Chapter 3. There I focus on the essays that appear in the collection Illuminations, including "The Storyteller," "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" and his "Thesis on History."

<sup>2</sup>In his effort to define the practice of his "new historian" or "genealogist," Foucault returns to Nietzsche's modes of history, transforming them to suit his poststructural program. Foucault figures his revised mode of monumental history into a "masquerade" and a "carnival" in which "the veneration of monuments becomes parody" (160-165).

<sup>3</sup>James Young recounted this incident in informal discussion following his lecture in January, 1996, at the University of Washington.

<sup>4</sup>For a fuller analysis of these crises, see Chapter 1. There, I draw on Terdiman's Present Past, Huyssen's Twilight Memories and Jameson's Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.

## Chapter I: The After-Life of Memory

The horrors and sadness, the endless mourning, is floating there, careening in the imagination, looking for a place. Looking for some way to be transformed. Looking, in a word, for culture.

--Patricia Hampl, A Romantic Education (253)

"This generation has written its memoirs early," Patricia Hampl writes in the first chapter of her own 1981 memoir, A Romantic Education (6). Born in 1945, just after the Second World War, Hampl defines her generation by what she sees as its most distinguishing feature, its hunger for the past. Indeed, Hampl suggests that anyone born after 1945 has the sense of being "born into an elegy," (175) and that the elegiac temper of the post-war generation finds its clearest expression in its memorial fervor: "Oral history, it is called, as if we were starved and wanted to wolf down a chunk of the past, not only to make sure it was there but *to make it our own*" (20). On the surface, Hampl's memoir is a meditation on her generation's elegiac sensibility and on her personal journey back to the country of her grandmother. Yet, after landing in Prague, Hampl never sets off to the village of her ancestors. Rather, for her, Prague becomes the site where she can contemplate what it might mean to make the past "her own." Ultimately, her memoir is also a quest to define a vocation for the poet in the latter half of the twentieth century and specifically, to make sense of her own troubling insight into the "residue of grief" and "haunting quality" that remains in Western culture (176). Rather late in her book, this insight is finally articulated:

It is true that the imagination was wounded by the history of this century; we have known that obliquely almost from the first...But the other truth is more slow in revealing itself. The imagination was enriched by this terrible history. (280)

Hampl's memoir is an attempt to make sense of the "relation between horror and creativity, between horror and faith" as they are illuminated by "the destruction of our world" (281).

Her reluctant affirmation of the contribution the Second World War has made to imagination and to memory, which she sees as its muse, distinguishes Hampl from a school of thought that recognizes only the wounds of "this terrible history." So, too, what follows here seeks to distinguish itself from the prevailing cultural criticism that "diagnoses" memory as diseased, dysfunctional, or broken beyond repair. While the broad ranging works of writers such as David Lowenthal, Pierre Nora, and Andreas Huyssen have insightfully described memory's tenuous status in the latter years of this century, they all assume that this thing called memory has been wounded by the Second World War. I throw in my hat with Hampl in order to make that more troubling companion assertion: that what has wounded has also enriched. Energized in the last twenty five years by its engagement with the ethics, aesthetics and politics of memory, contemporary fiction will serve as my primary evidence for that claim.

In order to understand the novel's recent preoccupation with memory, we need to situate it in its historical context, in the context of the widely held perception of what Richard Terdiman has termed a "memory crisis." Terdiman maintains that memory has been a source of "cultural disquiet" for the last 200 years and his Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis focuses largely on how this disquiet is defined, negotiated and contained in the discourses of the nineteenth century. Below, he defines that memory crisis:

In this period people experienced the insecurity of their culture's involvement with its past, the perturbation of the link to their own inheritance, as what I want to term a "memory crisis": a sense that their past had somehow evaded memory, that recollection had ceased to integrate with consciousness. In this memory crisis the very coherence of time and subjectivity seemed disarticulated. (Terdiman 3-4)

According to Terdiman, the 19th Century crisis is generated by a sense of "epochal rupture." That point of rupture is the French Revolution. The task of Terdiman's book is to demonstrate how the writings of the period after the Revolution reveal the various ways

in which the problems of memory became concomitant with the problems of determining what it might mean to be "modern." Terdiman's definition resonates provocatively.

In the writings of contemporary scholars, there is clearly a perception of a similar memory crisis, "a sense that their past had somehow evaded memory, that recollection had ceased to integrate with consciousness." The "epochal rupture" is a different one. More often than not, it is World War II or the year 1945. Certainly the historical conditions generating and sustaining the sense of a memory crisis also differ from what Terdiman analyzes in the nineteenth century. We can say that the problems associated with memory have now become imbricated in the project of determining what it might mean to be post-modern, post-histoire, post-colonial or simply post-WWII. The prefix "post" itself serves to mark the space between past and present without necessarily proffering a way to bridge the two. The peculiarity of the memory crisis of the latter half of the twentieth century may be lodged in this constitutive paradox: the high value contemporary culture places on the past at the very moment it disowns the ability to remember it. However, like the earlier crisis Terdiman studies, the twentieth century memory crisis is attributed to three major consequences of its historical moment of rupture: the forces of (post-)modernization, the rejection of earlier, influential models of memory and the distrust of history as a discipline. Each of these serves alternately as cause and effect of the memory crisis as it is perceived. If in the nineteenth century crisis the novel is the genre that "most organizes itself as a projection of the memory function and its disruptions" (25), we can say that contemporary fiction not only "projects" that crisis but makes a *project* of rehabilitating memory as an individual faculty and as a social practice. That project has involved a variety of attempts to define something called "collective memory." Collective memory offers a promising alternative to the memory of the memory crisis, but it continues to face a twin challenge: to define "memory" and to define the "collective." In the last fifty years, experiments in the

novel have participated in the broader social effort to think the inter-relationships between these two terms.

Like Terdiman's, this study is less concerned with demonstrating the objective existence of a memory crisis than in demonstrating the widely held perception of one. The memory crisis perceived today is an historical and theoretical construct based on assumptions that need to be questioned. For the notion of a memory crisis puts in a full day's work for the writers that survey its terrain. In their assertions that memory is sick, tired, or beyond repair, writers convey their anxieties about the future and reveal their participation in a long history of philosophical inquiry about the status and value of the past. Each of the factors that conspire to form the memory crisis have long histories of their own. For as long as there have been wars, there have been post-war generations who perceive their despair as different in degree and different in kind than any that has come before. Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War is the classical case in point. History also shows us that technology and modernization have long been regarded as threats to memory. Plato, for one, fears that the technology of writing will destroy the human capacity for memory (Krell 49). The technophobia of our own times is but the latest in that tradition of anxiety. And just as Aristotle's school struggled to define a new version of memory in response to Plato's, our post-modern school seeks to define memory against its modernist precursors. Finally, we can say that history as a discipline was the illegitimate, if much beloved, child of the nineteenth century's memory crisis; memory and history have been suspicious of one another for at least as long as the life of the novel.

It is not, then, the singularity of the memory crisis that recommends it to our attention. Rather, the reproduction of such a crisis in our cultural moment offers us the opportunity to analyze the role of memory in our lives. From the writers who survey the terrain of the memory crisis, we can gather that they believe memory is in some way essential. If it were not, there would be no tragedy in its deterioration, no cause for alarm. These writings, as

well as the efforts to take memory post-crisis, are both efforts to find a vocation for memory in an era that threatens to make it obsolete. The memory crisis of the late twentieth century is based on the presumption that World War II and the world order that followed in its wake have generated a thoroughly and uniquely dark state of affairs. Once we take a broader perspective on the horrors of the war, once we see the epochal rupture of the war as a *function of* the memory crisis, rather than its cause, we begin to see the memory crisis for what it really is, a new phase in the long history of memory's multifaceted lives.

### I. Antiquarians Anonymous

I fear for us when there is no one left in our places of learning who can tell one moth from another, no one who knows the habits of hornbills, no one to puzzle over the diversity of hawthorns, no one even to know that this knowledge is needed and is gone.

-- David Ehrenfeld, "Vanishing Knowledge"

David Lowenthal, Pierre Nora and Andreas Huyssen have each published works in the last ten years that convey their sense of a memory crisis. Each of these writers notes the constitutive paradox of that crisis: the increased value contemporary culture places on the past at the very moment it disowns its ability to remember it. Each also sees the commemorative practices of the last decades as a symptom of memory's ill health. David Lowenthal calls it the "nostalgia industry" (4-13) while Andreas Huyssen calls it "the memory boom" or the "musealization" of the past (14). Pierre Nora is the most vociferous of the three. From his point of view, the antiquarianism of contemporary culture is the "commemorative vigilance" of a society that no longer has memory at its disposal. "No longer quite life, not yet death," Nora's "lieux de mémoire" are the remains of memory (8). A closer look at these three writers reveals the kinds of anxieties that the memory crisis covers and specifies the kinds of criticism an alternate model of memory must answer to.

In 1985, David Lowenthal first published The Past is a Foreign Country, an encyclopedic study of the history of cultural preservation and especially, of what

Lowenthal describes as the deliberate, tangible evocations of the past that pervade the contemporary landscape (xv). It is Lowenthal's explicit argument that the past is no longer valued as a precursor to the present but only as an entirely disconnected sphere, as pure difference. The phenomenon of cultural preservation that we witness today, he asserts, is the result of this working definition of the past. "If recognizing the past's difference promoted its preservation," he writes, "the act of preserving made that difference still more apparent (xvii). In an apparent contradiction, Lowenthal also maintains that, although the past is a "foreign country," its strangeness is "domesticated by our own preservation of its vestiges" (xvii). Cultural preservation is driven by the perception of differences between past and present that the process of preservation continually redefines. Behind this paradox, however, lurks an additional argument. Ultimately, The Past is a Foreign Country is itself driven by the paradoxical claim that as a culture we increasingly value a past that we no longer know how to remember; memory, as we have known it, has become inadequate to the task of connecting the present to the past. Hence, preservation, conservation and commemoration all emerge as symptoms of a most abnormal state of affairs. Lowenthal writes:

...(Our) rampant nostalgia, our obsessive search for roots, our endemic concern with preservation, the potent appeal of national heritage show how intensely the past is still felt. Yet new historical perspectives have outmoded once customary ways of feeling and using it. Wholehearted faith in tradition, the guidance of past examples, empathetic communion with great figures of antiquity, the solaces of a golden age, evocative ruminations over ruins and relics—these modes of engaging with bygone times have largely ceased to be credible. History has made them obsolete. (xxiv)

"Rampant" and "obsessive," our flailing attempts to connect with something called the past are symptoms here of the inadequacy of our extant "modes of engaging with bygone times," modes that are otherwise known as memory. Lowenthal's concluding assertion is provocative here. How has history made these modes of memory obsolete and how has the foreignness attributed to the past contributed to the process? On these points Lowenthal

remains rather obscure. The pure difference of the past, we can gather, disrupts a history based on continuity and makes it difficult to conceive of just how the past inflects the present and how the two can shape the future. Ultimately, Lowenthal's memory crisis rests on a dialectical model of time in which past and present synthesize into the future.

Lowenthal is not the first or the last to identify the paradox emergent in the conjunction of our zeal for preservation and our sense that memory has been lost. Like Lowenthal, French historian Pierre Nora places the blame on history. History, he says, has "annihilated" and "engulfed" memory. In 1989 his influential essay "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*" appeared in its English translation. More so than Lowenthal, Nora characterizes the recent permutations in the arts of memory as a tragedy of the highest order. The "lieux" in his title, translated as "sites," are the remains, if not the ruins, of the milieux that have lately disappeared. Loss of the milieux is the loss of the "real environments of memory" (7). In the aftermath of this historical transformation, Nora mourns, memory has ceased to be a "living" and "spontaneous" occurrence, a "perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present." Nora's entire theory is based on a nostalgia for the utopian world of *Gemeinschaft*, an Edenic realm in which memory was so thoroughly integrated with life that it literally wasn't given a second thought; living memory required no conscious reconstruction.<sup>1</sup> Now, Nora declares that "living memory" is alienated into history, memory at a second remove, or as he says, "the remembering of memory itself." Echoing Lowenthal, Nora concludes, "These lieux de mémoire are fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it" (12).

Nora's lieux de memoire refer largely to the same set of cultural practices that Lowenthal's "deliberate, tangible evocations of the past" do: preservation, conservation and commemoration. For Nora, however, the paradox of antiquarianism in an age that has

abandoned memory is explained away in a cause-effect analysis. Simply, we preserve, conserve, commemorate and archive *because* memory has been so thoroughly destroyed. The "truth of lieux de memoire," he writes, is that "without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away" (12). The whole gamut of practices of "commemorative vigilance" comprise what Nora calls a "spectacular bereavement" which reaches its apotheosis in the genre of the novel. As in Lowenthal's analysis, Nora's study operates under the assumption that the past seems all the more valuable in the context of our inability to remember it. Nora's study specifies the invidious role of history that Lowenthal alludes to but if Lowenthal's memory crisis is a crisis in temporality, Nora's is a crisis in the collective, the disintegration of milieux into lieux. Without the shared, immediate experiences of the milieux, memory ceases to be and underlying Nora's memory crisis is the vacuum left by the loss of "organic communities." Thus, the only way out of Nora's crisis is to redefine the collective and the individual's relationship to it. Nora's analysis is, in short, crying out for a model of inter-subjective experience.

Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia is the most recent contribution to the study of the status and practice of memory in the latter half of the twentieth century. Published in 1995, Andreas Huyssen both echoes and attempts to distance himself from the tragic aura that surrounds the work of both Nora and Lowenthal. Indeed, on the first page of his book, Huyssen differentiates his own position from those who declare "that our culture is terminally ill with amnesia" (1). Working in the field of Germanics, a field in which the issue of commemoration has become highly politicized in the last 25 years, Huyssen focuses on the relationship between the "culture of amnesia" and the "memory boom" that co-exist in contemporary German culture. As forecasted in his title, Huyssen's work is ultimately less distanced from Nora's than he would probably like. The register changes slightly, but in the shift from the language of bereavement to the language of disease, memory hardly gains in vitality. Huyssen writes:

The difficulty of the current conjuncture is to think memory and amnesia together rather than simply to oppose them. Thus our fever is not a consuming historical fever in Nietzsche's sense, which could be cured by productive forgetting. It is rather a mnemonic fever that is caused by the virus of amnesia that at times threatens to consume memory itself. (7)

Throughout his ambitious and insightful essays, Huyssen will revert to this language of disease. The memory boom will be a "mania," an "obsession" and a "fever" symptomatic of what Huyssen sees as a crisis in temporality. Like Nora and Lowenthal, Huyssen places contemporary culture in an era defined by its loss of memory, an amnesia not simply of the events of the past but an amnesia that is a forgetting of memory itself. Though he would like to think the "twilight status of memory" less pessimistically, Huyssen concludes his introduction on a formidably apocalyptic note:

In that dystopian vision of a high-tech future, amnesia would no longer be part of the dialectic of memory and forgetting. It will be its radical other. It will have sealed the very forgetting of memory itself: nothing to remember, nothing to forget (Huyssen 9).

Such passages as this one reveal Huyssen's twilight not only as "memory's privileged time" but, also, as a time pervaded by fear of the future (3). Huyssen fears a future without the dialectical model of time and subjectivity alike. His dystopia is generated by technology which, he maintains, is quickly generating a crisis in temporality. The internet, he writes, removes us from the diachronic time frame necessary for memory's survival. In this technological dystopia, the past and present fail to transform into the future and, thus, the subject is no longer "a dialectic of memory and forgetting." Huyssen's memory crisis is both a crisis of temporality and a crisis of subjectivity.

In all of these studies, despair about the status of the past becomes a means of expressing despair about the future. Behind the complex analyses of the writers who survey the terrain of the memory crisis, lurk anxieties about the future of the modern bourgeois subject and a dialectic that could incorporate him into its model for change. Andreas Huyssen, for example, values the museum because it remains a site for that

subject's privileged activity: contemplation. Museums, he argues, thus "fulfill a vital anthropologically rooted need under modern conditions" (16). The museum remains valuable to Huyssen insofar as it may act as a "site and testing ground for reflections on temporality and subjectivity, identity and alterity" (16). In Huyssen's study, remembering thus becomes the last surviving mode of contemplation, of what Bachelard called "reverie" (69). In keeping with its long history in just this role, Huyssen's memory harbors the last gasps of a humanism under siege. We might say that each of these writers attempts to "strike a balance" between valuing the old and the new. Just as Lowenthal recommends a process of "creative anachronism" that owns up to its legacies and yet alters them creatively, Huyssen ultimately wants to "think memory and amnesia together" (19). We can also say that, in their own ways, each of these studies is crying out for dialectical transformation and struggling to adumbrate oppositions productive to that kind of transformation. A viable alternative to the memory of the memory crisis is invested with the task of reconceiving both temporality and subjectivity.

Before we take up the responses and alternatives specifically embedded in a notion of collective memory, a more specific understanding of the memory crisis and its sources is in order. How did memory end up in such a sorry state? How do writers "experience the insecurity of their culture's involvement with its past" and how do they explain memory's decline? Below, I offer a schematic genealogy of the contemporary memory crisis as it is registered both in cultural criticism and in the genre of the novel. While the sources of the memory crisis overlap and feed into one another, each presents a specific challenge to memory as a faculty and as a social practice.<sup>2</sup> As an event, World War II serves as the "epochal rupture" that unleashes the forces that generate the memory crisis and as a source of that crisis itself. Some say history itself ended with the war, while others claim that it caused the death of speculative philosophy, of poetry and of art. Still others equate the end of the war with the end of faith in things like god, man, technology and modernization.

Post-WWII, we supposedly devolve into an "amnesiac culture" the likes of which the "memory boom" of the last 25 years only apparently corrects. According to both contemporary fiction and criticism, memory is one of the mortally wounded casualties of World War II. We are left to produce the coroner's report. What is this memory that met its death? What do the aporias of the memory crisis tell us about the kinds of memory tenable in the late twentieth century?

## II. The War on Memory

And Lot's wife, of course, was told not to look back where all those people and their homes had been. But she *did* look back, and I love her for that, because it was so human.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Slaughterhouse-Five (19)

Lot's wife.

To be inconsiderate--without looking back--as a basic requirement for survival; one of the prerequisites that separate the living from the survivors.

--Christa Wolf, Patterns of Childhood (334)

Thus caught between the "human" injunction to look back and the "divine" injunction not to, Lot's Wife has become the modern day Mnemonsyne, the goddess of memory remembered in Western literature for her one fatal act of "looking back." Silenced in advance, she haunts writers with her two unarticulated questions: How can one remember and survive? How can one *not* remember and survive? Neither Vonnegut nor Wolf come to satisfactory answers; theirs is a literature of the memory-crisis. According to Vonnegut, his Slaughterhouse-Five is a failure "and it had to be, since it was written by a pillar of salt" (19). Similarly, Wolf ends her four-hundred page memoir and meditation on memory with a less than hopeful affirmation: "I shall not revolt against the limits of the expressible" (Patterns 407). From these examples, we may be tempted to conclude that it is the traumatic events of the war that render memory such a difficult and threatening task. However, the self-assigned limits and failures of these writers exert an influence that exceeds both the survivor's memoir and the genre of the "war novel." Rather, Patricia

Hampel's "residue of grief" and "haunted quality" cling to much of the writing of the last fifty years, marking the literature as a period; the Second World War somehow changed memory for all time. Or so the writing of the last fifty years seems to say. Despite significant historical evidence to the contrary, both contemporary critics and writers of fiction express their conviction that World War II marks a definitive change in our ability to conceive both the future and the past.

It is that "somehow" that needs to be explored. We can begin by identifying two sets of inter-related problems. On the one hand, the *faculty* of memory is damaged by trauma and by a revised notion of time; memory, as a mental function that provides its subject with wanted or unwanted experiences of the past, is wounded as if its power resided in a locatable body organ. Strong as Vonnegut's "human" desire to look back may be, the vista of the past remains obscured from view or blinding in its intensity. The trouble here is in getting at the past at all. On the other hand, the contemporary memory crisis dovetails with the crisis in representation; in this context, memory as a *social practice* suffers its major setbacks. Indeed, distinguishing memory from representation, the mnemonic faculty from the social practice, becomes increasingly difficult. Richard Terdiman goes so far as to suggest that the crisis in representation is merely a "flattened form" of the memory crisis at large (8) and Andreas Huyssen reminds his readers that "(i)t does not take much theoretical sophistication to see that all representation--whether in language, narrative, image or recorded sound-- is based on memory...memory, even and especially in its belatedness, is itself based on representation" (2-3). More and more, to remember is defined as "to represent the past," if only to oneself. By distinguishing between the problems of remembering the past and the problems of representing it below, we make visible their specific points of overlap.

The dysfunctions of memory after the Second World War are generally referred to as "amnesias" of slightly different stripes. One type is a voluntary amnesia affecting

individuals, communities and nations. A kind of conspiracy of silence follows the war to manage things like guilt, shame and trauma. After the shocking news footage and reports, the subject of war crimes and atrocities is pushed aside. Vonnegut and Wolf both address this generalized suppression of unsavory events. For Vonnegut, it is the bombing of Dresden, while for Wolf, it is the domestication of fascism in her hometown in Germany. A second strain of amnesia is of the involuntary order, the type of amnesia that befalls those suffering from what has been lately diagnosed as "post traumatic stress disorder," a disorder that can also strike individuals, communities and nations. Survival requires the repression of horror, the logic runs, however temporary or incomplete; amnesia serves as a protective limbo space in which the past is neither remembered nor forgotten.

These amnesias conspire in what we can call, along with Milan Kundera, "organized forgetting." In an interview with Phillip Roth in 1975, Kundera describes organized forgetting as both a public and a personal dysfunction:

When a big power wants to deprive a small country of its national consciousness it uses the method of organized forgetting...A nation which loses awareness of its past gradually loses its self. And so the political situation has brutally illuminated the ordinary metaphysical problem of forgetting that we face all the time, every day, without paying attention. Politics unmasks the metaphysics of private life, private life unmasks the metaphysics of politics. (*Book* 235)

"Organized forgetting," as Kundera explains, has always been a favorite tactic of colonialism. Although now a mainstay of the postcolonial critique, in the years of the Cold War, such amnesia was routinely associated with the totalitarian regimes that arose in the wake of World War II, especially those in the communist bloc. Kundera's comments are again emblematic. Totalitarianism, he writes, referring specifically to the Soviet occupation of the former Czechoslovakia, "deprives people of memory and thus retools them into a nation of children" (235). The patriarchy of the imperialist makes children of its colonial subjects by controlling its memory; the colonials are dependents on their oppressors for

their identity. Colonizing the past is a means of colonizing people and though it has been so for some time, writers since World War II focus on it as an urgent and new problem.

The silence surrounding the events of World War II are often attributed less to amnesiac influences than to the seeming inadequacy of speech, what Wolf called "the limits of the expressible." From Adorno to Lyotard, Steiner to Habermas, philosophy suggests that there simply are no words-- or images and sounds-- to express the unprecedented horrors of the recent past: the Holocaust and the use of the atom bomb. While the hierarchy of horrors may be disputed, the Nazi program of genocide and the nuclear explosions in Japan remain the icons of the unprecedented and inexpressible; they challenge the limits of representation and of memory, since it requires representation; memory demands a language. The memory crisis precipitated by the war is in large part the result of the sense, first, that no such language yet exists, and second, that language becomes contaminated in its attempts to portray such events. In this way, the death camps and the devastation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki both become "unspeakable" and thus, beyond memory. Wolf's writing reverberates these concerns, as in The Search for Christa T. which is as much the narrator's search for language as it is for the elusive past. Vonnegut, too, warns his readers that "there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre":

Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre, and it always is, except for the birds. And what do the birds say? All there is to say about a massacre, things like "Poo-tee-weet?" (17).

Vonnegut tells us that there is both nothing to say and no way of saying nothing. There is not even a language to express the incomprehensibility of the experience, for articulation itself implies a level of understanding Vonnegut will not allow himself directly. Hence, the nonsense language of the birds says "all there is to say."

In addition to the inadequacy of language, memory is hampered by the perceived inadequacy of narrative frameworks; there is no narrative that can contain events like the Holocaust in its story. Paul Fussell's work on Memory and The Great War asserts that

writers made sense of the First World War by embedding it in the literary tradition. He writes:

Inhibited by scruples of decency and believing in the historical continuity of styles, writers about the war had to appeal to the sympathy of readers by invoking the familiar and suggesting its resemblance to what many of them suspected was an unprecedented and (in their terms) all-but-incommunicable reality. (174)

In their remembering and representing of the Second World War, writers are also "inhibited by scruples of decency." Those scruples, however, are quite different. Unlike the response to World War I that Fussell describes, there is the general perception in the post-WWII era that using "precedent images and motifs"(139) is the height of indecency. Scholarship on the Holocaust is rife with the sentiment that to aestheticize or make sense of Auschwitz is immoral. Shoshana Felman suggests that the preservation of the trauma of Auschwitz is in fact the only way of preserving the memory of it and in her formulation, trauma and the sublime go hand in hand. She praises Claude Lanzman's *Shoah*, for example, because his film uses documentary material that points only to the ultimate unrepresentability of the Holocaust; it preserves the trauma of representation and the trauma of recollection.<sup>3</sup> Lanzmann himself denies that his film is "historical" or that its purpose is "to transmit knowledge" (97). He attributes to it, instead, an unspecified "philosophical" purpose that critics like Shoshana Felman link to the crisis of representation. As Saul Freidlander explains, neither irony nor metaphor appear as legitimate means of representation of the Holocaust. Embedding genocide into a literary tradition is simply anathema. Hence, the scholarship on the Nazi atrocities may also be applied to the problems of representing the "nuclear holocaust" as well. These "scruples of decency" turn the horrors of World War II, with Auschwitz as its representative, into Lyotard's sublime--beyond representation, beyond comprehension. As representation is aestheticized into the sublime, so too is memory. The absolute difference of the past is its trauma as it is preserved, even at the cost of our ability to remember it. These scruples of decency, I want

to argue here, are a function of the denial and trauma caused by the war. While such scruples may have aided a post-war generation in coping with their pasts, it is clearly time to put the fears behind those scruples into their historical context, to risk embedding the horrors of the recent past into history. In so doing, we create a point of view from which to recast the memory crisis in far less sinister shadows, from which to see that crisis as a historically generated event.

The "memory boom" began in the sixties, which is not to say that archiving, musealization and the collection of oral testimony only began to thrive after 1965. Rather, while the Holocaust, for example, remained unrepresentable, its traces rose steadily in value. In this case, Nora, Huyssen and Lowenthal all appear to be born out: antiquarian zeal compensates for the devastation of memory. However, the final threat to memory posed by the war is this latest popularization in commemoration. Even in 1968, Vonnegut confronts the uselessness of anti-war literature. Writing an anti-war novel, his friend suggests, is like writing an anti-glacier book :

What he meant, of course, was that there would always be wars, that they were as easy to stop as glaciers. I believe that, too...And even if wars didn't keep coming like glaciers, there would still be plain old death. (Vonnegut 3)

The uselessness Vonnegut refers to adds an additional dimension to the memory crisis. In the latter half of the twentieth century, apocalypse seems to be just around the corner, whether it be through nuclear proliferation or a "newer, bigger Holocaust." Indeed, the term "Nuclear Holocaust" sutures together the two iconic horrors of World War II and figures them together as the final devastation. In short, these writers reflect a lack of confidence in the idea of a future and in art's ability to affect it. Santayana's famous dictum is drained of meaning. In the context of the contemporary memory crisis, "Those who do not remember history are doomed to repeat it" may be pessimistically reworded as "Those who remember history *know* that they are doomed to repeat it." In this way, the past-present-future structure of temporality becomes obsolete and throws memory further into a

state of crisis. Even if memory had a language, it would be hopelessly robbed of its idiom. We become a culture situated in what Kundera calls "the period of terminal paradoxes," a period in which history is "impersonal, uncontrollable, incalculable, incomprehensible...inescapable" (*Art* 11). In Lyotard's register, the metanarrative of progress is obsolete and with it, the memories of a past that might inflect the future.

Memory is not merely threatened by uselessness, however. As writers tell us, the "memory boom" endangers the past. The final threat to memory becomes our fear that acts of remembrance make forgetting all the more easy. Rather than keeping "memory alive," we bury it in pomp and circumstance. In their work on "German-Jewish Memory and National Consciousness," Michael Geyer and Miriam Hansen write:

Today, we no longer say that the Germans have no memory of the Holocaust or that memory is denied. Yet a concern about forgetfulness is as warranted as ever...They *remember in order to forget*. And these rituals of remembering are the benevolent versions. (Hartman 176).

Dominick LaCapra comments, "The Holocaust has been both repressed and 'canonized' in the recent past" (xi) and Andreas Huyssen echoes the sentiment most forcefully:

Despite the growth of Holocaust revisionism in recent years, the problem for Holocaust memory in the 1980s and the 1990s is not forgetting, but rather the ubiquitousness, even the excess of Holocaust imagery in our culture... Certainly, the unchecked proliferation of the trope itself may be a sign of its traumatic ossification, its remaining locked in a melancholic fixation that reaches far beyond victims and perpetrators. (255-6)

While Huyssen argues here that the "trope" of the Holocaust is an offensive ossifying agent, I would argue that the *problems* of the memory of the Holocaust and of the nuclear devastation in Japan are what comprise a trope in contemporary literature. The Second World War underscores a host of such problems, including both the problems of representation and recollection. Any alternative model of memory will have to face the debacles of the memory put to rest in that war. In summary, in rethinking memory we will need to relinquish the opposition between memory as an individual faculty and memory as a social practice; memory needs to be reconceived as an intersubjective affair. Further, any

alternative model of memory viable to contemporary culture will need to come to terms with its fears about the ways nations, language and modes of representation colonize the past and take possession of history. The threats posed to memory by "ubiquity," "canonization," and rituals of commemoration bring us to the second source of the contemporary memory crisis: modernization.

### III. The Market for Memory

When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning.  
--Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations" (171)

Suddenly it just spilled out, three-dimensionally, all over the landscape. You have to make allowances for the fact that everything we see tonight is real.  
-- Dom DeLillo, White Noise (139)

In his essay on "Jewish Memory in Poland," James Young analyzes a variety of memorials now designed for the tourist trade, including the Lodz Jewish Cemetery, the largest Jewish graveyard in Europe, the monument and the walking tour of the Warsaw Ghetto. His essay reaches its high point in its description of the synagogue in Kazimierz on the Vistula, "one of the oldest examples of masonry architecture in Poland" (Hartman 220). As there is no congregation to reclaim it, the former Kazimierz synagogue serves instead as the Vistula Cinema, although the villagers continue to refer to it as "the synagogue."

Young describes it as follows:

Entering, we found girls still sitting in the upstairs in the women's gallery but now with their sweethearts. The windows were boarded up on the outside and plastered over on the inside to keep light from coming in. The walls were whitewashed and clean, and the original wooden floor was polished to a shine. No one seemed to mind when I pulled the screen slightly away from the wall to peek behind it: the frame for the holy ark was intact. ...The ark may be covered by the movie screen and its images but devoted viewers still face in its direction. (Hartman 220)

We might look at the Kazimierz synagogue next to Auschwitz camp, as it has been redesigned to serve tourists. Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt have conducted a detailed analysis of the process of "Reclaiming Auschwitz" and the various ways the camp

has been shaped to suit the tourist needs and, at the same time, to seem more "authentic." They describe how tour guides tell the visiting groups that they are actual survivors of the camp. They do not, however, point out the original uses of the buildings that have been reclaimed. Instead, for example, they allow most visitors to assume that the building that now houses a restaurant, cafeteria, post office, money exchange, cinema, book shop, conference room and hotel (Hartman 237), was constructed after the war. In fact, the building actually served as the reception and bathing area for incoming prisoners. Nor do the guides point out the former barracks now walled off from the camp and used for low-income housing; they were omitted because they seem too nice and do not fit most peoples' images of what Nazi barracks should look like. Similarly, in Birkenau, no tour guide explains the reconstruction of Crematory I or why it was chosen as the representative exhibit. In actuality, the chimney, hatched openings in the roof (for pouring in Zyklon B) and the remodelling of the furnaces were added to create this representative image for the tourists. Dwork and van Pelt write:

There are no signs to explain these restitutions, they were not marked at the time, and the guides remain silent about it when they take visitors through this 'palpably intact' building that is presumed by the tourist to be the place where *it happened*. (Hartman 239)

Thus, the visitor's experience at Auschwitz is a carefully orchestrated tour that only pretends to simulate the prisoners' approach, entrance, and ultimate departure from the camps through the chimneys of the Birkenau crematoriums.

Together, the synagogue in Kazimierz and the Auschwitz visitors' center illustrate what critics regard as the twin evils of modernization: technology and capitalism. As contemporary writing reveals, both of these elements of modernization threaten to destroy memory. The former synagogue is paradigmatic of the amnesia attributed to our "image culture." In this context, the real is subsumed by the simulacral and we are in the realm of what George Lipsitz calls the "forgetting of commercialized leisure" (6). Lipsitz is

especially wary of mass media, attributing to it the power to "colonize the past" and to disconnect people from tradition. "The period from World War II to the present," he writes, "marks the final triumph of commercialized leisure, and with it an augmented crisis over the loss of connection to the past" (12). We can thus see James Young's description as literally a description of "screened" memories. Instead of worshipping a god, the images projected on the film screen scrolled over the holy ark become the object of worship. Behind the screen, the frame of the ark remains, although it is empty of the scrolls that were once stored in them. Not only is the content of the past screened, but its reality is no longer available for recovery. In the local use of the word "Synagogue" we also have the repression of memory. For the Polish moviegoers, synagogue has simply become synonymous with cinema, all connections to its original usage forgotten. Behind the technologies of reproduction, this kind of critique continues, lurk the technologies of mass destruction that are said to have reached their apotheosis in the Second World War. One can no longer just lift the screen; both the content and the form of memory have been altered by these technologies.

As the real becomes engulfed by the simulated, the "real past" and "real memory" are, as Baudrillard argues, the trademarks of late twentieth century nostalgia. Don DeLillo's White Noise illustrates that it is not merely events of WWII that are subject to the dangers of technology. The past as such has apparently collapsed in our particular age of mechanical reproduction. DeLillo's White Noise paints both a threatening and nostalgic picture. When Murray and Jack go to visit "The Most Photographed Barn in America," for example, they approach it via a path marked with signs advertising the tourist attraction. "Once you've seen the signs about the barn," Murray, the professor of Popular Culture explains, "it becomes impossible to see the barn" (12). In Baudrillard's terms, "a new amnesia is produced by an endless process of image-substitution" (11). The longing for the lost eden of the real pervades White Noise.

Moreover, in DeLillo's novel, visiting the "Most Photographed Barn in America" is disturbingly similar to the tourist's visit to Auschwitz, at least as far as Murray's analysis takes it:

Being here is a kind of spiritual surrender. We see only what the others see. The thousands who were here in the past, those who will come in the future. We've agreed to be part of the collective perception. This literally colors our vision. A religious experience in a way, like all tourism. (12)

In both cases, the tourist site shares a kinship with Baudrillard's Disney Land that highlights his nostalgia for the real, the authentic and the actual. The simulated experience of the Auschwitz inmate is produced as the path to the actual, a way of overcoming the absolute difference of that experience. Remembering has become simulating, and memory simulacra. David Lowenthal provides an apt synopsis: "Now a foreign country with a booming tourist trade, the past has undergone the usual consequences of popularity" (xvii). "Popularity" we may translate here as successful entry into the tourist industry, into the capitalist economy. Thus, we may conclude along with Adorno that capitalism results in "the freezing of memory in commodity form" (7) or we may prefer the no less threatening prospect of Benjamin's conclusion to "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" and maintain that the tourist site that Auschwitz is now, yet remains a place in which we "experience (our) own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order" (242).

Perhaps the contemporary critic whose work most clearly adumbrates the dangers of modernization on memory is Fredric Jameson. In Jameson's work, "postmodernism" may be better translated as "post-modernization" for as John Frow explains, Jameson's work "deliberately conflates the cultural and political with the economic" (Slemon 139). Indeed, in Jameson's work, the distinction between the threats of capitalism and technology become indistinguishable from one another as what he calls "late capitalism." In the period of postmodernization, the technology of industry is indistinguishable from the industry of

technology. Thus splicing a Frankfurt School culture industry critique to the long history of technophobia, Jameson identifies a "crisis in historicity." The crisis is the direct result of multinational capitalism and its technologies. Forecasting both Huyssen's "dystopian vision" and the language of disease he gives to memory, Jameson writes:

...(F)or political groups which seek actively to intervene in history and to modify its otherwise passive momentum...there cannot but be much that is deplorable and reprehensible in a cultural form of image addiction which, by transforming the past into visual mirages, stereotypes, or texts, effectively abolishes any practical sense of the future and of the collective project, thereby abandoning the thinking of future change to fantasies of sheer catastrophe and inexplicable cataclysm, from visions of "terrorism" on the social level to those of cancer on the personal. (46)

Jameson's "fantasy of catastrophe" suggests most of the fears about memory that come to the fore in an age of postmodernization. Memory is commodified, commercialized, shaped to the dictates of the market economy, reduced to simulacra. Jameson's crisis in historicity is a crisis, like Nora's, of the "collective project," but also it is a crisis of the real and it is the destabilization of the real that leads us to one of the greatest fears of the writers of the memory crisis, the fear, if not "terrorism," of an unconstrained relativism. In the absence of a real past, of a solid historical ground, the "sense of the future and of the collective project" lose their vitality and memory devolves into simulation.

From Jameson's "fantasy of catastrophe" we enter a space that allows for both Huyssen's "amnesiac culture" and Lowenthal's "nostalgia industry." Predating Huyssen by almost ten years, Jameson does not quite get around to a detailed critique of the technology of the Internet which now serves as a standard threat to memory, history and temporality. In Huyssen's critique, the focus shifts away from the threats of capitalist reification to those of "the accelerating technical processes that are transforming our *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld)" (7). In the technologies of information processing like the Internet, Huyssen identifies speed and the illusion of "simultaneity" as the key threats to memory. He writes:

The more we store on data banks, the more the past is sucked into the orbit of the present, ready to be called up on the screen. A sense of historical continuity, or, for that matter, discontinuity, both of which depend on a before and an after, gives way to the simultaneity of all times and spaces readily accessible in the present...Real difference, real otherness in historical time or in geographic distance can no longer even be perceived. (253)

Once again, Huyssen's comments reveal his anxieties about the future, anxieties that revolve around the structure of time.

In all of these critiques, the forces of modernization endanger memory by destabilizing our concept of the real on the one hand, and our experience of temporality on the other. While capitalism appropriates the real with its images, technology plays havoc with the tripartite model of past-present-future temporality. The synagogue in Kazimierz and the Auschwitz reclamation remind us that collective memory and collective forgetting proceed without the luxury of the real or authentic past to ground them. In the world of (post)-modernization, collective culture is difficult to differentiate from mass culture and it will be that distinction that a viable theory of collective memory will need to assert. For behind the fear of commodification and the attack on the real, lies the fear that capitalism has co-opted collective identities and their histories, homogenizing culture and generating a generalized amnesia through its proliferation of images. In addition to WWII and the threats of modernization, however, the memory crisis is sustained by both a need to historicize memory and to re-member history. The first requires a negotiation of the weighty inheritance of modernist models of memory. As powerfully influenced as it was by Freud, Bergson and Proust, the novel is particularly sensitive to the burden of that legacy. Below, I argue that postmodernism's relationship to modernism is especially murky with regard to modernism's accounts of memory. In order to postulate a memory that escapes the aporias of postmodernism, we will need to understand the memories of modernism that continue to haunt postmodern thought and literature.

#### IV. Postmodernism Remembers: Suspensions and Disbeliefs

If one is lost on the water, every hill is Ararat. And below is always the accumulated past, which vanishes but does not vanish, which perishes and remains.

--Marilynne Robinson, Housekeeping (172)

The so called "stream of consciousness novel" remains one of modernism's pre-eminent experiments. In it we find a narrative structure developed to explore the conscious and unconscious workings of a subject who interprets the world through her unique point of view. The subgenre of the stream of consciousness novel is more than paradigmatic; it is a showcase for the staging of modernism's trademark epistemological questions: How do I see the world? How do I interpret it? How can I see and interpret it differently? The last of those questions is, of course, the invitation to the artist. The art of epistemology is, at once, the art in which the modernist writer creates himself and recreates the world. It is perhaps for this reason that Alan Wilde tells us that modernists, in their various ways, have made an art of their uncertainty (9).

The stream of consciousness novel is also a privileged site for the investigation of the workings of memory, the suspension bridge that links conscious thought to realms like the Freudian unconscious and the Bergsonian *durée*. Freud, Bergson, and Marcel Proust together reflect and feed the preoccupation with memory so pervasive in the modernist era. In Faulkner, in Woolf, and even in Joyce, rivers, streams and oceans figure the flow of memory. To pun on Bergson, at the forefront of the modernist arts of epistemology is "the matter of memory." If this matter is not abundantly clear in the modernist canon, it is surely clarified in theories of post-modernism. In order to differentiate the postmodern from the modern, critics inevitably foreground a shift in the role of memory as part of the decisive shift in aesthetic practices. Fredric Jameson, for example, describes "the waning of the great high modernist thematics of time and temporality, the elegiac mysteries of *durée* and memory" and declares that "our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as

in the preceding period of high modernism" (16). In Jameson's analysis, even postmodernism's pre-eminent art form, the pastiche, cannot be said to recall the past in the "random cannibalization" of styles (18). Even postmodernism's nostalgia, then, must be differentiated from what Jameson calls "a properly modernist nostalgia" (19). Instead of longing for "a past beyond all but aesthetic retrieval," postmodernism "appropriates a missing past" only "through the iron law of fashion" (19). The postmodern past is reduced to a style of representation. In Jameson's formulations, the depth of temporality collapses into a protracted, spatialized surface. We are left with the supposed shift from diachronic organizations of time to synchronic ones. In that shift, memory's vocation and privileged modes themselves become post-dated.

