From Roost to Rookery

Environmental Memory in Mark Cocker's *Crow Country*

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ABSTRACT

This article expands Lawrence Buell's notion of environmental memory beyond its seemingly singular focus on the natural environment in relation to the human. It does so by paying close attention to the nonhuman animals that also inhabit these spaces. As our understanding of animals becomes ever more complex, it becomes clear that they each have a specific subjective relation with, and memories of, the environments they inhabit. These more-than-human memories also deserve our recognition and understanding and can help us formulate a less anthropocentric approach to memory studies. Mark Cocker's *Crow Country*, a seminal piece of British New Nature Writing, consequently allows us to imagine where such a more-than-human memory can begin and what it could look like. In his book, he reflects at length on the entanglement of landscape with both human and crow memory. By reading his text alongside Jamie Lorimer's idea of affective logics and Diana Taylor's conception of the ephemeral repertoire, we can not only see how humans act and remember in relation to other beings, but also what the role of literature might be in these more-than-human interactions.

KEYWORDS

cultural memory, environmental memory, literary animal studies, Mark Cocker, affective logics, repertoire

INTRODUCTION

One of my earliest memories is of me, my father, and my grandfather going birding. At the time, my family lived in Zwolle, which is a place in the Netherlands situated in the comfortable embrace of the meandering IJssel river. In the days before we went, I had been scouring my dad's field guides and kept asking him what birds we could see outside our living room. When the day of birding finally came, we went to the floodplains in the IJsselvallei—the valley through which the river meanders—an area that was specifically developed for the purpose of nature conservation. I do not remember exactly which birds we saw or heard that day, but the experience of trudging through muddy lanes and watery walkways is still clear in my mind. I also distinctly remember my father telling stories of what this place used to look like when he had just moved to Zwolle, pointing out the differences but also the similarities. My grandfather, in turn, told stories about the birds we saw and how to pay attention to them: what flight pattern belonged to which bird, the different colorings marking distinct species, and how, even then, he noticed the disappearance of certain species and the coming of others. It gave me a sense of

interconnectedness that still colors the way I view the world today. A sense of not just the landscape, the birds, or previous generations, but one that interwove all three of them, with each separate facet affecting me in its own way.

The sense of shared environment as a lived experience is elaborated on by Laurence Buell (2017), specifically in his idea of environmental memory. In his tentative investigation of what such memories might envision, Buell describes it as 'the intimation of human life and history as unfolding within the context of human embeddedness in webs of shifting environmental circumstance of some duration' (96). This memory consequently takes shape across several spatiotemporal scales, which all emphasize the interrelated nature of individual and collective memory with a particular sense of their environs and the time—be that finite or infinite—in which they exist. The different generational perspectives that were present that day along the IJssel, and their impact on my experience of the landscape and its inhabitants, foreground the impact such an environmental memory can have.

Axel Goodbody (2011), likewise, combines the field of cultural memory with that of ecocriticism and aims to draw 'attention to dimensions of the affective investment in place and of place-belonging whose implications have hitherto been largely ignored by ecocritics' (57). While these attempts toward a more posthumanist notion of cultural memory should certainly be applauded, their focus on embeddedness and connection seems to focus primarily on the environment. Since posthumanism is used here to indicate a cultural memory that is aware of the limitations and blind spots that can be found at the heart of humanism (Knittel and Driscoll 2017, 382), critical attention should also be given to the non-human animals that inhabit these spaces. My memory of that birding day, for instance, is not only formed by the mud and water of the IJsselvallei, but just as much by the birds I managed to find through my binoculars. Guided by my grandfather's voice, I saw an oystercatcher frantically search for food, noticed the careful strut of a redshank, and found a buzzard sitting in its nest. It became clear to me that they lived and remembered in and with this landscape in a manner that was perhaps not so different from my own. As our understanding of nonhuman animals becomes ever more complex, it becomes clear that they have a particular subjective relation towards, and memories of, the environments they inhabit. These more-than-human memories also deserve our critical attention and creative imaginings. Mary Midgley, for instance, rightfully points out that, if humans have mental experiences, we can only have acquired them through a process of gradual evolution (1983, 140). This evolutionary basis consequently allows us to consider an act of remembrance as something that might exist beyond the human. The neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp, in his seminal book *Affective Neuroscience* (1998), similarly states that 'if we consider actions to be valid indicators of internal states in humans, we

should also be ready to grant internally experienced feelings to other animals' (7). Animals may not convey their cultures and reactions in manners that are conventional to humans, such as speech and writing, but there are other ways of knowing how they respond to the world around them.