Like Jameson, Lyotard summarizes the difference between the modern and the postmodern as essentially a difference in the relationship of the present to its pasts. Moreover, Lyotard similarly contrasts the dominant aesthetics of the two periods as different forms of nostalgia, with the postmodern, of course, being the more extreme. Modern aesthetics, he argues, is an "aesthetics of the sublime, though a nostalgic one" (81). It is the *content* of the missing past that is unrepresentable, while the form remains "recognizably consistent" and serves as a replacement pleasure for its audience. On the other hand, Lyotard's postmodern is "that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of good taste which would make it possible to share collectively in the nostalgia for the unattainable" (81). In short, Lyotard's postmodern nostalgia is nostalgic for modernism's brand of longing. More recently, Brian McHale has also theorized the difference between modernism and postmodernism as the latter's disavowal of a presumed organization of time and the function of memory the former presupposed. However, nostalgia is not a foregrounded issue in his analysis. Instead, his Postmodernist Fiction adumbrates a shift from epistemological to ontological concerns in postmodern artworks,

especially in narrative fiction. In the context of an aesthetics dominated by the ontological, he explains, memory and perspectivism are "firmly displaced to the background" (19).

From such critics as these, we may gather that either contemporary culture is unconcerned with the past, or that having left the modernist modes of memory behind, we remain stymied by the question of memory's ontological status. Instead of asking, "How can I know the past? How can I remember?" we would be forced to ask "What is the past? What are memories?" Lacking satisfying answers, these questions, as McHale puts it, are "displaced." Not coincidentally, we can note, displacement is a standard Freudian defense mechanism, a device for managing memory. Given the general preoccupation with the past, the "memory boom" and nostalgia industry we have already discussed, we can dismiss the first option rather quickly. Clearly, contemporary culture is concerned-- if not driven-- by the possibilities and problematics it invests in memory. We can, however, consider the second option, that the rejection of modernism's models of memory has contributed to the sense of a memory crisis. Contemporary fiction shows more support for this claim. Narrative fiction since the Second World War reveals less a rejection of modernism's versions of memory and temporality, than a suspension of faith in them. But whence the anxiety? What exactly is it that renders the great theories of modernist memory suspicious? While critics are generally quick to point out that memory, as formulated by Proust, Bergson or Freud, is outdated in the contemporary period, they are less forthcoming in explaining *why* this might be the case. What do the different models of memory associated with these figures have in common? What about them is considered untenable today?

We might take our cue from McHale and retrace the path of memory's "displacement." According to Richard Terdiman's study, displacement was also a primary way nineteenth century writers handled their "memory crisis." In his analysis, the existential crisis invoked by memory's instability is displaced into scientific and objective discourses; he

reads the disciplinization of history, for example, as an attempt to institutionalize and thereby stabilize the problem of the past (30). In this way, Terdiman sets up modernist memory as a response to its nineteenth century disciplinization. In Terdiman's model, modernism's "most intense fantasy" is its attempt to escape all manner of "extra-artistic determination" and memory plays a central role in that attempt (160). Proust's involuntary memory is epiphanic and bestows meaning on the past, while Bergson's involuntary memory saves its subject from enslavement to the mechanical and habitual dogma of its everyday life. Freud's psychoanalysis can also be seen as an attempt to free the subject from her enslavement to the past; memory here is cure. Andreas Huyssen describes these various attempts to counter objectifying discourses of science with subjective, if not magical, models of memory as "utopian modernism":

...Nietzsche was a utopian modernist, standing at the beginning of an intellectual trajectory from Bergson to Proust, from Freud to Benjamin, that articulated the classical modernist formulations of memory as alternative to the discourses of objectifying and legitimizing history, and as cure to the pathologies of modern life. Here memory was always associated with some utopian space and time beyond what Benjamin called the homogeneous empty time of the capitalist present. (6)

The hallmarks of the kinds of memory proposed by this school of utopian modernism are twofold. First, each writer posits an extratemporal realm in which the past persists, unadulterated and unchanged from the subject's original experience of it. Bergson calls this realm *duree*, while Freud calls it the Unconscious. In spite of quite significant differences, all three of these memory theories assert archival realms in which the past remains, a past comprised as a record of facts untouched by the corrosion of time or the subjective prejudices of the rememberer. Certainly, by all accounts, gaining access to this realm is no simple task, but the possibility is a primary and defining feature of the period we traditionally call modernism. Modernist perspectivism and the permutations of stream of consciousness narration rest comfortably on the modernist faith in the existence of the archival realm, that is, on the stable ground of the past.

Additionally, the modernists art of epistemology presumes the existence of a subject capable of the memorial feats Proust, Bergson and Freud each describe. The modernist fantasy of escaping extra-artistic determination implies that such autonomy is a realistic goal. It implies a subjective experience of time. As Shive K. Kumar explains in his classic study, the stream of consciousness novel presupposes a "psychological time" and it is in this realm of pure subjectivity that "true aesthetic experience" occurs. Kumar writes:

The new novelist accepts with full awareness inner duration against chronological time as the only true mode of apprehending aesthetic experience (7).

Both the persistence of the past in its extra-temporal realm, and the subject capable of remembering it as such, are two of the modernist tenets most suspicious to contemporary thought. As we have seen, extra-artistic determination has graduated to a kind of aestheticized fatalism: apocalypse is around the corner and prediction is no replacement for an effective agency. Black humor mutates into the deadpan affect of Jameson's postmodernism.

The generation of writers that follows the war feels compelled to break with the major modernist tenets, including the ideal of the autonomous artist and the liberating power of memory. Indeed, the pain attached to the remembrance of the immediate past plays havoc with a notion of memory that is curative, transcendental or capable of otherwise investing events with meaning. After modernism, a model of memory must not only dispense with the autonomous subject and the archival realm that grounds the past, but must also relinquish the notion of memory as a liberating experience for its subject. Post-modern, memory enslaves much more clearly than it frees.

Contemporary fiction registers a less adamant verdict on modernism's memories. In the context of an ontological uncertainty, the art of interpretation does not disappear but proceeds instead in a state of heightened anxiety. In the hands of writers like Marilynne Robinson, Marguerite Duras and Graham Swift, modernism's streams of consciousness

become suspensions, holding what Alan Wilde calls "an equipoise of opposites" (9). The past persists and it doesn't; we can remember and we can't. In Duras' The Lover, the Mekong River is asked to figure the relentless flow of time without the benefit of a surface/depth opposition. The truth of the past is not lodged in some hidden depth of the river and yet, the random effluvia of the past runs in its stream. Duras writes:

The river has picked up all it's met with since Tonle Sap and the Cambodian forest. It carries every along, straw huts, forests, burned-out fires, dead birds, dead dogs, drowned tigers and buffaloes, drowned men, bait, islands of water hyacinths all stuck together. Everything flows toward the Pacific, no time for anything to sink, all is swept along by the deep and headlong storm of the inner current, suspended on the surface of the water's strength. (22)

What is the inner current of the river, the "storm blowing inside the water"? (33).

Duras remains obscure on this point and whatever the motor of time is, it is the speed and violence of it that obstructs access to the past. In fact, in Duras' first account of her adolescence in Indochina, she dramatizes her mother's failed attempt to stop the river with a construction of a "sea wall." In The Lover, remembering also requires a suspension of the flow of time. Hence, Duras invents a photograph of herself as a young girl. The photograph literally suspends the girl on the surface of the Mekong; she stands on a ferry awaiting departure. In addition, the invented memory as photograph emphasizes the artificiality of the stasis involved. Of that photograph, Duras explains: "(I)t's to this, this failure to have been created, that the image owes its virtue: the virtue of representing, of being the creator of, an absolute" (10). Remembering is invention and the slowing of the river, but Duras is unsure of the ultimate persistence of the past. The water is not an extra-temporal realm and it suspends, rather than harbors, memory. Yet, Duras writes no less than three novels on the same subject matter, each presenting itself as the "real" version. The project of getting at that real past remains essential to her aesthetic.

The ambiguity of Duras' Mekong River is clarified in the muddy rivers of Marilynne Robinson's *Fingerbone*; the town is literally suffused with waters and those waters are

filled with the past. The "breath of creeks and lakes," Robinson's Ruthie tells us in Housekeeping, are marked by a "certain pungency and savor...which however sad and wild are clearly human" (194). In the depths of the waters of Fingerbone is a derailed train full of passengers who are never found, as well as Ruthie's drowned grandfather and mother. But, in Housekeeping, water is also the domain of imagination. Indeed, Ruthie tells us she cannot differentiate what she knows from her senses and what she imagines. We are left with the suspension of my headnote to this section, Ruthie's contradictory affirmations that "below is always the accumulated past, which vanishes but does not vanish, which perishes and remains." The ambiguity of Robinson's memory is lodged in the instability of time itself. She writes that "memory pulls us forward" and "prophecy is only brilliant memory" (192). Her novel, however, imagines a "reconciliation and a return"-- of memory, as well as the lost past. In her provocative fantasy of the "re-matriation" of Mnemosyne, Lot's Wife is surrounded by adoring children who throw flowers at her feet and "forgive her, eagerly and lavishly, for turning away, although she never asked to be forgiven" (153).

Like Duras and Robinson, Graham Swift has written a novel in which memory and water mingle together. In Waterlands, the reclamation of the fens from the continually brimming waters of the river Ouse represents the narrator's attempts to reconstruct his own past. The project is stymied by the paradox of its own elements. Silt "obstructs as it builds; unmakes as it makes" while peat absorbs huge quantities of water and then shrinks when it dries (11). Time, as the river Ouse, follows multiple, spiral trajectories. Swift writes:

...As we all know, the sun and the wind suck up the water from the sea and disperse it on the land, perpetually refeeding the rivers. So that while the Ouse flows to the sea, it flows, in reality, like all rivers, only back to itself, to its own source; and the impression that a river moves only one way is an illusion. (146)

For this reason, remembering is only a process, and memory a temporary artifice. The fens, as the narrator explains, "are never reclaimed, only being reclaimed" (10). And yet, Waterlands is the narrator's attempt to get to the truth of his childhood on the fens, the reasons that explain his exile in London to himself. Waterlands, too, wants memory to correct the lies of history. The very circularity of memory and its unstable ground are the features he uses to reveal the artificiality of history. "So forget, indeed, your revolutions, your turning points, your grand metamorphoses of history," the narrator admonishes in the first chapter of the novel, "Consider, instead, the slow and arduous process, the interminable and ambiguous process-- the process of human siltation-- of land reclamation" (10). Like Duras and Robinson, Swift reveals the anxieties that emerge in the rejection of modernism. Post-modern, memory will have to confront the relative truth of a past no longer preserved in an archival realm. It will reject the autonomous subject and it will need to re-conceive the individual's relationship to the group in order to facilitate an intersubjective model of memory. However, history, the logical sphere for that model is itself under suspicion.

Swift's indictment of history brings us to the fourth source of the memory crisis. A final reason for the disavowal of modernism's memories is their vulnerability to the accusations deconstruction levels at "stable models" in general. In short, the elegant accounts of memory produced by Proust, Freud and Bergson suffer under a common triptych of related charges: they are essentializing, totalizing and universalizing. In other words, we might simply say that they are insensitive to cultural and historical differences. In the aftermath of World War II, these differences become more and more difficult to ignore. While history earns a sketchy reputation as the narrative of the colonizer and the exploiter, memory finds itself in an uncomfortably duplicitous position.

#### V. History's Interrogation

History begins only at the point where things go wrong; history is born only with trouble, with perplexity, with regret. So hard on the heels of the word *Why* comes the sly and wistful word *If*.

-- Graham Swift, Waterlands (106)

The protagonist of Swift's novel is Tom Crick, high school history teacher in modern day London. The drama of the novel is in part Crick's struggle to find a way to remember his own past, but it is also the drama of his efforts to find a value for History as a discipline, a science, or art of storytelling. Midway through Waterlands, Master Crick pulls back from the story of his childhood on the Fens and faces the unspoken censure of his practical-minded students. On behalf of his class, Crick poses the question: What is a history teacher? To his own query, Crick responds:

He's someone who teaches mistakes. While others say, Here's how to do it, he says, And here's what goes wrong...He's a self-contradiction...An obstructive instructor, a treacherous tutor. Maybe he's a bad influence. Maybe he's not good to have around. (235-6)

Crick's less than complimentary self-portrait is telling, as are his various depictions of History, his supposed area of expertise. For in the course of the novel, Swift's protagonist articulates all of the major criticism that has been leveled at history and its practitioners in the last fifty years. He rejects the linear trajectory of history, the master narrative of progress. He charges history with claiming ownership to reality: "Reality: What every world-builder, what every revolutionary wants a monopoly in" (206). He doubts the truth-value of historical "fact" and describes historical narrative as a "reality-obscuring drama" (40). Finally, he concedes that history "creates this insidious longing to revert...this bastard but pampered child named Nostalgia" (136). And yet, while Crick is unable to settle into the role of simply "teaching the mistakes" of history and its practitioners, he is also loathe to dismiss the project of history altogether. Waterlands, in its plot and narrative construction, represents his attempt to re-invest history with a viable role. Crick's melancholy project bears the standard marks of postmodernism's critique of

history. It preserves a traditional practice of history, but advertises its own dangers, failures and guilt. Crick's project is a perfect example of the postmodernism that Linda Hutcheon calls "complicitous critique":

My humble model for progress is the reclamation of land. Which is repeatedly, never-endingly retrieving what is lost. A dogged, vigilant business. A dull yet valuable business. A hard, inglorious business. But you shouldn't go mistaking the reclamation of land for the building of empires. (336)

Detaching history from empire ends up to be no simple task and a good many of the fears that revolve around the writing of history find their crisis in just this challenge. The netherworld of J.M. Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians, for example, may be a thinly veiled critique of the empire of Apartheid South Africa, but it ultimately transcends its own allegory; the account of Coetzee's Magistrate is a self-conscious attempt to practice a history divorced from the imperialist project of "building empires." The dangers are apparently great, for in the hands of Empire, Coetzee's novel insists, history is little more than the imperial's narrative of legitimation. Like Swift's Crick, Coetzee's Magistrate seeks to remove history from the dictates of empire and replace the artificial linearity of its narrative with a more "natural" cyclic model of time:

Empire has created the time of history. Empire has located its existence not in the smooth recurrent spinning time of the cycle of the seasons but in the jagged time of rise and fall, of beginning and end, of catastrophe. Empire dooms itself to live in history and plot against history. One thought alone preoccupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era. (Coetzee 133)

The protagonists of both of these novels ultimately fail in their attempts to redefine history, and the dead-ending of both are the narrators' recognition that they, themselves, are subjects of the Empire, subjected to it and by it. In their attempts and failures, Waterlands and Waiting for the Barbarians illustrate the double-bind of the contemporary history debate: the injunction to criticize history and to be historical at the same time. It is here that memory is called in to correct and prevent the excesses of historical narrative, to be both a substitute for and antidote to History.

It is perhaps appropriate in this context that historicizing the "crisis in historicity" should present itself as such a formidable problem. The logic of cause and effect, the teleology attributed to narratives of all stripes, the ideology behind the "jagged time of rise and fall," are all suspect in contemporary thought and the suspiciousness of these very qualities renders the problem of historicizing them all the more difficult. Hayden White's Metahistory is perhaps the seminal study of history as a system of tropes and their linguistic protocol. The enabling assertion that allows White his influential study of nineteenth century historiography is that "in any field of study not yet reduced (or elevated) to the status of a genuine status of a genuine science, thought remains the captive of the linguistic mode in which it seeks to grasp the outline of objects inhabiting its field of perception" (xi). More recently, the critique of the content and form of history has been popularized as one of the key projects of postcolonial studies. Helen Tiffin writes:

The myth of historical objectivity is embedded in a particular view of the sequential nature of narrative, and its capacity to to reflect, isomorphically the pattern of events it records. The post-colonial task, therefore, is not simply to contest the message of history, which has so often relegated individual post-colonial societies to footnotes to the march of progress, but also to engage the medium of narrativity itself, to reinscribe the 'rhetoric', the heterogeneity of historical representation as White describes it. (356)

On the other hand, Linda Hutcheon presents the contemporary effort to de-captivate history as the "key paradox of postmodernism" (78). As she writes it, "The past really did exist, but we can only know it today through its textual traces, its often complex and indirect representations in the present" (78). Hutcheon summarizes the narrative conventions that history and the postmodern historical novel seek to evade as what we can call the three C's: Causality, continuity and closure. Once we regard narrative as an ideological construct, historical explanations can only acquire the status of "relative truths."

It is that relativity that post-colonial critic Diana Brydon expresses concern about and that causes her to insist on the "reality" of the past. She insists that "the clearest difference between a post-modernist practice and a post-colonial practice emerges through their

different uses of history" (Tiffin 142). Postmodernism foregrounds the problems embedded in representing history, focusing on the textuality of the past, she writes, while post-colonialism assumes the reality of the past. To Brydon's mind, an emphasis on "deconstruction" and issues of textuality serves as a convenient western fetish, another veil for post-colonialism to lift. Even Diana Brydon's faith in the "reality of the past" runs into crisis, however. In the postcolonial world, the reality of the past is divorced from the narrative of nation and a chaotic proliferation ensues in which so many "realities" of the past emerge that the true past can enjoy only a relative status; we end up with "relative realities of the past." The Brydon-Hutcheon debate has been anthologized in a number of collections. It represents the questions that arise when postmodern priorities meet those of postcolonialism. For the purposes of this study, we may also note that their debate underscores the complexities that arise when both the constitution of memory and of the collective are destabilized. Thus, Hutcheon and Brydon mirror each other's error. Hutcheon's postmodernism chooses to ignore the crisis of the collective, whereas Brydon's postcolonialism chooses to divorce "true memory" from the relativizing forces of point of view.

In the face-off between postmodernism and postcolonialism, counter-memory arises as a practice that attempts to reconcile the concerns of each. George Lipsitz, for example, wants to differentiate his version of "counter-memory" from that of Michel Foucault. Like Swift's protagonist, Lipsitz finds that Foucault's counter-memory only allows history to be "a treacherous tutor...the teacher of mistakes." Lipsitz struggles to define a counter-memory that is historical and yet critical of history. Thus, he wants a "counter-memory" that contains "aspects of both myth and history," but which remains suspicious of both categories. Lipsitz explains:

Unlike historical narratives that begin with the totality of human existence and then locate specific actions and events within that totality, counter-memory starts with the particular and the specific and then builds outward toward a total story. Counter-

memory looks to the past for the hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives. But unlike myths that seek to detach events and actions from the fabric of any larger history, counter-memory forces revision of existing histories by supplying new perspectives about the past. (213)

Memory is valued here for being both the opposite of History and for its subjective nature. For this reason, he invests memory with the power to relativize history. It is perhaps for this reason, as well, that Patrick Hutton would like to define "postmodern history" as "an art of memory." Like Lipsitz, Hutton struggles to get beyond a merely critical mode of history and to identify a propositional one. From these projects, we might conclude that memory has recovered its reputation and acquired a new vocation as the antidote to History. As Andreas Huyssen suggests,

...(T)he shift from history to memory represents a welcome critique of compromised teleological notions of history rather than being simply anti-historical, relativistic, or subjective. Memory as a concept rather than merely material for the historian seems increasingly to draw literary critics, historians, and social scientists together, while a more traditional concept of history, certainly in some prominent discourses of literary theory, just gives rise to disciplinary trench warfare.(6)

And yet, even Huyssen is quick to point out the paradoxes in this situation. Even as memory's stature increases, we find that it is also diminished by the crisis in historicity. Memory, it seems, becomes "contaminated" by its association with History, to use Linda Hutcheon's word. In the shift from "counter-memory" to Hutton's "history as an art of memory," the enabling opposition between memory and History threatens to collapse. In the process, memory becomes subject to the same critiques as history and the qualities of memory that recommend it as an alternative-- its subjectivity, its art, its flaunted relativity-- become its undoing. "Counter-memory" can criticize History, but it cannot postulate an alternative; it cannot correct it. Additionally, the very heterogeneity of points of view, of versions of the past unleashed in the post-colonial era, further devalue memory, making it ubiquitous and radically relative to its point of view. No longer attached to the nation, to race or to religion, history suffers a fragmentation and the gap between a subjective memory and a collective one comes to our attention as a seemingly unbridgeable chasm.

## VI. Collective Memory

The contemporary memory crisis presents any model of memory with the challenge of evading its two major anxieties: an unconstrained relativism and an equation of memory with colonialism. A contemporary model of memory that wants to account for the assertion that memory can be shared, must apparently do so without the crutches of either an autonomous subject or a socially determined one. Any new model of memory will need to beware, in addition, of the potential for appropriation posed by history, myth and fiction. Further, a contemporary model of memory will emerge into, and be tested in, a cultural context that takes the simultaneous existence of multiple organizations of time for granted.

As outlined above, the challenges that face any new model of memory are formidable and yet, not altogether unique. For the cultural context that has produced our memory crisis, has also reproduced many of the anxieties familiar to history. At least with regard to memory, the postmodern condition is singular neither in content nor severity. As we approach the *fin de siècle*, our memory crisis presents us with a set of situations and debates that were equally pervasive in the first decades of this century. In response to a philosophical impasse not unlike our own, Maurice Halbwachs introduced his concept of collective memory. As it seems to respond to many of the challenges contemporary models of memory face today, his collective memory has been appropriated by contemporary critics such as Pierre Nora, Patrick Hutton and George Lipsitz. Given the revival of interest in this earlier twentieth century figure, Halbwachs' collective memory merits some closer inspection.

Maurice Halbwachs first used the term collective memory in his sociological study published before the Second World War. As a philosopher and sociologist, Halbwachs himself seems to be a conjunction of the opposing theories of his two most influential teachers, Henri Bergson and Emil Durkheim. In fact, The Collective Memory shows the

wear and tear of the difficult task of merging Bergsonian subjectivism and intuition with Durkheim's brand of sociological determinism. Halbwachs' successes and failures in this volume of collected essays have gained attention in recent years. The attractiveness of his theories are twofold. First is the reason I have alluded to above. In The Collective Memory, Halbwachs conducts a relentlessly materialist analysis and, yet, also grants the individual rememberer an individuality, an art of memory. Halbwachs insists on the social construction of time and refuses to believe in what he calls a "subterranean gallery," an extra-temporal realm in which the past is saved. Rather, he insists that the past is stored in the milieu, in the collective that keeps its memory alive. Like Bakhtin's subject, however, Halbwachs' rememberer always has membership in a host of milieux and much like Bakhtin's language, the dynamism of Halbwachs' memory occurs in the overlap of these milieux. Indeed, Halbwachs' explanation for "personal memory" reads like an illustration of Bakhtinian heteroglossia.<sup>4</sup> What we attribute to ourselves alone, Halbwachs says, are those remembrances that are composed by the most heterogeneous sources. Framed by the conventions and remembrances of social milieux, our personal memories are the result of such a multiplicity of social frameworks that they are unrecognizable as "the complexity of the combination that was its source" (49). The art of memory abides in charting this bricolage of group-specific elements. In this way, Halbwachs' model of memory reworks the individual's relationship to the collectives she belongs to. The collectives combine to "determine" the individual's memories but the individual's heteroglossic memories are reworked into the fabric of collective remembrance. Memory is insistently intersubjective. Further, the only archival realm in Halbwachs' formulations are the sustaining social contexts of the collectives. The problems of relativism remain to be negotiated across community boundaries.

Contemporary historians are also attracted to Halbwachs' work for his prescient critique of the discipline of history. For Halbwachs, history and collective memory are in

direct opposition to one another. In this opposition, history is the bad guy: it "resembles a crowded cemetery, where room must constantly be made for new tombstones" (52). In contrast to this accumulation of dead signposts, collective memory is presupposed by a concept of "living history" (64). In this formulation, written history begins when tradition ends and collective memory is fading or breaking up. Halbwachs understands historical memory as linear and chronometric, "the sequence of events remembered in national history" (77). He writes:

Viewed as a whole from afar and especially, viewed from without by the spectator who never belonged to the groups he observes, the facts may allow such an arrangement into successive and distinct configurations, each period having a beginning, middle, and end. But just as history is interested in differences and contrasts, and highlights the diverse features of a group by concentrating them in an individual, it similarly attributes to an interval of a few years changes that in reality took much longer. (Halbwachs 81)

As a record of events, history is a record of changes, according to Halbwachs, and its gravest error is in posing as unitary and universal.

Collective memory, on the other hand, relies not on the "distant frameworks" of history but on conservation of "nearby milieux." It is contrary to history in five major respects. First, it is not seen from the point of view of an outsider, the historian-spectator. Rather, "the collective memory is the group seen from within during a period not exceeding and most often shorter than, the average duration of a human life" (86). Unlike history, the collective memory stresses continuity and a gradually accumulated tradition. Resemblances, then, rather than differences, are its focus. As Halbwachs notes, "History ... is not interested in these intervals when nothing apparently happens, when life is content with repetition in a somewhat different, but essentially unaltered, form without rupture or upheaval" (85). In collective memory, difference is located within sameness.

Finally, the collective memory is definitionally non-unitary and anti-universal. This can be explained by a further distinction between history and collective memory, namely, that memory only extends as long as the memory of the groups composing it (82). A

multiplicity of groups suggests a multiplicity of different, if overlapping and interweaving collective memories. Collective memory eschews the neat distinction between past and present that history assumes. Halbwachs sees periodization as an artificial imposition. "In reality," he asserts, periodization veils "irregular and uncertain boundaries" (82). For the collective memory, the present includes the past that is of interest to the social group; past and present cannot be distinguished as "neighboring historical periods" (82).

Where collective memory is local, dynamic, and the social unit's way of retaining continuity, history is the national, ironclad narrative of artificial change.

While critics chide Halbwachs for the stark opposition he draws between history and collective memory, historians who are themselves attempting to amend their discipline find his work invaluable. Patrick Hutton maintains that Halbwachs was practicing history "despite himself" (77). For Hutton, Halbwachs' key insight is that the capacity of a collective memory to endure depends on the social power of the group that holds it (7). Wipe out the group, and the memory goes with it; enslave, colonize or otherwise dominate the collective, and the endurance of its memories will diminish. What Hutton and Halbwachs fail to engage with is the converse proposition, that the erasure of memory also threatens the endurance of the collective. It is this threat that Kundera articulates in his definition of "organized forgetting," that favored method of "a big power (who) wants to deprive a small country of its national consciousness" (*Book* 235). The vulnerability of collective memory resides not only in memory's dependence on the collective but also in the collective's dependence on memory.

Pierre Nora's revision of collective memory focuses us on the major difficulty we face in applying Halbwachs work: the collective. Nora claims that there are no longer *milieux*, no longer organic communities and thus, no longer memory proper. As compensation, he turns history into the study of "*Lieux de Mémoire*," sites of memory. While I disagree with Nora's rather dark and nostalgic conclusions, I agree that the main challenge in

theorizing a viable collective memory is not so much in refuting Halbwachs' memory as in re-defining his milieu. What, or who, constitutes the collective? In contemporary society, what is a collective? I suggest that Halbwachs's work becomes more compelling if we add to his original assertion that the collective composes memory the converse claim: memories compose collectives. Just as memories are framed by the collective, so too the collective is framed as a unit by the memories its members share. Bearing in mind that collectives overlap and interweave with one another as surely as do memories, we begin to gather the complexity and richness of the concept of collective memory.

Contemporary fiction pays tribute to that complexity and richness. In the fiction of writers like Toni Morrison, Italo Calvino and Salman Rushdie, we can see the struggle to define the two terms of "collective memory" and, at the same time, to explore the complex inter-relationships between the two. These writers are each set on different projects and their fiction comes out of different, if overlapping, contexts. Thus, the collective memories they generate are necessarily divergent. Each of the following chapters is a study of one novelist's attempt to come to terms and to transcend one of the three sources of the contemporary memory crisis that have come to the fore in the fifty years since World War II. Toni Morrison constructs a model of collective memory that brings modernism's legacy into conversation with her version of African American aesthetics, while Italo Calvino adumbrates a space for collective memory in order to combat the homogenizing power of (post-) modernization's mass culture. Finally, from his ever more public hiding place, Salman Rushdie finds a collective memory that can counter history and be historical at the same time.

## Notes to Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup>I give a more thorough reading of Nora's nostalgia in Chapter 3. Here, I invoke Lukács' distinction between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* in order to illuminate the analogous distinction Nora draws between *milieux* and *lieux*. The extent to which this analogy holds up, indicates just how vulnerable Nora is to the same nostalgias as Lukács. Both see the loss of an "organic community" as the definitional alienation of the era they live within, and both see this alienation as "a fall" from the grace of "real experience."

<sup>2</sup>I use the term *faculty* here to signify the power of recall the modern subject has traditionally been invested with. For such a faculty to be operative, the past must persist in some extratemporal realm. At times, then, the faculty of memory relies on an anatomical location or on a less tangible realm, such as Bergson's *durée*. Freud himself vacillated between these two and struggled, at times, to combine them. His elaborate discourse on the UCS, for example, explained memory as both a biological and psychological endurance. See David Krell's *Of Memory, Reminiscence and Writing* and Richard Terdiman's chapters on Freud in *Present Past* for more thorough analysis.

Memory as a *social practice* signifies the cultural processes by which the past is reconstructed by social groups. Commemoration, memorialization, and history may be considered such social practices of memory. In its constructivist paradigm, the social practices of memory make no distinction between recall and interpretation. Even if the past persists in a realm outside of time, it is put beyond our access; there is no immediate experience of the past. Both Bergson's intuition and Freud's psychoanalysis presume that our experience of memory is semiotic. Postmodernism, as Terdiman adumbrates, collapses the distinction between the "faculty" and the "social practice" already latent in these modernist models of memory.

<sup>3</sup>See Felman's...

<sup>4</sup>What Bakhtin says of the prose writer in his "Discourse on the Novel," Halbwachs might say of the rememberer:

The prose writer makes use of words that are already populated with the social intentions of others and compels them to serve his own new intentions, to serve a second master. Therefore the intentions of the prose writer are refracted *at different angles*, depending on the degree to which the refracted, heteroglot languages he deals with are socio-ideologically alien, already embodied and already objectivized (299-300).

The italics here are Bakhtin's and they flag the slippery quality of his construction of subjectivity. Subjectivity somehow arises with these "different angles," that is, with point of view. For Bakhtin, point of view must shape and be shaped simultaneously by the social worlds it comes out of. So, too, Halbwachs' struggle is to define a subjectivity that produces and is produced by the point of view of the rememberer.

## Chapter 2:

### Memory Under Reconstruction: Toni Morrison and the Fugitive Past

To call up the past in the form of an image, we must be able to withdraw ourselves from the action of the moment, we must have the power to value the useless, we must have the will to dream.

--Henri Bergson, Matter and Memory (82)

Remembrance is an image entangled among other images, a generic image taken back into the past.

--Maurice Halbwachs, The Collective Memory (71)

Much to the chagrin of its detractors, the legacies of modernism continue to exert their powers in our period of the prolonged "posts-." The burden of those legacies is perhaps felt nowhere more strongly than in the genre of the novel. For if the distinguishing features of what is known as "high modernism" or "utopian modernism" are its preoccupation with the theme of temporality and its faith in the restorative powers of human memory, then the problem of imagining narrative fiction post-modernism is a difficult task indeed.<sup>1</sup> What is narrative, if not a representation of time? What is fiction, if not the collaboration of memory with imagination? Such questions have been the mainstay of post-modernism's novelistic experiments and if those experiments have not necessarily proffered answers to their own inquiries, the energy of their failures has offered its own compensatory rewards.

Through the voices of Proust, Bergson and Freud, modernism told us that memory was recuperative in the double sense of that word: the past could be recovered and its recovery could cure its subject. The past could free us, could give meaning to our experiences in the world, if only we could get to it. Hence, all three of those "utopian" writers dedicated their lives to developing theories of memory and its recollection.

Remembrance of Things Past, Matter and Memory and The Psychopathology of Everyday

Life, can each be read as an elegant and complex "How To": how to get at and how to interpret the past, how to, in Bergson's terms, "free the fugitive past" (83). In the years since the Second World War, modernism's autonomous subject and the endurance of her past have both come into question. In the latter half of the twentieth century, it seems, we strive less to free the past than to free ourselves from it, to escape the fatalistic determinism of history. The epistemological foci of modernism's "how-to's" shifts in contemporary writing to more ontological concerns. "How can I remember?" is complicated by "What is memory? What is the past?" Under this interrogation, memory can no longer promise to recuperate the past and its significance. Nor is memory capable of redeeming the subjective imagination. In the context of the contemporary memory crisis, memory requires its own recuperation and, in the last twenty-five years, narrative fiction has found a vocation in variously re-covering, re-habilitating and re-constructing memory.<sup>2</sup>

Toni Morrison's Beloved takes place during the historical period known as the "Reconstruction," the period following the American Civil War. While the official account of that era focuses on the roles of odd-sounding, mythic characters like "scalawags" and "carpetbaggers," white profiteers from north and south, and on the plot of the economic recovery they participate in, Morrison's novel takes as its focus a different reconstruction, the reconstruction of the lives of black people; in Beloved, Morrison reconstructs this period of history into a time when her characters themselves must reconstruct their lives through a strategic re-remembering and dis-remembering of their pasts as slaves and as fugitives. Morrison's novel is less concerned with freeing the fugitive past, than with freeing her fugitive protagonist from her past, and the desperate desire that drives the narrative of Beloved is the desire to remember history without becoming enslaved to it. In order to accomplish this task, Beloved puts memory under reconstruction.

Both the utopian modernists and Toni Morrison combine two traditionally irreconcilable models of memory. The first is memory as re-presentation; the past is experienced in the

present as mimetic repetition. In such a model, the past has an ontological existence and it can re-present itself as memory without the distortions of either time or the point of view of the rememberer. The past persists and makes itself present, usually as an image or a ghost. The second model of memory is insistently constructivist; the past is experienced in the present as semiotic representation. In this model, the past is an epistemological reconstruction of the rememberer. Memories are inseparable from the desires, fears, consequent experiences and imagination of the rememberer. As re-presentation, memory is *mnemic*, the presencing of the past; as representation, it is *mnemonic*, a sign of the past. The antagonism between representational models of memory and re-presentational ones goes back at least as far as the antagonism between Aristotelian and Platonic thought. In Aristotle's figure of the wax slab, the past is engraved on the soul in the form of iconic images which are recalled as re-presentation of the past. David Krell thus call's Aristotle's model of memory "iconography." By contrast, in Plato's figure of the aviary, the birds function as symbolic images of the past. Krell calls Plato's model "typography," since the past is encoded and its recollection depends on the decoding of its language (Krell 4). Utopian modernism exacts its own compromise between these two models in order to valorize subjectivity. In the works of Proust, Bergson and Freud, an archival realm houses the past in Aristotelian style, as iconography. Yet, in the journey from the realm of the archive to the realm of the present, art intervenes. In the experience of memory, the subject encodes the past. Thus, for Bergson and Proust, the memory image is meaningful only insofar as it is a semiotic representation, for subjective imagination inheres in the transformation of noumena into phenomena. Freud finds the vocation of the psychoanalyst precisely in decoding the metaphors and metonymy that the past undergoes in its passage from the unconscious (UCS) to the conscious mind of the subject.

Morrison's fiction, from the Bluest Eye onward, reveals less interest in the ways the individual subject invests experience with meaning than in the ways the collective

constitutes its significance. Contrary to modernism's memory, then, Morrison's combination of re-presentation and representation is exacted in order to confirm its own version of collective memory, a memory which constitutes and is constituted by its collective. Through the telling of the novel Beloved, the past is re-membered as the community's collective representation of it. And yet, for all of its emphasis on memory as collectively conspired narratives, Beloved never fully disowns the existence of a true past which endures in an extra-temporal realm and which resurfaces iconographically, both as images and as ghosts. Neither the constructivist nor the mimetic model of memory will ultimately suffice in Morrison's novel. In Beloved, memory as imagistic re-presentation co-exists with memory as narrative representation of the past, and it does so in order to facilitate the re-construction of a model of collective memory.

Beloved has generated an impressive and large body of literary criticism. In it, the issue of memory has not been neglected, nor has the co-existence of two very different kinds of memory. As Emily Miller Budick notes, "The way of remembering dramatized through the story is not the way of remembering that the text embodies" (117). Her analysis of the problem of memory in Beloved is in many ways paradigmatic. The novel's story, Budick maintains, dramatizes the "rememory" of Sethe and the community. Based on Sethe's description of it, Budick defines rememory as "the concrete and corporeal resurrection of the past in the present, as if time did not exist" (118). Sethe's rememory is another word for what I have been calling the re-presentation model of memory. On the other hand, Budick asserts, the narrative of Beloved performs a very different kind of memory. It models a communal reconstruction of the past. In Budick's essay, the involuntary re-memory is cured by this voluntary, narrative reconstruction and so Beloved teaches us how to remember without mimetically re-presenting the past. Budick concludes:

As a novel, Beloved listens and speaks. The kind of remembering that it performs is neither rememory nor disremembering but, rather, commemoration: dearly beloved, we

are gathered here today to remember, collectively, in words, the past, which we all accept as gone and buried" (135).

In Budick's study, narrative reconstruction is a curative force. Through the dialogic construction of narrative, the collective constitutes its memories and cures its members of their traumatic experiences of rememory as they are embodied in corporeal and concrete resurrections, in images and ghosts. Commemoration is the process by which words lay those images and ghosts to rest; collective memory is a collective reproduction of narrative that has both therapeutic and constitutive potential. Mae Henderson and David Lawrence echo the force of Budick's argument. Henderson suggests that "Sethe must imaginatively reconstitute or re-member her history" and thus develop a "counternarrative" to the mimetic re-presentations of her rememory (67). Lawrence, too, valorizes the "active, constitutive force" of a narrative reconstruction of the past (189). Like Budick, these two writers put memorial re-presentation in opposition to memorial representation, the memory image in opposition to narrative. Budick, Henderson and Lawrence all grant narrative representation of the past the power to free the community and its members from enslavement to their imagistic re-presentations. Narrative lays rememory's ghosts to rest.

Such a reading of Beloved is attractive, not least because it finds its confirmation in the criteria for an "authentically African American aesthetics" that Morrison adumbrates as the guiding principles of her compositional practice (389). Those principles equate the composition of memory with the composition of fiction. As Morrison enumerates them, she stresses not only the collective value of art, but the collective composition of it: "Antiphony, the group nature of art, its functionality, its improvisational nature, its relationship to audience performance, the critical voice which upholds tradition and communal values and which also provides occasion for an individual to transcend and/or defy group restrictions" (*Memory, Creation* 389). The dialogics and therapeutics of collective memory that Budick, Henderson and Lawrence describe seem to fit this criteria

well. Antiphony, as a call and response aesthetic, is created through the ongoing dialogue of varying points of view. This is the composition that Budick tells us Beloved "performs," suggesting the novel's attempt to translate the facets of antiphony from an oral to written medium, including the active audience participation and the improvisational quality of the dialogue between audience and performers. In their insistence on the curative power of this performance and its role in constituting group identity, Budick, Henderson and Lawrence all affirm the functionality of the antiphonic reconstruction of the past. In their hands, collective memory becomes an identifiably African American aesthetic.

Convincing as these arguments are, however, they dismiss the images and ghosts of Beloved too quickly. Ultimately, the haunting re-presentations from the past in the novel cannot be so easily diagnosed, as they are not purely psychological or mental projections; rather, the novel grants them ontological place in the world. Further, while Budick, Henderson and Lawrence can account for the ways the collective representation constitutes memory, they are less insightful into the process of how re-presentation functions to constitute the collective. The interdependence of re-presentation and representation, and of image and narrative, gives us a way to theorize both of these facets of collective memory and to analyze their workings in Beloved. Toni Morrison's writings confirm such an interpretive strategy. In her many self-reflective essays, Morrison privileges the involuntary memory image as much, if not more, than the volitional composition of narrative. Creative composition for Morrison is a collaboration of memory and imagination, both of which depend upon the experience of a memory image. While the composition of Beloved may well fit the criteria of an authentically African American aesthetics, Morrison's account of her compositional practice contains all the hallmarks of utopian modernism's memory, including the valorization of subjectivity, the emphasis on the image, and the presumption of an archival realm in which the past is preserved.

Morrison's self-reflections foreshadow Beloved's efforts to reconcile the strongly subjectivist emphasis of modernism and the equally strong collectivist emphasis of African American aesthetics.

### I. Conspiring Fiction: Morrison's Mnemonic Muse

In a recent essay exploring the collaborative work and play of memory and imagination in her own creative process, Toni Morrison recalls a metaphor long-established in the discourses surrounding memory: water, that endlessly permutating figure for change and continuity both, taking the shape of its container, following the path of least resistance, flowing, seeping, flooding, drowning, bathing, transparent medium and dark obscurer. "All water," Morrison writes, "has a perfect memory" (*Site* 119). In her evocation of water as the ebb and flow of memory, Morrison appropriates a specifically modernist trope, a trope attached to the "stream of consciousness novel." In the last twenty years, Morrison is joined by her contemporaries in the project of refiguring the waters of modernism to suite different aesthetic priorities. In Housekeeping, Marilyn Robinson's Fingerbone is suffused with waters alive with the past, the breath of creeks and lakes marked by a "certain pungency and savor...which however sad and wild are clearly human (194). In The Lover, Marguerite Duras' narrator describes the logic of the flow of her narrative, and of her very sentences, as the movement and the incessant gathering of the Mekong river that "has picked up all has met." "All is swept along," she relates, "by the deep and headlong storm of the inner current, suspended on the surface of the river's strength (22). Graham Swift's Waterlands does away with all subtlety on the matter and declares explicitly that the reclamation of the flooded fens is the ill-conceived but necessary attempt to re-member, to reconstruct the past, only to have it suffused anew in its wash (146). Robinson, Duras and Swift all reveal the effort of contemporary fiction to come to terms with the legacies of modernism and its stream of consciousness novel. In them, we can

say, modernism's streams are held in suspension while contemporary writers reflect on their uncertainty about the presumed persistence of the past.<sup>3</sup>

The magic of the metaphor of water is perhaps its ability to stand in as both the *medium* of memory and imagination and as the *process* of remembering and imagining. Water, it seems, can coexist as both the *site*, to follow from the title of Morrison's essay, of the remembered, the repressed, or the disremembered that surface from its presumed depths, and simultaneously as the flow of imagination, the *process* of remembering, of bringing to the surface. In "The Site of Memory," Morrison invokes the figure of the Mississippi River. In its waters, memory and imagination are so thoroughly integrated that they we cannot tell them apart. Morrison writes:

You know, they straightened out the Mississippi River in places, to make room for houses and livable acreage. Occasionally the river floods these places. 'Floods' is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was. Writers are like that: remembering where we were, what valley we ran through, what the banks were like, the light that was there and the route back to our original place. It is emotional memory-- what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared. And a rush of imagination is our flooding. (*Site* 119)

Morrison's description of the Mississippi provides a good synopsis of the process she adumbrates in a variety of essays on the subject of artistic composition. Remembering, she tells us in "Memory, Creation and Writing," is a "deliberate act," a "form of willed creation" (388). It takes the writer back to the site in order to perform a kind of "literary archeology." At the site, the rush of imagination inspires the flood that allows her to "reconstruct the world that the remains imply (*Site* 111). There is, of course, no easy differentiation between remembering and imagining in Morrison's account. We can chronologize the process but such an attempt at a linear progress reveals itself as a clumsy and forced effort, analogous to straightening the progress of the Mississippi. We can say that the flood is not flooding but remembering, except when it does flood, at which times it is imagination. We can then, perhaps, conclude that a rush of imagination is a flooding of

memory, or the remembering of memory, but like the rush of water itself, the meanings and the words won't stand still. As Morrison readily admits, "the act of imagination is bound up with the act of memory" (*Site* 119). The model of memory implied in Morrison's figure of the Mississippi River dispenses with any notion of a mimetic representation of the past, as imagination always conspires in the design of memory's images. We can also infer Morrison's faith in an archival realm in which the past persists. In both of these matters, Morrison's affinity with modernism begins to make itself clear.

Morrison's representational model of memory and the existence of an extra-temporal archival realm are confirmed in her second figure for memory, the archaeological site. In that same essay discussed above, Morrison defines the "remains" at the site of memory as images. Contrasting herself to writers such as James Baldwin and Simone de Beauvoir, she asserts that all of her novels begin with such an image. Rather than moving from the event to the image it leaves behind, Morrison says, "My route is the reverse: the image comes first and tells me what the memory is about (*Site* 115). By way of homage to the ancestors responsible for these mnemonic signs, Morrison confirms,

They are the entrance into my own interior life. Which is why the images that float around them--the remains, so to speak, at the archaeological site-- surface first, and they surface so vividly and so compellingly that I acknowledge them as my route to a reconstruction of a world, to an exploration of an interior life that was not written and to the revelation of a kind of truth. (*Site* 115)

For Morrison, we can say, the image is not merely the memory, the product of remembering, in itself. Rather, the images surrounding the ancestors that inhabit the site of her memory serve as mnemonic aids to the reconstruction of that memory. Like the waters of imagination and memory they spring from, the mnemonic images serve as representations of the past. What Morrison calls the "truth of memory," the significance of the past, is made available in these images conspired by memory and imagination.

In recent years Umberto Eco has identified mnemonics as a kind of semiotics. If we see the image as the sign of Morrison's memory we can say, along with Eco and Peirce

before him, that this sign enjoys all the motility of its semiosis. Morrison's memory image always appears linked to an ongoing chain of signification which itself constitutes imagination. More precisely, Morrison's imagination, like Eco's "open work," is dependent on the "unlimited semiosis" of the mnemonic sign. The images that hover at the site of memory as mnemonic aids are Peircean signs in the fullest sense of the word. For what the signs inspire, definitionally, is what Peirce called the "interpretant," a second sign that arises in the mind of the subject. As Peirce writes,

A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, it creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of representation. (180)

It is the fact that the interpretant is a second sign that allows Eco to attach it to a chain of signification and to build his notion of the open work on the Peircean ground of unlimited semiosis. The check on the infinite regress of the sign for Eco is found in Peirce's pragmatism and specifically in the proposition of the "final interpretant," the habit or "regularity of behavior" the sign establishes in the interpreter (Peirce 192). As a pragmatic issue, the interpretant is both a result and a rule. "To understand a sign," Eco summarizes, "is to learn what to do in order to produce a concrete situation in which one can obtain the perceptual experience of the object the sign refers to (192). However, the process of intentional semiotics that Eco would like to lay out is limited by Peirce's description of the interpretant as a mental event. He suggests that "we should perform a sort of surgical operation and retain only a precise aspect of this category. Interpretants are the testable and describable correspondents associated by public agreement to another sign" (198). Eco's surgical operation on Peirce has important ramifications. By transforming the interpretant from a mental event to a concrete entity, Eco shifts semiotics into the sphere of social exchange. Eco's surgery ensures that semiotics is a social practice. By extension, we may

conclude that once the mnemonic sign is materialized, memory, too, becomes a matter of "public agreement, " a social practice. But does Morrison do the same? Do the composition of memory and of imagination become social practices in Morrison's accounts of them? In order to answer these questions, we must turn to Morrison's third figure for composition, the painter.

In many of her essays and interviews, Morrison figures the composition of fiction and memory as the work of a painter. In "Memory, Creation, and Writing," Morrison begins with an epigram by Edward Munch:

It is not enough for a work of art to have ordered planes and lines. If a stone is tossed at a group of children, they hasten to scatter. A regrouping, an action, has been accomplished. This is composition. This regrouping, represented by means of color, lines and planes, is an artistic and painterly motif. (387)

This quotation is significant for several reasons. First, Munch implicitly articulates what we have seen are Morrison's own positions about "the interior part of the growth of a writer," what she adds in this essay in parenthesis, " (the part that is both separate and indistinguishable from craft)." Once again, it is memory that Morrison identifies as the unspoken but central agent in composition. Morrison writes,

The painter can copy or reinterpret the stone-- its lines, planes, or curves-- but the stone that causes something to happen among children he must remember, because it is done and gone. As he sits before his sketchbook he remembers how the scene looked, but most importantly, he remembers the specific milieu that accompanies the scene. Along with the stone and the scattered children is an entire galaxy of feelings and impressions-- the motion and content of which may seem arbitrary, even incoherent at first. (*Memory* 387)

In the comment above, Morrison emphatically dismisses with a mimetic view of memory; the re-remembering, as regrouping, will be no re-presentation of the previous picture or even of the experience of that image. As before, imagination works to allow the interpretation necessary to produce the "kind of truth" Morrison is after. What we have here in addition, however, is what Morrison herself focuses on: the stone. The original chronology of events is obscured in the proliferation of pictures implicit in this narrative of

composition. For prior to the painting is the stone that scatters the children and prior to that, the gathering of children subsequently scattered by that stone. It is the picture of the scattered children that carries with it the "galaxy of feelings" that identify it as the remains at the site of memory, the image that tells the composer what the memory is about. The picture that inspires the fiction, the new composition of parts, seems to be an intermediary picture, the snapshot of the action of the stone scattering the children. The original image is already embedded in narrative. Rather, narrative and image form a conspiracy as solidly integrated as memory and imagination.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Morrison admits that it can be a sentence, a phrase, word or gesture that serves de facto as the image, as that which gives rise to "emotional memory" or "that nimbus of emotion" spawning a narrative reconstruction of memory. The two initial inspirations Morrison identifies as the sources of *Beloved* are not images, or pictures even, in the strictly visual sense. Rather, the newspaper clipping of Margaret Garner contains both an inky photograph and a written account of how she killed her baby girl. Similarly, the photograph in Van der Zee's *The Harlem Book of the Dead*, a dead girl in full dress in her casket, is accompanied by his memory of the story behind the girl's death. Prior to the image of *Beloved* "projected ... out into the earth" (*Site* 208) are these earlier images, these pictures and narratives. Additionally, Morrison targets a personal image or figure that has haunted her fiction all along and laid the way for the resurrection of the "dead girl;" her images and stories, then, must all also be seen as inherent, or inherited, in the composition of *Beloved*. As Morrison confides, "bit by bit I had been rescuing her from the grave of time and inattention. Her fingernails maybe in the first book; face and legs, perhaps, the second time. Little by little bringing her back into living life" (*Conversations* 217). There is a re-membering of the image, then, as literal and as figurative as the remembering and dismembering and disremembering of *Beloved* in the novel she names.

The genealogy of Morrison's image thus reveals itself as complex. Already we can see the image as a confluence of extant ancestral powers, of the stories and images of other writers and of the author's own prior compositions. Morrison has referred to both the artistic muse, and, not coincidentally, to the character she calls *Beloved*, as "a collection of presences" (*Memory* 387). So, too, the images, those remains at the site of memory that tell Morrison what her memory is about, can be seen as a collection of presences that comprise the muse, the mnemonic muse that gives way to memory and to fiction. Given its complex sources, we can see the composition of memory here as a social practice. The individual's re-grouping is a re-remembering of images and narratives already composed by the social body. Despite its appearance, its ability to "surface" wholecloth and complete, then, the imagistic artefact is neither a mimetic re-presencing of the past, nor is it readymade; rather, the mnemonic is, by some seemingly magical process, mysteriously and invisibly re-membered from these pre-existing sources. But how?

On this point Morrison has little to say. While, as we have seen, she has a good deal to say about the composition of fiction that follows from the appearance of the image, on the serenading of that image her comments become obscure, or as she would say, "respectful." She will talk about it in terms of "waiting" and "trusting." In her "Conversation With Gloria Naylor" she summarizes, in a vocabulary she says is "not the vocabulary of literary criticism" but the language of writers, what she clearly views as a fundamentally involuntary process:

People speak, of course, of the muse and there are other words for this. But to make it as graphic a presence or a collection of presences as I find it absolutely to be, *it's not even a question of trying to make it that way*-- that's the way that it appears...It isn't a question of searching it out. It's a question of my perceptions and in that area, I know. (Italics mine) (*Conversations* 210)

Morrison is, of course, not the first to through up her hands appreciatively at the inexplicable mystery of the ways of the poetic muse. Nor is she the first to link the involuntary, if propitious, experience that gives way to memory as "a question of

perceptions," or more specifically, to a kind of immediate perception associated with the intuitionist tradition. It is no coincidence that Henri Bergson's extrapolation of memory's composition is linked to watery ways of fiction, that is, it has been used to illuminate a specifically modernist genre, the stream of consciousness novel (Kumar 10-13). "Reality flows," Bergson writes in 1913, "it is already far away from the word which thought to hold it; and it is found in our formulas to just that extent to which the current of the river is found in the water we draw from it." (11). The great universal solvent in Bergson's thought, as we shall see, is *durée* within which multiple, independent durations exist simultaneously. For Bergson, it is time itself, continuous and indivisible, that has a "perfect memory."

Like Morrison as well, Bergson attaches memory to the "question of perception." He cites intuition as his critical method, as that which allows him to distinguish differences in kind which are otherwise masked as differences in degree. As Giles Deleuze summarizes it, "intuition is the means by which we emerge from our own durations, by which we make use of our own duration to affirm and immediately to recognize the existence of other durations, above and below us (33). In Matter and Memory, however, the intuition exists in the service of recollection. Like Morrison's mnemonic muse, intuition's "office," Bergson writes, is "to call up the recollection, to give it a body, to render it active and thereby actual." (66). A closer look at Bergsonian intuition and memory points us to the specifics of the modernist legacy in Morrison's theory of memory composition and to the transformations it undergoes in Beloved. Apparently, before Morrison can free the fugitive from her past, she must first free the fugitive past from its archive.

## II. The Fugitive Past

"To call up the past in the form of an image," Henri Bergson writes in Matter and Memory, "we must be able to withdraw ourselves from the action of the moment, we must have the power to value the useless, we must have the will to dream" (82). At the center of Bergson's opus is the desire to free the subject from the slavishness of habit, to adumbrate the space of pure subjectivity. In memory, "the intersection of mind and matter," Bergson locates that space (12). In Bergson's formulation, as in Morrison's, memory and imagination are intimately connected, so intimately that, as more than one critic has been moved to comment, memory seems to be an activity that only an artist could successfully accomplish. Bergson's complex model depends on the existence of *durée*, that archival realm where the subject's past endures, on the delineation of two kinds of memory and on the power of the intuition.

According to Bergson, there are two types of memory that exist in but remain unperceived in their pure states. Both involve images that can facilitate or inhibit one another but which remain different in kind. On the one hand, there is habit or motor memory with its movement-image, as Deleuze calls it, while on the other hand there is the spontaneous recollection that produces the time-image, a representation of the past. The distinction between these two images represents the separation Bergson makes between two separate realms: the material and the spiritual. Each of these realms involves its own mode of memory. Bergson's material world uses habit memory, a memory responsible for perception, motor control and movement. It is the body's realm of use value, a future-oriented realm that is enslaved to the body's demand for action.

For Bergson, perception of a material object is the perception of "possible actions the body can perform with regard to it" (93). The subject perceives movement-images or sketches. These images are repetitions of actions previously performed by the body. Each is a mimesis, a re-presentation of past movement. Bergson emphasizes repeatedly, that the movement-image performs; it does not represent. What the body stores up are motor

mechanisms, not pictorial images. The cerebral cortex, which he equates with the mind, perceives through a recognition made possible only through the point of view provided by the body. That point of view, according to Bergson, is always oriented toward action in space. "To recognize a common object," Bergson writes, "is to know how to use it" (93). Through the repetition of these movements, habits are formed. As though to underline the slavishness of habit-memory, Bergson chooses the figure of a dog greeting his master to exemplify the habituation of the body. Necessary for everyday functioning in the world, habit memory is characterized by its enslavement to action, its relentless orientation toward the future, and as a performance that is strictly repetition.

The everyday functioning of the body aside, Bergson opposes habit-memory to its more spiritual analogue: recollection-memory. This is the memory in which Bergson seeks to "find the spirit in its most tangible form." Where habit-memory is action bound, recollection memory causes a "withdrawal from action." While habit memory values only the useful, recollection memory valorizes the useless. While habit memory is mechanical and imitative, recollection-memory produces images spontaneously and involuntarily. Most importantly for Bergson, recollection-memory "imagines" where habit memory simply repeats. Habit memory is mimetic re-presentation and recollection memory is semiotic representation. Habit memory is imitation; recollection memory is art.

It is when Bergson narrates the process by which recollection occurs with all of its images and color that he gives us insight into Morrison's process of composition. As Bergson explains the way in which recollection's images come to consciousness, we can hear echoes of the ways in which Morrison's images give way to narrative fiction. The trick, it seems, is to arrest action, to stop the body in its tracks and thus give memory its chance to "continue the work of attention" (93). To escape the mimetic and discover the imagination of recollection, we require a propitious break in the action, a gap or a rift. "Memory," Bergson says, referring at this point strictly to recollection-memory, "awaits

the rift between the actual impression and the corresponding movement to slip its image in" (95). The attentive subject, the subject with the "will to dream," ends up to be the one who can prepare to accept recollection and then wait for its appearance. The subject of Bergsonian recollection receives the call of the past, undergoes the rites of attention and then waits until "little by little it comes into view" (100). Bergson calls this moment when the perception of the past merges with the perception of the present "contraction." Contraction composes memory.

As we have already noted, both Morrison and Bergson attach memory to the realm of the spiritual and to imagination. According Bergson, memory is the place where we "find the spirit in its most tangible form," while for Morrison it is her "entrance into my own interior life," and her only route to "a kind of truth." Bergson's coveted and involuntary recollection-memory, imagines, he says, and allows the subject to escape the habitual, the purely mimetic repertoires of action. Similarly, Morrison's "flooding" is both the process of remembering and the "rush of imagination." Moreover, at a crucial point such remembering for Morrison is also involuntary. "It isn't a question of searching it out," as she says, "It's a question of my perceptions and in that area, I know" (*Conversations* 210). Like Bergson, Morrison begins with an involuntary process that values the "useless" or "discredited" (*Site* 388); Memory, as that form of willed creation is otherwise impossible. She, too, however, actualizes recollection in a realm of necessity and use value, the novel. The "randomness" or capriciousness of memory is transformed into the intentional and rigorous shaping of narrative fiction. As she says in "The Site of Memory," "In the end, nothing in a novel's composition is unnecessary" (120). Morrison's characterization of writing, dependent equally on the inexplicable, random and involuntary "collection of presences" and the intentional, conscious craft of the writer easily suffices as a synopsis of Bergson's fully actualized memory, as well. She writes, "Writing is thinking and

discovery and selection and order and meaning. It is also awe and reverence and mystery and magic" (*Site* 111). For Bergson, I would maintain, recollection is largely the same.

Crucial to the connection between Morrison and Bergson is their similar identification of the recollection image as the source of the magic of both memory and imagination. The magical moment of Bergsonian recollection is that moment of contraction, the moment when the two kinds of images fuse, when the image emitted by the subject merges with the image averred by the object. By contrast, the slavishness of the movement-sketch reveals itself in its strictly imitative zeal, in its failure to signify something more than what it is. Morrison's creative composition depends on the semiosis of Bergson's recollection image. When she talks about her creative process as "a kind of literary archeology," she also speaks about the necessary provocation of the image, what she calls the "remains" that hover over her ancestors at the site of memory, and its ability to "imply" other meanings. Morrison goes so far as to maintain: "What makes it fiction is the nature of the imaginative act: my reliance on the image—on the remains— in addition to recollection, to yield up a kind of truth" (*Site* 112).

As we have already noted, Bergson's recollection is the realm of pure subjectivity. This privileged mode of memory is the individual's faculty, the life force of the individual's spiritual world. While Morrison's artistic process strongly resembles this version of utopian modernism, her comments about the composition of Beloved do not. In these comments, Morrison figures the process of memory as a voluntary, collective endeavor that puts memory's images and narratives on a more equal footing. As the "re-grouping" of newspaper clippings, anthologized photographs and her previous fictions, Morrison's Beloved is composed by her own recollections and the recollections of others (110). The composition of Beloved is embedded in a complex of social practices. Even as Morrison voices a Bergsonian account of memory, she echoes the contrary explanation of Bergson's renegade student, Maurice Halbwachs. Rejecting the work of his distinguished teacher,

Halbwachs theorized a thoroughly constructivist and intersubjective model of memory. If Eco performs a surgical operation on Peirce, Halbwachs performs no less than an autopsy on the Bergsonian oeuvre.

"Renegade" may sound a bit excessive as a characterization for Maurice Halbwachs. Yet, as Mary Douglas notes in her introduction to the English translation of The Collective Memory, Halbwachs could not have arrived at Durkheim's doorstep in 1907 prepared to trade the metaphysical philosophy of Bergson for the Comte-inspired positivism of Durkheim without some sense of defecting to the "enemy camp." As Douglas writes, "He was not leaving Bergson's territory in any neutral sense, but rather was moving into a good position from which to prepare an attack on it. For Durkheim and Mauss...had consistently developed conceptions of time which did not in any way rest upon the discoveries of individual psychology; they presented time not as an intuition but as a social construct" (6). Douglas goes on to maintain that Halbwachs' work is based on the confrontation of feuding intellectual fathers, Bergson: "individualistic, psychologistic, subjectivist," and Durkheim: "collectivist, sociological and...seeking objectivity" (6).

It is not incidental to our study here that Halbwachs leaves Bergson by way of Leibnitz. It is through his work on Leibnitz's unpublished papers that Halbwachs separates himself from both Bergson's theory of the intuition of personal identity and his suggestion that memory is stored up in the unconscious. Douglas quotes several passages from Halbwachs' 1907 Leibnitz textbook which, she maintains, emphasized Leibnitz's attack on intuition. Attributed to Leibnitz by Halbwachs, for example, is the following provocative statement: "An intuition is a calculation without signs. It does not belong to our nature, which is able to proceed by continuous movement from cruder to finer symbolizing" (4). What we find, then, is that it is the intrusion of the sign that obviates the intuitionist model of identity for Halbwachs. His work in The Collective Memory is presented here as an opportunity to reconsider the signs of memory as mutable social

constructs. In other words, by viewing the mnemonic as a convention conspired collectively, we prepare the ground for viewing the composition of fiction, too, as a collectively inspired effort.

Of central importance to Halbwachs in The Collective Memory is the insistence that there is no such thing as a "personal memory." The remembrances that are most accessible to us, he maintains, are "preserved in groups that we enter at will and collective thought to which we remain closely related" (45). For Halbwachs, remembering is a process of filling out piecemeal and fragmentary recollections by recourse to the recollections of others and the general framework provided by what he refers to as the "milieu." Unlike Morrison's "milieu of buried stimuli," however, Halbwachs' milieu is the living stimulus of the collective. He maintains that memories become indistinct or inaccessible not because an original perception has become faded but because the "paths of communication" to the milieu that preserves the memory have become faded. In fact, Halbwachs' privileged figure for the process of remembering is the trope of the traveler. In Halbwachs' hands, the narrative of the traveler becomes the chronotope of remembering; constructing allusive memories is a matter of "leaving the main thoroughfare and rejoining another via a rough and infrequently used trail" (47). As he explains:

The starting points of such a short cut lie on the main routes and are common knowledge. But close scrutiny and maybe a bit of luck are required to find them again. A person might frequently pass by either without bothering to look for them, especially if he couldn't count upon passers-by to point them out, passers-by who travel one of these thoroughfares but have no concern to go where the other might lead. (47)

Halbwachs dismisses what he sees as Bergson's tendency to view memory as stored somewhere in the consciousness of the individual, what he disdainfully calls a "subterranean gallery" (74). "Rather," he asserts, "we can find in society all the necessary information for reconstructing certain parts of our past represented in an incomplete and indefinite manner, or even considered 'completely' gone from memory" (75). Necessarily then, Halbwachs demystifies the emblem of Bergsonian subjectivism: the recollection

image. From his perspective, "remembrance is an image entangled among other images, a generic image taken back into the past" (71). He proposes an explanation for "personal memory" that sees the restoration of the memory image as a composition that is an imaginative re-creation on the order of bricolage. In Halbwachs' model, the conventions of the collective provide the frames that allow the subject to know something called "personal memory." What we attribute to ourselves alone, Halbwachs insists, are those remembrances that are composed by the most heterogeneous sources. Bergson's pure memory in Halbwachs' account is, in fact, the most "impure" because it is the result of such a multiplicity of social frameworks that it is unrecognizable as "the complexity of the combination that was its source" (49). He writes:

...(S)ince the remembrance reappears, owing to the interweaving of several series of collective thoughts, and since we cannot attribute it to any single one, we imagine it independent and contrast its unity to their multiplicity. We might as well assume that a heavy object, suspended in air by means of a number of very thin and interlaced wires, actually rests in the void where it holds itself up. (49)

Bergson's recollection image here becomes a fetish that veils its own complex genealogy and earns the aura of authenticity by virtue of its refined "strangeness" (46), as Halbwachs calls it. The memory image is a perfect memory insofar as it forgets, or better, to invoke Sethe's neologism, disremembers, its past. Since Halbwachs privileges the voluntary reconstruction of memory, he also prioritizes those narrative "frames" over the image. Rather than producing narrative, Halbwachs' image results to fit it. And yet, for all its demystifying force, Halbwachs' memory mosaic, pieced together fragment by fragment, does not sound all that far removed from the Bergsonian account of contraction. Like Bergson, Halbwachs proposes an image that is a composite of different remembrances and images, but while for Bergson these images are drawn from the consciousness of the individual, for Halbwachs they are drawn from the images and narrative frames available in the collective storehouse. Halbwachs entirely discards the Bergsonian notion of "purely individual and mutually exclusive durations" (97) and presents, instead, an insistently

intersubjective model of consciousness. He writes, "In reality, many currents that proceed back and forth between one consciousness and another crisscross at each moment or stage of the unfolding of our thought. Consciousness is that point of intersection" (97).

In short, contraction in Halbwachs' formulation is an emphatically intersubjective affair. Instead of a "backward movement of the mind," the fragment of memory becomes a filled out image dialogically via an *outward* movement of the mind. More precisely, even a so called "backward movement of the mind" would be viewed by Halbwachs as, actually, such an outward movement; in Halbwachs' view, the milieu of buried stimuli is an interiorization and combination of the various social frameworks the subject has recourse to. Like Bakhtin's novel, then, Halbwachs' recollection becomes a heteroglossic text. Though not especially preoccupied with imagination as such, Halbwachs does suggest, also to follow Bakhtin, that it inheres in the process of interweaving that produces the apparently seamless "personal memory," that is, it inheres in point of view. As he writes,

While collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember. While these remembrances are mutually supportive of each other and common to all, individual members vary in the intensity with which they experience them. I would readily acknowledge that each memory is a viewpoint on the collective memory, that this viewpoint changes as my position changes, that this position itself changes as my relationships to other milieus change. (48)

There are several ways in which Halbwachs' The Collective Memory aids us in understanding Morrison's account of both her process and her project. On the one hand, Halbwachs' emphasis on remembering as a project of reconstruction and his insistence on the complex genealogy of even (or especially) the most seamless and complete recollection images, allow us to "tear the veil" from the images Morrison identifies as the mnemonic muse of composition. His model of memory can explain the multiple sources that Morrison tells us combine and splice themselves into the character and novel Beloved: newspaper clippings, anthologized photographs, earlier fictions. The definition of composition as the transformation of "pieces into parts" that Morrison analogizes from

Munch's painterly process can also be viewed anew from Halbwachs' perspective. Munch maintains that composition in painting is a regrouping of the elements of a recollection image. From this Morrison is able to explain her own compositional practice based on the recognition of an image that tells her what her memory and her fiction is about.

Halbwachs' insight invites us to see that image as a sign that exists in a socio-historical context and asks us to explore the narrative frames from which it is effectively (and affectively) detached.

Moreover, Halbwachs' work offers a connection between Morrison's process and her project of translating African American aesthetics into print. The aesthetic values she identifies as specifically African American resonate strongly with the aesthetics of memory formation Halbwachs describes. Indeed, all of guiding principles for composition Morrison enumerates stress not only the collective value of art, but the collective composition of it. "Antiphony, the group nature of art, its functionality, its improvisational nature, its relationship to audience performance, the critical voice which upholds tradition and communal values and which also provides occasion for an individual to transcend and/or defy group restrictions" represent a set of aesthetic principles that similarly describe Halbwachs' account of memory reconstruction.

In "The Site of Memory," Morrison specifies the ambitions she had in the composition of *Beloved*. Her study of African American slave narratives adumbrate the space for her as a novelist. As the historical frame of those narratives, and the audiences they were geared toward, required the writers of them to avoid the unseemly realities of slavery, "there was no mention of their interior lives" (110). As Morrison writes,

Over and over writers pull the narrative up short with a phrase such as, 'But let us drop a veil over these proceedings too terrible to relate.' In shaping the experience to make it palatable to those who were in a position to alleviate it, they were silent about many things, and they 'forgot' many other things. There was a careful selection of the instances that they would record and a careful rendering of those that they chose to describe. (*Site* 110)

Morrison sets as her task "how to rip that veil drawn over 'proceedings too terrible to relate.'" To accomplish this task, she tells us, she must "trust my own recollections" and, additionally, "depend on the recollections of others." But, as she ends her paragraph, "the memories and recollections won't give me total access to the unwritten interior life of these people. Only the act of the imagination can help me" (*Site* 111). It is then that Morrison introduces the image and explicates the complicated relationship between memory and imagination that she ultimately figures as the confounding trajectory of the Mississippi river.

Morrison's description reveals first the ways in which African American slave memories were shaped and censored strategically as a means of constructing a collective image of the slave experience that abolitionists could engage with. The history of the African American slave experience can be seen as a sanitized image, a fetish or, as Morrison calls it, a veil, that masks the narratives and images behind it and ultimately presents a "personal memory" that, as Morrison maintains, is impersonal in the extreme. Morrison's explanation also implies the complex overlapping of "milieus" or social frameworks she finds herself a part of as a writer set on reconstructing the interior lives of these people. Morrison suggests that, to follow Halbwachs, the collective constitutes and conserves memory and that, in its experience of memory, the collective is constituted and its group identity conserved.

Bergson's intuition and Halbwachs' constructivism represent two diametrically opposed models of memory. While in many ways she affirms the utopian modernist project of freeing the fugitive past through a process like intuition, her commitment to African American aesthetics leads her, also, to postulate a collective memory reminiscent of Halbwachs. Both of these models, however, undergo reconstruction in Beloved. In that novel, Morrison continues to confirm the persistence of the past in an archival realm. She also presents the potency of involuntary memory in the perception of an image. This is

what her protagonist calls "rememory." Yet, the experience of these involuntary images provides Beloved's characters no cure, transcendence or liberation from their pasts. Contrary to the images that give way to Morrison's fictions, the images of "rememory" are mimetic repetitions of the past, re-presentations that make their appearance without the semiotic play of Bergson's recollection images. Art does not intervene. As re-presentation, Beloved's rememory images have the ontological status of ghosts; they enjoy a corporeal, concrete existence. Rememory is not a subjective psychological event and we can say that Beloved performs its own surgical operation on Matter and Memory, concretizing the image and making its significance thus a matter of "public agreement." Even as the novel performs its collective re-remembering in the form of narrative, however, it never fully disavows its "rememory," never contains its images completely in narrative. To its final pages, Beloved relies on the preservation of the real past, unadulterated and undiluted in the depths of its watery archive.

### III. The Past of the Fugitive

"This is gonna hurt," Morrison warns her readers at the beginning of Beloved, "Anything dead coming back to life hurts" (77). Morrison's warning is well-taken for Beloved is a novel filled with the return of painful memories. Rather than serenading involuntary memories, the characters of Beloved protect themselves from the intrusion of the "rememories" that threaten to hold them fugitive decades after the conclusion of the Civil War. Without the courtesy of Morrison's charitable warning to her readers, the images and ghosts of the past haunt the present of Beloved, reappearing despite the community's efforts to "beat back the past" (73). While the narrative imaginatively reconstructs the past, the troubling re-presentations of rememory ground the novel's community. It is the shared experience of these images and ghosts that frame the community and constitutes its identity as a group.

The novel begins to demonstrate the intrusion of involuntary memory on its main character's task of "beating back the past" (73) from the very beginning of the novel. For Sethe, we are told, "the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay" (42) and she centers herself on the project of protecting her one remaining daughter, Denver, from that past. "As for Denver," the narrator tells us, "the job Sethe had of keeping her from the past that was still waiting for her was all that mattered" (42). The grave danger of the past, apparently, is that it can repeat itself in all its original detail and color. Sethe, in the years since she has left Sweet Home, has learned to guard against this possibility. She is not altogether successful at this work of deliberate forgetting, however, because "unfortunately, her brain was devious" (6) and Sethe still finds herself subject to involuntary recollections that are viewed more as dangerous intrusions than the liberation of subjectivity from the tyranny of habit. Sethe would just as soon hold the past fugitive.

Aiding Sethe and the other ex-slaves in the novel at this project of containing the past are the twin forces of involuntary forgetting and the more deliberate dis-remembering mentioned above. At times, a fine line seems to separate these two stratagems and although Sethe would like to control the selection of her "rememory," it slips out of her grasp. When Baby Suggs complains that all that she can remember of her first born was that "she liked the burned bottom of bread," Sethe retorts, "That's all you let yourself remember" (5). She is forced to reconsider such a statement, however, as she finds her ability to recall the features of her sons disappearing. Rather, "though there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream," it is the "shameless beauty" of Sweet Home that she can recall in detail. "It shamed her," the narrator tells us, "remembering the wonderful soughing trees rather than the boys. Try as she might to make it otherwise, the sycamores beat out the children every time and she could not forgive her memory for that" (6).

The vagaries of involuntary forgetting notwithstanding, or, perhaps, because of them, Sethe must guard against rememory and must "work hard to remember as close to nothing

as was safe" (6). Sethe views the recollection image as just as potent as Bergson and Morrison view it, but for Sethe it is potentially lethal, as well. According to her, the recollection image or picture, as she calls it, has an independent life outside of the mind of the original rememberer. "What I remember," she tells Denver, "is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened" (36). Moreover, the re-presented image is not only powerful enough to persist on its own, it is dangerous precisely because the experience of this memory picture is equal to the original experience; they correspond exactly and to perceive the recollection image, even that produced by someone else, is to suffer the experience that generated the image in the first place: the recollection image is pure recollection. Hence, Sethe's terror of it and the effort she will expend to protect her daughter from the pictures, and the memories they are equivalent to. As she explains to Denver:

Someday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it's you thinking it up. A thought picture. But no. It's when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else. Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It's never going away. Even if the whole farm-- every tree and grass blade of it dies. The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there-- you who never was there-- if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. (36)

What Sethe proposes is not merely the possibility of pure recollection but of a pure mnemonic re-presentation that persists at the site of memory. There is no mediation between the perceiver and the perception of the past, no screen is posited either in the image or in the point of view of the spectator. The obstacles to remembering that Bergson, Morrison and Halbwachs struggle to overcome are no problem at all for Sethe who lives, rather, in fear of the direct access to the past that persists through recollection's images. What we lose in Sethe's account is the mnemonic sign. Unlike in Morrison's and Bergson's account, the recollection image here is a "closed work." It is beyond interpretation and, therefore, outside of the chain of signification that presupposed imagination in these other accounts.

Sethe's rememory image is a relentless taskmaster; it is no escape from mimesis but, rather, it demands repetition.

For this reason, Emily Budick, Mae Henderson and David Lawrence all concur that Sethe's theory of rememory is misguided. They maintain that the lethal power of rememory is only alleviated by the active, communal reconstruction of narrative performed in and by the text. These critics neglect two important factors. First, the images and ghosts of rememory have a special credibility in the community and, in its respect for these representations of the past, the community reveals its collective resistance to the enslaving power of the written word, specifically, to history. We need only look to the first major scene of involuntary rememory to find proof for these claims. The rememory takes place during a conversation between Sethe and Denver, directly after they fail to call up the "baby ghost" and talk to her directly. That ghost itself is no mere psychological projection; it is irreducible to point of view. Rather, the presence of the baby ghost is taken for granted by the entire household of 124, by the community that has abandoned it, and is confirmed by Paul D. when he reappears in Sethe's life after an absence of some eighteen years. After failing in their active attempt to communicate with the ghost, the past intrudes on Sethe involuntarily. "For a baby she throws a powerful spell," Denver comments to her mother and Sethe responds, "No more powerful than the way I loved her" (4). It is at this point that Sethe receives the rememory of the headstone and the inscription of the letters of the word Beloved bought at the price of ten minutes of "rutting about the headstones with the engraver" (4).

This first involuntary recollection in the novel contains a literalization of one of the classical metaphors for memory: engraving. The Aristotelian topos of the wax slab and the seal that engraves memories on it is, as David Krell's Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing attests, a figuration of memory the western tradition has conserved and reformulated in various ways. Not last and certainly not least, we can look to Freud's

choice of the Mystic Writing Pad as his long sought model for memory, a children's toy that allows the child to write with a magic wand on a wax slab through the surface of two interposing layers of cellophane; to Freud's pleasure, the cellophane could be erased and reused even as the markings of the wand were retained by the wax" (Krell 151).

Morrison's formulation revises a model of memory centered on the brain to one equally centered on the body. The phallic stylus engraving the soft and accepting wax is replicated in the engraver's sexual exploitation of Sethe with "her knees wide open as any grave." The scene itself is, what we will learn later, a replication and contraction of the two scenes at Sweet Home. Where the boys nursing her at Sweet Home included Schoolteacher looking on and taking notes, here we have the father, the writer-engraver "rutting with her among headstones" while his son looks on, "the anger in his face so old; the appetite in it quite new" (5). The engraving on the grave stone is, additionally, a repetition of the "engraving" of the "chokecherry tree" on Sethe's back. In this rememory, we find the transformation of a classical model of memory that located memory's marking in the mind to one that puts them on the body.

Simultaneously, Sethe's contraction privileges the image over the word. The word "Beloved" becomes an image, an etching and engraving, just as Sethe's scarred back is described as a sculpture, "the delicate work of an ironsmith too passionate for display" (17). As we find out later, it is the marks on Beloved's body, described as "lineless," except for the crucial three scratches on her forehead and the scar on her neck, that allow Sethe to recognize her as the sacrificed baby girl. The emphasis on pictures of memory is perhaps not surprising, given that in *Beloved*, writing and the power to write are closely associated with the power to define and specifically, to define the body. Schoolteacher's notebook is filled with such definitions, as is the writing of his nephews. The boys make lists that separate Sethe's human characteristics from her animal ones. Moreover, at Sweet Home, Sixo refuses to learn to read and to write. He even refuses to speak English for a time,

because "it would change his mind-- make him forget things he shouldn't and memorize things he shouldn't and he didn't want his mind messed up" (208). When presented with the newspaper article that documents the infanticide, Paul D. similarly disregards the writing and focuses his full attention on the picture of Sethe. Even when Stamp Paid reads him the words, Paul D. insists on Sethe's innocence based on the depiction of the mouth in the photograph. Moreover, *Beloved's* first monologue begins with a similar privileging of the recollection image as an immediate memory, implying the inadequacy of the translation of it into words. She wonders, "(H)ow can I say things that are picture"? In Sethe's first involuntary memory, then, we find that the signs of memory are put on the body where they are subject to view and interpretation by others, and they are divorced from the fixed and fixing meaning of the word.

The second major scene of involuntary rememory in *Beloved* occurs during the scene in which Sethe contemplates the logic of her rememory. She is "shamed" by its selection of the "soughing trees rather than the boys." The passage actually begins in the hypothetical, describing how involuntary recollection images "might" intrude on her at unexpected moments: "She *might* be hurrying across a field...Nothing else *would be* on her mind" (6). At first, the sensual prompts that characterize Bergsonian recollection are apparently absent. There is "not the faintest scent of ink or cherry gum and or oak bark from which it was made...Then something." In the movements of washing the chamomile sap from her legs and in the "plash of water, the sight of her shoes and stockings awry on the path where she had flung them, or Here Boy lapping at the puddle near her feet," a connection is unconsciously made until "suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes" (6).

Inspired by perception in the present, this rememory might seem a prime example of Bergsonian intuition. However, we can note that the recollection images offer Sethe no freedom, no liberation from the past. It is only when Sethe's rememory is concretized in

the re-presentation of Paul D. that the narrative transforms from the hypothetical or virtual action of Sethe's musings into the actual action of the story. "As if to punish her further for her terrible rememory," (6) the narrator tells us, Paul D. appears on Sethe's porch and with him, the present tense of the narrative. Paul D.'s arrival banishes the ghost from 124 and precipitates the arrival of Beloved on the tree stump. The corporeal re-presentations of Paul D. and Beloved are the two crucial re-presentations of the novel, and both Sethe and the community grant their returns equal credibility. It is no more incredible to them that Paul D. survives and finds Sethe eighteen years after her pregnant flight from Sweet Home, than that a slaughtered baby girl could re-present herself as a full grown woman. The community defines itself, constructs its identity, around this belief that the past can re-present itself as easily as a long lost friend or enemy.

To see just how thoroughly Beloved transforms Bergsonian recollection with its involuntary, subjectively imagined images, we can look to the most dramatic moment of involuntary memory in the novel. What we find is that Sethe's one promising Proustian moment reneges on its offer. Integrating perception of the present thoroughly with perception of the past, memory seems to come to Sethe as a purely subjective semiotic construct. In the final analysis, however, memory as a mental event offers little by way of reward; it unambiguously refuses to be a transcendental or liberating experience. The scene occurs while Sethe is not alone, but in the company of Denver and Beloved. Combing Denver's hair and responding to Beloved's question about her own mother, Sethe describes to the two girls: "Right on her rib was a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin. She said, 'This is your ma'am. This,' and she pointed. 'I am the only one got this mark now. The rest dead. If something happens to me and you can't tell me by my face, you can know me by this mark'" (61). Sethe continues describing how she asked to be marked, too, but that her mother slapped her instead. "I didn't understand it then," she tells the girls, "Not till I had a mark of my own." Finally, Sethe tells them that her mother

was hung and that "By the time they cut her down nobody could tell whether she had a circle or a cross or not, least of all me and I did look" (61).

It is this voluntary recollection that triggers an additional involuntary memory, "something she had forgotten she knew." As she tries to get at it, Sethe resorts to a repetitive, habitual body movement much in line with Bergsonian account of the process; she leaves off combing Denver's hair and "folded, refolded and doublefolded" (61) the damp sheets. Stirred by her conversation with Denver and Beloved and she is sparked by the recollection she shares with them, just as the hair she discards into the fire sparks. This additional memory is one which she does not share with them. It is "something privately shameful that had seeped into a slit in her mind right behind the slap on her face and the circled cross" (61). As Sethe folds and refolds the laundry, the movements and images give way to a problem of language and translation that need to be overcome for Sethe to remember Nan's message, that her mother saved only her and threw the rest of her children, fathered by whites, overboard. The narrator recounts:

Nan was the one she knew best, who was around all day, who nursed babies, cooked, had one good arm and half of another. And who used different words. Words Sethe understood then but could neither recall nor repeat now. She believed that must be why she remembered so little before Sweet Home except singing and dancing and how crowded it was. What Nan told her she had forgotten, along with the language she told it in. The same language her ma'am spoke and which would never come back. But the message-- that was and had been there all along. Holding the damp white sheets against her chest, she was picking meaning out of a code she no longer understood. (62)

What we have here is an implied notion of memory at odds with Sethe's earlier description of the direct access to the past provided by rememory's pictures. The enduring power of past events remains but it is no longer available outside of a system of signs, a code, subject to interpretation and vulnerable to the limits of translation, or, rather, the openness of "unlimited semiosis." The mnemonic sign, here the image of the circled cross and the slap, begins a chain of signification; it does not end it. The rememberer here must actively and attentively break "the code." The past is neither concretized nor corporealized.

In fact, it remains a mental event trapped in code. Unavailable to the collective, without materiality in the real world, the past languishes in its indecipherable language and wields no transformative power. As the return of the repressed, it finds no cure at all. Painful and dangerous as they may be, the ghost-images of rememory are far more productive than artistry latent in the subjective, mental representation of the past. The title character of the novel is a case in point. The corporealization of Beloved lays the groundwork for the community's final reconstruction of the past. For only in their shared experiences and perceptions of the ghost-child, in the credence they collectively give to the resurrected version of the slaughtered girl, do they confirm their collective identity and come to Sethe's rescue.

While the re-presentation of the past allows the community to forge an identity premised on a shared experience of its images and ghosts authenticated outside of discourse of white history, Beloved concurrently suggests that the community collectively constitutes its memories as dialogically reconstructed narratives. In this respect, Beloved seems to confirm Maurice Halbwachs' contention that memory is reconstructed from fragments, piecemeal remains, that this process of reconstruction is an inherently intersubjective, intertextual affair that connects the individual to the collective. In this voluntary reconstruction of the past, when the image is placed within the frame of a larger story, its power is contained. Beloved illustrates how the "personal memory" as intertext is reconstructed, remembered from pieces into parts. In the collective process of reconstruction of "personal" pasts, in the narrative structure of the novel itself, and in the character of Beloved, we can see evidence that confirms Halbwachs' explication of memory and the practice of Morrison's authentically African American aesthetics.