By employing Diana Taylor's (2003, 19) performative notion of the 'ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge' we can become aware of such ways of knowing.[1] Subsequently connecting this concept to Jamie Lorimer's (2015, 38) affective and 'more-than-human epistemology of conservation', we can begin to see how the interconnection of nonhuman and human animals also 'requires an intimate, haptic knowledge of the local landscape' (36). By bringing these concepts together, we can begin to see how the traces of memory that inhabit bodily movements and reactions occur both within humans and animals and in relation to their environment. As such, these traces can offer a different way of remembering and knowing. This subsequently allows us to consider 'the planetary future of humans and nonhumans alike' (Buell 2017, 97) and 'how we inherit and inhabit the legacies of the past to shape possible futures' (Van Dooren 2017, 188). Throughout my analysis, Mark Cocker's *Crow Country* (2007) will serve as an example of the way in which these concepts converge and how 'literature and other expressive media might act as carriers of environmental memory' (Buell 2017, 96). In his novel, Cocker lovingly portrays the lives and histories of several communities of rooks in the Yare Valley near Norfolk, England. The narrative beautifully shows how we, as humans, can employ literature to convey specific cultural nonhuman memories and how it can make us aware of the more-than-human landscape that surrounds us.

ECOLOGICAL MEMORIES

The idea of cultural memory started to gain wider recognition from the twentieth century onwards.[2] The need for a more ecological and posthuman approach to memory studies, however, is a relatively recent development. In an introduction to a roundtable discussion on memory studies and the Anthropocene, Stef Craps (2018, 500) explains that if memory studies is to begin thinking more ecologically, 'the field may need to break with the persistent humanism that can be seen to prevent it from adequately addressing the vast spatiotemporal magnitudes of the Anthropocene.' The poststructuralist and posthuman questioning of the nature-culture divide have, furthermore, shown that our notion of memory is based on a largely anthropocentric viewing of the world. As Susanne Knittel and Kári Driscoll (2017, 382) explain, 'it is no longer quite so certain what we mean by "man". How can this indeterminability be made productive for a critical re-evaluation of the field of memory studies?' Buell's (2017) environmental memory can be considered a crucial step towards such a rethinking.

Rosanne Kennedy (2017, 269), however, reiterates my earlier point that this view mainly emphasizes the relationship between human and landscape when she explains that the scholars who have tried to connect ecocriticism and cultural memory studies 'have tended to conceptualize the environment in terms of place understood as land or landscape.' She argues for 'eco-memory' which maintains the deep memory of a landscape, while simultaneously viewing it as an interconnected assemblage of both human and nonhuman elements. According to Kennedy, the concept of eco-memory 'requires critics to expand outwards to a multispecies horizon, […] and to examine how events, actions, and processes affect elements in the assemblage' (269). Whilst this critically addresses the relatively little attention that Buell pays to nonhuman animals, Buell (2017) also mentions that his article 'seeks to make a preliminary case for the importance of "environmental memory"' (95). He also emphasizes the urgent need 'to develop robust, shared conceptions of environmental memory' (97). Therefore, it seems to me that, rather than inventing a new term, it is more fruitful to keep working within, and expanding upon, the framework presented by Buell's environmental memory.

WRITING NONHUMAN REMEMBRANCE

Cocker's *Crow Country* was published in 2007, after which the novel quickly became one of the seminal texts of the British New Nature Writing movement. It was Jason Cowley (2008) who first identified this new string of British nature writing in 2008 and called it 'the New Nature Writing'. The movement stems from a long-standing practice of writing about nature in Britain. From the 1970s onwards a diversity of nature writers became more aware of the cultural impact their texts could have on the perception and awareness of 'nature'. He further affirmed that New Nature Writing consisted of 'writers who approached their subject in heterodox and experimental ways', rather than 'what might be called old nature writing', by which he refers to 'the lyrical pastoral tradition of the romantic wanderer' (n.p). Cowley continues by asserting that a critical focus on the extraordinariness of the ordinary and a distinct interest in new and connected ways of looking is what ties these writers together. They also share a deep understanding of the lasting impact we, as a species, have on the planet, and the importance of more-than-human histories and relations. Cowley made his observation right after a particularly rich period of nature writing publications, such as Cocker's novel, Robert Macfarlane's *The Wild Places* (2007), and Kathleen Jamie's *Findings* (2005).