A clear example of the remaking of personal memories through interpersonal exchange is found in ways Sethe and Paul D. provoke, open and contain each other's recollections. From the beginning, we are told that Paul D.'s arrival opens Sethe to the possibility of

recollection she has resisted over the years. After she tells Paul D. about the attacks on her breasts and her back, she stands at the stove with his body "an arc of kindness"(17) behind her, and wonders if "there would be a little space...a little time, some way to hold off eventfulness" and relive the past. "Maybe this one time," the narrator says of Sethe's tentative hope, "she could stop dead still in the middle of cooking a meal-- not even leave the stove-- and feel the hurt her back ought to. Trust things and remember things because the last of the Sweet Home men was there to catch her if she sank?"(18). It is Paul D.'s attentive look after they make love that also encourages Sethe to remember Halle, her improvised "wedding dress" and the scene in the cornfield that Paul D. simultaneously recalls. Moreover, it is through the exchange of stories that Sethe and Paul D. piece together a narrative that explains Halle's disappearance to Sethe and his insanity to Paul D. Sethe contributes the story of her stolen milk, while Paul D. adds his recollection of Halle at the butter churn and together they create a cause-effect connection, concluding that Halle saw his wife being abused from the loft, a vision that "broke him."

This retrospective reconstruction of past events represents a negotiation of the narratives of Paul D.'s failure to escape from Sweet Home and Sethe's haphazard and desperate success. After Paul D. contributes the information that presumably fills the hole in Sethe's story, we learn that she is "grateful" because the image of it eludes her. "Usually she could see the picture right away of what she heard, the narrator conveys, "But she could not picture what Paul D. said" (69). The image does come, moments later, as Sethe pieces the story back together, angry at her "rebellious brain" for accepting yet more. To the horror of her recollection of the school boys' abuse and the school teacher's notetaking, she is forced to add more:

Add my husband to it, watching, above me in the loft-- hiding close by-- the one place he thought no one would look for him, looking down on what I couldn't look at at all. And not stopping them--looking and letting it happen. But my greedy brain says, oh thanks, I'd love more-- so I add more. And no sooner than I do, there is no stopping.

There is my husband squatting by the churn smearing butter as well as its clabber all over his face because the milk they took from me is on his mind.(70)

Here we see that although Sethe's memory reconstruction is tied to the production of the recollection picture, that picture or image surfaces to fit a pre-existing, socially constructed narrative of the past. Once it appears, however, the resentment, anger, and frustration that accompany the image go on to color the narrative it fits into. Sethe draws the connection of the milk and the butter; it is not explicit in the narrative itself.

Despite the pain of this reconstruction, Sethe concludes that Paul D.'s presence is essential in her life specifically for his ability to participate in her re-membering. "Her story was bearable," she thinks, "because it was his as well-- to tell, refine and tell again. The things neither knew about the other-- the things neither had word-shapes for-- well, it would come in time: where they led him off to sucking iron; the perfect death of her crawling-already? baby" (99). Similarly, Paul D. finds that Sethe's presence allows him to recall the things he has forced into a "closed portion" of his memory. At the very sight of her, "walking around the corner of the house with her shoes and stockings in her hands," he thinks, "the closed portion of his head opened like a greased lock" (41). And it is after the two piece together the story of Halle that he feels the urge to tell Sethe what he has never spoken to anyone before. It is Sethe, then, that ultimately removes the bit for Paul D., we can say, that allows him to speak what was previously impossible to contemplate at all. In the end, Paul D.'s inexorable connection to Sethe, his love, is expressed as, "He wants to put his story next to hers," (273) a feat already accomplished in the pages of the novel through the dialogics of call and response antiphony.

The classic example of call and response in Beloved is, oddly enough, a silent exchange between Sethe and Paul D. After making love for the first time, the two characters silently re-member Sethe and Hall's wedding night in the cornfields of Sweet Home. The cornfield, enriched with sexual associations, furnishes the permutating refrain

around which their reconstruction proceeds. "How loose the silk. How jailed down the juice" becomes "How loose the silk. How quickly the jailed-up flavor ran free" and finally closes the chapter as "How loose the silk. How fine and loose and free" (27). The first time the refrain appears, it seems to be Sethe's response to the recollection. As in the call and response tradition, the narrative immediately shifts to another point of view and another speaker; the second, slightly altered appearance of the sentences seems to come from Paul D. and the scene continues as a dialogue of unspoken recollections and responses. Paul D. remembers "parting the hair to get to the tip, the edge of his fingernail just under, so as not to graze a single kernel" and Sethe responds that "the pulling down of the tight sheath, the ripping sound always convinced her that it hurt" (27). The sexual associations of corn are paired, as well, with the eating of it and in the midst of the account of how Sethe experienced making love with Halle in the cornfield and how Paul D. experienced watching the scene, is the account of the preparation and eating of the corn that followed. The reader receives the intertext of their intertextual reconstructions; the truth of the recollection resides in the intersection of points of view.

Just as Paul D. and Sethe serve as aiders and abettors to each other's remembering, so, too, the character Beloved provides occasion and incentive for these two, as well as for Denver. The entire community is forced into a process of memory reconstruction by Beloved's appearance on the scene. Beloved's power lies in the fact that she has the double life of the corporealized memory and of its signifier; she is both re-presentation and representation. Like Halbwachs' personal memory image, however, she is an intertext, a fetish that succeeds as re-presentation only insofar as the "parts hold," as her genealogy is sufficiently masked. While I will ultimately argue that Beloved, as an intertext herself, is a mnemonic representation constantly on the verge of separating, or dismembering, into her various narrative parts, she is also a mnemonic muse for Sethe, Paul D. and Denver. It is not surprising then, that her arrival sparks different questions in all of them. Beyond the

"major question" of where she had come from," each of them wonders at something else. As the narrator relates, "Paul D. wondered at the newness of her shoes. Sethe was deeply touched by her sweet name; the remembrance of glittering headstone made her feel especially kindly toward her. Denver, however, was shaking. She looked at this sleepy beauty and wanted more" (53).

It is not long before the three discover that Beloved craved stories the way a small child craves sweets, we are told. Particularly, she is entranced with stories of the past, that is, with memories, and Sethe finds herself enjoying the telling of her previously "unspeakable" past when prompted by Beloved. For reasons she cannot quite place, "she found herself wanting to, liking it" (58). Just as Sethe metaphorically removes the bit from Paul D.'s mouth, Beloved's curiosity allows Sethe to speak without the pain of the past that she likens to "a tender place in the corner of her mouth that the bit left" (58). Moreover, as we have already seen, it is Beloved's insistent questions that cause Sethe to remember her own mother and Nan's troubling message about her. Finally, when Sethe decides that the stranger is her lost daughter returned from "the other side," she revels in "all that she doesn't have to remember." In effect, this becomes a deluge of recollections that she could not allow herself to remember before. Because of Beloved's return, Sethe is able to remember details of Sweet Home and of the scene of infanticide.

While what, precisely, Beloved unearths for Paul D. is unclear, we are led at least to conclude that her seductions of him result in the release of his "red, red heart," from the tobacco tin he has locked it in. About Beloved's effect on Denver and on her recollections, we can say a good deal more. As we are told repeatedly, Denver's favorite story, the only one from the past she cares to hear from her mother, is the story of her birth, an event that takes place during Sethe's flight from Sweet Home. The first time in the novel that Denver recalls this story, the narrator writes, "Easily, she stepped into the told story." As this truncated version of the story proceeds, it is given to us as Sethe's recollection and has the

marks of interpolation. "Sethe told Denver" is a phrase sprinkled in the telling of what is presented here as Sethe's tale. However, the second time we encounter Denver's birth, it is prompted by Beloved's questions and in order to entertain her listener, Denver makes the story her own; she becomes the teller and in the process the tale becomes hers. We are told that she "swallowed twice to prepare for the telling, to construct out of the strings she had heard all her life a net to hold Beloved" (76). Further, through Beloved's craving for detail, Denver "began to see what she was saying" (77). The listener's role in reconstructing the past is perhaps expressed better in no other passage than when Denver's narration moves from monologue to duet:

Denver was seeing it now and feeling it-- through Beloved. Feeling how it must have felt to her mother. Seeing how it must have looked. And the more fine points she made, the more detail she provided, the more Beloved liked it. So she anticipated the questions by giving blood to the scraps her mother and grandmother had told her-- and a heartbeat. The monologue became, in fact, a duet as they lay down together, Denver nursing Beloved's interest like a lover whose pleasure it was to overfeed. (78)

Denver's re-telling takes in all three strategies Morrison adumbrates in "The Site of Memory," as she incorporates her own recollections, the recollections of others and imagination, as well.

In Denver's re-telling of the encounter of her mother with Amy, not only do the marks of interpolation disappear but, actually, the narrative is presented in a third person omniscient point of view. While we are invited, given the comments above, to see this as Denver's version, it is not told in her voice but in the voice of the nameless narrator we recognize in the rest of the text, a narrator who can wax lyrical about "spores of bluefern growing in the hollows along the riverbank" and liken their seeds to the seeds of "a whole generation (that) sleeps confident of a future" (84). This is the narrator that appears in her enumeration of features that identify a specifically African American aesthetic, "the critical voice which upholds tradition and communal values and which also provides occasion for an individual to transcend and/or defy group restrictions." As demonstrated here, what we

find in *Beloved* is not a version of the re-memory as a refraction of point of view. Rather, like Denver, the reader is asked to "step into the told story." We do not get the duet between Denver and *Beloved* and cannot, therefore, identify which question prompts which additional detail, where the roles of teller and listener separate and combine. It is the narrator that negotiates the exchanges that produces the intertext of these "told stories." In addition to reporting the synthesis of Denver and *Beloved*'s duet, it is also the narrator that reports the call and response composition of the memory of Halle and Sethe in the cornfield that Sethe and Paul D. silently and unconsciously construct. Finally, of course, it is this narrator that provides the lyrical coda that ends the novel. As in Halbwachs' personal memory, these narratives represent an already accomplished combinatorics that earn their authenticity through the apparent seamlessness of their weave.

The contrast can be seen in a comparison to the monologues of Sethe, Denver and *Beloved* that appear in section two. As opposed to the "told stories" above, these monologues appear without the narrator, in the first person point of view and so, can be seen more as "tellings." Each of these points of view presents a different set of memories and sees the relationships between the three women differently. When they merge in the final section into a chorus of "You are mine/You are mine/You are mine," we cannot conclude that the characters have synthesized identities or recollections into a single coherent whole. Each means something different by the statement "You are mine" and the recollections of the three cannot be reconciled logically. *Beloved*'s recollection of the middle passage from Africa, for example, is not merely a different point of view on Sethe's recollections; the two do not fuse, along with Denver's version, into a unified whole. Indeed, there appears to be nothing of a conversation at all taking place here, no "response" to another's "call." We are told, in fact, that they are "unspeakable thoughts, unspoken" (199). The combination of voices that appears in the final section can be likened to the "noise" Stamp Paid hears outside 124 and the union of the three as ironic commentary of

the failure of communication that produces it and proceeds from it in the following pages of the novel. On the one other hand, these passages reflect the failure of intersubjective exchange and foreshadow the breaking apart of the trio that ensues. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of these incommensurable points of view directs the reader to the narrative's strategy of composition, the achievement of a literary motif analogous to Munch's painterly signature.

What connects these points of view is a provocative illustration of the composition process that Morrison likens to Munch's account of painting in "Memory, Creation and, Writing" called "regrouping." The intertextual composition of memory and the regrouping of elements that makes memory a "form of willed creation," is recapitulated in the novel as an intra-textuality that remembers the elements of different scenes into others. Munch, to review, states that regrouping, "represented by means of color, lines and planes, is an artistic and painterly motif." The motif that is regrouped in each of these monologues is the motif of abandonment and in each section it is "painted" by means of different lines, colors and planes. The abandonment by her mother that Sethe fears, denies and then refuses to repeat, becomes a different constellation with a somewhat different "galaxy of emotions" attached to it in Denver's account of the fear of her mother she both harbors and is ashamed of. Denver's sense of abandonment, by sister, brothers, and grandmother, as well as her doubts about her mother, blend with Sethe's and find resonance in Beloved's account of the loss of her mother. Like Sethe's mother, Beloved's mother leaves her voluntarily, apparently preferring to drown than to remain on the ship. She also echoes, if in reverse, Sethe's "secret shame" that her mother threw all of her children overboard but her. The motifs of loss and abandonment, we can say, attach themselves to different movement sketches, to different re-groupings of similar elements.

In the course of the novel, there are several scenes in which the narrative regroups or contracts elements, images and words from prior scenes into later ones. In this way, the

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narrative structure repeats the process of remembering that Morrison illustrated with her corn imagery. These reverberating, reconstructed primal scenes are one example, and the second monologue of *Beloved* can be seen as a re-membering of pieces into parts to form a coherent narrative. The clearest example, however, is at the climatic ending of the novel in which Sethe mistakes Mr. Bodwin for the return of Schoolteacher. In this scene, we get the repetition of Schoolteacher's hat in Bodwin's but it also recalls the hat of Sethe's mother, the identifying garment she searches for in the rice field even after her mother's death. "The Clearing," we are told, also is re-membered into this scene, "with all its heat and shimmering leaves, where the voices of women searched for the right combination, the key, the code, the sound that broke the back of words" (261). The song of the women here also recalls the song Sethe associates with "the place she was" before Sweet Home and the "code," that other language that holds the memories she has lost with that language. As in the account of Schoolteacher's arrival, Sethe "hears wings. Little hummingbirds stick needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings" (262). This description is preceded in turn by Sethe's account of the aftermath of her discovery that the nephews were separating her into "human" and "animal" characteristics. Then, she explains that her "scalp was prickly...My head itched like the devil. Like somebody was sticking fine needles in my scalp" (193). From the water to the leaves, to the reference to heat, to the reversal of pregnant daughter for newborn baby, this scene takes its details from previous moments in the novel and regroups them, re-members them into a new composition.

If the valorization of voluntary memory reconstruction, the containment of images in pre-existing narratives, as well as the intertextuality in the narrative structure of the novel, all seem to bear out Halbwachs' version of memory, the character of *Beloved* can also be illuminated through the lens of his theory. As an intertext with a complex genealogy, she embodies memories that include the middle passage, Africa, and the baby girl Sethe

sacrifices in the woodshed. Beloved is literally a composite of re-membered parts. In order to appear as the re-presentation of the baby girl, she must be so thoroughly "composed" that her intergenerational pedigree is as smooth as seamless as her skin. Halbwachs' theory would then explain Beloved as an incomplete synthesis of frames, of pieces into parts. Hence, she constantly fears and verges on dismemberment, separation. After losing a tooth, Beloved thinks, "This is it. Next would be her arm, her hand, a toe. Pieces of her would drop maybe one at a time, maybe at once... It is difficult keeping her head on her neck, her legs attached to her hips when she is by herself. Among the things she could not remember was when she first knew that she would wake up any day and find herself in fragments" (133).

That the other characters in the novel are uneasily re-membered as well can be seen in their preoccupation with this danger of dismemberment. In their final scene in the novel, both Paul D. and Sethe make references to just this problem. Looking at Sethe, Paul D. recalls Sixo explaining his Thirty-mile Woman as "a friend of his mind" because, "She gather me, man. The pieces I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order" (272). Sethe, more tentative, wonders if Paul D. will know how to bathe her "in sections," as Baby Suggs did, "First the face, then her hands, her thighs, her feet, her back...ending with her exhausted breasts." If he does, she worries, finally, "will the parts hold?" (272). It is the reader of *Beloved* who is asked, as well, to fit all the pieces into parts and put them in the right order, that is, to re-member them into a whole.

"Some things go," Sethe tells Denver at the beginning of the novel, "Pass on. Some things just stay" (35). Time, she says, is hard for her to believe in and at the close of the novel she reiterates her frustration that "time didn't stay put" (272). If we follow Maurice Halbwachs', we conclude necessarily that time is a social construct and the individual constructs a sense of their own past based on and in relation to the collective's. As we have seen, Halbwachs disputed his former teacher on these points, dismissing Bergson's

notion of subjective and mutually exclusive durations. For Halbwachs, there is no *durée*, no "subterranean gallery" in which the past remains, in which things "just stay," although they are not readily available to the individual. He therefore dismisses intuition, with or without its intermediary images. Stressing the intersubjective project of memory reconstruction, *Beloved* appears to follow the renegade student, rather than his mentor. However, we began this chapter with water and there is no leaving *Beloved* without returning to it. For everywhere in the novel is the water Morrison tells us has a "perfect memory," and is the elixir, too, that figures for the complete synthesis of memory with imagination. And in all this water there is, too, a subterranean gallery or, perhaps, we should say a subterranean galley, in the hold of a ship.

It is from this water that *Beloved* emerges, from the hold of the slave ship which we are invited to read as the storehouse of a collective and unavailable past. It is possible to eschew Halbwachs' criticism in this case, and to read *Beloved* as the recollection image of this past, the intermediary representation of what is otherwise imperceptible. Intuition, known only by image and shadow, readily reconciles itself with the haunting vocation of the ghost. We might even say that she is the recollection image that prevents Sethe from simple mimesis, from merely repeating the past. The encouragement to view *Beloved* as "something more" than the resurrection of the baby girl is, of course, made throughout the narrative. Denver suggests this to Paul D. who, even earlier, tells Stamp Paid that *Beloved* reminds him of "something I'm supposed to remember" (234). In spite of the ironic repetition of the refrain "It was not a story to pass" by the narrator in those much disputed final pages, the narrator also confirms that *Beloved* persists in "the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep" or the "photograph of a close friend or relative—looked at too long." To follow through on the ironic reading of the "not" in these pages leads to the conclusion that *Beloved* is, in fact, "the breath of the disremembered and unaccounted for" that the community has collectively and deliberately forgotten. The novel, too, is dedicated to the

"sixty million and more" Africans that died in the waters, in the holds of slave ships making the middle passage. If water, as Morrison says, has a perfect memory, it is the *durée* of her novel, the archival realm in which the past persists in its unadulterated form.

The constructivist model ultimately will not suffice in Morrison's novel any more than the recuperative model of modernism; re-presentation persists alongside representation. Indeed, we can say that Beloved is haunted by the very models of memory it seeks to undo in its reconstruction of history. In Beloved, collective memory relies on the preservation of a true past that is singularly unknowable, a definite if sublime endurance that motivates the project of memorial reconstruction and makes it perpetually incomplete. The very incompleteness of that project provides the collective with its communal task and hence, its identity. For if there is a duration in Beloved, a collective storehouse where the past persists in its pure state, where images are manufactured as intermediaries and released to haunt the present with the shadows of the past, where the waters of imagination and memory flow to and from, it is presented here as the construction, or re-construction, of that collective.

## Notes to Chapter 2

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<sup>1</sup>In their efforts to define postmodernism, critics often identify a postmodern dismissal of these "modernist themes." See Fredric Jameson's Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism and Andreas Huyssen's Twilight Memories. In his Postmodern Fiction, Brian McHale differentiates the aesthetics of postmodernism by identifying a shift from to "ontological" concerns. He regards questions of memory and temporality as epistemological and, therefore, as secondary concerns in postmodern fiction (McHale 11). See also Linda Hutcheon's The Politics of Postmodernism.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter 1 for a fuller analysis of the problematic legacy of modernist models of memory on contemporary fiction.

<sup>3</sup>I provide a more detailed reading of these three novels in Chapter 1.

## Chapter 3:

### Technologies of Memory: Calvino and the Disorder of the Imagination

This disease, of provincial origin, was about to attain universal recognition: students were to hold forth on the subject, to defend other propositions on its cause and effects. Henceforth, the nostalgic individual was justified in waiting upon the opinion of the enlightened Profession, and no longer on the risky advice of friends and empiricists. Moreover, this mental disease, which had until this time been limited to common souls such as mercenaries and country-folk newly transplanted to the city, was about to take advantage of the approval of the Profession, eventually to penetrate to the educated classes themselves.

--Jean Starobinski, "The Idea of Nostalgia" (86)

At just the moment one would expect them to fall into oblivion, classical and medieval arts of memory fell, instead, into an unexpected renaissance. Just as the printing press came into popularity, as the written word and replicated visual image became easily disseminated and available, the ossification of the arts of memory slowed, and memory arts and their experts enjoyed a resurgence of popularity. In their renewed form, however, the older arts of memory underwent considerable changes due to the technology they were supposedly revived to contest. As the extensive studies of Elizabeth Eisenstein and Francis Yates tell us, the new technology of print was quickly put into the service of the traditional arts of memory; the new print technology gained its broad acceptance through its reproduction and dissemination of memory aids. Like the classical "memory palace," the book became a place to store and recollect the past.

As illustrated in the case of the printing press, the threat of technology has long been interpreted as a threat to memory and to a model of the human mind invested with the task of recollection. While we may view the fears generated by the printing press in the late fifteenth century sardonically, our contemporary culture mirrors those fears with an uncanny precision. Just as early modern culture feared that the technology of the book

would destroy memory, our late post-modern culture fears that digital technology will destroy the book and with it, a mode of memory that fosters humanism as we know it. Both of these cases demonstrate that a culture in the throes of modernization is also a culture that registers a crisis in memory, a crisis in both the content and modes of its recollections. In the writings of early modern and postmodern writers alike, we find that anxieties about the changing face of the future seldom appear without their counterparts, anxieties about the disappearing past.

Today, critics such as Andreas Huyssen and Fredric Jameson lament our "amnesiac culture" and attach our loss of memory to developments in technology. In 1995, for example, Huyssen writes,

The paradox is that we still harbor high-tech fantasies about the future, but the very organization of this high-tech world threatens to make categories like past and future, experience and expectation, memory and anticipation themselves obsolete. The jumble of the non-synchronous, the recognition of temporal difference in the real world thus clashes dramatically with the draining of time in the world of information and data banks. (9)

Here, Huyssen's fear is that technology has already damaged our organization of time irreparably. In the age of the internet, we witness what he calls a "crisis of temporality," in which technology undermines the past-present-future structure of time, replacing it with an artificial synchronicity. In short, technology reduces the diachronic model of time so essential to Huyssen's notion of memory to "the jumble of the non-synchronous." Huyssen's postmodern technophobia, we can note, turns a blind eye to the possibility that we move --and have always moved--among multiple structures of time. Whatever supposed synchronicity the internet represents, there is still the moment we turn on the computer and the moment we turn it off; we have not abandoned the diachronic.

The word "modernization" in contemporary culture represents the merging of two types of threats to memory, those posed by technology and those posed by what Jameson calls "late capitalism." According to Jameson, technologies of reproduction team up with the

long arm of capitalism, the media. As a result, memory is concurrently threatened by its proliferation in prefabricated images and by its commodification in these images, reproduced as they are according to the laws of the market economy. Jameson thus concludes, with Guy Debord, that "the image has become the final form of commodity reification" (18). What Jameson fears, contrary to Huyssen, is not the loss of the individual's faculty of memory but the loss of our collective sense of history (6). He prefers the language of "the crisis in historicity" to that of "the crisis in temporality."

The struggle to reinvent memory in an era of post-modernization, is thus a struggle to define a memory that is neither simply an individual faculty nor merely the expression of mass culture; the challenge is to derive a collective memory that falls between these two poles. The fiction of Italo Calvino has taken up such a challenge and has done so with the full knowledge of its most cherished weakness, its propensity for equating memory with nostalgia for the lost past. Defining a collective memory with and within contemporary fiction has meant two things for Calvino. It has meant divesting memory of nostalgia, and thus from the domain of the alienated subject. It has also meant framing a collective that falls somewhere between the anonymity of mass culture and a pipe dream return to *Gemeinschaft*. To evade both nostalgia and commodity reification, Calvino's collective memory seeks to undo the binary opposition between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, between bourgeois subjectivity and the anonymity of the masses. In order to accomplish this task, Calvino's fiction turns to the tradition of "mnemonotechnics," technologies of memory. In his novels, essays and short stories, Calvino recuperates pre-modern technologies in order to fashion his postmodern collective memory.

### I. Remembering Calvino: The Writing Machine and the Still-too-human

In his 1981 review of *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, Salman Rushdie confesses the formidable challenge that presents itself to the Calvino critic, reviewer and commentator at

large. As Rushdie writes, "One of the difficulties with writing about Italo Calvino is that he has already said about himself just about everything there is to be said" (*Imaginary* 254). Rushdie goes on to liken Calvino to the planet Solaris and reads Calvino's books as messages from that mythical site. His praise is established as he introduces his metaphor:

Solaris, like Calvino, possesses the power of seeing into the deepest recesses of human minds and then bringing their dreams to life. Reading Calvino, you are constantly assailed by the notion that he is writing down what you have always known, except that you've never thought of it before. (*Imaginary* 255)

Prolific, articulate and relentlessly self-reflective, Calvino indeed seems to have cornered the market on Calvino criticism. While scholars do battle over the escapist and the engage, neorealism and fantasy, science and literature, Calvino himself resists the binary oppositions implicit in those discussions and thereby dismisses them to our attention as so many petty skirmishes. In short, when compared to Calvino's own essays, reviews and interviews, the criticism that emerged in his lifetime largely divides itself between a parochial schematism, and, as in the case of Rushdie, to the inspired praisemaking typical of contemporaries as varied as John Updike, Gore Vidal, Roland Barthes, and Carlos Fuentes. Indeed, Fuentes' comments reveal to us that Calvino's sudden death in 1985 has done little to lessen his influence as the presiding figure he was when Rushdie's review appeared in 1981. In *Christopher Unborn*, Fuentes' narrator tells us that, for his heroic Don Fernando Benitez, September 19, 1985 is remembered for "two equally sad reasons":

First came the quake, which affected everyone, and hot on its heels he heard the news of the death, far away from Mexico (in Sienna) of Italo Calvino, the great Italian writer...(39)

Fuentes' narrator pauses long enough in his narrative to tell us that the grief of Fernando Benitez was "shared by thousands of readers" before continuing his focus on the grief that befell the victims of the devastating Mexico City earthquake. Just as Rushdie resorted to figuring Calvino as a place, "a planet" rather than a person, Fuentes equates his death with the destruction of a place, that is, with a natural disaster.

Fuentes' aggrandizing homage to Calvino, thinly disguised as it is in the point of view of his character, nicely describes the aura that surrounded Calvino in the years following his death and offers an explanation for the dearth of interrogative criticism about the author's work during that time. Perhaps predictably, that situation appears to be changing now, some ten years later. What is also perhaps predictable is that Calvino's publications did not stop with his death in 1985. Rather, almost immediately following his death, the "new" posthumous releases began. In 1986 Under the Jaguar Sun was published with a note by Esther Calvino describing the three pieces in the collection as part of an uncompleted project. "Had he lived," she warns us, "this book would certainly have evolved into something quite different" (85). She asks the reader to consider the book, however, not as unfinished but simply as "three stories written in different periods of his life" (86). In 1988, the Six Memos for the Next Millennium were published, a series of lectures Calvino was scheduled to deliver at Harvard the year of his death. Only the first five of these lectures had been written and completed, as our note again tells us. Finally, in 1990, The Road to San Giovanni was collected and released. This new collection of old pieces is especially noteworthy as it is described by Esther Calvino in her introductory comments as part of an unfinished "series of 'memory exercises'"(vii). The pieces included in this collection were written between 1962 and 1977 and each, in fact, explicitly takes up the problems and possibilities of memory reconstruction. The posthumous publication of The Road to San Giovanni, renamed from the working title "Obligatory Passages" because of the omission of exercises originally intended by the author, is not in itself remarkable. Rather, it appears as part and parcel of the posthumous publication life of any well-known writer. However, the book also represents one of the key tensions in Calvino's fictions; it embodies the desires to conserve the past, the old, and, simultaneously, to embrace the new, to give the conserved past new form. Further, the book, focused as it

is on memory, draws a connection analogous to one presumed by this essay, that where the new and the old confront one another in Calvino, the problems and potentials embedded in the process of remembering arise to arbitrate conflict and anxiety-- as, for example, the anxiety over gaps, omissions and guesswork revealed in Esther Calvino's series of notes to the reader. While Calvino's novels are infamous for their propensity to begin again and again, his publication history demonstrates a tendency to end again and again and again.<sup>1</sup>

In her 1994 survey of Calvino scholarship, Tommasina Gabriele reiterates Rushdie's sentiments, and my own, in part, when she attributes the gaps and failures in that scholarship to Calvino's own "large output of self-commentary" (14). Gabriele, however, pictures Calvino's diverse "self-commentaries" as the work of an evasive provocateur. We are thwarted in our "attempts to define and understand" Calvino due to his "chameleonic and provocative style" (15). To illustrate the "undermining gestures" of Calvino's self-commentary, Gabriele provides a series of juxtaposed quotations taken from essays and interviews conducted from 1960 to 1980. Through these quotations she is, in fact, able to point to specific confusions and even conflicting assertions. This reader is, indeed, quite convinced. However, rather than reading these conflicts or "contradictions" as the scheming of an intentional provocateur, it seems more in keeping with the development of Calvino's fiction to see development and change in his reflections on writing and art. Like Theresa De Lauretis, I would maintain that these inconsistencies are conceded by an author more aware than most of "divided impulses or irreconcilable interests" (16). The divided impulses, as well as the reconciliations attempted by Calvino, that I wish to focus on are the twin desires of conservation and innovation I've identified in the posthumous publication of The Road to San Giovanni, impulses closely linked to Calvino's permutating conceptions of memory and recollection. On the one hand, Calvino's fiction abounds with an anti-

nostalgic interrogation of memory as part of its postmodern aesthetic. On the other hand, Calvino's essays, introductions and "self-commentary," never seem to fully reject models of memory embraced in modernist fiction and parodied in his own. The essays in The Road to San Giovanni and the introduction to the 1964 edition of Path to a Nest of Spiders resonate with a Proustian ethos, what Franco Ricci prefers to call the "Return of Mnemonic Memory." Harkening back to childhood on the Riviera, the essays mourn the failures of voluntary memory, the impossibility of getting to the "true past" but they clearly also see the process of constituting memory as a simultaneous constitution of art and of identity. The collection concludes:

From the opaque, from the depths of the opaque I write, reconstructing the map of a sunniness that is only an unverifiable postulate for the computations of the memory, the geometrical location of the ego, of a self which the self needs to know that it is itself, the ego whose only function is that the world may continually receive news of the existence of the world, a contrivance at the service of the world for knowing if it exists. (*Road* 150)

Similarly, the introduction to Path to the Nest of Spiders, Calvino's first novel, performs for us the complicated exchange of wealth and violence exacted between art and memory:

Your memory will never recover from the violence you have done it in writing. Memory --or rather experience, which is memory plus the wound it has left in you, plus the change it has worked in you that has made you different--experience, first nourishment also of literary work (but not only of that), true wealth for the writer (but not only for him), now, as soon as it has given shape to a literary work, declines, is destroyed. The writer finds himself once again the poorest of men. (xxiv)

Only the first and last sentence of this quotation articulate clear assertions, assertions about loss and violence done to memory by writing and, finally, done to the writer by the memory-inspired art. The middle sentence, cut up into parenthetical clauses and qualifications added with the uncertain links of hyphenation, mysteriously works the ritual exchange of terms. Somehow we return to the articulation of loss, but by the time we get there, writing is so thoroughly confused with remembering that we have forgotten the

difference. In the victim-victimizer substitutions, all we can know for sure is that we are quite definitely and inevitably at a loss. This fear of the loss of the past remains a persistent, if quiet, refrain in Calvino's writing, fictional and nonfictional. Even as he creates characters like the Dinosaur and the Aquatic Uncle in Cosmicomics to parody nostalgic longings for simpler times, Antonio Paraggi in "Adventures of a Photographer" and the anonymous Reader in If on a Winter's Night a Traveler who parody the longing for the purer art of the past, and Marco Polo and the Great Khan who reveal the self-serving desires at the heart of nostalgia for anything, Calvino's self-commentary and later fiction remain unresolved. His acknowledgement of nostalgia and its distortions do not preclude the sentiments expressed in those earlier quotations. In his later fiction, Calvino will work his way out of the trap of nostalgia only by redefining memory, by removing it from the domain of the tragically alienated individual and endowing it with a collective character capable of resisting modernization's appropriating zeal.

Calvino's self-conscious vacillation about the nostalgic can be seen as his unresolved, if also self-conscious, ambivalence about the affective and constitutive potential of memory. This attraction and repulsion to a sort of Proustian valorization of the art of memory in which memory and the subject mutually construct one another to produce things like identity, art and the past, is reproduced provocatively in Calvino's ambivalence toward technological innovation, which, at times, is figured as the bugaboo of humanism as we know it. In this Calvino, mass media and its proliferation of images stalk imagination and clearly, we live under a siege mentality that requires both forward and backward thinking; our future depends on our memory. On the other hand, one does not have to look long to find a Calvino who embraces the new, including the developing technologies of reproduction, imaging, and artificial intelligence. It is my central contention that these two inconsistencies are profoundly related to one another: ambivalence toward the past and ambivalence toward the future shift in Calvino's work to serve as antidotes to the dangers

of each. Especially in Calvino's earlier fictions, but even in his latest essays, conservation and innovation emerge in a high wire act in which the pitfalls are the distortions of nostalgia at the one end, and the commodification of subjective imagination on the other. Calvino's last essays serve as perfect examples of these interdependent anxieties.

In his essay on "Visibility," the fifth of his posthumously published Six Memos For the Next Millennium, Italo Calvino anxiously asks, "What will be the future of the individual imagination in what is usually called the "civilization of the image"? Will the power of evoking images of things that are not there continue to develop in a human race increasingly inundated with prefabricated images?"(92). The threat of these "prefabricated images," as he specifies in the following sentences, is the destruction of the "visual memory" of an individual. The sheer quantity of reproduced images obstructs the traditional manner in which, Calvino maintains, "fragments of this memory came together in unexpected and evocative combinations." The chaotic disorder of memory precludes the dynamic reordering of creative composition. Calvino summarizes his concerns,

We are bombarded today by such a quantity of images that we can no longer distinguish direct experience from what we have seen for a few seconds on television. The memory is littered with bits and pieces of images, like a rubbish dump, and it is more and more unlikely that any one form among so many will succeed in standing out. (*Six Memos* 92)

The reader familiar with the body of Calvino's work will no doubt be surprised by the pessimism and antagonism to technology implicit in these statements. Works such as Cosmicomics and T-Zero make a funhouse of science and essays such as "Cybernetics and Ghosts" reveal a much less antagonistic view of computer technology and its role in artistic production. In that latter essay, for example, we find Calvino distinguishing the "true literary machine" from the "still too human" poetic-electronic machines experimented with in Italy. The Italian model fails, he asserts, because "it is still an entirely lyrical instrument, serving a typical human need: the production of disorder" (*Uses* 13). Alternatively, he foresees a poetic-electronic machine which "will be one that itself feels the need to produce

disorder, as a reaction against its preceding production of order : a machine that will produce avant-garde work to free its circuits when they are choked by too long a production of classicism"(Uses 13). Unlike others who regard these developments with "tearful laments punctuated by cries of execration" (Uses 14), Calvino "gaily" announces these prospects in 1967 because of his complete identification of the poet and the storyteller with the writing-machine. Contrary to specifically modernist constructions, Calvino claims:

The so-called personality of the writer exists within the very act of writing; it is the product and the instrument of the writing process. A writing machine that has been fed an instruction appropriate to the case could also devise an exact and unmistakable "personality" of an author, or else it could be adjusted in such a way as to evolve or change "personality" with each work it composes. Writers, as they have always been up to now, are already writing machines; or at least they are when things are going well. (Uses 15)

Here Calvino uses technology, the erstwhile threat to memory, to wrest writers from the undertow of nostalgia. Further, Calvino's participation in the OULIPO, the Workshop of Potential Literature founded by Raymond Queneau, evidences his dedication to an art based on the fixed rules, constraints and permutating combinations of that school; what the OULIPO proposed, in fact, was a mathematical structuralism as the "game plan" of composition. It should be noted, then, that the Six Memos are written with an eye on the potentials for the novel in the near future and the final memo, "Multiplicity," ends on a decidedly more optimistic note than we hear in the essay on "Visibility." Here Calvino writes:

Someone might object that the more the work tends toward the multiplication of possibilities, the further it departs from that unicum which is the *self* of the writer, his inner sincerity and the discovery of his own truth. But I would answer: Who are we, who is each one of us, if not a combinatoria of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined? Each life is an encyclopedia, a library, an inventory of objects, a series of styles, and everything can be constantly shuffled and reordered in every way conceivable. (*Six Memos* 124)

This quotation reflects a Calvino who does not shy away from the limitless "multiplication of possibilities" and who retains, rather, a confidence in the potential

shufflings and reorderings implicit in the "combinatoria of experiences." The "unicum of the self" so productive to nostalgic longings is also eschewed and the combinatoria reveals itself as one of the more promising technologies that Calvino ultimately returns to its original vocation, recollection of the past. Taken together, however, these two passages from Calvino's last essays reflect strategies and concerns addressed in the novels that precede them. For a close examination of Calvino's works reveals narratives with forms and contents that are never far from the problem of memory. On the one hand, we can find in Calvino a distinct nostalgia for the lost past, an ironic melancholia and that preoccupation with origins that is, as we shall see, the nostalgic's hallmark. On the other hand, we can also see self-conscious and ironic play even in the most nostalgic of Calvino's fiction; it is the parody of nostalgic longing that works as a motif in Calvino's stories and novels.

This essay will argue that Calvino's earlier fiction confronts the problematic relationship between memory and nostalgia, predominantly through parody. I will use "The Adventure of Photographer" to convey the pitfalls that novels like Invisible Cities and If on a Winter's Night a Traveler later evade. For only in these later novels, in the works in which Calvino resists the urge to pose the individual's memory against the commodification of mass media and technology, does he find a way out of nostalgia. In these novels, the opposition is left behind and instead, Calvino puts technologies in the service of memory, re-contextualizing traditional figures into his own postmodern landscape. Not coincidentally, the prefabricated image and the combinatoria are two of the re-membered tropes that appear in Calvino's fiction to arbitrate between nostalgic desire and the affective potential of the remembered past.

I frame my analysis of Calvino's work with a Paraggi and a Palomar, framers in their own rights, the accidental photographer and the incidental astronomer. By framing my study with the camera and the telescope, I hope to underscore the ambivalence with which Calvino views the technologies of art, vision and memory. While the mechanics of mass

reproduction threaten to commodify memory and its artistic representations into mere fodder for a burgeoning "nostalgia industry," Calvino's fiction simultaneously seems to suggest that the technologies of artistic reproduction open the way to a re-invention of memory and a redefinition of its relationship to nostalgia. Before approaching Calvino's fiction and his treatment of memory and nostalgia, however, some more specific definitions of those terms and the context in which their slippage acquires significance, is in order.

## II. Between Memory and Nostalgia

In the spring of 1989, the editors of Representations published a "special issue" of their journal entitled "Memory and Counter-Memory." Included among the six essays on the subject is Pierre Nora's attempt to historicize the prevailing social climate that would produce a monthly installment dedicated to this issue. His tone is tragic, his lyric furnished in mournful, retreating clauses, the damage he identifies irreversible. In the course of Nora's essay, memory is "torn," "wrenched," "seized," "besieged," "assailed." Vestigial and totemic, Nora's memory exercises the power of the obsolete. In short, we, the readers and writers of Representations • Number 26, can explain our preoccupation with memory in its various extant and damaged incarnations as the product of "a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it" (12). Nora calls his essay "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," and explains that these "lieux" are "fundamentally ruins," the artefacts of sundered "mileux." The word "lieux," he tells us in an appendix to the essay, "owes its origin" to Yates' work on "loci memoriae." If Nora's lieux are a return to this "origin," they are also a reference to Maurice Halbwachs, whose sociology of memory identifies the "loci memoriae" in the spaces framed by social mileux. Nora clarifies his debt to Halbwachs by way of introduction. He writes,

Our interest in lieux de mémoire where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn-- but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory. (7)

Milieux de mémoire, the lost "real environments of memory," is, as we have seen, Halbwachs' term, a reference that Nora makes more explicit in his following argument on the opposition between history and memory. "Memory," he asserts, "is blind to all but the group it binds--which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs has said, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural and yet individual" (9). Here Nora paraphrases Halbwachs' claim that "the succession of our remembrances, of even our most personal ones, is always explained by changes occurring in our relationships to various collective milieux-- in short, by the transformations these milieux undergo separately and as a whole" (Halbwachs 49). Nora accepts without ado, then, Halbwachs' materialist sociology as published in The Collective Memory and then, regretfully, maintains that this natural state of affairs has been lost in the "acceleration of history;" milieux have transformed into lieux. In the aftermath of this transformation, memory ceases to be a "living" and "spontaneous" occurrence, a "perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present." Rather, Nora declares, "living memory" is transformed into history, memory at a second remove, or as he says, "the remembering of memory itself." He writes, "If we were able to live within memory, we would not have needed to consecrate lieux de mémoire in its name. Each gesture, down to the most everyday, would be experienced as the ritual repetition of a timeless practice in a primordial identification of act and meaning. With the appearance of the trace, of mediation, of distance, we are not in the realm of true memory but of history" (8). A special issue dedicated to "Memory and Counter-Memory," is, according to Nora, evidence of the tragic deformation of memory into its alienated other, that is, into history.

If Nora's narrative of loss and alienation sound familiar, the reader that recalls the trajectory rehearsed by Lukács, Lévi-Strauss, Benjamin and a host of early and mid twentieth century social scientists, must also predict that once history has been identified as the key manifestation of the loss of true memory, the novel cannot be far behind.<sup>2</sup> And Nora does not disappoint. As the essay progresses, history and the novel star as partners in crime, colonizers of true memory who forever after mourn the native culture they've helped to forget. In the apotheosis of a nostalgia flaunted in this essay from its beginning to its end, Nora concludes, "History has become the deep reference of a period that has been wrenched from its depths, a realistic novel in a period in which there are no real novels. Memory has been promoted to the center of history: such is the spectacular bereavement of literature" (24). Indeed, such is the spectacular bereavement of Pierre Nora, a virtuoso performance all the more noteworthy for its latter-day (re)production; this is not Tristes Tropiques and Lévi-Strauss has long since endured the posthumous scoldings of such stellar interdisciplinarians as Jacques Derrida and Clifford Geertz.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in the very same issue of Representations we can find Renato Rosaldo's "Imperialist Nostalgia," a title that tells us not merely that we can expect imperialism to manufacture its strategic nostalgias but, also, reminds us that the charge of nostalgia is easily yoked to less ambiguous allegations: imperialism, colonialism, domination.

But what is nostalgia? What are the anxieties that attach to it? How and to what effect does Nora's essay display this nostalgia? Following Raymond Williams, Renato Rosaldo would like to maintain that "not all nostalgias are the same" (120) and that some nostalgic feelings are more "benign" than others (108). What he defines as "imperialist nostalgia" is a paradoxical phenomenon in which "people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed" (108). Anything but innocent, Rosaldo tells us, "imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its

complicity with often brutal domination" (108). In a description of imperialist nostalgia that accurately summarizes Nora's yearning for the lost milieux, Rosaldo writes:

"We" valorize innovation and then yearn for more stable worlds, whether these reside in our own past, in other cultures, or in the conflation of the two. Such forms of longing thus appear closely related to secular notions of progress. When the so-called civilizing process destabilizes forms of life, the agents of change experience transformations of other cultures as if they were personal losses. (108)

Clearly, Nora's longing for the real environments of memory is such a yearning for "more stable worlds." But is Nora's nostalgia relatively "benign" or is it a surreptitious example of the more malignant strain Rosaldo calls "imperialist"? As an ideology that masks complicity, domination, collective and personal guilt, Rosaldo claims that imperialist nostalgia depends on its association with the more "innocent yearnings" that implicitly serve as his definition for the less dangerous versions of nostalgia. "The relatively benign character of most nostalgia," he writes, "facilitates imperialist nostalgia's capacity to transform the responsible colonial agent into an innocent bystander. If most such recollections were not fairly harmless, the imperialist variety would not be nearly as effective as it is" (108). After such strongly stated assertions, however, Rosaldo proceeds to remind us that the term nostalgia was invented in seventeenth century discourse to describe a "pathological homesickness" among Swiss mercenaries involved in fights far away from home. From the Greek, nostalgia is literally a splicing together of *nostos*, "to return home" and *algia*, "a painful condition." (108) From its earliest usage, then, nostalgia was an illness, a physical malady that Rosaldo concedes, however parenthetically, was tied up with imperialism and colonial domination.

Indeed, Rosaldo's essay is hard pressed to conjure up the garden variety "innocent nostalgia" that his imperialist variety supposedly depends on. There is his reference early in the essay to childhood memories as the prototype for innocent nostalgia, but his presumably rhetorical questions invite suspicions. He asks, "Doesn't everyone feel nostalgic about their childhood memories? Aren't these memories genuinely innocent?" At

best, the answers are subject to debate. Rosaldo himself appears less than convinced about the innocent face of nostalgia and his move, rather, is to exploit the original definition of the word. He will continue to analyze nostalgia and its longings as a "disease and its symptoms" from which he desires to "immunize" his readers. Summarizing a critical method he hopes will own up to his own complicity in the ideology of imperialist nostalgia he writes, "My dismantling analytic strategy attempts to *infect* the reader, so to speak, with a minor case of the ideology's persuasiveness in order to provide *immunity* against more *pathological episodes*" (110 Italics mine). However unwittingly, Rosaldo's essay points beyond imperialism's nostalgic strategy to unmask innocent nostalgia as a yearning for the past that by definition, serves and is served by ideologies. If Nora's homesickness, is not necessarily "guilty" of imperialism, neither is it "innocent" of ideology.

Rosaldo's rhetoric tells us something more, however. In addition to revealing the fallacy of the "innocent nostalgia" he presupposes, his analysis of nostalgia hearkens back to the etymological origins of the term for definition, as though to discover the root of the word were a means of getting, so to speak, to the truth of the matter. Moreover, it is at these origins that Rosaldo discovers the language of infection with which he infuses his own discourse on the subject. In Rosaldo's essay, nostalgia is not merely an illness; it is a contagious disease that can be spread from person to person and must be protected against. Further, the disease is apparently communicable through its expression in the medium of writing. Hence, Rosaldo proposes to "infect" his reader with the measured doses of nostalgia he hopes will result in the build up of natural defenses against more lethal exposure. The notion of contagion is nothing new to what Jean Starobinski documents as "The Idea of Nostalgia." Although the developments of bacteriology and pathological anatomy actually contributed to the decline of interest in nostalgia as a medical condition at the end of the nineteenth century, nostalgia was regarded as "catchy," and often times fatally so, well before the vaccination and infection paradigms of microbiology were made

available in that scientific discourse. Rather, as Starobinski tells us, once nostalgia became the object of "the enlightened profession," trading in its provincial origins and victim pool for the city and its educated classes, it became "transmitted to others through their very fears" (85). Starobinski remarks:

We know that there are diseases-- that is, nervous or 'mental' disease, neuroses, or even psychoses-- which are transmitted because people talk about them. Conversation sets the mind to work and in this way serves as the contaminating agent. At the end of the eighteenth century people began to be fearful of extended sojourns away from home because they had become conscious of the threat posed by nostalgia. People even died of nostalgia after having read in books that nostalgia is a disease which is frequently mortal. (85-86)

As for the eighteenth century educated classes, so too for Renato Rosaldo; discourse itself is the contaminating and inoculating agent. Ironically, Rosaldo has no need to view history or the novel with the bereavement of Pierre Nora, since for Rosaldo the reader's encounter with a written text has all the urgency and immediacy of a face to face encounter; there is simply no alienation to bemoan. Further, if we regard nostalgia as the "disorder of the imagination" Johannes Hofer does in 1688, it manifests itself in Rosaldo's formulations as an insidious power to organize, to order, and to achieve narrative closure.

In her On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection, Susan Stewart confirms nostalgia as a malady, what she calls punningly a "social disease." She defines nostalgia as "the sadness without an object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience...Nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack" (Stewart 23). Stewart's definition and analysis of nostalgia specify the symptoms we have already noted in Pierre Nora's essay. When Nora mourns the loss of a time when memory existed as a "bond to the eternal present," and longs for the "primordial identification of act and meaning," he perfectly exemplifies what Stewart calls the nostalgic's "utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a

past which has only ideological reality...a genesis where lived and mediated experience are one, where authenticity and transcendence are both present and everywhere" (23).

Halbwachs' milieu serve Nora as such a nostalgic utopia, the retrospectively constructed, prelapsarian Eden where signifier and signified seamlessly unite. In Stewart's further explanation, nostalgic desire ends up similarly to be linked up with power, specifically the power to control and order narrative. She writes:

The inability of the sign to capture its signified, of narrative to be one with its object, and of the genres of mechanical reproduction to approximate the time of face-to-face communication leads to a generalized desire for origin, for nature, and for unmediated experience that is at work in nostalgic longing. Memory, at once improvised and enriched, presents itself as a device for measurement, the "ruler" of narrative. (Stewart 23)

Why, then, if it is so predictable and well-rehearsed, so thoroughly ruled by the narrative of nostalgia, should Representations publish Nora's essay? Is he merely an easy, if well-spoken, target? More pointedly, why do I take the time to quote him so extensively in this essay? Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, the guest editors of Representations • Number 26, suggest in their introduction that Nora's essay is an attempt to identify "places" of memory in a "postmodern culture" that has eschewed "overarching ideological narratives-- so, for example, The Triumph of Western Civilization, of the Nation-State, of the Proletariat, etc.-- defining what is supposed to be memorable" (3). While Nora's text does indeed serve as a counter-memory to these narratives of progress, I have maintained that it is complicit with a different overarching teleology, one that narrates the demise of organic community along with its living memory, the Ur- myth of regress. I include Nora, however, not simply because he is such an instructive example of nostalgia, although he is that, too, but because in his hyperbolic effusions, Nora provides his own immanent critique and in doing so, Nora's essay takes the problem of nostalgia and memory to its extreme. By making memory the object of his nostalgic desire, Nora implicitly concurs with Stewart's assertion that nostalgia is "the desire for desire itself"

(23). However, Nora goes further still. In his hands, memory is both the subject and object of nostalgic desire, its signifier and signified; for Nora, there is no memory, counter- or otherwise, that is not self-alienated, no memory, in short, that is not nostalgic at its core. Hence, Nora adumbrates a trap not easily disassembled. Nora dares us to disavow nostalgia only to show up the desire to disown it as the hallmark of the true nostalgic. All attempts to recollect and represent the past are enmeshed in the web of longing and hence, he proclaims that "spectacular bereavement" of literature.

But is Nora correct? Is contemporary memory definitionally nostalgic or does Nora's theoretical trap only trap us theoretically? In his final book, translated into English as Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes' investigation into photography offers an assertion that, in effect, seems to bear Nora out. He writes,

The Photograph does not necessarily say what is no longer, but only and for certain what has been. This distinction is decisive. In front of a photograph, our consciousness does not necessarily take the nostalgic path of memory..., but for every photograph existing in the world, the path of certainty: the Photograph's essence is to ratify what it represents. (Barthes 85)

Barthes' rescue of the photograph from "the path of memory" is simultaneously a means of freeing the photograph "necessarily" from nostalgia. Later in the book, Barthes will go so far as to assert that the Photograph "is never, in essence, a memory... but it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory" (91). Counter-memory is not just alternative memory here. Rather, it is the antagonist of memory; it is not memory at all. When Barthes thus disassociates the photograph from memory, he separates this particular prefabricated image from the long history of artificial memory that, on the contrary, uses the placement of such images as its primary mnemonic tool. Rather than aiding and abetting memory retrieval, as they do in the tradition of memory technicians from Simonides to Leibnitz that Francis Yates so meticulously traces, Barthes identifies the peculiar essence of the photograph in its refusal to serve such ends. What Nora suggests of the novel, Barthes seems to imply of the photograph. Both see their chosen art form as

a representational reproduction that supplants memory. Unlike Nora, however, Barthes' representation is valued not for sending us back to the lost original but for its dynamic substitution of it. Specifically, the face of nostalgia is mitigated in Barthes' photograph by its substitution with the mask. Of the mask Barthes writes, "It is this word which Calvino correctly uses to designate what makes a face into a product of a society and its history...(T)he mask is the meaning, insofar as it is absolutely pure..." (34). For both Nora and Barthes memory is inextricable from nostalgia. Nora identifies literature as a "tom" lieu de mémoire, a damaged, artificial site of memory that wears its nostalgia on its proverbial sleeves. Barthes, on the other hand, removes the photograph simultaneously from both the narratives of memory and nostalgia, indeed, posits this distinction as the photograph's distinguishing feature, what he calls its "madness."

But what conclusions can we draw from this contrast? Are the "bereavement" of literature and the liberating "madness" of photography the results of differences inherent in the expressive media of each? Are all works of art nostalgic in an age of inescapable nostalgia or are some arts more "immune" to that charge than others? Finally, are we to take the complete identification of memory and nostalgia as a given or is there some space between the two? If so, what is the role of artistic representation in negotiating that space? Such questions bring us back to Calvino. Barthes' reference to Calvino's mask is an allusion to "Adventure of a Photographer," an early story in which the mechanical reproduction of the photograph is used to make visible the relationship between memory, nostalgia and the work of art. Calvino's story presents us with Antonio Paraggi, a nostalgic character whose adventure is in the investigation of this relationship. As the story progresses, we find his attempt to separate the photograph from the "nostalgic path of memory" stymied by the desires of the photographer and the photographed. Time after time, the reader witnesses the nostalgic character contemplating itself in the images it reproduces and, at every turn, it wears a different face.

### III. Framing Nostalgia: Paraggi's Photograph

In Calvino's "Adventure of a Photographer," published in the author's earliest collection of stories, the reader is introduced to protagonist Antonio Paraggi, a "nonphotographer" and the "only surviving bachelor" among his circle of friends and colleagues. In the course of the story, it is the second statistical detail that provokes the undoing of the first; in the face of the increasing domestication of his friends and the corresponding escalation of their photophilia, Paraggi finds himself in the position of designated photographer. At the beginning of the story, our protagonist is alienated from his circle of friends, the "Sunday Photographers," in the two simultaneous senses that underlie the pun at the heart of the story; Paraggi, specifically, is outside of the twin narratives of reproduction, sexual and mechanical, that organize the lives of his friends. As the narrator tells us, "One of the first instincts of parents, after they have brought a child into the world, is to photograph it" (222). Paraggi, "non-photographer and non-procreator," comes to us, then, as a parody of the alienated artist, marginal and undomesticated. It is Paraggi's obsolescence in the post-war age of sexual reproduction that, we are told, causes him to disparage the photographic reproduction that comes with it. When Paraggi takes up the camera, as he inevitably does, his "anti-photographic polemic" will similarly be a parodic polemic against what he calls the "iconography-family-madness nexus" (222).

Paraggi's contemplations on dangers of photography, as well as his exploration into the possibilities of that art, provide the reader with a history of twentieth century aesthetics—of photography but also of literature and the plastic arts; that is, Paraggi's quest for "true photography" leads him down a path that is itself a reproduction of the narrative of aesthetic history in the twentieth century that leads logically, and seemingly of necessity, to postmodern skepticism. Paraggi embodies the nostalgia for modernist avant-garde

aesthetics and simultaneously, parodies those aesthetics, showing up the desire for the new as impossibly naive. Eventually, Paraggi's adventure leads him to an appropriately accidental discovery of postmodern aesthetics as the only "true photography." In Calvino's hands, Paraggi's cathartic recognition is no less a biting parody of the postmodern than it was of his earlier modern pretensions. As Barthes' mask is revealed as a fetish, the disappearance of the face from photography only perfects the desire for that absent face; Calvino's parable reveals postmodern skepticism similarly as the perfection of nostalgic desire.

In her "Calvino on Photography," Constance Pierce offers an incisive reading of Paraggi's adventure that contextualizes the story by placing it provocatively in the ongoing discussion surrounding photography in the twentieth century. "Italo Calvino is drawn into an establishment of literary discourse on photography," she begins, "the Benjamin/Barthes/Sontag complex of meditative and speculative writings" when Barthes makes specific reference to this story in *Camera Lucida* (130). Like these "skeptical critics of photography," Pierce maintains, "the suddenly obsessed Antonio can only concede his fascination with the photographic process and its artifacts, with the possibilities and impossibilities of the medium, even as he ponders the problematic notional and emotional aspects of taking, viewing, collecting, and disseminating photographs" (130). For Pierce, "Adventure of a Photographer," is about the seduction of this skeptic by photography. While in many ways my own reading of the story parallels that of Pierce, I differ on two key points. First, Calvino's story is published well before Barthes' and Sontag's work on photography is written. It is, however, written only shortly after Benjamin's "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" becomes available in translation for Calvino and his story begins essentially where Benjamin's essay leaves off. Like Pierce, I will also go on to argue that the postmodern apotheosis at the close of the story is no simple resolution to the conflicts Benjamin's essay leaves Calvino with. However, unlike Pierce, I

will suggest that the irresolution at the close of the essay, its exhaustion, if you will, is specifically achieved because of Paraggi's equation of memory and nostalgia and his fear of the contaminating influence of that nostalgia.

As Pierce tells us, Calvino's Paraggi comes to us as "the cynical non-photographer who already embodies many of the standard arguments 'against photography'" (132), reservations about the technology of reproduction embedded in Benjamin's essay. Just as Benjamin asserts that "the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproduction" (224), Paraggi's early lectures to his friends include the explicit echo of the sentiment:

The line between the reality that is photographed because it seems beautiful to us and the reality that seems beautiful because it has been photographed is very narrow...The minute you start saying something, " Ah, how beautiful! We must photograph it!" you are already close to the view of the person who thinks that everything that is not photographed is lost, as if it had never existed, and therefore, in order really to live, you must photograph as much as you can... (224)

Paraggi goes on to critique the photograph's false authenticity, as well as "the appropriation, commodification, objectifying of its subjects; the nostalgic effect with the overtones of reaction; the emotional distance it produces in the viewer "(Pierce, 132). In his early Sunday-Philosopher phase, Paraggi, indeed, focuses his polemic against the dangers of the snapshot, especially for the unposed or "natural" photograph. As he frames the two ocean-bathing women who have requested his services, Paraggi discourses:

The taste for the spontaneous, natural, lifelike snapshot kills spontaneity, drives away the present. Photographed reality immediately takes on a *nostalgic character*, of joy fled on the wings of time, a *commemorative quality*, even if the picture was taken the day before yesterday. And the life that you live in order to photograph it is already, at the outset, a commemoration of itself. To believe that the snapshot is more true than the posed portrait is a prejudice... (225 *Italics mine*)

Contrary to Barthes' assertions, the snapshot seems to have slipped from its vocation in representing "what had been" into the "what is no longer." The nostalgic character is fueled by the sense of "joy fled on the wings of time." Further, Paraggi identifies the conceit of the snapshot as the pretense of spontaneity. What is spontaneous, natural and

lifelike is transformed by the presence of the camera into the artificial, posed and reified.

As Paraggi proceeds to tell the women, their pleasure has shifted from playing ball in the ocean,

Tossing the ball back and forth, you are living in the present, but the moment the scansion of the frames is insinuated between your acts it is no longer the pleasure of the game that motivates you but, rather, that of seeing yourselves again in the future, of rediscovering yourselves in twenty years' time, on a piece of yellowed cardboard... (225)

Like Susan Stewart's utopian face of nostalgia, then, the present that is photographed is transformed into "the future past." The nostalgic character of the snapshot identified by Paraggi then, is revealed in its representation of the "what is no longer" and in the desire to capture the present that is already nostalgic for itself.

Benjamin's "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" is, of course, no thesis "against photography" and neither is Calvino's story. Benjamin's "seduction" to the medium, as Pierce would call it, serves as a counterbalance to Benjamin's own nostalgia, nostalgia that haunts his essay. The loss of artistic "aura," while proposed as liberating, is delivered in anxious, if not mournful, tones. It is with this anxiety over the new that he states, "the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed" (224). Similarly, it is not without revealing his own melancholy that Benjamin identifies the melancholy in the photograph. He writes:

The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty. But as man withdraws from the photographic image, the exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to the ritual value. (226)

When he goes on to oppose traditional "cult value" with the emergent "exchange value" of the art work, and targets the photograph as the demise of cult value, we are situated with Benjamin in a prelapsarian limbo. Behind us, Benjamin's history posits a milieu in which art had "the semblance of authenticity," a semblance, if not an authenticity, we can acknowledge as perhaps existing only in this narrative of the past. As Benjamin's "past

continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack," we can identify his longing for the era of the cult and its intrinsic use-values as the longing of the nostalgic. Unlike his "Thesis on History," however, Benjamin here shifts the gaze of his "angel of history" and looks forward to the emancipating potentialities of the technologies of reproduction. For Benjamin, as for Calvino's Paraggi, the photograph becomes the perfect technology to  
 face: it is the hybrid of new and old, a technological development with the capacity to record and conserve the past. Paraggi's problem, in the domesticated climate of post WWII Italy is that the exchange value has not replaced the cult value; the human face has not disappeared. In fact, photography seems not to be an art at all. The pretensions of high modernism have been reduced (domesticated) to the banality of mass culture.

Therefore, although Paraggi's intended audiences completely and consistently ignore his chastising refrains, Paraggi himself takes his own words to heart. Midway through the story, he concludes that "his antiphotographic polemic could be fought only from within the black box, setting one kind of photography against another" (226). To this end, he will exhaust a gamut of aesthetic positions in an effort to create a photograph that escapes the "nostalgic character" of the snapshots of his friends. Dismissing the conceit of the snapshot, Paraggi turns to artistic conventions as his strategy for exacting Barthes' "decisive distinction." Ironically, Paraggi begins by turning back to the "old-fashioned," to the origins of photography. "Stepping into those cemeteries of objects no longer serviceable," he acquires all the accouterments of an old photographer and prepares to produce posed portraits in the style of the nineteenth century. Although he seeks, in this way, to "make explicit the relationship with the world that each of us bears within himself" which the snapshot and the Sunday Photographers veil, he discovers his quest to identify this relationship as equally nostalgic. He admits that "he, too, was one of those who pursue life as it flees, a hunter of the unattainable..."(228). Next, he tries to capture "the stereotype, the mask" which Barthes finds so valuable in Camera Lucida. Paraggi,

however, concludes that the mask of his subject is a "somewhat nostalgic, somewhat ironic" (229) appearance harkening back to a period before the war. Rather than embracing the truth of the mask, then, he chides himself, "Wasn't he perhaps trying to photograph memories, or rather, vague echoes of recollection surfacing in memory? Wasn't his refusal to live in the present as a future memory, as the Sunday photographers did, leading him to attempt an equally unreal operation, namely to give a body to recollection, to substitute it for the present before his eyes?" (229) Apparently answering in the affirmative, Paraggi's aesthetic strategy shifts and he embarks on one technique after another for the remainder of the story.

It is at the very moment when Paraggi admits defeat, when he is purging his home of the formidable evidence of what had become an obsession with photography, that he recognizes the rubbish heap of "half crumbled and torn images" as the only possible subject for the achievement of "total photography." The narrator concludes:

To get all this into one photograph he had to acquire an extraordinary technical skill, but only then would Antonio quit taking pictures. Having exhausted every possibility, at the moment when he was coming full circle, Antonio realized that photographing photographs was the only course that he had left-- or rather, the true course he had obscurely been seeking all this time. (235)

It is possible to read Paraggi's development as the story of Calvino's own evolving aesthetic, revealing his transition from the neorealism that predates the story to the metafictional experiments that follow; just as Paraggi comes "full circle" to begin the project of photographing photographs-- and discarded ones, at that-- so, too, Calvino begins to tell stories about telling stories. In other words, we can read the ending of "Adventure of a Photographer" as a resigned acceptance of postmodern skepticism. Paraggi's emblematic meta-photographic pastiche may, in fact, be seen as the "true course." Such a reading, however, is at odds both with the "somewhat nostalgic, somewhat ironic" tone of the story and the Calvino repertoire that follows. An interpretation more in keeping with the spirit of the story would keep in mind the ironic playfulness of a piece in which the preacher

becomes seduced by the very temptations he warns against. Indeed, we are invited to see Paraggi as his own self-fulfilled prophecy of the lapse into madness by the truly compulsive photographer. In her reading, Constance Pierce does, in fact, resist the temptation to see Paraggi's final photograph as simply "an argument for the critical meditative stance of meta-artifacts as 'the only true course left'" (136). She writes:

It doesn't seem that the story is making an art-of-exhaustion case for self-reflexivity as the 'only course left,' so much as it is advancing a point for a useful procedure and a means of empowerment, a critical and probing way of thinking (and writing) whereby we are able to assert a productive skepticism into the powerful spectacles (visual and literary, and presumably any other kind) that contain and shape us. (Pierce 136)

While I am perfecting willing to embrace the generative stance Pierce recuperates in her conclusion, I am also inclined to read Paraggi's final attempt with the irony Paraggi himself identifies in his previous succession of trials and errors. His final photograph, the new conglomeration of old and discarded images, is, indeed, so representative of the irony associated with postmodernism that I cannot but read Paraggi's assessment without a skepticism that is not, perhaps, as "productive" as Pierce would have it. As Alan Wilde elaborates in Horizons of Assent, the characteristic irony of this postmodern aesthetic of exhaustion is a "suspensive irony," an irony in which the radical vision of multiplicity, randomness, contingency and absurdity give way to quandary, to a "low-key engagement with the world of perplexities and uncertainties" (10). In Calvino's hands, Paraggi fails to see that nostalgia has exceeded the frames of the photographs and has instead infused the frames themselves. More precisely, the skeptic is revealed in this final picture as the nostalgic par excellence, for the object of desire is put at a second remove, much as Pierre Nora's memory is. In Paraggi's last photograph we are presented with a picture of the "desire for desire itself" that conforms so well to the nostalgic's self-alienated desire identified by Susan Stewart and demonstrated unwittingly by Pierre Nora.

If, as Constance Pierce maintains, "Adventure of a Photographer" leaves the reader with a "productive skepticism" and a "critical and probing way of thinking (and writing),"

so, too, apparently, it leaves Calvino with the same. For the problems of nostalgia and narrative, memory and the prefabricated image reproduce themselves as a series of strategies and experiments in the Calvino writing that follows. Specifically, we can distill three motifs that serve as a kind of legacy from Antonio Paraggi's quest and the phase of Calvino's writing it is a part of. First, we can find even in Calvino's latest writings a fear, sometimes expressed as evasion, of the prefabricated image and its technologies of reproduction. As a reaction against the standardization of imagination and the erasure of subjective memory this deluge of images seems to threaten, Calvino offers a valorization of the mental image, but an image that has what he calls an "icastic" character; the mental images Calvino seeks to evoke in his readers are images that derive from the collective memory, the cultural storehouse of images. Calvino turns his readers into the collective that constitutes and is constituted by its shared memories. The power to evoke these mental images and to contribute to them, becomes the high-priority work of Calvino's technologies of memory. Two related strategies emerge. Calvino will opt at times to focus on the problem of nostalgia, parodying the nostalgic's enterprise as he does to an extent with Paraggi. Additionally, we can see in Calvino an attempt to recuperate past models of memory that produce a definition and experience of the past distinct from the contagion of nostalgia. These will include the classical memory palace, the medieval *ars combinatoria* and the memory implicit in the oral storytelling tradition.

We can look to Calvino's *Cosmicomics*, the 1965 publication that Calvino scholars generally point to as the turning point in his development as a fiction writer, as exemplary of the fun Calvino has in his parodic depiction of the nostalgic. Here we are presented with a book of tales told by the narrator Qfwfq of his experiences at various stages of evolution, stages he remakes through a series of anthropomorphizing parables that organize the images that break through the skein of scientific discourse. As Calvino later explains, his aim was to "show that writing using images typical of myth can grow from any soil, even

from the language farthest away from any visual image, as the language of science is today" (*Six Memos* 89). Needless to say, the word image here refers specifically to a mental, immaterial entity. Cosmicomics not only pokes fun at the totalizing narrative of evolution but at the generalized desire for origins made explicit in any metanarrative of the past. In the book, each "new generation" is perhaps a new form of life, but its newness and uniqueness is criticized always by a survivor the previous generation, as in "The Aquatic Uncle's seduction of his landrover nephew's fiance. The "new ones" are always infatuated with a newness that we are made to see as an unknowing repetition of the past. While the narrative of evolution is undermined by the overdetermination it presupposes and the logic of myths Calvino uses to overlay and counter that metanarrative, the linearity of history and the active reconstruction involved in personal and collective memory is similarly countered. Next to the collective memory of science and fable, the remembering of old forms in the new, Calvino juxtaposes a collective amnesia that allows each successive generation to view themselves as spontaneous, new and improved. Like the Dinosaur that survives the demise of his species and is accepted by the "New Ones" who do not recognize him as the dinosaur he is, despite their incessant chatter about the long-dead monsters, origins and originality alike are revealed as a function of forgetting. Every stage of evolution is a stage in transition, constancy the historicist's illusion.

Cosmicomics leaves us with the mollusk, or rather, Qfwfq's retrospective account of life as a mollusk, especially concerning the development of the extravagantly designed shells by a species lacking the mechanics of vision. Calvino's mollusk is an artist and, in his radial symmetry, an embodiment of the shape of the narrative of the book he concludes. Like Steinberg's "The Spiral" that Calvino himself wrote about and chose for the cover of The Uses of Literature, the mollusk is the hermeneutic circle gone spiral and multi-dimensional. Instrumentalism and the functionalist world view are entirely reversed by the mollusk's account of his self-making. In a kind of Bergsonian triumph, individual

intuition and imagination-- as mental image--come first. Vision and art originate simultaneously from the mental vision and foresight of one revolutionary mollusk. As

Qfwfq relates:

An image... presupposes a retina, which in turn presupposes a complex system stemming from an encephalon. So in producing a shell, I also produced its image--not one, of course, but many because with one shell you can make as many shell-images as you want-- but only potential images because to form an image you need all the requisites I mentioned before...For myself I had none of the equipment, so I was the least authorized to speak of it; however, I conceived an idea of my own, namely that the important thing was to form some visual images, and the eye would come later in consequence. In short, I conceived of the eye-encephalon link as a kind of tunnel dug from the outside by the force of what was ready to become an image, rather than from within by the intention of picking up any old image. (150)

But we have a mollusk suffering from some delusions of grandeur on our hands, for as he admits, "I had failed to foresee one thing: the eyes that finally opened to see us didn't belong to us but to others" (151). While the mollusk will continue congratulating himself for producing vision in others, vision inspired by his art, the reader sees the mollusk's "blind spots" and recognizes his retrospective, self-aggrandizing account as impossibly deluded, ahistorical and egocentric. Indeed, like vision, the mollusk engenders ego before its "invention." He is, in the end, entirely encased in his shell. As in the case of Paraggi, the reader is asked to see the successes and limitations of the character's point of view. We can say of the mollusk that ends *Cosmicomics* what Calvino says of Steinberg in his 1977 "The Pen in the First Person." Using "The Spiral" as his example, Calvino writes of Steinberg:

On the one hand, his drawing crosses the frontier between self and the world and invades space so that the draftsman finds himself caught in his drawing and the visitor to the exhibition is caught in the picture exhibited. On the other hand, a continuous "travel diary" assails with implacable irony the depicting world and the depicted world; every visual opportunity is carried to its extreme, paradoxical consequences; every contradiction of the plastic materials of our daily experience is exacerbated to the point of absurdity. (297)

Like Steinberg, the mollusk crosses the frontier between self and world with the artistry of his shell. However, Qfwfq's narrative fails to admit that "implacable irony" that "assails" the depicting and the depicted world.

This long quotation is not, however, the close of Calvino's essay on Steinberg. As the essay continues we see that while Qfwfq is taken to task for his preoccupation with origins and the nostalgic longing that pervades each lost past, Calvino, too, has not stopped looking backward with longing and looking forward with anxiety. Directly after the comments quoted above, Calvino returns to these longings and fears:

The past is added to the present in our cities like a collage of detailed engravings of objects overladen with ornaments in an old catalogue; they are enthroned over a sketch, done with the tip of the pen, of a street full of traffic. And the only image we can form of the future is marked by the visual mortgages that city planners and comic strips, cubo-futureo-constructivism and science fiction have deposited on it, which give a face to our anguish at what lies in store for us. (297)

In this quote, Starobinski's description is borne out. Nostalgia, that "disease of provincial origins" has relocated to the city and to the educated classes. More correctly, we might say that nostalgia is a disorder that presumes provincial origins, for only a population "transplanted to the city" would have need to assert such origins or to complain of an ailment like nostalgia. It is not incidental that nostalgia returns to Calvino's discourse with the introduction of the city. Five years before his essay on Steinberg, Calvino published Invisible Cities. Unlike the parodic play that characterizes the journeys of Cosmicomics, Invisible Cities is a travel diary that documents an excursion into the furthest outposts of nostalgia, to psychic sites where memory and desire are never evoked without one another. Invisible Cities bears simultaneously and without neat resolution the hallmarks of the three motifs derived from "Adventure of a Photographer." The mechanical reproduction of the image results in an inquiry into the production of the mental image as the primary mnemonic aid and the potential for collective memory. Additionally, old technologies of

memory and mnemonic devices are employed as a means of re-membering memory into something new.

#### IV. Re-membering Memory: Marco Polo and the Restitution of Forgotten Arts

One need not crack the binding of Invisible Cities to understand that this novel is written in the context of Benjamin's so-called "Age of Mechanical Reproduction." The title Invisible Cities, spanning across the top of the cover conveys, of course, the emphasis on the absent, as well as the unseen, mental images that the novel attempts to describe and evoke. As if in contradiction, the reader is given a large, framed reproduction of what is identified on the back cover as "Woodcut of seventeenth century drawing screen." This woodcut is an illustration of an unidentified city focused from the desk of an absent or unseen surveyor. Dotted lines emanate through the surveyor's grid, dividing the city into sections that will, presumably, allow the draftsman to draw his view as a perspectively accurate reproduction on the demarcated paper to the right of the desk. Ink, quill and ruler are at hand beside the paper. What we have before us is the visual depiction of a thrice reproduced image of a city and at each level of reproduction, the standardizing and conventionalizing of the image of the city is implied. The book cover is a reproduction of the woodcut which is a reproduction of a drawing; the mechanics of HBJ publishing are preceded by the mechanical reproduction of the woodcut which is in turn by preceded by the technology of ink and paper. Finally, the print itself is, to paraphrase Benjamin, quite literally "designed for reproduction." The city reproduced for our benefit is posed in its frame for yet another reproduction-- here again by the mechanics of ruler and grid, ink and paper that began the cycle. Concurrently, the drafting instruments are prepared to reproduce the very city that we already view on the cover. There is no original in this circular cycle of copymaking that is not already a copy itself. True to the spirit of the aesthetics of absence the novel partakes of, the simulacral takes center stage. In the point

of view of the draftsman, the reader, too, is implicated in a chain of signification analogized as a chain of mechanical reproductions.

It is, in fact, the technology of the woodcut that Benjamin points to in his essay as the invention that rendered graphic art "mechanically reproducible for the first time" (218). While he concedes that "a work of art has always been reproducible" by imitation, he calls this "craft" and differentiates it from "mechanical reproduction." The semiotics of the cover of Invisible Cities illustrate the development of the various technologies of reproduction adumbrated in Benjamin's essay. However, the positioning of the absent draftsman's tools implies that the "craft" of the copyist has its "mechanics," as well. In her extensive work on The Printing Press in Early Modern Europe, Elizabeth L. Eisenstein reveals that the invention of the printing press encouraged, rather than discouraged, the continuation of visual illustration and facilitated a typology and codification of images. As she writes,

After the advent of printing, visual aids multiplied, signs and symbols were codified; different kinds of iconographic and nonphonetic communication were rapidly developed. The fact that printed picture books were newly designed by educational reformers for the purpose of instructing children and that drawing was considered an increasingly useful accomplishment by pedagogues also points to the need to think beyond the simple formula "image to word." (37)

The city itself, Eisenstein reveals, is a perfect example of the co-existence of image and word culture, as well as of the standardization of iconography resulting from the advancing technologies of reproduction. In the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493 and in other travel guides of the period, the same woodcut was used to illustrate all of the different cities; only the name at the top of the illustration was changed. Whether or not Calvino was aware of travel guides such as the Nuremberg Chronicle, the cover of his novel contextualizes what follows in a cultural moment in which mechanical reproduction has resulted in increasingly standardized images but which, additionally, acknowledges the art embedded in the mechanics and technologies of copymaking. Just as the writer has always been a kind of

writing machine, as far as Calvino is concerned, art has always been a technology of reproduction.

While the woodcut is the reverse and negative image of that which it is designed to reproduce, Calvino reverses the use of visual icons as mnemonic aids and creates a narrator that recounts his past travels to one city after another with recourse to only most minimal visual details. Marco Polo's travelogue delivered to the Great Khan provides no drawing to scale; the ruler and grid are abandoned, vanquished to the cover of the novel. Instead we get what critics often call "oneiric writing" or "tableaux." Ellen Esrock's defense of what she calls "visual thinking" in The Reader's Eye identifies Calvino as "perhaps the most powerful contemporary educator on readerly imaging" (160). Her reading of Invisible Cities argues that the novel is an "epistemological inquiry" into the relations of word, order and image, what she calls the "three principles constitutive of human memory" (165). A reader-response analyst, Esrock maintains that "Calvino plays upon the reader's disposition to use vision as a vehicle of knowledge" (170) and succeeds in evoking images in the reader not through ekphrasis but through the use of textual icons that necessitate the reader's mental elaboration. As she writes, "Marco Polo's descriptions of these cities, lacking systematic physical detail and analysis of their spatial or functional relationships to one another, name the elements of the cities as if listing an inventory of sacred icons" (171). According to Esrock, the evocation of mental images through the use of "sacred icons" is Calvino's contribution to "visual thinking;" mental visions lead, as she says, "to knowledge." It is on this point that my argument differs most from hers. Invisible Cities is rife with examples of the dangers of the prefabricated image but its emphasis on mental imagery, as we shall see, is literally a dead end.

We can find evidence in the novel for the kind of iconophobia that encourages a turn to "mental imagery." In his first installment of "Thin Cities," Polo describes Isaura, "city of the thousand wells," and takes the opportunity to remind the reader that "the invisible

landscape conditions the visible one; everything that moves in the sunlight is driven by the lapping wave enclosed beneath the rock's calcerous sky" (20). The invisible is the liquid, the motile and transforming elixir. In contrast, we are later told of Valdrada, city that views its upside-down image in the mirror of the lake below it. Since their actions possess "the special dignity of image," Valdrada's inhabitants are prevented from "chance and forgetfulness" (53). They become enslaved to their potential images in the lake, although, as Polo maintains, "not everything that seems valuable above the mirror maintains its force when mirrored" (54). Similarly, Maurila's postcard depictions of its past image are illusory and, despite the nostalgia they evoke in the current city's inhabitants, Polo maintains that "the old postcards do not depict Maurilia as it was, but a different city which, by chance, was called Maurilia, like this one" (31). In short, the visual image, reflection, drawing or photograph, is not to be trusted, as it leads only to a fetishization and distortion. But is the mental image a more liberated or true depiction?

Certainly, Polo seems unsure. In the city of Zobeide, for example, the invisible does condition the visible, but not without sinister implications. The city is constructed according to the identical dream experienced by men from different nations, a dream in which each man chases the identical woman, although to no avail. Zobeide is the city of that dream: "In laying out the streets, each followed the course of his pursuit; at the spot where they had lost the fugitive's trail, they arranged spaces and walls differently from the dream, so she would be unable to escape" (45). In Polo's words, the mental images of the collective dream produce an "ugly city," a "trap" (45). The images produced in the mind are not individuated, but mass produced in Zobeide's case. Moreover, those images constitute a collective male desire to possess an elusive woman and result in the construction of little more than the architecture for a chase that never happens. Even while the dream is forgotten, the city retains its shape and the inhabitants remain caught in these

traps of their own making. Surely, the mental image results in something less than redemption in Zobeide.

The liberating potential of "visual thinking" is further questioned by the ambivalence of Invisible Cities toward the power of words to evoke memories as mental images. While on the one hand language is figured as the threat to memory, the force of ramification, distortion and erasure of "true memory," the articulation of words appears to be necessary at other times to insure recollection. This ambivalence can be registered in a comparison of the cities of Olivia and Aglaura. In his account of Olivia, Polo cautions that "the city must never be confused with the words that describe it" (61). He specifies:

If I describe to you Olivia, a city rich in products and in profits, I can indicate its prosperity only by speaking of filigree palaces with fringed cushions on the seats by the mullioned windows...But from these words you realize at once how Olivia is shrouded in a cloud of soot and grease that sticks to the houses, and in the brawling streets, the shifting trailers crush pedestrians against the walls. (61)

For every description of splendor, Polo's commentary asserts, "the image evoked in your enlightened mind" is precisely the opposite. Not only does language offer no direct correspondence between signifier and signified, but, as with the visible, the sayable is conditioned by the unsayable. As an alternative to the limitations of language, Polo alludes to memory that is not told. Zaira is the city that "does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightening rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls" (11). This city is a melancholic body wearing a memory, outside of words but likened all the same to writing, on its surface. This motif haunts Polo's accounts, as in Tamara, where "your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse, and while you believe you are visiting Tamara you are only recording the names with which she defines herself and all her parts" (14). But if Tamara forces you to read and repeat her discourse, she also forces you to interpret "images of

things that mean other things" (13). In *Tamara*, we see the assertion of the limitations and possibilities of words as complex signs. In *Aglaura*, too, we learn that "everything previously said...imprisons your words and obliges you to repeat rather than say" and yet, of the "Aglaura that grows on the ground" Polo says he cannot speak "because the recollection...in the lack of words to fix it, has been lost" (68). Words, like the language of images, are necessary hazards. As Polo tells Khan, "There is no language without deceit" (48). Neither, Polo implies, is there recollection without deceit, even as a memory outside of consciousness persists on the body.

The failure of language to communicate, what is referred to as the "ramification" and "calcification" of signs, is responsible for one dimension of the nostalgia that pervades *Invisible Cities*. In their conversations, Polo and Khan recognize the loss of what we have seen Susan Stewart call "The primordial identification of act and meaning...the inability of the sign to capture its signified." In order for the foreigner, Marco Polo, to communicate with the Khan, the book recounts a language of physical gesture, ideograms and silences that mesmerize the emperor with the force of emblems and with "the space that remained around" these communications, space that allows—even necessitates—multiple interpretations. When the two men do finally share the same language, the narrator remarks,

But you could have said communication between them was less happy than in the past: to be sure, words are more useful than objects and gestures in listing the most important things of every province and city...and yet when Polo began to talk about how life must be in those places, day after day, evening after evening, words failed him and, little by little, he went back to relying on gestures, grimaces and glances. (39)

The two men then begin to add "mute commentary" after their words but find that after a time this, too, "tended to become closed, stable" (39). Taking skepticism about the power of language to the extreme, Polo and Khan fall into conversations described as "silent and immobile" (39). The failures of language are transformed into something more actively dangerous as the novel continues. For, in fact, language and communication do

not end after these assertions of silence and language exerts its gravest potential with regard to memory. Why, the Khan asks Polo, does he never speak of Venice? To this, Polo responds that Venice is the "implicit city" which makes possible all others; when he describes any city, he is always also describing his lost home. Polo clarifies:

Memory's images, once fixed in words, are erased...Perhaps I am afraid of losing Venice all at once, if I speak of it. Or perhaps, speaking of other cities, I have already lost it, little by little. (87)

We can say for Polo as storyteller what we have seen Calvino say of himself as writer, that the memory that is behind all stories is "wounded" in the writing of them. In that introduction to Path to a Nest of Spiders quoted earlier, Calvino mourns the loss of memory generated by the writing of that first novel. Writing, he goes on, "burns up the treasure of memory--what would have become a treasure if you had had the patience to preserve it," substituting a "transfigured memory in the place of the general memory with its vague outlines, its infinite possibilities of rediscovery" (xxiv). Polo attempts to give Venice an infinity of shapes but, even so, transfigures this ordinary city and puts it beyond a memory that is not explicitly infused with nostalgic desire. Sitting in the imperial court, Polo conveys this imperialist nostalgia of the storyteller. For it is Polo, more so even than the imperial Khan, who illustrates most perfectly Rosaldo's definition of imperialist nostalgia; Polo mourns that which he has helped to destroy. Words and stories colonize the past in Invisible Cities, taking possession of it. Polo's predicament underlies the fallacy of "benign nostalgia" and confirms the acquisitive nature of language, a nature so often associated with the photograph.

The nostalgia of Invisible Cities is not limited to the problems of language, however. While the Khan continually searches for the "internal rules" and deep structures of meaning that will survive even the disintegration of his empire, cities such as Fedora and Clarice typify the nostalgia for lost possibilities, for origins, and a memory that has not, in Nora's sense, been alienated into history. Fedora, one of the "Cities of Desire," is one of the

myriad of cities that serves as an explanatory model for the book as a whole. The emblematic feature of this city is its museum, a "metal building with a crystal globe in every room" (32). The globes in the museum each contain abandoned plans of Fedora from various stages in its history. The collection of "forms the city could have taken if, for one reason or another, it had not become what we see today" is a collection of utopias, versions of the past that only existed in the desires of their designers. On the one hand, Fedora's museum offers an illustration of the "utopian face of nostalgia." The desires contained in the globes that the viewer identifies with are desires for a past that never existed except as so many propositions. However, the globes also imply that all constructions of the past are "only assumptions" that are similarly imbricated with desires, pasts that have never existed "except as narrative." The museum in Fedora, as well as the novel *Invisible Cities*, houses these contained desires; it is only in the context of the collection of impossible pasts that these artefacts attain the status of the actual. The "real Fedora" in turn acquires the status of the imaginary.

The fact that Fedora's utopian versions of itself are in miniature globes underscores these issues. As Susan Stewart explains in her analysis of the miniature, while the visitor is offered a "transcendent and simultaneous view," she is always "trapped outside the possibility of a lived reality of the miniature" (67). Stewart gives us further insight into the tableaux of Marco Polo's cities as expressive of a dual desire to fix time and to escape it:

In its tableaulike form, the miniature is a world of arrested time; its stillness emphasizes the activity that is outside its borders. And this effect is reciprocal, for once we attend to the miniature world, the outside world stops and is lost to us. (67)

Conversing in a world that is already lost to them, Khan and Polo attend to the miniature cities and enjoy their transcendent, simultaneous view of them, only to find themselves perpetually outside of their borders. However, the reader of *Invisible Cities* and the visitor to Fedora's museum experience tableaux as narrative, in serial form. The series of miniatures comprises a history as a collection of arrested moments.

Nostalgia as the desire for un-lived or impossible pasts is reiterated in various forms in the novel. Polo, for example, tells the Khan that "Futures not achieved are only branches of the past: dead branches" (29) and that "at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of his that he did not know he had" (28). Clarice, we are told, is a "glorious city" with a "tormented history" (106). After its centuries of "decadence," survivors repopulate the city and the remains of the old were collected and used for different purposes, resulting in a rag-tag reconstruction of the "first Clarice." While the entirety of the city persists in its effects, it is all "arranged in a different order, no less appropriate to the inhabitants' needs" (106). It is when prosperity returns to the city that the real destruction takes place. As Polo recounts:

And the more the new city settled triumphantly into the place and the name of the first Clarice, the more it realized it was moving away from it, destroying it no less rapidly than the rats and mold. Despite its pride in its new wealth, the city, at heart, felt itself incongruous, alien, a usurper. (107)

The "shards of the original splendor" are now repaired to a building much like Fedora's museum where they are "preserved under glass bells, locked in display cases, set on velvet cushions" (107). In Clarice, Fedora's miniature utopias are substituted with shards, broken pieces, disconnected remains. The milieu of the miniature world, we can say, is torn, replaced with fractured lieux. While the first sentence of the tableau informs us that the inhabitants long for the glory of the first Clarice, the last conjectures that "Clarice has always been only a confusion of chipped gimcracks, ill-assorted, obsolete" (108). It is only from this confusion, however, that the history of Clarice is now inferred.

Like the inhabitants of Clarice, Polo consciously attempts to gather the "ashes of other possible cities...that can never be rebuilt or remembered" (60). From the discarded and abandoned remains, he tells Khan, he can always construct the new. From the rubbish pile of discarded models of memory, Calvino's book retrieves the classical Memory Theater and the thirteenth century combinatoria. Francis Yates provides a detailed description of

both in The Art of Memory. The first, the memory theater or palace is a classical mnemonic device itself revised in various historical epoches. Essentially, the memory theater is a physical architecture memorized by the individual for the purposes of memory. Once the architecture is memorized, all manner of material may be stored in it in the form of rule-governed images. These images must be placed, too, in effective loci, or sites in the building. To retrieve information, the rememberer mentally traverses the theater, "picking up" the images that may represent anything from Latin verb forms to the closing remarks at a trial. In the memory theater, memory is a narrative constructed by the connection of representative images. In Invisible Cities, the city is clearly invoked as such a memory theater.

The most explicit example of this re-membered model for memory is in Zora. "This city that cannot be expunged from the mind," Polo narrates, "is like an armature, a honeycomb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember" (15). It is described as "a musical score in which not a single note can be altered or displaced" (15). Hence, it is the perfect memory theater and "the world's most learned men are those who have memorized Zora" (15). However, Zora as a resurrected lost art is no rousing success. In the final, provocative sentences of the tableaux, Polo relates:

But in vain I set out to visit the city: forced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to be more easily remembered, Zora has languished, disintegrated, disappeared. The earth has forgotten her. (16)

Several insights may be gathered from these comments. First, we have, once again, the tragedy of the fixed, stable image; the stability of the mental image of Zora has resulted in the disintegration and disappearance of the physical architecture. Stasis equals death. Furthermore, the architecture of Zora, and of the memory theater in its classical conception, assumes both the stability of the architecture and the unchanging mental route of the rememberer through that structure, a structure and a route that provide the narrative of memory. With Zora we find that it is not simply the fixity of the image of the city that

causes its demise, but the fixity of narrative. Zora is a deconstructed memory theater in which the organizing and ordering of images is revealed as hopelessly enslaved to the conventions of narrative. However, Invisible Cities, as a narrative, combines the memory theatre with a second technology of memory: the combinatoria. Through the use of the combinatoria, narrative loosens the sequence and organization of narrative from both the desires of the rememberer and the conventions of form. Unlike the visitor to Zora, the reader of Invisible Cities travels through a theatre of different and endlessly permutating paths. In this way, memory evades its calcification.

The combinatoria that begins in the thirteenth century is the invention of Raymond Lull. Lullism, as Yates explains, responds to classical arts of memory in two ways that are significant to our analysis here. First, Lull's model for memory changes the memory theater's representative icons from pictures to letters. As Yates tells us:

...(T)here is nothing corresponding to the images of the classical art in Lullism as taught by Lull himself, none of that effort to excite memory by emotional and dramatic corporeal similitudes which creates that fruitful interaction between the art of memory and the visual arts. (177)

As we might have expected, Calvino's invocation of lullism is easily situated within the more generalized iconoclasm noted earlier. Lull's art not only substitutes the images classical scholastics used as memory aids, however. He also de-emphasizes the experience of memory as an experience of mental imagery. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, movement becomes essential to memory with Lull's invention. Yates describes his model as follows:

The figures of his Art, on which its concepts are set out in the letter notation, are not static but revolving. One of the figures consists of concentric circles, marked with the letter notations standing for the concepts, and when these wheels revolve, combinations of the concepts are obtained. In another revolving figure, triangles within a circle pick up related concepts. These are simple devices, but revolutionary in their attempt to represent movement in the psyche. (178)

Lullism attempts to synthesize science and art and begins the line of memory arts that Yates ultimately attaches to Leibnitz and his combinatoria, the universal calculus. By the

time Calvino writes Invisible Cities, he has already served his time with the OULIPO, the French school for "potential literature" with its insistence on "voluntary fiction" and its "aesthetics of combinatorics," a concept the school takes directly from Leibniz's *Combinatoria*. In "Cybernetics and Ghosts," Calvino identifies Ramon Lull and his ars combinatoria as "one of the most arduous intellectual efforts of the Middle Ages" (*Uses* 9). He goes on to liken Lull's intellectual efforts with more contemporary efforts and associates Lull explicitly with game theories currently applied to literature.

The combinatorics of Invisible Cities can be seen in the structural composition of the novel. One need only look at the table of contents to see that way Calvino appropriates Lull's revolving wheels for a literary combinatoria. In a sense, the novel operates as an exacting musical score in which each of the eleven types of cities must be repeated five times by the close of the book. The arbitrary and ironclad rules that govern the game of Invisible Cities, as many critics have noted, comprise an attempt to experiment with narrative possibilities. Play the game, we are admonished, for the pleasure of seeing what happens. On the other hand, the mathematical formula suggests a form for Marco Polo's travel diary that wrests it out of the nostalgic desires that drives the construction of conventional narratives of the past. In that case, we can say that however pervaded by nostalgia the contents of Invisible Cities is, the form is an ironic commentary and a surreptitious challenge to the desires of the inhabitants of the cities and of the Tartar imperial court alike. By the end of Invisible Cities, narrative has replaced image as the repository, the storehouse, of memory. However, we leave this novel and proceed to If On a Winter's Night a Traveler with a narrative threatened by commodification and a storyteller identified with imperialist nostalgia. In this later novel, Calvino will address explicitly what he only hinted at in Invisible Cities: the commercialization of the book, the relationship of the book to collective memory, and the role of the reader in the valuation of those books.

### V. The Modern Classic: Remembering the Book

The shifts in the arts of memory in the late fifteenth century provoked by the invention of the printing press were accompanied by anxieties explored by both Eisenstein and Yates. The expert, the educator and the sage were each threatened by print culture's potential, their functions and status put under question by the published and widely available instruction manuals. Further, the proliferation of engraved images in the earliest books produced, rejuvenated the iconoclast agenda and set off a debate around the relative dangers of "images on walls" vs. "images in books." Eisenstein notes the gamut of these fears, including the notion that the book would do away with the architecture of the cathedral that had become the standard structure for memory organization (34-36). Interestingly enough, both Yates and Eisenstein turns to a novelist, Victor Hugo, in order to illustrate these anxieties. As Yates details it in her reference to his *Notre Dame de Paris*, Hugo sees the arrival of the book as a signal for the destruction of the cathedral outside his window, as well as the cathedrals of the mind constructed for the purposes of memory. On receiving "the first printed book which has come to disturb his collection of manuscripts," Yates writes, Hugo "gazes at the vast cathedral, silhouetted against the starry sky, crouching like an enormous sphinx in the middle of the town. 'Ceci tuera cela,' he says. The printed book will destroy the building" (131).

That Hugo is so closely associated with the historical novel lends an ironic twist to the inclusion of this parable remarking on the book's threat to structures of memory. However, the fears Hugo registers also offer an inverse model of the anxieties surrounding the future of print culture in the latter half of the twentieth century. While the advancements of photographic and video technologies have not signalled the obsolescence of the book any more than the book signalled the end of iconography, the very medium that was once regarded as the threat of the arts of memory has found one of its vocations in the current

cultural context, as a repository, organization and artefact of the collective memory it originally transformed. As illustrated in Italo Calvino's If on a winter's night a traveler, the book-- and specifically the novel-- is a structure of memory threatened by both its means of production and means of consumption. By looking at the depiction of publishing house, book store and library, we can reverse Hugo's reported comment: these are buildings that threaten to destroy the book. However, just as the arts of memory enjoyed an unexpected renaissance at the moment when the printed word might have foreshadowed their obsolescence, so, too, Calvino's novel focuses not on the "death of the novel" but the multifaceted lives it has lived and has yet to live. In If, Calvino turns his attention definitively away from the opposition between the individual and mass culture. Instead, his readership emerges as the collective that comprises memory in and through the novel.

We need not look back to centuries past to observe the connection of these concerns. In Pierre Nora's essay, we have already seen a more contemporary identification of the project of the novel with the problems of memory. Nora's essay, resonating as it does with Lukacs' 1920 pessimism in Theory of the Novel, identifies the form of the novel as a "lieu de mémoire," a site of memory "torn" from its original wholeness in the milieu. Alienated from itself, memory is history and the novel, dramatizing just this alienation, comes to us in its "spectacular bereavement." It is in "The Storyteller," that Benjamin foreshadows the kind of nostalgia that Pierre Nora recapitulates half a century later. Specifically, Nora's distinction between memory and history is a reiteration of the distinctions Benjamin draws between the story and the novel. Just as memory has devolved into history as a result of the disintegration of the milieu, the end of storytelling is approaching, according to Benjamin, as the epiphenomenon of the ability of people to exchange experiences. Storytelling is a communal, oral, face-to-face practice. The novel, the other hand, is written and read in isolation. As opposed to the novel, the story never reaches "finis," does not "exhaust itself in the telling." While storytelling "is always the art

of repeating stories," of "spinning and weaving" previous tales, the novel concludes, spending itself in the reading. Even the short story, Benjamin maintains, is outside of the living tradition of retelling. He writes:

We have witnessed the evolution of the "short story," which has removed itself from oral tradition and no longer permits that slow piling one on top of the other of thin, transparent layers which constitutes the most appropriate picture of the way in which the perfect narrative is revealed through the layers of a variety of retellings. (93)

The novel takes this alienation from living tradition to the extreme. Benjamin, indeed, predicts Nora's somewhat belated "bereavement" in the assertion, "To write a novel is to carry the incommensurable to excess in the representation of human life" (87). The binary opposition between the story and the novel moves, as in Nora's essay, to a clinching distinction explicitly attached to memory. In short, memory "manifests itself in a form quite different from the way it manifests itself in the story" (98). The epic tradition and the practice of storytelling both rest on the short-lived reminiscences of the storyteller, a mode of memory that "creates a chain of tradition" and connects all stories together in a "web." The decisive turn of the novel is the move from the reminiscences of the storyteller to the "perpetuating remembrance of the novelist." The web collapses into the tyranny of linear narrative, the layers of interpretation distilled beyond recognition into one version: "one hero, one odyssey, one battle" (98).

Benjamin's nostalgia for the lost lived and exchanged experiences of the milieu and of storytelling is clarified if we look to his consequent use of Georg Lukacs. To Lukacs he attributes "the most important elucidation on the matter" (99). And what is this key insight of Lukacs? It is to see in the novel "the form of transcendental homelessness" (99). To liken this "transcendental homelessness" to the nostalgia of the seventeenth century Swiss mercenaries is, of course to conflate homelessness with homesickness. It is, however, precisely the blurring of these two terms that Benjamin courts here. In "The

Storyteller," to be homeless is to be homesick and that is the very measure of the nostalgia in this essay and the nostalgia it identifies at the heart of the form of the novel.

One can argue that the fictional work of Italo Calvino is an extended series of experiments in undoing the opposition between the story and the novel articulated by Benjamin. Indeed, Calvino seems to have taken to heart Benjamin's injunction that "great writers differ least from the species of nameless storytellers" (84). Calvino's infatuation with the tradition of oral storytelling is revealed in his interest in the work of Vladimir Propp and in the project of collection and transcription of Italian folktales; Italian Folktales, remains, in fact, his bestselling book in Italy, the book that made him a "household name" in his native country. In the more recent Six Memos for the Next Millennium, Calvino reports on the influence of the form of the folktale on his stories and novels. He writes:

If during a certain period of my career as a writer I was attracted to folktales and fairytales, this was not the result of loyalty to an ethnic tradition (seeing that my roots are planted in an entirely modern and cosmopolitan Italy), nor the result of nostalgia for things I read as a child (in my family, a child could read only educational books, particularly those with some scientific basis.) It was rather because of my interest in style and structure, in the economy, rhythm, and hard logic with which they are told (35).

Later in this essay entitled "Quickness," we learn that the value of "mental speed," "economy," and the construction of time in the folktale are valued specifically because they are under siege in contemporary society. Calvino recommends the quickness represented in the folktale because we are in "an age when other fantastically speedy, widespread media are triumphing, and running the risk of flattening all communication onto a single homogeneous surface..." (45). Calvino's essay resonates with Benjamin's ethos in "The Storyteller," recalling as it does an earlier form of narration that embodied values now are the verge of disappearance. Calvino asserts,

The motor age has forced speed on us as a measurable quantity, the records of which are milestones in the history of the progress of both men and machines. But mental speed cannot be measured and does not allow comparisons or competitions; nor can it display its results in a historical perspective. Mental speed is valuable for its own sake,

for the pleasure it gives to anyone who is sensitive to such a thing, and not for the practical use that can be made of it. (45)

Throughout Calvino's years of writing, we can see a foregrounding of the storytelling process and of the dynamic collaboration between speaker and listener in that process. Narrators such as the chameleon time traveler QFWFQ and the space traveler Marco Polo come to the reader in the act of speaking, in the present tense of story telling time. The bulk of Invisible Cities consists in Marco Polo's oral narrative to Kublai Khan. If on a Winter's Night a Traveler takes the storyteller-traveler conceit to its extremes, addressing the reader directly in the second person and simultaneously referring to its main characters as "readers." Oral and written storytelling thus each overstep their definitional boundaries: the characters "read" while the reader of the novel is "spoken to." Additionally, If represents a perfect example of Calvino's propensity for novels that, contrary to Benjamin, revel in the "complex spinning and weaving of previous tales" and the "laying of a variety of retellings" within the form of the novel itself. "I am producing too many stories at once," the novel's narrator confesses in a convoluted sentence that performs the message it describes, "because what I want is for you to feel, around the story, a saturation of other stories that I could tell and maybe will tell or who knows may already have told on some other occasion, a space full of stories that perhaps is simply my lifetime, where you can move in all directions, as in space, always finding stories that cannot be told until other stories have been told first, and so, setting out from any moment or place, you encounter always the same density of material to be told" (109). Indeed, this narrator refers to the saturation of stories as "the sign of real wealth" that puts him in the position to "handle it with detachment and without haste, even allowing a certain irritation to be perceptible and granting myself the luxury of expatiating on secondary episodes and insignificant details" (109). With Ermes Marana and the Organization of Apochryphal Power (OAP), the teams of ghost writers in the publishing house, the Organization for the Electronic Production of

Literary Works (OEHLW), *If* proposes its own copycat Scheherazades, purloiners who take copyright at its word, as the right to copy, to repeat, to retell. From his first novel Path to the Nest of Spiders to If on a Winter's Night a Traveler, Benjamin's "spinning and weaving" appears in Calvino's fiction in the recurring metafictional figure of the web.

Calvino's *If* undoes the binary opposition between storytelling and novel writing. It can be seen, in other words, as an attempt to breath life into a dead form, to infuse the novel with the originary lifeblood of the story. The novel is cured, in this interpretation, of its homesickness by the absorption of the lost legacy of storytelling into its newly invigorated form. A written interpolation is still, of course, different in kind than an oral one and although *If* does revel in the storytelling traditions that have shaped the novel at different points in its history as a genre, it is not for the face-to-face oral performance that Calvino's novel expresses concern. Rather, it is the novel and the experience of its reader that are in jeopardy in *If*, a novel that is valued specifically for its "bookness," its conjunction of the new and the old and its status as a storehouse, or cathedral, of the collective memory.

The nostalgic longing of the characters in *If* is not for the time of the storytelling encounter. Rather, the Reader, publishing representative Mr. Cavedagna, and author Silas Flannery all look back to a golden time of readerly innocence. After entering the publishing house, the Reader fears "having also passed over to 'the other side' and of having lost that privileged relationship with books" (115) and with Ludmilla, his female counterpart, he dreams of "rediscovering a condition of natural reading, innocent, primitive..."(92). Cavedagna is described as a Dickensian character in a modern day Bleak House, reminding the Reader of "a world in which they still read books where you encounter 'little men, shrunken and bent.'" (96). To the Reader, Cavedagna confesses a similar dream to return to "what I call reading," an activity he doesn't engage in at the publishing house but associates instead with the chicken coop of his childhood home in the village. The return to

the village is not a return to the time of the oral storytelling experience but, rather, in Calvino's hands, the return to the milieu is a return to the innocence of reading. Even Silas Flannery, the tortured writer, complains that "since I have become a slave laborer of writing, the pleasure of reading has finished for me" (169). Despite himself, the vocation of the copyist attracts him, Flannery admits, for its fusion of reading and writing (178).

The two storytellers we are given in the novel reinforce the fact that the object of nostalgia in Benjamin's essay is shifted in Calvino's novel from the story to the novel. While a reference is made to the "Father of Stories," an old man reciting the tales of the world in a cave in South America, he is mentioned only in the context of Marana's less-than-trustworthy correspondence and even there, not a single word is interpolated from him. Rather, Marana claims to tape record the old man and then to translate the stories into bestselling novels. The only time in the novel an oral recitation occurs is in the dead letter office of Professor Uzzi Tuzii, scholar of the dead Cimmerian culture, who refers to his bookshelves as "graves of a cemetery" (53). When Uzzi Tuzii begins to recite the novel that he believes the Reader and Ludmilla are interested in finding, he can be seen as a storyteller. However, he is a storyteller who is first, a reader and second, a translator. Indeed, the Reader's first reactions to the recitation are negative ones; he would clearly prefer to be left with a book, to read at his own pace. It is with effort that both reader and reciter take to their roles. Cimmerian, we are to gather, the "dead department of a dead literature in a dead language," is the prospective language of literature in general at a time when it can no longer be understood in "its original language," when literature is mined only as the artefact of dead cultures. In a description of the dying language of literature, and of the original Cimmerian prose, the Reader likens the untranslated sentences to "the song of the last bird of an extinct species or the strident roar of a just-invented jet plane that shatters in the sky on its first test run" (69). If the Cimmerian language is indeed the

language of literature, we are faced with a choice between such an endangered species or its misguided and mechanical simulacrum: the flying-machine.

This juxtaposition of the disappearing past and the explosive capacity of its mechanical reproduction will be a motif that reappears continually in the novel where that balancing act between conservation and innovation is performed over and over again. The myth of progress, countered as it is in this quotation, is later used to counter the myth of regress, as well. *If*, for example here resists the urge to figure the supposed shift from oral story to novel as cause for grief but, will simultaneously view the shift from writer and reader to electronic devices as sinister in the extreme. The novel's future, Calvino's novel ultimately suggests, is its ability to be new and old at the same time. Uzzi Tuzii, the chair of the "dead department," mournfully values literature for its ability to stand at "the threshold" where "the wordless language of the dead begins" (71). For Uzzi Tuzii, the value of reading is consequently the occasion it provides for us to "measure ourselves against something else that is not present, something else that belongs to the immaterial, invisible world, because it can only be thought, imagined, or because it was once and is no longer, past, lost, unattainable, in the land of the dead..." (72). To Tuzii's conservationist position, Ludmilla counters that reading is oriented to the future, not to the lost past. "Reading," she insists, "is going toward something that is about to be, and no one yet knows what it will be" (72). In *If*, these two positions will not be mutually exclusive; the novel's "madness" will be its ability to look forward and ahead simultaneously.

Indeed, in the first pages of the novel our Protagonist makes his first visit to the bookstore to purchase the "latest novel by Italo Calvino." As he makes way to the proper section of the store, we are given his mental organization of books, an organization that reflects his desires for books that balance the new and the old. It is in "the citadel of the New Books Whose Author or Subject Appeals to You" that the Reader seeks finds his novel. To get to it, he must separate out books even within this category. His method

consists in "defining the attraction they have for you on the basis of your desires and needs for the new and the not new" (6). Specifically, the Reader that is the protagonist of Calvino's novel organizes books to facilitate "the new you seek in the not new and for the not new you seek in the new" (6). That much spoken, the Reader concurrently sees the reading of the novel as an opportunity to "rediscover the continuity of time." The duality is repeated in the next pages. In the "freshly published book," the Reader looks for "true newness" but first, he engages in what is clearly a long-standing ritual devoted to the tactile pleasures of the book as book. Plastic needs to be removed, pages cut, the back cover read, the number of pages noted. Then again, the Reader does not begin reading with a view to newness. Rather, he "prepare(s) to recognize the unmistakable tone" of a known author. It is only when this proves impossible that the Reader decides he "prefers it this way, confronting something and not quite knowing yet what it is"(9).

Later in the novel we find out that the second novel sought is a "Penguin Modern Classic" and it is no accident that the Reader encounters Ludmilla in this section of the store. For the oxymoron of the publication banner "modern classic" conveys a marketing device specifically designed to advertise the novel as new (modern) and old (classic) at the same time. The reader of Calvino's novels recognizes the materiality of these lines of fine novels, as Calvino's books appear on "A Harvest" division of HBJ Books, oversized paperbacks that combine brightly colored contemporary computer fonts with black and white artwork from previous epochs. The rounded green print of the front cover of If on a winter's night a traveler contrasts with the de Chirico "Autumn Melancholy" beneath it. Even the "bookness" of the novel embodies this dual valuation of the genre as traditional and cutting edge at the same time. To borrow James Clifford's malleable terms, we can say that the "artefact value" of such novels is coupled with their "masterpiece value" as a marketing strategy. Seeing glossy, oversized, special edition paperbacks, the reader of

Calvino's fiction knows that the artefact-masterpiece value of the paperback novel produces a re-valuing of the novel reflected in size, price and marketing strategy.

While literature and the book reflect that they have both become valued for their abilities to be new and old simultaneously, the experience of the reader is similarly portrayed as a variation on this theme. In the first of the nested narratives in *If*, Calvino most explicitly attempts a defamiliarization of the conventions of reading. As in the bookstore, the central convention of reading, its proverbial rule of thumb, is to identify the new in the not new. Reading emerges as an experience of the uncanny; all reading is in some sense the experience of the traveler displaced into the strange but oddly familiar topos of the train station, "that nontemporal trap which all stations unfailingly set" (12), a "setting you know by heart" (11). This first novel the Reader engages with is one which suspends the reader in a "station" that may be a "station of the the past or a station of today" (12), unsure if the novel will take him forward or backward. The metaphor of the reader as a traveler waylaid at a train station is underlined as the narrator muses that a "cloud of coal dust still hovers in the air of stations all these years after the lines have been totally electrified, and a novel that talks about trains and stations cannot help conveying this odor of smoke" (12). It is precisely the "electrifying of lines" that the novel, like the train station, has undergone in the contemporary culture of *If*. Like the train station, we are told, the "odor" of its former existences still clings to the book and to the reading of it. The clock in the station, we are told, may be "the round clock of an old station" or the digital clock with its rectangular windows. In either event, time refuses to go backward and the sense of its passing is the link between the two stations, the two eras, and what allows the reader his privileged *déjà vous*. At the train station cafe, the traveler/Reader encounters "faces seen for the first time but also faces that seem to have been seen thousands of times" (18). Of the woman he meets at the cafe, the traveler explains:

In other words, there is a veil of other images that settles on her image and blurs it, a weight of memories that keep me from seeing her as a person seen for the first time, other people's memories suspended like the smoke under the lamps. (19)

Reading here is not only the accumulation of a reader's personal experience with books, but also a participation in a collective memory the conventions of the novel represent. It is not simply that you have seen this woman before, but that others have seen her. To use Calvino's language, she is a combinatoria of experiences others of have had of her. What we have in the recognition of the figure of the woman at the cafe, and what we will have in the novel *If*, is an intertextuality different in kind than allusion, a familiarity that cannot be readily tracked to its source. The woman in the cafe "veiled in images" foreshadows all of the illusive women in the narratives that follow, including the Sultana who literally veils her image. Indeed, the Reader will find it difficult to separate these women readers from his own romantic interest, Ludmilla: "Holding your breath, you have followed from letter to letter the transformations of the woman reader, as if it were always the same person. But even if they were many persons, to all of them you attribute the appearance of Ludmilla" (128). Similarly, Ludmilla's sister is identified by the Reader in all the female characters in which he recognizes her. Surely enough, behind the costume of "Alphonsina" lurks "Corinna" and beneath her clothes, "Sheila." Naked, the staunch feminist already identified with Lotaria reveals herself in her insistence that "the body is a uniform," as well (219). All characters, we are to gather, exist for the reader as a composite of so many uniforms, a re-membering of "the not new in the new." In *If*, recognizing a character is representative image, an icastic image that relies on the collective consolidation of such types for its recognition.

The intertextuality and intratextuality of *If on a winter's night a traveler* reinforces the novel's composition as the re-membering of old styles, plots, and characters into a new book— the "latest" book by Italo Calvino, no less. Only one past novel is reproduced identifiably in the novel and that comes to the reader as Flannery's transcription of the first

paragraphs of Crime and Punishment. The project of copying these lines is his attempt to break out of his own writer's block. Although attracted to the vocation of the copyist, Flannery will not be Marana, the professional counterfeiter. So, too, Calvino's novel includes ten "incipits" within its own narrative that recall types and styles of novels, but are no direct translations. While, as many critics would have it, we may hear the influences of Borges, Nabokov, Garcia-Marqués, Mishima and a host of other male novelists (the genealogy is always exclusively male here), there is no lifted material in the novel. Rather, the styles of these writers are re-membered, put together into a novel that is described as "experimental," "postmodern," and, perhaps, as a "modern classic."

In spite of the Protagonist's desire to locate a novel that is a discrete object, that can be read from start to finish, and in which he can "connect the details with the whole," If on a winter's night a traveler thwarts him and the reader of this novel. There is no "zero moment" for reader or writer. Even Flannery's preoccupation with the purity of the first sentences of novels is revealed as his illusion. All novels bear the weight of other novels that have been read and written before. Even the first "incipit" in the novel is not the beginning of the book, but the second chapter, an addition to a text already in progress. Flannery feels relief from the burden of writing only when he recognizes the incompleteness of all writing:

If, on the contrary, I think that I am writing a whole library, I feel suddenly lightened: I know that whatever I write will be integrated, contradicted, balanced, amplified, buried by the hundreds of volumes that remain for me to write. (182)

Just as the novel is always already in progress, "not new," it is never complete and it is in this incompleteness that Calvino apparently sees its future.

Ultimately, we might see If on a winter's night a traveler as a fusion of the parodic play of Cosmicomics and the technological renovation of memory in Invisible Cities. While our Protagonist conducts his quest like a "dinosaur" lost among "the new ones," longing for an innocent reading experience that may well have never existed, no less than half of the

incipits in the novel are explicitly preoccupied with problems of memory. These sections "do the dirty work" antithetical to the postmodern climate If appears in and contributes to; they confirm the "pleasure of narrating the past from a distance," validate the search for lost parents and childhoods, struggle with the necessities and dangers of reconstructing history to justify later events, giving credence to all of these plots and motifs as a legitimate terrain for the novel to traverse, explore and continue to map. If on a winter's night a traveler may well "remember memory" in Pierre Nora's words, but this novel is no "spectacular bereavement."

#### VI. Conclusion: Palomar's Critical Sacrifice

In the final chapters of Mr. Palomar, Calvino's last completed novel, narrator and character find themselves in a museum exhibit of Mexican ruins faced with two unsatisfactory choices. On the one hand, Mr. Palomar's friend and guide offers an exhaustive and exhausting interpretation of the most minute details in each artifact, "every picture seems a rebus to be deciphered." However, as Mr. Palomar's friend "pauses at each stone, transforms it into a cosmic tale, an allegory, a moral reflection," a group of schoolchildren led by their teacher cross their path through the exhibit. "No se sabe lo que quiere decir," the teacher informs his class at each exhibit, "We don't know what it means." In contrast to his friend's encyclopedic knowledge and thorough interpretation of the effects, then, is what Palomar recognizes as the opposite "scholarly and pedagogical" position, one that maintains the "refusal to comprehend" as the golden rule, because "trying to guess is a presumption, a betrayal of that true, lost meaning." Attracted as he is to the school teacher, Mr. Palomar ultimately rejects his position as surely as rejects the allegorical definitiveness of his friend's accounts:

He knows he could never suppress in himself the need to translate, to move from one language to another, from concrete figures to abstract words, to weave and reweave a

network of analogies. Not to interpret is impossible, as refraining from thinking is impossible. (98)

So concludes Mr. Palomar and so concludes Calvino, providing in typical fashion, an allegory about the problematics of allegory and interpretation. The novel's role in interpreting the remains of history is the subject that takes us to Salman Rushdie.

Following Palomar, and Calvino, Rushdie picks up largely where Palomar leaves off, attempting to find a space between the "presumptuousness of history" and a "refusal to comprehend the past."

## Notes to Chapter 3

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<sup>1</sup>The latest collection of Calvino stories are scheduled for publication in 1996.

<sup>2</sup>See Lukács' Theory of the Novel and Lévi-Strauss' Tristes Tropiques.

<sup>3</sup>See Derrida's Writing and Difference and Geertz's Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author.

## Chapter 4:

### Over the Counter Memory: Salman Rushdie and the New Historical Fever

I even believe that all of us suffer from a consuming historical fever and should at least realize that we suffer from it.

--Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Abuses of History for Life" (8)

The genealogist needs history to dispel the chimeras of origin, somewhat in the manner of the pious philosopher who needs a doctor to exorcise the shadow of his soul.

--Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History" (144)

In 1995, seven years after the declaration of the *fatwa* by the Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic decree that called for the destruction of his latest novel, not to mention the death of his person, Salman Rushdie appeared as a guest on the David Letterman Show. The *fatwa* had not been lifted; it is not lifted now and so Rushdie's televised-live-appearance-while-in-hiding is an anecdote worthy of the typical Rushdie narrator. "Many years later," such a narrator might begin, "when his first son gathered all of the video tapes in which his father appeared during those ghostly years of his largely faded notoriety..." and continue winding a tale that included among other Rushdie hallmarks, the inversion of cause and effect, the merger of the public and the private, the blurring of high and low culture, and the exploitation of the detail to generate meaning-- as in the "man of letters" playing "straight man" to the host of the "Letter-man" Show.

Indeed, Rushdie's 1995 appearance seems custom made to illustrate the postmodern condition Rushdie is so often associated with. Postmodern is not, however, the only "post" in his repertoire, at least as literary criticism would have it. Rather, Rushdie's fiction-- if not his actual person-- has become emblematic of the conjunction of the postmodern and the postcolonial. "As such," Clement Hawes notes, "it has been taken to represent a new, 'de-totalizing' way of writing history" (147). Linda Hutcheon confirms

the same. In her chapter in The Politics of Postmodernism dedicated to "Re-presenting the Past," she invokes Midnight's Children to demonstrate the "de-doxifying" trend in a fiction that "works to foreground the totalizing impulses of western--imperialist-- modes of history-writing..." (65). Following the reception of the Satanic Verses, Sara Suleri's "Contraband Histories" also identifies Rushdie's "idiom" in the combination of the aesthetics of these two "posts" (606). "De-totalizing," "de-doxifying," or "contraband," the problem of history as it is addressed in narrative fiction comes to our attention in these essays as an especially inviting site for potent collusions between postcolonial and postmodern concerns. But in "One Thousand Days in a Balloon," Rushdie coins himself yet an additional post, situating himself and his readers in the "crazy, upside-down logic of the post-fatwa world" (*Imaginary* 431). And what are the effects of the post-fatwa condition? Largely, they are effects that foreshadow the writer's guest spot on a television talk show four years later. Rushdie explains:

This isn't so much a balloon, I've wanted to say, as a bubble, within which I'm simultaneously exposed and sealed off. The bubble floats above and through the world, depriving me of reality, reducing me to an abstraction. For many people, I've ceased to be a human being. I've become an issue, a bother, an 'affair'...In this phantom space a man may become the bubble that encases him, and then one day--pop!--he's gone forever. (431)

In addition to his reduction to "abstraction" and the simultaneous exposure and isolation later exemplified so well in his televised-live appearance, the post-fatwa world specifically endangers Rushdie's status as a human being with its power of erasure, that is, its power to forget him. Thus, when he makes his 1995 appearance on the David Letterman Show, postmodern, postcolonial and post-fatwa Rushdie makes his spectral, if momentary, return from the forgotten, and earns the not unambiguous privilege of being, in a sense, postmortem. My intention here is not simply ironic; to read Rushdie's fiction is to admit the existence of these posts, each staked firmly around his fiction and around him as a figure. By the same token, my contention is not merely that we-- Rushdie and his readers--

are hemmed in by these posts but, rather, that together they produce a context in which debates that remain quagmired under the aegis of any one of these posts taken alone are no longer germane and, certainly, nothing to go to intellectual war to prove. Given the array of postmodern, postcolonial, post-fatwa conditions, Rushdie's essays and fiction ask, what can the novel do? Where, we can specify, do Rushdie's rather long novels find their energy to defy the aesthetics of exhaustion and the politics of identity that mark the respective impasses of postmodern and postcolonial projects? It is perhaps yet another appropriate irony that this array of "posts" serve Rushdie by giving the novel a future in its contemplation, recollection and representation of the past. Like many of his contemporaries, Rushdie finds a vocation for the contemporary novel in the interaction of history and memory, an interaction that has pre-modern roots, dating back to the very inception of the novel. Midnight's Children and Shame are both generated out of the recognition of ramifications observed in the opposition and identification of something called "memory" with something called "history." In these novels, Rushdie embarks on the project of constituting a collective memory that can escape both the limits of subjective experience and the confines of history's disciplinization. He constructs his version of collective memory in these two novels in order to check the potential distortions of both the autobiography and history. Before attempting to grapple with these terms and what they mean in contemporary historiography and in Rushdie's fiction, we should pause to elaborate how the "givens" accumulated in Rushdie's "posts" lead him to his particular contemplations of the past and its representation in the novel.

### I. Between and Beyond the Posts

Postcolonial and postmodern are not terms Rushdie would readily attach to himself. Indeed, labels of any sort have a tendency to invite his derision, if not well-calculated

wrath. In 1983, Rushdie's "Commonwealth Literature Does not Exist" makes a frontal attack on the invention of what he calls a "ghetto" which "permits academic institutions, publishers, critics and even readers to dump a large segment of English literature into a box and more or less ignore it" (*Imaginary* 66). "Commonwealth Literature" becomes a hodge-podge of radically different literatures that happen to be written in English, positioned, of course, "below Eng. Lit. proper." Further, the label "Commonwealth Literature" accomplishes an homogenization of each of the writers lumped into its ghetto, a reduction of each writer's complex projects that Rushdie simply has no patience for. Lured by "the bogey of Authenticity," what Rushdie calls "the respectable child of old-fashioned exoticism," Commonwealth Literature attempts to "contain writers inside their passports" (67). In short, "the reality of the mixed tradition is replaced by the fantasy of purity" (68). Although postcolonial is not necessarily equivalent with commonwealth, there is little doubt Rushdie would be happy with this category either. Indeed, in this same essay he impatiently wonders if "postcolonial" is "anti-colonial" or not. Certainly, his novels bear witness to the fact that colonialism hasn't simply disappeared with the fall of the British Empire. What Rushdie does support is an admission of the eclectic roots and influences of writers and a theorizing of literature "bounded by frontiers which are neither political nor linguistic but imaginative" (69). For example, he draws our attention to the cross-pollination between Latin American novelists and the emerging population of Indian writers; the "imaginative" exchange the Rushdie notes is the Indian appropriation of the magical realism popularized in the Latin American "boom."

Rushdie's refusal to be "housed" in any fashionable tract is reflected in these remarks and results in his insistence on claiming his own literary predecessors. Like many of his male protagonists-- Saleem, Shakil and Chamcha-- the selection of fathers is a mutable, continuous project. "Choose your father," the narrator of *Shame* surmises, "and you also

choose your inheritance" (47). Where Rushdie and a concept called "postcolonial" overlap is in their mutual disregard for nationality as constitutive of identity, and in the recognition of a state of affairs in which movement across cultural, national, linguistic and even temporal borders is a given. In his essays, for example, Rushdie refers to Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities as a book which neatly summarizes his views on the uses of history to foster the myth of nation. Nationality, like history, is an invention that instantiates power and seeks to preserve the status quo (7-8).

Rushdie's favored figure is the figure of the *migrant*. His essay on Gunter Grass is, in fact, an explication of the migrant as "the central or defining figure of the twentieth century" (*Imaginary* 277). Literally, Rushdie elaborates, the migrant suffers a "triple dislocation," losing his place, language and social milieu. These dislocations provide the migrant with what Rushdie thinks is the key insight of the novelists he draws his ancestry and kinships from. It teaches "that reality is an artefact, that it does not exist until it is made, and that, like any other artefact, it can be made well or badly, and that it can also be unmade" (280). Among the "givens" in Rushdie's work is quite simply that the real is in no way given, but must be created and recreated from the extant "rubble." The migrant, it seems, has always dwelt in this kind of "postmodern condition."

Typically, Rushdie won't stay content with the literal. The centrality of the migrant, and Grass's affiliation with "migrants proper" lies in the metaphoric sense of the word. In recreating his reality from the rubble of World War II, Rushdie identifies Grass as a "migrant from the past," a "migrant from an old self into a new one," a "man who migrated across history" (279). Just as the word "metaphor" has its roots in the Greek words for "bearing across," migrants, Rushdie insists, "are metaphorical beings in their very essence," translating ideas into images (278). We are all, in this sense, migrants, Rushdie observes and perhaps that is why he prefers this word to the words "exile" or "refugee":

volition, or lack thereof, is not the definitive point; it is the movement itself that matters. The literally displaced person only suffers the trials of dislocation more severely. Among the things that Rushdie's contemplation of Grass as a migrant make clear to him is the centrality of the problem of memory for this metaphorical being. Through Grass, he learns that writing is a way of holding on to the "thousand and one things... that go on slipping, like sand, through our fingers" (277).

The loss of home is the first and definitive rite of passage for Rushdie's migrants. The house itself figures heavily in both Rushdie's essays and fiction and the loss of a house is always tantamount to a shattered subjectivity which must consequently be reconstructed from the rubble. Midnight's Children, we are told, is conceived through Rushdie's comparison of the black and white photograph of his lost childhood home in Bombay and the colorized vividness he witnesses when he visits that house decades after his emigration to England. In this case, the house is a figure for the past, while at other times it is the storage area, a memory palace where images of the past are conserved. Nishapur in Shame is such a house. In "Is Nothing Sacred?" , written post-fatwa, the house is a nation in its entirety ; under dictatorial rule the special rooms in which the "voices" of literature can be heard have been put under lock and key. That house, we are told, is bound for destruction. Rushdie's monograph on The Wizard of Oz for the British Film Institute underlines the simultaneous trauma and liberation engendered in the process of being " unhoused." "Over the Rainbow" he calls "the anthem of all the world's migrants" and in his interpretation, Dorothy's song is ultimately a "celebration of Escape, a grand paeon to the Uprooted Self, a hymn--the hymn-- to Elsewhere" (*Wizard* 23). That elsewhere, Rushdie underlines, is predicated on the event of Dorothy being "unhoused" and his greatest enthusiasm in his essay is revealed in his multi-page concentration on the transitional sequence in which this occurs. Like his foray back to Bombay, this is also a transition from black and white to

technicolor. Once Dorothy is "unhoused," Rushdie notes, "she will not be permitted to enter any interior at all until she arrives at the Emerald City. From Tornado to Wizard, Dorothy never has a roof over her head" (33). The "real secret" of the ruby slippers," Rushdie hence concludes, "is not that 'there's no place like home' but rather that there is no longer any such place as home: except, of course, for the home we make, or the homes that are made for us" (57). At his most nostalgic, Rushdie here equates homelessness with homesickness. He mourns not the loss of home so much as the loss of an idea like home.

Being "unhoused" and the prevailing condition of "homelessness" is, however, a condition which is not merely nostalgic; for Rushdie, to be homeless is *not* simply the equivalent of being "homesick" precisely because of the migrant's "metaphorical essence," his need to *translate*, another favorite Rushdie term. Translation, as elaborated in Shame, is not just a process in which something gets lost, but one in which something, too, is gained. Translation is the activity of making metaphors, of bearing across meaning, and always partakes of the imaginary. Another given: memory and imagination co-conspire to translate the past. Hence, the title essay of Rushdie's Imaginary Homelands details a version of postcolonialism that already and necessarily presupposes a postmodern sensibility, a point crystallized specifically only when the migrant must cross that temporal border, that is, when the migrant confronts the problem of memory.

Not that Rushdie likes the word postmodern much either. It is only as a last resort, only because he "can no longer avoid it" that Rushdie situates his aesthetic practice in the context of a postmodern age, an age in which metanarratives and totalized explanations are as obsolete as "a place like home". However, when Rushdie articulates his own experience with memory and his composition of a novel he says is itself "of and about memory," he specifically differentiates his project from the "proustian" enterprise he was forced to abandon (10). Despite his desire to restore the past and the Bombay of his childhood "in

CinemaScope and glorious technicolor," Rushdie discovers in the writing of Midnight's Children that the migrant crossing temporal and/or national borders will necessarily create fictions of the past. In short, Rushdie's proustian ambitions "to unlock the gates of lost time" are stymied by the recognition of the necessarily distorted, partial and selective character of his memory (*Imaginary* 10). As a result, Rushdie becomes fascinated by this "filtration" process imbricated in remembering and chooses to tell Midnight's Children from the point of view of a fallible narrator aware, as he had become himself, of the vagaries of memory. "I tried to make it as imaginatively true as I could," Rushdie writes, "but imaginative truth is simultaneously honourable and suspect" (10).

Memory for Rushdie is, literally and metaphorically, in ruins but paradoxically the fragmentation is itself what renders the ruins evocative for him. As he explains:

The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were *remains*; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities. There is an obvious parallel with archeology. The broken pots of antiquity, from which the past can sometimes, but always provisionally, be reconstructed, are exciting to discover, even if they are pieces of the most quotidian objects. (12)

It is precisely after this admission that Rushdie gives to subjectivity the character of memory. In his next paragraphs, human beings themselves become "wounded creatures, cracked lenses, capable only of fractured perceptions" (12). There is a shift here from the fragmented state of memory to the fragmentation of perception. Rushdie moves his discussion in this way from the ontological status of memory to the epistemological crisis of the rememberer. And for Rushdie it is the suspect nature of memory and the rememberer that renders meaning and truths in general suspect. Once meaning has become a "a shaky edifice we build out of scraps....," the subject has become irremediably "unhoused" (12). In short, it is because memory is in ruins, that the conventional litany of postmodern standards become a set of givens and acquire force. Hutcheon's chapter provides a handy illustration of these points.

"Re-presenting the Past" identifies the "three C's" anathema to postmodernism that follow from Rushdie's acknowledgement of memory's ruins: Closure, Causality and Continuity are all invoked, Hutcheon maintains, in order to be revealed as the provisional and ideological constructs of the point of view of the narrator. Contradictions are acknowledged and held in suspense, paradox refusing dialectical resolution. Omniscience is obsolete and the first person point of view credible only insofar as it flaunts its fallibility. Hutcheon's book is a primer of sorts for postmodernism and as such it uses Rushdie's fiction as exemplar of a more general aesthetic preoccupation in what she sees as a new refraction of the historical novel. I would concur that Midnight's Children and Shame demonstrate these preoccupations. In fact, they are presupposed in these two novels. The extent to which the postmodern challenges to metanarratives, to truth and to the "three C's" are given in Rushdie's fiction is reflected in the narrators Rushdie chooses for his books; these narrators are aware of their complicity, fallibility, distortion and altogether suspect authority over their material and its representation in narrative. What they produce are parodies of the chronicle which, as Hayden White explains, was a pre-eminent eighteenth century form distinguished by its reliance on chronological organization, its lack of closure, and the struggle of the chronicler for authority (16). In other words, the chronicle is a historical form seeking but not quite achieving closure, causality and continuity. In Midnight's Children Saleem Sinai courts the indulgence of the reader with his many concessions "that errors are possible, and overstatements, and jarring alterations in tone" throughout his attempt at the preservation or "chutnification" of the past (325). Form, he repeatedly notes, is both inescapable and necessary for the production of meaning. Similarly, in a much quoted passage from Shame, Rushdie's narrator is interrupted by an infuriated alter-ego who scolds,

Outsider! Trespasser! You have no right to this subject!...Poacher! Pirate! We reject your authority. We know you, with your foreign language wrapped around you like a flag: speaking about us in your forked tongue, what can you tell but lies? (23)

The hyperbole of this italicized diatribe is its give-away, much as Saleem's exaggerated self-aggrandizement says all that needs to be said about the tenuousness of his authority. The parodying of postmodernism's refrains, I am arguing, is an indication of their status as commonplaces, as old-- if not whiney-- voicings. Unlike Hutcheon, I maintain that Rushdie's novels take these topoi as a point of departure, rather than as their cause celebre.

It is helpful to keep in mind that Hutcheon's primer is complicated by her later works and is entitled the Politics of Postmodernism. Its primary goal is to connect postmodern aesthetics explicitly with politics. The problem of "re-presenting the past" gives Hutcheon ground to stand on, providing her with the space to make a specifically political claim about Rushdie's two novels and the postmodern historical novel in general. Their goal, in short, is to show up History by revealing the conventions of a discipline that rests on causality, continuity and closure. That Rushdie himself regards the novel as "an argument with the world" recommends his work all the more to represent a union of aesthetic and political projects. However, Hutcheon stops her analysis precisely where Rushdie's novels begin to argue with the world. In order to reveal the dangers of history, Hutcheon equates it with memory and although she quotes Foucault to describe "something different from the unitary, closed, evolutionary narratives of historiography as we have have traditionally known it," she seems unaware that Foucault's entire critique of "traditional historiography" rests on what he sees as an insidious identification of history with memory. Hutcheon, conversely, suggests that history's reformation is made possible by that identification, by the realization that history is memory, and shares with it its limitations and potentialities. We can put the reversal in these terms. For Hutcheon counter-memory is actually a memory that works as counter-history. The politics of postmodernism, in its historical novel, is to destabilize history, but not to replace it. The reality of the past can only be

criticized and, in the words of novelist Graham Swift, history, as Hutcheon's counter-memory, is successful only as "a teacher of mistakes" (235).

For Hutcheon, the critique of history is a result of a pre-existing postmodern condition. Her more recent and widely anthologized "Circling the Downspout of Empire" clarifies her position on the relationship between postmodernism and postcolonialism. Here she argues for the similarities between the two posts and suggests that "the post-colonial is therefore as implicated in that which it challenges as is the post-modern" (Tiffin 134). Postcolonialism, she specifies, "holds within it its' own 'contamination' by colonialism" (135). Hence, Hutcheon subsumes postcolonialism into her definition of postmodern politics; it is one more form of complicitous critique, or better, it is the more virulent strain. It is largely because of the logic of this narrative prioritization of the postmodern, that postcolonial critics attack Hutcheon's claims, and more often than not, the arguments center on the problem of history. Third World countries, Simon During argues, cannot be postmodern specifically because modernism was never institutionalized there; there's no modern to be beyond (Tiffin 7). According to Diana Brydon, postmodernism is targeted as the colonizing and universalist discourse of the West. Brydon directs her comments specifically in response to Hutcheon. She maintains that, whatever their resemblances, postcolonialism is independent of postmodernism. Further, she insists that "the clearest difference between a post-modernist practice and a post-colonial practice emerges through their different uses of history" (Tiffin 142). Postmodernism foregrounds the problems embedded in representing history, focusing on the textuality of the past, she writes, while postcolonialism assumes "the reality of the past" (142). To Brydon's mind, an emphasis on "deconstruction" and issues of textuality serves as a convenient western fetish, another veil for postcolonialism to lift.

What is memory and what is history? What is their relationship? These are the questions that Rushdie takes beyond the posts, and that migrate from one novel to the next. For by the time Rushdie writes his novels, the fragmentation of memory and the "new historiography" are not exactly front page material. With their self-reflexive narrators, Midnight's Children and Shame enter into an ongoing debate about memory, history and novel representation. In Rushdie's novels, neither Hutcheon's postmodern memory as "counter-history" nor Brydon's postcolonial memory as "the reality of the past" ultimately suffice. Rather, Midnight's Children and Shame attempt to adumbrate a collective memory that is neither simply "counter-history" nor history itself. In the era of the migrant, Rushdie's collective memory has to be neither and, by the same token, it has to be both. Manipulating the metaphors of genealogy and archeology, Rushdie's two novels echo Foucault's methodology and the discourse of a critical tendency that has become identified with the name "new historicism." However, it is the translation, interpretation and metamorphosis of genealogy and archeology, in Rushdie's work and in the memory-history debate, that recommend them to our attention as terms that reveal and conceal the anxieties and desires of the writers who invoke them.

## II. Doctoring History

Pierre Nora's 1989 "Les Lieux de Mémoire: The Site of Memory," focuses on the damaged state of memory and its effect on the novel. According to Nora, there has been a "conquest and eradication of memory" by history (8). Torn from its original milieu, memory has become alienated from itself and devolved into history, memory at a second remove. The novel dramatizes just this alienation of memory from itself in what Nora calls its "spectacular bereavement." Nora concludes:

History has become our replaceable imagination-- hence the last stand of faltering fiction in the renaissance of the historical novel, the vogue for personalized documents,

the literary revitalization of historical drama, the success of the oral historical tale. Our interest in these lieux de mémoire that anchor, condense, and express the exhausted capital of our collective memory derives from this new sensibility. History has become the deep reference of a period that has been wrenched from its depths, a realistic novel in a period in which there are no real novels. (24)

If in fact these "un-real" novels constitute the last stand of faltering fiction, we can note that the genre has been in this protracted renaissance of its last legs for quite a while now. While the apocalyptic tone and dark prophecies of Nora's essay ring false to this reader, at least, the opposition that he highlights between memory before its fall and history occasions an analysis useful to an understanding of the "renaissance in the historical novel" we have indeed witnessed in the last twenty years. For contrary to these three writers, memory and the novel are not viewed as degraded, damaged or opposed to one another. More often, as in the case of Hutcheon, what we might regard as the contemporary historical novel identifies that genre with the art of memory and positions it against history. The novel becomes the challenge, supplement or antidote to history and to what Milan Kundera has called "organized forgetting." Infused with the storytelling conventions of the oral tradition, the contemporary historical novel is transformed into a novel of the collective memory.

We can lift the darkness that veils Nora's more useful analysis by returning to one of the primary sources of his essay, Maurice Halbwachs' The Collective Memory. Written after Halbwachs' defection from the Bergsonian philosophy of *durée* and intuition to the materialist sociologies of Durkheim and Mauss, Halbwachs expends a fair amount of effort challenging the precepts of his former teacher. Just as he discards "purely individual and mutually exclusive durations," (97) Halbwachs similarly dismisses the notion that memories are preserved in the "subterranean gallery" of consciousness (74). Rather, he insists that time is a social construct and memories are conserved by the collective, what he refers to as the "milieu." The memories that individuals regard as their own, Halbwachs insists, are the ones in which such a multiplicity of social frameworks have overlapped that

they can no longer recognize "the complexity of the combination that was its source" (49). Once the fallacies of "personal memory" are explained away as the "interweaving of several series of collective thoughts" by a particular point of view, Halbwachs is free to turn his attention to his second major preoccupation in the book, the fallacies of history.

In his History as an Art of Memory, Patrick Hutton identifies Halbwachs' contribution to history "despite himself." His claim is provocative, given that Halbwachs lays out the antagonistic opposition between history and the collective memory that Nora later recapitulates. In this formulation, written history begins when tradition ends and collective memory is fading or breaking up. Historical memory is understood by Halbwachs as linear and chronometric, "the sequence of events remembered in national history" (77). He writes:

Viewed as a whole from afar and especially, viewed from without by the spectator who never belonged to the groups he observes, the facts may allow such an arrangement into successive and distinct configurations, each period having a beginning, middle, and end. But just as history is interested in differences and contrasts, and highlights the diverse features of a group by concentrating them in an individual, it similarly attributes to an interval of a few years changes that in reality took much longer. (81)

In this quotation, Halbwachs sets up the five ways in which history is opposed to collective memory. First, history is seen from the point of view of an outsider, the historian-spectator. Further, history is a record of changes and discontinuities, and it draws artificial lines between past, present and future. Finally, according to Halbwachs, History's gravest error is in posing as unitary and universal.

Collective memory, on the other hand, relies not on the "distant frameworks" of history but on conservation of "nearby milieus." Thus, "the collective memory is the group seen from within during a period not exceeding and most often shorter than, the average duration of a human life" (86). Moreover, the collective memory stresses continuity and a gradually accumulated tradition. Resemblances, then, rather than differences, are its focus. In collective memory, difference is located within sameness. Additionally, the collective

memory is definitionally non-unitary and anti-universal. This can be explained by a further distinction between history and collective memory, namely, that memory only extends as long as the memory of the groups composing it (82). A multiplicity of groups suggests a multiplicity of different, if overlapping and interweaving collective memories. As Hutton comments, one of Halbwachs' lasting influences stems from his suggestion that the capacity of memory to endure depends on the social power of the group that holds it (7). Finally, collective memory eschews the neat distinction between past and present that history assumes. For the collective memory, the present includes the past that is of interest to the social group; past and present cannot be distinguished as "neighboring historical periods" (82).

Halbwachs' formulation of collective memory offers something of an explanation for Hutcheon's "new historical novel," a novel that invokes the fallacies of history in order to debunk them. Collective memory challenges and supplements official historical accounts. It does so by challenging the closure and causality of historical narratives. As in Pierre Nora's observations, then, these novels would be set on the project of transforming history into an art of memory and, as Hutton suggested, Halbwachs could be viewed as a historian "despite himself." But that covers only two of Hutcheon's three C's anathema to postmodernism. What of the third term, continuity? Hutcheon's counter-history has no truck with this at all, while it is at the center of what Halbwachs calls collective memory. Hutcheon wants a memory that disrupts; Halbwachs wants one that connects. Rushdie wants both.

Hutton's introductory chapter brings us back to some of the inconsistencies latent in merging Hutcheon's version of counter-memory with Halbwachs' collective memory. Next to Halbwachs, Hutton puts Foucault. The sociologist and the philosopher become the

two main influences on what Hutton calls the "postmodern historian." He distinguishes this incarnation as follows:

If the modern historicists saw their task as using the recollective techniques of history to recover the repetitive truths of tradition, their postmodern counterparts focus almost exclusively on the material leavings once designed to inspire recollection. Historical memory, in their view, is a function of the power to determine the way in which the past is to be presented. (xxiv)

Hutton explains that much of his book is dedicated to reconstructing "the emergence and articulation of this postmodern perspective, especially," he notes, "as exemplified in the work of Halbwachs and Foucault" (xxiv). But how can collective memory, focused on continuity, and an interior point of view be reconciled with the Foucauldian inspired counter-memory that values the reverse? As in the case of Nora, it is perhaps best to take a step back to the source of much of Foucault's methodology to review Nietzsche's notions of history and genealogy. For if the proponents of collective memory view it as an art, they would not find Nietzsche antagonistic to the suggestion that art is an antidote to the bitter pills of history.

In both On the Genealogy of Morals and his earlier essay "The Uses and Abuses of History for Life," Nietzsche attacks the "historical fever" of his contemporaries as a "malady" and a "sickness." In the Genealogy, history has been "poisoned" by asceticism, whereas in the earlier set of essays, the spirit of science and objectivism has given the debased ascetic ideal its new lease on life. The Genealogy has no good words for the historian. "Nihilist" or "voluptuary," the historian is attacked for "cowardly contemplativeness" and "lascivious historical eunuchism" alike (26). Unceremoniously, Nietzsche dismisses these historians:

I do not like these weary and played-out people who wrap themselves in wisdom and look "objective"; I do not like these agitators dressed up as heroes who wear the magic cap of ideals on their straw heads. (158)

In "Uses and Abuses," the historian-eunuch metaphor has become a regular leitmotif and such eunuchs, Nietzsche fears, are "guarding the historical world-harem" (29). The impotence of the historian is his downfall precisely because he is powerless to act. According to Nietzsche, the value of any kind of history is "for life" which requires activity. On the first page of his preface, he clarifies the point:

Certainly we need history. But our need for history is quite different from that of the spoiled idler in the garden of knowledge, even if his refinement looks down on our rude and graceless requirements and needs. That is, we require history for life and action, not for the smug avoiding of life and action, or even to whitewash a selfish life and cowardly, bad acts. (*Genealogy* 7)

"Uses and Abuses" does not limit its project to an attack on historians, however. In these essays, the writer is driven by a concern that the general populace has become infected by this "surfeit of history" (28). "I even believe that all of us suffer from a consuming historical fever," Nietzsche writes, "and should at least realize that we suffer from it" (8). Impotence, cynicism, and a self-indulgent hopelessness are among the fatal symptoms of a society infected by such a consuming historical fever. A false sense of justice and a "disposition of irony with regard to itself" are among the more alarming dangers of the historical sickness (28).

Alternatively to the spectator-historicism his peers aspire to, Nietzsche identifies three interested modes of history and proceeds to adumbrate the values and dangers of each. "Monumental history" provides the consolation that the "great which once existed was at least possible once and may well again be possible sometime" (16). The project of this kind of history is to identify the exemplary, the model for imitation. "Complete truthfulness," Nietzsche remarks, is not to its advantage and monumental history is necessarily less concerned with causes than with a "collection of effects in themselves" (17). The dangers of this mode include its tendencies to deceive through analogy and to distort events by shaping them according to aesthetic criteria. Most importantly,

monumental history can lead to inactivity, to a situation in which the "dead bury the living." If the great may be possible again, it also may not; monumental history, then, can lead to a despairing resignation as easily as it can lead to inspired optimism.

Opposed to the hyper-discretion of monumental history is "antiquarian history" which functions by revering and preserving the past. The antiquarian is the historian who values origins and tradition. Antiquarian history "serves life" by conserving traditions for the benefit of future generations. Of the three modes, this is the one whose worth Nietzsche seems least convinced of. The excesses of antiquarianism, on the other hand, are strongly and clearly stated. Nietzsche warns against the "blind lust for collecting" (21) resulting from a perspective that sees everything old as "equally venerable" (20). In short, the antiquarian runs the risk of preserving the past at the expense of the future, of revering the old to the exclusion of the new. Nietzsche's third mode is "critical history." This final mode is necessary, we are told, to counter-balance the first two. Veneration is countered by a condemnation of history in this mode. "From time to time," Nietzsche explains, we need to "shatter and dissolve" something from the past in order to live (21). Critical history interrogates, judges, condemns and annihilates the past. It is a dangerous business because its practitioner can never completely dis sever himself from the incriminating past he unveils and condemns. In condemning the past, the critical historian condemns his descendants and therefore, also condemns himself. Critical history lives perpetually in danger of its own complicity in the crimes of the past. The hope of critical history, on the other hand, is to "implant a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature so that the first nature withers away" (22). The critical mode of history always imagines an alternative to the past he has descended from; it resurrects a lost possibility.

According to Nietzsche, each of these modes of history is appropriate at different junctures. Choosing a mode is a practical matter of assessing specific needs of societies at

specific historical moments. What is never useful or appropriate is the will to scientific objectivism that he identifies in the history practiced around him. If "On the Uses and Abuses of History for life" is thus a critical history of history, it must evade the dangers of that mode. Incumbent upon Nietzsche is not only the diagnosis of the over-historical society but also, a prognosis, a means of recovering life. The Genealogy provides two places to start. First, it suggests that memory and forgetting are definitionally acts of will and suggests that the latter is as necessary for well-being as the former. Likened to a "doorkeeper," forgetting allows the crucial time for incorporation. Without forgetting, Nietzsche insists, "there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no *present*" (58). In addition to explaining memory as an act of will that occasionally "abrogates" the forgetting necessarily for our well-being, Nietzsche's *genealogy* of morals proposes a method of history that is both anti-teleological and anti-functionalist. Purposes and utilities are "only signs that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function" (77). The history of a practice, a thing or an institution is explained as

a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion. (77)

In suggesting a genealogy of history, then, Nietzsche is calling for a metahistory as one of the cures for that historical malady he describes more fully in his earlier essay. In "Uses and Abuses" he therefore asserts that the "spirit of a new age" requires that "history must dissolve the problem of history, knowledge must turn its sting against itself" (45). It is at the close of "Uses and Abuses," however, that Nietzsche articulates his prescription most exactly. Here he identifies the "unhistorical" and "superhistorical" as the antidotes to the current historical sickness. Art and religion become the antidotes we "also have to suffer" (62). Nietzsche's prescription in this early essay is not exactly easy for contemporary

thought to swallow. Rushdie's life story is a prime example of the problems that arise when art is placed on the same plane as religion. Further, myths may be heralded as an effective means of destabilizing the truths of history, but few critics would allow myth to replace it. In other words, myth can be marshalled as counter-memory but as history itself, it is an invitation to collective delusion.

This Nietzschean perspective on history does provide, however, a provocative place from which to review the positions of Hutcheon, Nora, Hutton and Rushdie himself. As we have seen, Nietzsche's history is sick and society, too, suffers from its historical fever. The sickness stems from a quest for objective truth. Sick with science, History can only be remedied by the unscientific: the myths of art and religion. In Linda Hutcheon's "Representing the Past," history has similarly been accorded an insidious character. Its threat to society, however, is not in its will to science but in the subjectivity of the myths it entrenches under the guise of objectivity. If history is poisonous in Hutcheon's reading, it is because its continuity, causality and closure serve the myth of nationalism. Her postmodern historical novel, however, makes no attempt to restore objectivity, of course, and Hutcheon clearly sees it as an art form attempting to constitute a "history for life," one designed to combat History with its capital "H". Hence, for Hutcheon, the activity that justifies these creative histories is called politics and narrative itself is identified as such an activity. What Nietzsche's analysis of history and its modes clarifies most precisely is the attempt by Hutcheon's postmodern historical novel to reclaim a "critical history" within the context of that art form. And just as in Nietzsche's discussion, Hutcheon sees her aspiring critical historians as self-consciously complicit in the histories he or she condemns. In her analysis, we can say that myth, Nietzsche's superhistorical, is promulgated as critical history. Memory's myths counter-history but they do not correct it.

The situation Pierre Nora observes, on the other hand, identifies a "sickness" not in history but in memory. Nietzsche helps us identify the deformation of memory into history as a devolution specifically into "antiquarian history." In Nora's postmodern landscape, antiquarian history has become the dominant mode of memory. With the loss of "true memory," Nora notes an "indiscriminate production of archives" (14) designed to accomplish "the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past" (13). Like Nietzsche's antiquarian, Nora's memory-historian locates the past in its artefacts, *realia* that appear as equally valuable in Nora's moment because of the rejection of metanarratives of the past. Nora summarizes:

(T)he loss of a single explanatory principle, while casting us into a fragmented universe, has promoted every object—event the most humble, the most improbable, the most inaccessible—to the dignity of a historical mystery. Since no one knows what the past will be made of next, anxiety turns everything into a trace, a possible indication, a hint of history that contaminates the innocence of all things. (17)

Patrick Hutton's "postmodern historian" similarly emerges as a descendant of the antiquarian mode. With its focus on "commemorative leavings" once designed to "inspire recollection," Hutton's postmodern historicism offers a telling complement to Nora's assertions. If Nora gives us memory as transformed into antiquarian history, Hutton gives us a mode of history focused on the antiquation of memory. According to Nora, memory has been annihilated by history. However, history as memory or the study of "*lieux de mémoire*," Hutton affirms, is in rather robust good health.

Rushdie's diagnosis, by contrast, notes a state of ill health but is optimistic about recovery. As we have seen, he has much to say about the subjects of memory and history alike. His comments about the evocative power of "even the most quotidian" remains of memory in their fragmented state resonate with Nora's torn "*lieux de mémoire*" and suggest his art of memory as the art of an antiquarian historian. However, like Hutcheon, Rushdie's essays reveal a desire to construct a critical history in the form of the novel.

Certainly, the lawsuit by Mrs. Gandhi generated by Midnight's Children, the banning of Shame in Pakistan and the death sentence proclaimed after the publication of The Satanic Verses all suggest that, whether intended or not by Rushdie, his novels are taken as all-too-critical history. His references to Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities reveal his desire to combat the myth of nationalism with a collective memory divorced from the history of empire and colonialism. Moreover, more explicitly than any of the post-Nietzsche critics cited here, Rushdie places art and religion on the same plane. In both "In God We Trust" and "Is Nothing Sacred?" he alludes to the affinity between these two species of myth. In the latter essay he elaborates on this theme. Even while asserting that "the idea of the sacred is quite simply the most conservative of notions in any culture," he recognizes the role of art in filling our "godshaped holes." For Rushdie, art is the spiritual repository of the secular soul, the site of "awestruck wonderment" the faithful find in the idea of god. He writes:

Not even the visionary or mystical experience ever lasts very long. It is for art to capture that experience, to offer it to, in the case of literature, its readers; to be, for a secular, materialist culture, some sort of replacement for what the love of god offers in the world of faith. (*Imaginary* 421)

Art and memory share in a mutually beneficial alliance for Rushdie, while history appears as the all too sacred religion of nationalism. History is in the service of the powers that be. The potent art of memory, on the other hand, has an "obvious parallel with archeology," which as it happens, is one of Foucault's terms for the activity of his "new historian." Will Foucault's transformation of Nietzsche, then, offer us a clearer understanding of Rushdie's attempts to fashion art into a collective memory?

From Nietzsche, Foucault takes the term "genealogy" to describe the activity of "effective history." Like Nietzsche, Foucault's genealogy rejects teleology and functionalism. As he writes in "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History," genealogy "seeks to reestablish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but

the hazardous play of dominations" (148). Similarly, interpretation is regarded by Foucault as "the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules" and the role of genealogy is to record the history of these interpretations (151). The quest for origins is, of course, anathema to Foucault as is the continuity implied in something like "tradition." Rather, history is "effective" as it "introduces discontinuity into our very being" (154). In short, Foucault's genealogy or "effective history" is an attack on the very qualities of narrative. Hutcheon also positions postmodernism against: continuity, causality and closure. In the absence of these qualities, in what he calls the shift from "total history" to "general history," Foucault's method emphasizes the accident and the detail. The first disrupts causality and intentionality, while the foregrounding of the second plays havoc with the gestalt of total history. Rushdie's fiction, similarly gives prominence to the accident and the detail. That accidents, like houses and pictures and crimes, require frames, that foregrounds require backgrounds, is a set of problems to which we will have to return. For it is in the frames that house these accidents that a collective memory is presumed and called upon.

In Foucault's hands, Nietzsche's three modes of history only become viable in metamorphosed forms. Monumental history is only possible as "parody," he maintains, while in the antiquarian mode respect for ancient continuities is transformed into a "dissociative" practice. The role of the effective antiquarian is now to work against history as a tradition, to "reveal the heterogeneity masked by the self" (162). Critical history becomes "sacrificial" history. Foucault's critique of the subject necessitates the "sacrifice of the subject of knowledge" that performed critical history. Sacrificial history is now effective to the degree that it reveals that knowledge rests upon injustice. This last point is crucial to our analysis here. For in his short essay on Nietzsche and in The Archeology of Knowledge, Foucault diagnoses history's ailments as a consequence of its association with

memory. Effective history is only possible if viewed as "counter-memory." In "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History," Foucault writes that his three modes of the "historical sense" imply

a use of history that severs its connection to memory, its metaphysical and anthropological model, and constructs a counter-memory-- a transformation of history into a totally different form of time. (160)

The point is reiterated in The Archeology of Knowledge; to escape the retrograde humanist and anthropological assumptions of traditional history, effective history must be viewed as opposed to traditional definitions of memory. Often misused, Foucault's "counter-memory" is not, then, alternative or counter-hegemonic memory. Ideally, it is not memory at all. Memory, as Foucault views it, is the activity of the sovereign subject he so thoroughly dismisses. But is a definition of memory like that of Halbwachs as unfriendly to Foucault's effective history as the subject-specific and subject-constituting activity he positions both his genealogy and archeology against? Is Halbwachs' collective memory the ally or antagonist of Foucault's counter-memory? Hutton, Nora and Hutcheon all appear to have their respective answers. Hutton's History as an Art of Memory clearly presents the two positions as synthesized, however uneasily, in what he calls the "postmodern historian." His prototype is Pierre Nora, who both updates Halbwachs for the late twentieth century and, not coincidentally, was involved in the editing of Foucault's papers. Hutton describes the tensions between Halbwachs and Foucault as tensions between "tradition" and "rhetoric." Nora accomplishes a union of these two by placing history at the crossroads of "tradition and historiography" (152). His encyclopedic work on the historiography of the French revolution is, in effect, a study of the transformations of memory in what Hutton calls "commemorative leavings." Like Hutcheon, however, Hutton evades the problematic merger of the continuity-focused collective memory and a counter-memory that prioritizes the reverse.

Nora himself might take exception with Hutton's analysis of him. What does emerge from Nora's work, however, is the potential of counter-memory to unveil contradictory and mutating collective memories. Linda Hutcheon's analysis, on the other hand, seems to favor an alternative reading of the relationship between counter- and collective- memories. Her Politics of Postmodernism implies that collective memory is the force that transforms Nietzsche's three modes of history into Foucault's, as the proliferation of collective memories introduces doubt and irony into the grand master narrative of "traditional history." Yet a fourth possibility exists. It is, after all, entirely possible that Halbwachs' collective memory is completely irreconcilable with Foucault's counter-memory and that the desire to synthesize the two reveals the anxieties of contemporary historiography, the manifestations of the "new historical fever" and/or the drama of the center-- albeit absent-- of the postmodern historical novel. For to be counter-memory or counter-history requires a memory and a history that retain the fixed character of the whipping boy appropriate to the counter-proposition. Hence Hutcheon homogenizes the discipline of history into something called "traditional" and Foucault distills the various life forms of memory into the "metaphysical and anthropological model" that served as the primary technology of cartesian subjectivity. Salman Rushdie's novels emerge, however, in a morass of unfixed characters and, hence, dramatize the search for a critical history in an opposition of memory and history that continually threatens to collapse. In Midnight's Children, Rushdie uses the memory of his narrator to critique history but, also, uses something I will call collective memory to critique the individual's subjective distortions of the past.

### III. Gross Proportions: Midnight's Children and History's About Face

In the classroom of the intrepid Mr. Emil Zagallo, in the midst of a lesson on "human geography," Saleem Sinai reports the story of his "monk's tonsure" and the source of his

latest unwanted nickname, "mapface." Selected from the room of petrified boys, Saleem is forced to stand in front and have geography mapped onto his face. Pleased with own wit, Zagallo brings the point home. "You don't see?" he guffaws. "In the face of thees ugly ape you don't see the whole map of India?" (277) Birthmarks or stains are identified as the East and West Wings of Pakistan and Saleem's enormous nose, the Deccan Peninsula. The geography lesson ends as Saleem's nose "unleashes a weapon of its own" onto Zagallo's palm and the livid teacher pulls the young boy's hair long enough and hard enough to ever so accidentally remove a clump which, henceforth, never grows back. On the face of it, then, literally on the face of Saleem, Midnight's Children (MC) apparently proposes the absolute identification of history and autobiography. Autobiography, in turn, is explicitly defined as the art of memory. Born on the stroke of midnight, the very moment when the independent nation of India comes into existence, Saleem narrates his personal story as the history of India. "Handcuffed to history," he calls himself the "living proof of the fabulous nature of this collective dream," this new myth and collective fiction "in which anything was possible" (130). As "Midnight's Child," he is reported by newspapers and receives a personal letter from none other than Jawaharlal Nehru himself. As correspondence in the double sense of that word, the letter document that authorizes the equivalence between history and autobiography that Saleem exploits in his chronicle:

Dear Baby Saleem, my belated congratulations on the *happy accident* of your moment of birth! You are the newest bearer of that *ancient face* of India which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; *it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own.*" (143 Italics mine)

The central importance of this "correspondence," and the problems that arise with it, are later generalized by Saleem in a passing comment. "As a people," he writes, "we are obsessed with correspondences. Similarities between this and that, between apparently unconnected things, make us clap our hands delightedly when we find them out. It is a sort of national longing for form-- or perhaps simply an expression of our deep belief that

forms lie hidden within reality; that meaning only reveals itself in flashes" (359). The forms "found out" in correspondences comprise Saleem's attempt to invest his past with the gold coin of meaning.

In what sense is Saleem the mirror of the nation? What is the agency of a mirror or its reflection? Is Saleem's story identical, or even analogous to the history of India in its first thirty-one years? Is his series of memories to be taken as a history of his nation? These questions haunt Saleem and his quest to find the answers may be seen as the unspoken occasion for the narrative he produces as the novel *MC*. Despite the accidents and mutilations that accompany both of these correspondences between Saleem and India, not to mention the humor and absurdity generated by the confusion of the metaphoric and the literal faces involved, the temptation to read Saleem's account as allegory for the history of India pervades criticism on the novel. Admittedly, the insights are more impressive than those of Emil Zagallo. Uma Parameswaran remarks that the links between Saleem's personal history and the history of India "could be purely coincidental, quite unconnected at any causal level, but would be related in having a significance at the personal level that is *as important as* the historical incident is at the national or world level" (22 *Italics mine*). She interprets these arbitrary links as the novel's means of relating its primary messages: that personal events are as important in their sphere as "historical" events in theirs and that "some of history's violent events have their source in trivial accidents" (7). Oddly enough, Parameswaran's first claim obviates her second: commensurability drains the category of the trivial of any meaning whatsoever. Parameswaran's claims, however suspect when placed next to one another, allow her to mine for allegories in the novel. Since "personal" and "historical" events are analogous in their respective spheres, she equates characters and plot with national and political events. For example, we have her interpretation of the conception of India and Pakistan as reflected in the parentage of Saleem and his rival Shiva:

Thus Vanita (Mother India) and William Methwold (England) have brought into existence Saleem (Pakistan); this parallel does not hold all the way unless one is to see the Sinais as representative of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Kashmiri who unwittingly condemned India (Shiva) to a life of destitution and faulty ideology. (24)

Parameswaran's essay goes on to identify each "link" between Saleem's life story and the history of the nation. She continues to see them as running in parallel trajectories and to address something like their commensurability. The conjunction of the explosion of the A bomb and the fury unleashed by Reverend Mother Naseem over the prolonged virginity of her married daughter, for example, are seen not simply as similar in kind, but also by Parameswaran, as similar in degree. She writes, "The storm that mushrooms out of Reverend Mother on finding her daughter still a virgin is by implication *at least as toxic as* the radioactive mushroom that enveloped Hiroshima" (24 Italics mine).

The direct correspondence between events, not to mention their commensurability "by implication" is suspect, at best, and draws the attention of other critics who actually take Rushdie to task for shackling history to Saleem. R.S. Pathak and Keith Wilson note that in MC "the narrator is literally the history that he records" (212). His more megalomaniac and self-aggrandizing tendencies are the focus of Subrahmanya Sarma's essay which announces on its first page that "Metaphor apart, to put it directly the story of the child and the nation are not integrated well" (89). According to her, "the problem" with MC is that history is handcuffed to Saleem (93). She admonishes Rushdie as follows:

The fact is Rushdie makes use of history as a handmaid or as a prop or as a scaffolding on which he could construct his phantasmagoric saga, and once the saga appears in its full plumage, the scaffolding is thrown out. There is no blending of the impersonal and the personal. (92)

Sarma is not the only critic to admonish Rushdie for a cavalier or ill-informed use of history. Indeed, Rushdie was so often accused of being a poor student of history that in 1983 he felt obliged to publish an essay on the "errata" in MC, explaining the workings and logic behind his intentionally unreliable narrator. Specifically, Rushdie was compelled to articulate the differences between the narrator and the author of the novel. As soon as

Saleem Sinai is taken as a character, and not the equivalent of Salman Rushdie, the identifications, correspondences and analogies between Saleem's personal story and the history of the nation are revealed as the narrator's manipulation of his favorite explanatory fiction. As Saleem tells his readers in the first pages of the novel, "above all things, I fear absurdity" (4). History is the chief explanatory fiction Saleem turns to in order to evade the absurdity that his story courts. Ironically, whenever history is invoked, whenever the links are identified, absurdity prevails. And it is in this irony that the novel MC posits not the identification or mirroring of history and memory Saleem holds so dear, but a divergence and even an antagonism between the two. Memory and art are allied in MC to form autobiography, which is offered as an alternative or challenge to history. In the process of remembering, myth is constructed as a critical history. In what Saleem calls the literal modes of history, we find the opposition of memory to history, while in what he calls the "metaphoric modes" we find the equation of those terms. Saleem's shifting use of his literal and metaphoric modes represents his desire to counter history and be historical at the same time. It is in the co-occurrence of literal and metaphoric modes of history that his account will rely on the assumed existence of a memory that is neither tied to the monumentality of nation nor reducible to the individual.

The alliance between memory and art is revealed immediately in Saleem's vocation: pickling. The master of his own pickle factory, Saleem has "dedicated (his) latter days to the large-scale preparation of condiments," chutneys and kasaundies (38). His cookery is, he tells us, intimately connected with his "nocturnal scribblings," as both involve him in the "great work of preserving." "Memory, as well as fruit," he concludes, "is being saved from the corruption of clocks"(38). As the novel progresses, Saleem compares his chapters to individual jars of chutney. In his thirtieth and final chapter he writes,

Tonight, by screwing the lid firmly on to a jar bearing the legend *Special Formula No. 30: "Abracadabra"*, I reach the end of my long-winded autobiography; in words and

pickles, I have immortalized my memories, although distortions are inevitable in both methods. We must live, I'm afraid, with the shadow of imperfection. (548)

Reconciling himself to the imperfections, inadequacies and distortions of his "legend," Saleem asserts that the art of preserving memory is "to change the flavour in degree but not in kind; and above all...to give it shape and form-- that is to say, meaning" (550). Given that correspondence is so closely linked to hidden form, we may wonder if Saleem is successful in this art of giving meaning to the past without changing it in kind. Is it possible to give form to the past without so altering it? When does a change in degree constitute, or become tantamount to, a change in kind? At various points in the novel, Saleem has his own doubts about his supposed mastery of the pickling process. While "filling in the gaps" is a mainstay of this art, "an out and out lie" is unacceptable, as evidenced in Saleem's confession about the false account of his rival's death. Errors in historical coincidence are also part and parcel of the art of memory, if they add form and meaning to the events of the protagonist. When Saleem discovers a mistake in the date of Mahatma Ghandi's death, he admits an "error in chronology" but declines to correct it: "In my India, Ghandi will continue to die at the wrong time" (198). However, an error that escapes Saleem and is brought to his attention by his supposedly "simple-minded" listener and attendant Padma, throws him into crisis. If "small things go," he wonders, "will large things be close behind?" (266) The crisis of authority is short-lived and Saleem makes his most eloquent self-defense to Padma by elaborating the art of memory as follows:

I told you the truth...Memory's truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own. (253)

This paean to memory's art allows Saleem to literally and figuratively cut history to suit his purposes, to give shape and form to his life story; history can obviously be changed "in kind" if it adds spice, in salutary degrees, to memory. The metaphor is literalized in the novel when adolescent Saleem undertakes his revenge on Lila Sabarmati and Homi

Catrack. To inform her husband, the naval commander, of her illicit affair with Catrack, Saleem cuts the necessary words out of a series of old newspapers reporting events from political crises in Pakistan to chewing gum advertisements. Glueing the words together to form the incriminating sentence, Saleem admires his "first attempt at rearranging history" (312). Ironically, his re-composition of the public events of the past produces a scandal with historic consequences, leaving the navy leaderless at the helm.

As many critics have noted, MC uses the art of memory to critique history, both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly, we can note Saleem's comments. Though he continues to wonder in what sense he mirrors the nation, always assuming that this "some sense" exists, he gradually reveals his memories as a supplement or challenge to "official" accounts of recent history. Before recounting the tragedy of his cousin Zafar, he takes half of a paragraph to relate the military events that comprise the "facts" of Zafar's end. His version of it is a several page affair and is presented to us as "substantially that told by my cousin Zafar" insists that the truth inheres in the story behind the facts. His story, Saleem states, "is as likely to be true as anything; as anything, that is to say, except what we were officially told" (400). Similarly, in his fragmented and clearly tortured account of the "Emergency," Saleem separates the official history from the truth, parting them as precisely as the two colors of Mrs. Gandhi's hair. The white half he calls the public, visible, documented matter for historians. The black part is "our" domain, "secret macabre untold" (501). Interestingly, it is only in the telling of the events of recent history that Saleem invokes memory explicitly as the the vehicle for revealing the truths hidden by officially sanctioned history. For, concurrently, Saleem admits that his perspective on these closer events in time is increasingly less reliable as they near the present. Further, it is precisely when Saleem's memory is most suspicious that he makes his frontal attack on history, an attack we might see as a means of compensating for compromised credibility. The

identification of the history of the nation with his personal life story devolves into an opposition specifically when Saleem and his family face extermination, his family as victims of the Indo-Pakistani war, himself as victim of the forced sterilizations of the "Emergency." The divergence of his story from that of the nation's official version forces the reader to reconsider the mirroring Saleem embraces in the bulk of the novel. Yet, the reader is disinclined to doubt Saleem's account of the historical event of the "Emergency." In fact, it is when Saleem uses his memory to oppose history that his authority is at its strongest. We may be tempted to resolve this paradox by maintaining that only up until the Emergency does Saleem mirror India, that the advent of Indira cracks the mirror. However, the narrative of MC tells us a different story from Saleem. That story relies on the collective memory of its readers to counter the excesses of Saleem's account. In the end, MC presumes a collective memory that knows a lie, and a truth, when they see it in narrative.

While Saleem moves from an identification with history to an opposition with it, his narrative presents the art of memory from the outset as a challenge to "traditional history." In contrast to Saleem's development, it is only toward the end of the novel that this opposition confronts potential collapse. As Linda Hutcheon notes, Saleem's art of memory parodies "closure, continuity and causality," revealing them as the bi-products of form, point of view, and generic necessity. Uma Parameswaran similarly interprets Saleem's account as the undoing of the chronometric time of "traditional historical writing," as well as spoofing these histories for "being no more than biographies of kings and generals" (8). For her, MC is an "autobiography of the common man" and reveals his participation in "the making of history" (8). Clement Hawes concisely explains the reversal of cause and effect in MC as the manipulation of the trope of metalepsis, a trope in which "what seems like an effect...motivates and thus is the cause for a certain act of genealogical reconstruction"

(150). In spite of Saleem's interpretation, Hawes notes that his "origins" are "the secondary effects, rather than the causes of his history" (152). Through his use of metalepsis, the logic runs, MC parodies the arbitrary and distorting chains of cause and effect forged by the discipline of history. Rukmini Bhaya Nair insightfully adumbrates the process by which history comes to the reader of Rushdie's novels as gossip, a form of discourse "which uses history as a pre-text and a pretext" and is used to create doubt about established facts (995). All of these essayists, then, devise ingenious theories for the ways in which the art of memory is used to counter history in MC.

Along with Hutcheon, it is Aruna Srivastava's "The Empire Writes Back" that connects the project of MC to the critiques of history advanced by Nietzsche and Foucault. His central argument is that "Saleem wrestles with a chronological view of history, passed on by the ruling British and now part of the Indian national conscience, and (to him), a more ephemeral (Mahatma) Gandhian, mythical view of history— properly and traditionally Indian, but suppressed by more 'progressive' ideas about history and its relation to time" (63). Insightful as it is, Srivastava's essay seems to me to be limited by two assertions. First, the notion of a single "proper and traditional" form of Indian history is an idea that would give both Saleem and Rushdie some pause. In short, his essay simplifies Saleem's complex genealogy and although the rebellion against western forms of history is convincingly interpreted as an anti-imperialist strategy, it ignores the importance of the fact that Saleem is a hodge-podge of nationalities and traditions. Srivastava wants to nationalize Saleem, to make him the representative body of India, while Saleem is precariously poised at the intersections of shifting milieu. Saleem is Halbwachs' traveler, his memory the repository of the collectives he traverses and brings together. Saleem, in fact, does not appear to be wrestling against so much as playing with conventions of linear narrative and its chronological view of history. It is his readers, characterized in Padma, who lobby for

cause-effect relations, historical accuracy, speed, concision, and something called "truth." As a narrator, Saleem engages in all sorts of digression, prophecy, and "idle commentary" that create a logic and a suspense of their own. Additionally, although Srivastava invokes both Nietzsche and Foucault, alongside of Gandhi, to explicate MC's handling of history, his jump to Gandhi as the missing emulsifying agent of the disparate elements glosses over the tensions revealed in a novel that illustrates both Nietzsche's earlier assertions and Foucault's later re-interpretations of them. MC performs both a Foucauldian critique of history and an equally pointed critique of the myth-making reconstructions Saleem composes as his autobiography. In the end, MC recovers the opposition between history and memory but does so only after demonstrating the unfixed character of these terms.

MC is Saleem's self-fashioned genealogy, a genealogy unlike his Uncle Mustafa's family trees ultimately used for the Emergency's ethnic cleansing. As in the definitions of genealogy by both Nietzsche and Foucault, Saleem's "inheritance" is outside of evolutionary logic; biology has little to do with it. Fraught with baby swaps, invented ancestry, gossip and truths "sanctioned by time" alone, Saleem descends from a root system in which no straight line emerges to trace between him and something like origins. Indeed, the lines that recur as a leitmotif in the narrative are the lines he sees beneath his skin, the cracks that foretell his imminent disintegration and which his narrative is racing against. As the lone survivor of his family and of the "midnight's children," the 1001 children born in the first hour of India's independence, Saleem is, in Foucault's terms, the prototype of a heterogeneity masked by the self. "Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me," Saleem tells us at the very beginning of the novel, and at the end, he confirms the same. In sentences that have lost their grammatical signs and leave their verbs in a jostling and shoving competition for power, he writes:

Who am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose

being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter...(457)

Strewn with competing interpretations and manipulating correspondences to distill cause and effect connections, Saleem's autobiography is a genealogy of his subjections. As in the hands of Nietzsche and Foucault, this genealogy also defies teleology and functionalism. If, as Nietzsche writes, utilities are "only signs that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function," Saleem's mastery is predicated on his ability to assign historical functions to each of the characters that people his story. Every character Saleem introduces makes what he calls their "contribution to history," to his story. Similarly, the power Saleem must exercise to interpret this story is not without its violence; characters exist and events transpire solely in order to make their contribution to his illustrious story. "It is my firm conviction," Saleem tells, for example, "that the hidden purpose of the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 was nothing more nor less than the elimination of of my benighted family from the face of the earth" (403). Such statements are a "firm conviction" of Saleem's will to interpretation. Overwhelmed by history after the Emergency, Saleem literally becomes Nietzsche's historical eunuch, sterilized and impotent.

Saleem's doctoring of history additionally reflects Foucault's transformation of Nietzsche's three modes of history. His complete indulgence in the dangers of monumental history identified by Nietzsche produce parody so pervasive as to render the original "consolation" of the mode untenable. Specifically, Saleem makes an art of deceiving through analogy (correspondence) and shaping history to fit aesthetic criteria (form). Antiquarian zest for origins becomes the dissociative genealogy discussed above, the unveiling of heterogeneity and discontinuity behind every pretense of unified subjectivity and continuity. As in Foucault's formulations, the metamorphosis of these two modes is characterized by the prominence of the accident and the detail.

However, Saleem adds his own modes into the formula: literal modes of history and metaphoric ones. The coexistence of these modes is what allows Saleem to simultaneously confirm the opposition of history to memory and also, their direct identification. Saleem identifies four ways in which his life interacts with history: active-literal, active-metaphoric, passive-literal, and passive-metaphoric. The literal categories are the ones in which Saleem affects or is affected directly by history; one changes the other. The metaphoric categories are the ones in which the problematic notion of mirroring re-emerges; Saleem and the nation reflect one another and provide allegories, the one for the other. Not coincidentally, it is in the literal categories, in which causality and intentionality are at stake, that accidents proliferate, framed against the meaninglessness of events. Hence, in the literal categories, Saleem's memories undermine the conventions of history. Similarly, it is in the metaphoric categories that rely so heavily on allegorical correspondences that the detail finds its foreground against the background of the incommensurable. In the metaphoric modes, where memory and history are equated, the narrator and his memory are undermined. As in Mr. Zagallo's geography class, in the most "monumental" events, the accident and the detail overlap, the literal and metaphoric modes consequently becoming utterly indistinct. The crisis that is registered at this moment is the desire that memory be counter-history and be history at the same time. The collective memory is called upon to quell that crisis.

Saleem's birth, the birth of the independent nation of India and the birth of Saleem's narrative through the hole cut at the center of the sheet that veiled his future grandmother, are all accompanied by accidents. At Saleem's birth, his father proceeds to drop a chair and shatter his big toe, babies are mismatched with their biological parents and the "happy accident," in the words of Nehru's correspondence, of Saleem's birth at the stroke of midnight occurs. Birth occurs in a vaudeville of confusion and misconception. Reading personal agency and powerlessness arbitrarily into these accidents, Saleem simultaneously

takes responsibility for his father's toe and, "in a sense," eschews all future responsibility by the intrusion of the fate that "handcuffed him to history." The accident functions, from birth onwards, not only to disrupt causal relations but to confuse the assignment of responsibility and blame that lurk behind those relations. The false agency Saleem attributes to himself is revealed to the reader through the ubiquity of the accidents that surround his "actions," while the investment of coincidence with intention and meaning reveals the extremes of Saleem's drive to conform the past to aesthetic norms that lend them meaning. The instability of the frames that shape accidents is revealed in the opening sequence of Saleem's autobiography. While "attempting to pray," we are told, Saleem's grandfather hits his nose against a tussock of earth (4). Only a few pages later, this event is re-read as the revenge of the native soil against its foreign educated son; hereafter, the "story" distilled from the accident is one in which the earth, gloved in a prayer mat, "smote him upon the tip of the nose" (6). Saleem's grandfather takes his "accident" as a last straw. Unable to pray "in good faith," the young doctor gives up prayer and god and Kashmiri superstition in one proverbial fell swoop. Proverbial is the apt modifier, for the parable Saleem constructs from his grandfather's break with faith is a narrative construction of the opposite: the investment of the accident with intention necessitates a faith in meaning itself.

Every historical event that Saleem claims to have caused is, in fact, so thoroughly mixed up with accidents that the desperate protagonist is revealed as a victim of chance, if not the agent of less than honorable actions. It is a bicycle accident that catapults Saleem into the ranks of the language marchers, where he ludicrously tells them the only Gujarati he knows, a schoolyard rhyme that becomes their protest chant: How are you?/ I am well/ I'll take a stick/ and thrash you to hell (228). "In this way," Saleem concludes, "I became directly responsible for triggering off the violence which ended with the partition of the state of Bombay, as a result of which the city became the capital of Maharashtra...(229).

The absurd agency Saleem attributes to himself here, along with a measure of guilt and self-congratulations, masks the responsibility for the violent misuse of his telepathy that actually triggers his accident; invaded by Saleem, Evie Burns pushes his bicycle into his supposedly "active-literal" affect on history. Similarly, the accidents of his cousin Zafar's bladder put Saleem at the table of his Uncle and the General, where he manipulates tabletop objects to simulate the proposed coup. Rather than interpreting himself as a pawn, Saleem prefers to comment, "not only did I overthrow a government-- I also consigned a president to exile" (349). The fact that it is Saleem who has been consigned to exile in Pakistan here, whose legitimacy has been put into question by his ayah's confession of baby-swapping at birth, is a set of "facts" surreptitiously reworked into an example of "passive-literal" historical effect.

If the accident is manipulated to parody "monumental history" and confuse "active" and "passive" influences on history, it is the detail that serves an analogous role in transforming the antiquarian quest for origins into a dissociative practice and which facilitates the "mirroring" of autobiography and history in Saleem's metaphoric categories. For in his chosen vocation of "chutnification," Saleem is a relentless antiquarian. As in Nietzsche's analysis of this mode, he is ostensibly preserving the past for his son, although from the beginning Saleem emphasizes that his primary goal is to escape absurdity by imposing a form on his past. The two motivations, of course, are not mutually exclusive and their overlap in Saleem is provocative; embedded in the antiquarian's drive for the conservation of artefacts and traditions is his desire to give shape, and, thereby, meaning to his existence. As an antiquarian, however, Saleem is not so much in the business of conserving objects or even traditions-- unless conservation and storytelling are themselves taken as such traditions-- as in conserving his extant shards of memory in narrative. Saleem's narrative conservatory is a seemingly endless accumulation and reiteration of

detail. As Pierre Nora suggests, "the loss of a single explanatory principle," in the case of Saleem, "has promoted every object-- even the most humble, the most improbable, the most inaccessible-- to the dignity of a historical mystery" (17). Saleem's anxiety indeed seems to have "turned everything into a trace, a possible indication, a hint of history that contaminates the innocence of all things" (17).

This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the litany of "begettings" that are repeated in the narration prior to the recounting of the most dramatic episodes in Saleem's autobiography. While some critics suggest that these litanies are merely a technique used to refresh the confused reader's memory, I would maintain, on the contrary, that they function as the very nearly religious rite of the antiquarian, a rite in which enumeration is incantation. In the introduction to the "Tick, Tock" chapter in which he is born, for example, Saleem performs no less than four pages worth of this ritual, re-counting his "inheritance" of detail sutured together simply with commas and loose conjugations. "And," the conjugation of unspecified accumulation, acquires magical force and each detail re-counted is invested with historical import, significant because it reappears, however randomly, in Saleem's life story. In the composition of Saleem's autobiography, leitmotif is not only an organizing strategy but the very stuff of meaning; repetition replaces explanation. The single long sentence, that I quote here only to its first ellipsis break, offers a prime illustration:

Five years before the birth of a nation, my inheritance grows, to include an optimism disease which would flare up again in my own time, and cracks in the earth which will-be-have-been reborn in my skin, and ex-conjurer Hummingbirds who began the long line of street-entertainers which has run in parallel with my life, and my grandmother's moles like witchnipples and hatred of photographs, and whatsitsname, and wars of starvation and silence, and the wisdom of my aunt Alia which turned into spinsterhood and bitterness and finally burst out in deadly revenge, and the love of Emerald and Zulfikar which would enable me to start a revolution, and crescent knives, fatal moons echoed by my mother's love-name for me, her innocent chand-ka-tukra, her affectionate piece-of-the... (124-5)

Such litanies of disparate detail recur in MC ritualistically before Saleem takes up any of the "monumental" events of his life: birth, marriage, the onset and termination of his telepathic powers. Indeed, the commemoration of the detail collapses the hierarchy of importance that allows for the discretionary zeal of the monumental mode; details are monuments unto themselves and the monumental event, yet another occasion for their compositional play.

However, this democracy of detail does not persist consistently in MC. The hierarchies of importance that are leveled in Saleem's litanies must be somehow re-established in what he calls the metaphoric categories of interaction between himself and history. Here, the allegory that creates the "mirroring" of autobiography and national history in the novel is accomplished through the exaggeration and exploitation of detail. As a result, the equation of history and memory in MC always manifests itself in the form of the grotesque, as the mutilation, deformity and sickness of parts of the body. Whenever and wherever the mirror functions, correspondence and commensurability produce the exaggeration of the part that has been substituted for the whole; metonymy, masquerading as metaphor, produces the "freaks of embodiment" that are the midnight's children (264). The gifts of the surviving 581 children, "fathered by history," are also their abnormalities. For Saleem, the grotesque is the result of aggrandizement, a problem of proportions and perspective. The confrontation with the grotesque inevitable in his autobiographical narrative is described as the approach toward a cinema screen:

Suppose yourself in a large cinema, sitting at first in the back row, and gradually moving up, row by row, until your nose is almost pressed against the screen. Gradually the stars' faces dissolve into dancing grain; tiny details assume grotesque proportions; the illusion dissolves-- or rather, it becomes clear that the illusion itself is reality...(197)

Saleem's story, indeed, is one in which "tiny details assume grotesque proportions."

However, while this problem of aggrandizement does increase dramatically in the latter half

of the novel, it occurs specifically when Saleem asserts the correspondence between his life, or the life of his family, and national history.

Saleem's first brush with history is, of course, his birth and even here aggrandizement is the problem. The infant is repeatedly described as a "10-chip whopper" and his birth is heralded in the newspaper along with a photograph that always reappears in the novel as the "jumbo-sized babysnap." Physical deformity is evident in the exaggerated importance imposed on Saleem's birth. As he notes, in the photograph "it is still possible to make out a child with birthmarks staining his cheeks and a runny and glistening nose" (138). The baby Saleem will go on to enlarge too quickly and, even so, his nose will remain wildly out of proportion with the rest of his face. Through the mirror of history, his mother's "piece of the moon" is forced to stand for the whole of it; exaggerated to the size of a nation, the life and times of Saleem's family perpetually result in bodily manifestations of the grotesque.

Three examples suffice to illustrate the escalating severity of the deformities produced by the correspondences insisted on in Saleem's metaphoric modes. The hostilities between China and India are proposed as parallels to events in Saleem's immediate family. While national pride and unity arises with the threat of China, Saleem's family is reunited and his parents embark on a second honeymoon of conjugal affection. Indeed, the announcement of the use of force to eject the Chinese presence from the Himalayas is delivered at the exact moment Saleem's mother receives a piece of correspondence about her estranged husband. The telegram describes her husband's "heartboot," a reconfiguration of the shape of his heart that corresponds to the changing shape of India as it moves troops into the Himalayan frontier. Ahmed Sinai's heart "boots," in short, as India attempts to boot China from the frontier. The midnight's children attack Saleem as China attacks India and the consequent draining of public morale is paralleled by the draining of Saleem's nasal passages which,

also, drains him of his telepathic powers. Deformed, both India and Saleem, then, lose a sense of their own power in the world.

The most direct and extreme set of correspondences occur around the events of the Emergency and the results mirrored in the lives of Saleem, his wife Pavarti and his son Aadam. Pavarti's thirteen day labor is paralleled exactly by the thirteen days of political upheaval caused by charges against Indira Gandhi's government. Aadam is finally born on the day the Emergency is put into effect. The identification of Aadam's birth and the birth of the Emergency, that "endlessly prolonged midnight" manifests itself in the baby's deformity (500). Upon seeing his son for the first time, we are told, Saleem "began to laugh helplessly, his brain ravaged by hunger, yes, but also by the knowledge that his relentless destiny had played yet another of its grotesque little jokes." Aadam is born with "audient protuberances like sails" (500). Moreover, Aadam develops a case of tuberculosis that is the private equivalent of the Emergency's "macrocosmic disease." His illness, as Saleem predicts, does not disappear until the end of the historical sickness. His life story completely indecipherable from history, Saleem undergoes his most devastating mutilation, sterilization at the hands of the Emergency's forces. The grotesque consequences of the equation of an individual with the nation are revealed simultaneously in the political slogan "India is Indira and Indira is India" (501). The reader is asked to reconsider Saleem's claims to represent a nation as he questions, "Were we competitors for centrality-- was she gripped by a lust for meaning as profound as my own-- and was that, was that why...?" (501). If Indira Gandhi's "lust for meaning" results in the grotesque and the terrible, then, we cannot but consider if Saleem's necessarily results in the same. Rendered impotent by the operation, Saleem's powerlessness is the only possible solution to a situation in which power itself is grotesque.

It is only at the very end of the novel that Saleem literally looks in a mirror, what he calls the "mirror of humility" (533). At this culminating moment, Saleem writes:

Looking upwards into the mirror, I saw myself transformed into a big-headed, top heavy dwarf;...nine-fingered, horn-templed, monk's-tonsured, stain-faced, bow-legged, cucumber-nosed, castrated, and now prematurely aged, I saw in the mirror of humility a human being to whom history could do no more, a grotesque creature who had been released from the pre-ordained destiny which had battered him until he was half-senseless; with one good ear and one bad ear I heard the soft footfalls of the Black Angel of death. (534)

In spite of his pessimism, Saleem does not die. Indeed, we leave him on the verge of marriage with his Padma. With the intrusion of an actual mirror, the metaphoric one, with all of its powers of deformation, is evicted unceremoniously from the text. In this way, MC recovers the literal modes of history and with them, the opposition between history and memory.

It is the business of chutnification, of preserving memory (and fruit) against the corruption of clocks, that allows Saleem to embark, however reluctantly, on something like a future. As Aruna Srivastava suggests, it is not difficult to see the parallels between Saleem's cure by myth and Nietzsche's prescription for the historical fever of his contemporaries. In Srivastava's view, Rushdie's Saleem turns to Nietzsche's superhistorical domain of myth to remedy the ills of the historical modes. He points to the striking parallels between Nietzsche's conclusion to "Uses and Abuses of History for Life" and Saleem's concluding sentiments in MC. Nietzsche tells us that "We who are sick of the disease may suffer a little from the antidote. But this is no proof that the treatment we have chosen is wrong" (71). Similarly, Saleem reflects on the potency and potential of his chutneys:

One day, perhaps, the world may taste the pickles of history. They may be too strong from some palates, their smell may be overpowering, tears may rise to the eyes; I hope nevertheless that it will be possible to say to them that they possess the authentic taste of truth...that they are, despite everything, acts of love. (550)

So, then, we may conclude that Saleem cures himself of the historical sickness through his art of memory, the mythification of his life. However, MC is not simply Saleem's story; it is not the triumph of the individual, nor is it a bildungsroman. MC is also about the history of India. It is not only Saleem who wants to counter-history and be historical at the same time; it is the novel itself. In its simultaneous critiques of the excesses of autobiography and history, and the kinds of memory they presuppose, MC implicitly recommends a mode of memory between the two, a memory shared and constituted by groups. In order for the accidents that undermine history to have force, the novel relies on its readers' collective knowledge of history, of cause-effect relations. Collective memory is a pre-requisite for the literary effect of the trope of metalepsis. Similarly, recognition of the grotesque presumes a collective agreement of proportionality and commensurability; recognition of the grotesque also presumes collective memory. More explicitly than MC, Shame takes up the possibility of adumbrating this collective memory and exploring its ability to criticize history and be its antidote at the same time. The recognition that the myths of memory serve power, that interpretation is a violence, that art and memory are not labels that protect their stories from the criticism leveled at history, all come to the fore in Shame. No longer clothed in the point of view of the compromised protagonist, Shame confronts the fact that collective memory implies collective responsibilities and, as it were, occasion for collective shame.

#### IV. The Telescope and the Watch: Shame's Malpractice

The transformation of "critical history" into what Foucault calls "sacrificial history" is, of course, all too literally illustrated by the Khomeini-led response to the Satanic Verses and the identification of Rushdie as the scapegoat-sacrifice for the blasphemous revelation that all knowledge, indeed even of the prophet, rests upon injustice. Post-fatwa, it has

become customary to refer to Shame for the finest, eeriest, most exact prophecy of the fate that awaited Salman Rushdie, however unbeknownst to himself. In retrospect, seven years into the fatwa, the direct addresses to the reader by a narrator posing as the writer himself and reflecting on the personal and political controversies of his craft, reads as something more than idle contemplation. The exaggeration and humor implied by the imagined hyperbolic reaction to his novel, should it be taken as "realism," for example, is so canny and un-canny at once that the contemporary reader cannot help but stop to consider a fantasy that has so thoroughly been transformed into history. The conclusion of a long passage bemoaning of the tedious horrors that would have to be included *if* Shame were a realistic novel reads:

By now, if I had been writing a book of this nature, it would have done me no good to protest that I was writing universally, not only about Pakistan. The book would have been banned, dumped in the rubbish bin, burned. All that effort for nothing! Realism can break a writer's heart.

Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairytale, so that's all right: nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need be taken, either.

What a relief! (72)

The game Rushdie's narrator sets up in this passage is replayed intermittently throughout the novel. This isn't history, the narrator winks, only a fairytale, a myth, a story. Of course, as attested by the two pages of criticism of Pakistani politics that precedes the "defense" quoted above, Rushdie's "looking-glass Pakistan" is the land of a fairy tale that specifically essays a critical history of the Bhutto/Zia regimes. Everywhere in the narrator's direct addresses we can find the problem of history conjoined to the problem of his novel. On the same page that the narrator admits to "inventing what never happened to me," he defends his right to the subject matter as a right to "history" (23). Most explicitly, he defines his problems in the composition of Shame as the challenges of the fantasist and the historian simultaneously. As a self-proclaimed "fantasist," his work is to build "imaginary countries" (92). Such a project, however, also forces him to confront

what he calls the "problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change" (92). Fantasy, then, is not only the guise of controversial history, but embedded in the problem of history itself. In Shame, this fantasy or myth is marshalled as a critical history; myth is used to counter myth and in the process, Rushdie's narrator is forced, like his protagonist Dr. Omar Khayyam Shakil, to answer for the uses and abuses of his art. Much as Nietzsche suggested of critical history, Rushdie's narrator sees his goal as the "substitution of a new myth for the old one" (278). However, in the context of a novel in which all myths are used and abused to veil crimes and squelch uprisings, the narrator cannot help but be conscious of the potential repressions in his proposed substitutions.

Unlike in MC where art and memory apparently ally themselves against history, Shame places history on the same plane as art, on the plane of myth. Among the many metaphors given to history in the novel, are the mythic homelands of Zarathustra and Nishapur. Moreover, what we might call History with a capital "H" in the novel, is equated with the force of gravity, something to get out from under, something to transcend. The migrants, who in some way make a "conquest of the force of gravity" and become "unstuck from their native land," have also "floated upward from history, from memory, from Time" (91). "Flight" the narrator calls the "anti-myth of gravity and of belonging." The migrant, it would seem, flies in the proverbial face of history. But gravity, as Rushdie's narrator well-knows, is also a myth, the mystical insertion into Newtonian physics. As the narrator writes:

We know the force of gravity, but not its origins; and to explain why we become attached to our birthplaces we pretend that we are trees and speak of roots. Look under your feet. Roots, I sometimes think, are a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places. (90)

Migration and the conquest of gravity are the anti-myths and the antidotes to history. Yet the conquest of gravity, like the fantastic anti-gravity pill the narrator concocts to make

"migrants of us all" (91), is not an unambiguous triumph. Characters like Bilquis Hyder and Omar Khayyam Shakil that fly from their pasts bear their burdens of what Milan Kundera calls "unbearable lightness of being," and Kundera is an authority on the subject that does not go unreferenced in the novel. Bilquis' involuntary flight manifests itself in a fear of the loo, the afternoon winds; she develops a compulsion to hold things down. Conversely, Omar's denial of his past manifests itself, from his earliest childhood days, in attacks of vertigo, the fear of falling which is, of course, also the fear of gravity. That Pakistan itself is described as two wings without a body, neatly summarizes the hazards of flight, of being up-rooted, of challenging history.

If history, as the conservative myth of gravity, is used to hold people in places, the range of historical myths in the novel are similarly used to cover-up and suppress. Not coincidentally, then, clothing is another frequent figure for history in Shame. When Bilquis is "stripped of history," she is also literally stripped of her clothes, denuded (64). The history imposed on her thereafter is reflected in the series of veils that cover her. In spite of his efforts to throw off his past like "a feathery insubstantial thing, a discarded skin" (157), Omar Khayyam is perpetually bursting out of the grey clothing he chooses as his cover. In the end, he meets his death, as does Raza Hyder, completely naked. Appropriately, then, Rani Harappa used the medium of shawls to embroider her critical history of the myth of her husband's regime as propagated by her daughter. Too "realistic" for her daughter's taste, the shawls are locked in a trunk and Rani herself is kept under house arrest. If history as myth is used to cover-up Iskander Harappa's crimes, religion is manipulated to cover-up the crimes of Raza Hyder's regime. Under the aegis of god, Raza's Islamic fundamentalist revival is "rammed down" his constituencies' throats as a means of solidifying his power and ensuring political stability. The myth of his piety, like

the myth of his rival as the man of love, is contrasted to his barbarism, greed and oppression.

If it is the business of history to hold down, cover-up and squelch opposition, the myths of the fabulist-historian similarly run the risk of such violence and injustice. The Rushdie narrator does not fail to see the danger. In addition to conceding that his account inevitably leaves out many fragments of the fractured mirror of history and to asserting that "every story is a kind of censorship" that "prevents the telling of other tales," (72) the narrator figures both his novel and the country of Pakistan as a "palimpsest." He writes, "A palimpsest obscures what lies beneath. To build Pakistan it was necessary to cover-up Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistani Standard Time. The past was rewritten; there was nothing else to be done" (91). The narrator's counter-myth is similarly noted as an imaginary country that he is attempting to "impose" on existing layers. As he writes,

It is the true desire of every artist to impose his or her vision on the world; and Pakistan, the peeling, fragmenting palimpsest, increasingly at war with itself, may be described as a failure of the dreaming mind. Perhaps the pigments used were the wrong ones, impermanent like Leonardo's; or perhaps the place was just insufficiently imagined... (92)

In her essay "Palimpsest History," Christine Brooke-Rose uses Rushdie's Shame as the prototype for "a type of fiction that has burst on the literary scene in the last quarter of a century thoroughly renewing the dying art of the novel" (127). Clearly, palimpsest is cure here, but what exactly does it do? For Brooke-Rose it allows for the coexistence of multiple versions of the same events that "mingle" without "supplanting." Of palimpsest histories, she writes,

(M)ingling realism with the supernatural and history with spiritual and philosophical re-interpretations, they could be said to float half-way between the sacred books of our various heritages,....and the endless exegesis and commentaries these sacred books create, which do not usually survive one another, each supplanting its predecessor according to the Zeitgeist...(Eco 137)

Brooke-Rose's valorization here of the palimpsest "covers up" or "rubs out" the anxieties faced by Rushdie's narrator. Though she quotes the novel extensively, she seems unaware that the palimpsest has an insidious side in Shame; it imposes a vision and rewrites history. Indeed, the palimpsest is a ruin and here, no less, a "peeling, fragmented" one. Etymologically, "palimpsest" translates as a "rubbing over again," not a conservation of endless layers of exegesis. Yet, Brooke-Rose describes the ideal the narrator would like to achieve: to be an antiquarian and a critical historian at the same time. More precisely, the narrator wants, like Patrick Hutton and Linda Hutcheon, to bring collective memory and counter-memory together. While the narrator performs the dangerous tasks in the office of counter-memory, his narrative performs the rites of collective memory.

To combat the repressive potential of myth, the novel uses what Janet Lungstrom calls a "narrative palimpsest." Such narratives, "bring to consciousness the repeated series of the inscribing and 'rubbing' (-psestos) motion which does not, however, totally suppress preceding images" (109-10). Proust is the master of this form, in Lungstrom's analysis, and we can see evidence of it in Shame. For example, the narrator reports the three news items that he layers to compose his heroine, Sufiya Zinobia. Further, the narrator routinely includes future retellings of the events he recounts in his own version. It is in this appropriation of the oral tradition of storytelling that Rushdie manipulates what Rukmini Bhaya Nair calls the art of "gossip" and hearsay. Parenthetically, for example, the narrator includes the account Rani Harappa would give her daughter "years later" of the uncompleted duel between her father Iskander and her uncle Raza Hyder (118). Many of these interpolations are included in the novel with tags such as "years later." However, the scandal of the birth of Sufiya Zinobia Hyder and her father's refusal to believe she was not a boy, in spite of all anatomical evidence, is concluded with the following telling qualification:

It is possible that the above incident has been a little embellished during its many tellings and retellings; but I shall not be the one to question the veracity of the oral tradition. (95)

On the contrary. The oral tradition is invoked to delay the sedimentation process the narrator finds so threatening; to avoid imposing a single vision, he continually layers his own account with the various and contradictory interpretations of characters recollecting their pasts. Is the oral tradition the "talking cure" of history then? Is the trick of critical history, as myth, simply the juxtaposition of the laws of relativity next to the laws of gravity? Does the very proliferation of myth cure "counter-myth" of its own insidious potential? If Shame's narrative exacts this compromise, it doesn't let its narrator, or its characters, get off that easy. After all, as the narrator concedes, proliferation is delimited by history's demand for selection. Doctor and historian are sacrificed to the project of counter-memory, while the storytelling and the shawls woven by Rani Harappa survive to tell their tales. In Shame, counter-memory is martyred for collective memory's cause.

To unravel the narrator's attempts to doctor history's fevers, Shame provides its readers with other avenues of investigation. For not coincidentally, the novel is permeated with sickness, illnesses of a specifically psychosomatic nature: Omar's vertigo, Raza's "involuntary" tears, Bilquis' fear of the loo and, of course, Sufiya Zinobia's "brain fever" and burning blushes. The medical experts Rushdie's narrator quotes on the subject of the "psychosomatic event" use blushing as the irrefutable piece of evidence: "People who do not believe in psychosomatic events and do not believe that the mind can influence the body by direct nervous pathways should reflect upon blushing, which in people of heightened sensibility can be brought on even by the recollection of an embarrassment of which they have been the subject— as clear an example of mind over matter as one could wish for" (132). Blushing, of course, is the psychosomatic event provoked by the emotion that gives the novel its name. Further, in the midst of all of the suffered illnesses in the "Land of the Pure," Shame also identifies its unlikely "hero" in a person of corruption, debauchery and

decadence, the shameless Dr. Omar Khayyam Shakil. Shakil's area of special interest is in the subject of "mind over matter" (132). Celebrated immunologist and self-taught hypnotist, it is this character who is called upon to diagnose and cure the psychosomatic epidemic in the world of Shame. An examination of this doctor, then, along with his most famous patient, serve the reader as an invaluable case study of the doctor-patient relationship that Rushdie's narrator also has with his historical subject.

The parallels between the intrusive narrator of Shame and Dr. Shakil are as telling as their divergences. Like the narrator, Shakil exiles himself from the "mother-country" of "Nishapur" and settles in the cosmopolitan milieu of the city. Like the narrator, his relationship to gravity, and therefore to his past, is that of the migrant; vertigo plagues him. The exploration of history is not something foreign to Shakil, either. As a child, his nocturnal wanderings through the endless corridors of "Nishapur" are described as excursions "beyond history" into "positively archaeological antiquity" (26). It is when he discovers "a room whose outer wall had been partly demolished by great, thick, water-seeking tree-roots" that Shakil feels the need to take revenge on his "useless, massacred history" (27). The vandalism of the mother-country "Nishapur" by the young doctor-to-be is written as a reaction against the suffocating power of the past. As the narrator writes, "No howls, no clanking chains!--But disembodied feelings, the choking fumes of ancient hopes, fears, loves; and finally, made wild by the ancestor-heavy, phantom oppressions of these far recesses of the run-down building, Omar Khayyam took his revenge" (27). Like Nietzsche's historical eunuchs, Shakil's desperate lunge for a future requires an attack on, and a consequent denial of, his past. Immediately after his attack on history, Shakil discovers the two tools of his new historical persona: the telescope and the watch. Thereafter, he is defined as a voyeur and a hypnotist and his choice of profession is explicitly described as a continuation of these childhood practices. Observer and

mesmerist, Shakil's status is a neat analogue to the narrator's paradoxical one of historian-fantastist. Both men find their sciences steeped in their arts.

Just as the narrator and Shakil share analogous professions and relationships to history, the relationships each has with his respective subject reflect one another. The narrator's attempt to cure history with myths of his own is plotted in the drama of Shakil's attempt to cure Sufiya Zinobia of the "beast" within. The history of Pakistan is figured analogously to Sufiya Zinobia. Just as Pakistan is described as a palimpsest at war with itself and a "miracle that went wrong," Sufiya Zinobia develops into a character at war with herself and, from birth, is described as "the wrong miracle" (74). Pakistan and Sufiya Zinobia have "uprisings" that need to be suppressed. While Pakistan is "The Land of the Pure" that erupts into violence, Sufiya Zinobia, too, the idiot character purified by her "brain fever," is ultimately the apocalyptic force of novel and narrative alike. A closer look at the trajectory and results of Shakil's treatment of his patient, then, once again offers suggestive insights into the narrator's treatment of history. Shakil's treatment of his patient results in a medical treatise entitled "The Case of Miss H." that becomes a landmark in "the history of science" (154). My contention is that the narrator's treatise entitled "Shame" is an attempt to contribute to the inverse field of inquiry, the "science of history."

When Dr. Shakil first comes into contact with Sufiya Zinobia, she is suffering from an "immunological crisis" in which her "body's defence mechanisms have declared war against the very life they are supposed to be protecting" (154). The militaristic language applied to Sufiya Zinobia's medical condition is pervasive in the novel and Dr. Shakil comments that this first of several episodes is the "most terrible uprising I ever saw" and calls it a "mutiny" (155). Shakil's groundbreaking insight is the suggestion that:

"even a broken mind is capable of marshalling macrophages and polymorphs; even a stunted intelligence can lead a palace revolution, a suicidal rebellion of the janissaries of the human body against the castle itself" (155).

The doctor's conclusions echo suspiciously the hypnotist's mantra he invokes to justify his use of mesmerism: "You will do anything that I ask you to do, but I will ask you to do nothing that you will be unwilling to do" (51). Here, the simpleton Sufiya Zinobia is notable for willing her own "suicidal rebellion." This will be the doctor's crucial error. Shakil's prescribed treatment is to quell Sufiya Zinobia's internal uprising with "immunosuppressive drugs" (155). Just as the hypnotist works by putting his subject "under" and through the power of his "suggestion," Shakil's medical treatment involves a "putting down" and "under." Like the historian approaching his palimpsest subject, as well, Shakil's treatment is a "cover-up," his suggestions and suppressive drugs similar to the fantasist's myths.

Shakil falls in love with his patient and later marries her. His treatment, however, ultimately fails for two key reasons. First, it fails because it is a temporary suppression, a treatment of symptoms rather than a cure. Secondly, however, we are led to believe that the narrator's account of the source of Sufiya Zinobia's sickness eludes the infamous doctor. According to the narrator, Sufiya Zinobia is the repository for all the unfelt shame in her world. At first she merely blushes when in the vicinity of the ignored, surplus emotion of others. Later, she reacts by raping and tearing the heads off of her victims. Her "uprisings," then are not self-willed, regardless of Shakil's claims-- unless, of course, the concept of the "self" is redefined. For Sufiya Zinobia erupts in the violence of other people's shames, including the shame of her supposedly shameless husband, Omar Khayyam Shakil. In her eventual rampages through the Pakistani countryside, she freezes her victims with the hypnotic force of her eyes. In the apotheosis of violence, Shakil is destroyed in his ancestral home of "Nishapur" by his patient; indeed, everything goes up in a gravity-defying smoke, including the house of history.

Like Dr. Shakil, the narrator receives a subject at war with itself. His attempt is to cure the myths of history with counter-myths of his own making, to add a layer to the palimpsest that is the history of Pakistan. Like Shakil, he is an outsider and a trespasser, a voyeur and a mesmerist and also like Shakil, he apparently falls in love with his unwitting subject. But does the narrator fail as surely and as thoroughly as Dr. Shakil? We should keep in mind that Shakil's fatal error is in his assignment of will and responsibility. What can we say of the narrator's assignment of the same? A Foucauldian reading might identify will as the contaminating agent of the narrator's project, the will to knowledge. In the terms of the novel, we can say that the narrative erupts in violence as the expression of the unresolvable struggle in the narrator between Shamelessness (Omar Khayyam Shakil) and Shame (Sufiya Zinobia). In the end, the narrator's myth choreographs Shakil's death as a conjugal rite. He stands "beside the bed and waited for her like a bridegroom on his wedding night" and if Sufiya Zinobia pauses in her attack it is only "as though she had entertained for the tiny fragment of time the wild fantasy that she was indeed entering the chamber of her beloved" (317). The role reversal between the characters of shame and shamelessness is completed as Shakil himself gives in to the "hypnotic power" of his wife's eyes, a power also described as a "gravitational pull" (317). Shakil's sacrifice is, then, a surrendering of doctor to patient and, simultaneously, of the migrant to history. The narrator continues briefly after Shakil's death, long enough to tell us that, like Sufiya Zinobia, the historical fever is as fatal to him as it is to his characters. After Shame tears the head off of Shamelessness, the narrator writes:

She stood there blinking stupidly, unsteady on her feet, as if she didn't know that all the stories had to end together, that the fire was just gathering its strength, that on the day of reckoning the judges are not exempt from judgement, and that the power of the Beast of shame cannot be held for long within any one frame of flesh and blood, because it grows, it feeds and swells, until the vessels burst. (317)

So, too, the narrative seems to stand here "blinking stupidly, unsteady on its feet, and unaware of its imminent destruction. The shamelessness of the narrator extinguished, he is left as the uncontainable Beast of shame himself. The critical historian-fantast is also a judge that is not exempt from judgement and in the next, short, final paragraph the "the explosion comes." We are left with the image of "the silent cloud, in the shape of a giant, grey and headless man, a figure of dreams, a phantom with one arm lifted in a gesture of farewell" (317). Is this the Beast of shame? The headless transcendence of Shakil finally over gravity and history? Or is it the image of the narrator's own farewell from the self-created scene of his crime? Any of the three appear as viable interpretations and the choice among them ultimately unnecessary; any one them is bleak and perhaps this is the pre-eminent reason, in the end, that Shame is so often called upon as a prophetic text. Rather than sacrificing critical history, Shame's narrator sacrifices himself, the historian. In the shameless business of writing critical history, the narrator falls under the hypnotic gaze and the violent hands of his subject.

But the surviving thread in the weave of Shame, is the seamstress, Rani Harappa, and her shawls. Old before her time, her own house ravaged by the violence of historical foes, put under house arrest by her own daughter, Rani Harappa quietly stitches her shawls, her alternative histories. Just before his death, Omar Shakil has what we are told is a "prophetic dream":

A dream of Rani Harappa: who chooses to remain at Mohenjo, and sends Arjumand, one day, a gift of eighteen exquisite shawls. These shawls ensure that she will never leave the estate again: Arjumand has her own mother placed under guard. People engaged in building new myths have no time for embroidered criticisms. (306)

Rani's estate is the inheritance of collective memory, a memory that, however critical, holds all the wisdom and gravity we can find in Shame. She neither embraces the democratic myth of Harappa nor the religious myth of Hyder and so, the novel presents her as the visionary of its narrative. Embedded in Shame's prophesy of destruction is a

prophecy of conservation, a conservation of exquisitely spun narratives, layered and as fully imagined as Rushdie's novel. The peeling, fragmented, ruins of the palimpsest are only part of its weave.

Like Farah Zoroaster's father in Shame, who runs a Custom's House at the edge of the world, Rushdie's fiction comes to its contemporary readers seemingly from the furthest out-post, from "the backyard of the universe." It is a place that "overlooks the ancestral land of Zarathustra" and marks its boundary with concrete bollards at hundred foot intervals, those "posts" that I have repeatedly alluded to in the course of this chapter. In the novel, it is a site of vertigo, of mesmerism, of illegitimate conception, of magic and madness alike. There's a railhead rusted brown and an absence of trains because as Farah reports, running and dancing around and between the posts, "The international situation does not permit it" (48). Conceded: Rushdie is not Mr. Zoroaster, although as a writer he, too, perhaps, is the "type who goes on dreaming after he has woken up" (46). But Zoroaster volunteers for his post at the "end of the earth" and his plotline progresses in ways that do not echo Rushdie's own trajectory. Mr. Zoroaster's outpost is, however, simultaneously exposed and sealed off, a phantom space much like Rushdie's post-fatwa balloon. And it overlooks a frontier of an imaginary homeland, a terrain of the past blocked only by widely spaced bollards and shards of fractured mirrors. Migration, in short, is possible, prohibited and expected all at the same time.

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