The genre itself, however, has also received its share of critique. In a 2015 article for the *New Statesman*, for instance, Cocker argued that many British contemporary nature writers only explore the terrain between nature and literature, and do little to explore the axis between culture

and nature. Kate Oakley, Jonathan Ward, and Ian Christie (2018), furthermore, are mainly concerned with 'the overwhelmingly male nature of the grouping', but they also fear that this kind of nature writing 'commodifies or instrumentalises the natural environment—particularly as a balm to troubled psyches' (693). Examples of the latter can, for instance, be found in Richard Mabey's *Nature Cure* (2005), Helen Macdonald's *H is for Hawk* (2015), or Katharine Norbury's *The Fish Ladder* (2015). Cécile Beaufils (2018, 4) nevertheless sees these conversations as a sign that '[n]ature writing has become a fully-relevant genre, tackling ethical issues that trigger an emotional response from the readers re-investing landscape with affect, seen in a taste for hyperboles and comparisons with broader political and ethical issues'. How 'nature' and its human and nonhuman inhabitants are imagined and by whom matters, especially in a time when we become ever more aware of the ecological crisis we find ourselves in. As writer Robert Macfarlane (2005, n.p.) himself proposes in a series of essays written for *The Guardian*, 'the real subject of landscape writing is not landscape, but a restructuring of the human attitude towards nature—and there can be few subjects more urgent or necessary of our attention than this'. These insights show us that our relation to the more-than-human is as much a product of cultural imagination as it is something that is actually 'out there'.

Simon Schama (1996), in his book *Memory and Landscape*, continues this line of thinking as he emphasizes the importance of acknowledging 'that it is our shaping perception that makes the difference between raw matter and landscape' (9). Seen from this perspective, the genre of New Nature Writing can consequently be seen as an important site where specific kinds of nature and memory are written and imagined. By paying attention to the cultural, temporal, and geographical entanglement of crows and humans, Cocker's book illustrates and gestures toward a more inclusive, and less anthropocentric, notion of cultural memory, one that also takes into consideration how the complicated relationship between humans and non-humans influences and shapes the other. This can prove to be a vital addition to the 'embeddedness' that Buell's environmental memory advocates. Cocker, for instance, emphatically states that '[a]lthough the process of looking seems to set up an opposition between the observer and the observed, humans remain part of that [ecological] context, the very field of their observational studies' (208).

EXPERIENCING THE VALLEY

Crow Country can thus help us start the process of developing a more inclusive reconceptualization of Bueller's notion since his work brings together landscape, bird, and man in a combined vision of environmental memory. While discussing the specific flight patterns and heights at which rooks traverse the Yare Valley, for instance, Cocker comes to a sudden

understanding of how the valley is experienced by the birds themselves. Flying and roosting at a height of 100 meters—no great height for a flying rook—would allow the birds to be in almost constant visual contact not only with each other, but also with the whole valley. This in turn makes him realize how 'my own circumstances shaped my view of the Yare valley. Like all humans, my eye and brain configured the place according to the most deeply ingrained reflexes'. He sees the landscape not as it was, 'but as I'm bound by time and place and the condition of my species to see it'. His constrictions as a 'gravity-bound primate' foreground simple obstacles such as marshes, ditches, and dense bushes and simultaneously 'add a colour wash of emotional and psychological significance'. He also acknowledges his being in the world as a social animal, entwined within the institutional structures of 'the council, the Broads Authority, the powers that be, whatever—with all their political and social implications' with their barbed-wire, gates, and other means of exclusion. He continues and reflects upon these powers 'that constrained me to know my place or rather, to know *their* place and my restricted role within it' (2007, 146).

Cocker's realization of the landscape as a lived experience for both humans and nonhumans comes to him through a deep-rooted and affective relationship with the rooks. Not only does he imagine his life as part of an ongoing biogeological process, but Cocker's individual lifeline is also shaped by his relation to the rooks as co-inhabitants of the valley. The references to the 'powers that be, or whatever' with their 'noticeboards of officialdom' show the narratives that the community, and, to a certain extent, the nation, attempt to convey through exclusionary practices within the landscape. From his subjective relational memory, however, comes an almost mimetic knowledge of the rooks and their place in the valley. Cocker has his sense of the valley, but 'then the rooks had their version too. And yet how radically different was this country as seen from above' (146). He begins to see how flight paths from rookery to roost are as 'real and palpable as any human path or road, and some of these invisible threads of connection did not just extend through space, but arced through time' (148). Literary texts such as *Crow Country* can therefore come to function as 'as-if statements that potentially reorient vistas by pressing the contrast between the "is" and the "might be"' (Buell 2017, 99). In this narrative then, the rook is seen as an equal actor in a shared space. This equality helps, for instance, to consider how the history of our planet might be viewed as something other than a story of ever-increasing human impact. According to Buell (2017), our environmental imagination, when considered as a memory-(re)construction project, does not need to be bound to this one destructive plot. Aesthetic texts such as Cocker's allow us to view the land as a place that is interdependent on more than humans and their stories; it is also shaped by animals and their specific narratives.

In the ecological reimagination of memory, the notion of place seems to take a central role in both ecocriticism and memory studies alike. Ecocriticism, for instance, foregrounds the importance of the close bonds between people and places in order to create a sense of environmental awareness. Memory studies, similarly, looks at the connections between a place and its people in order to examine how 'a sense of place is deeply intertwined with both individual as well as collective memory' (Schliephake 2016, 575). Both fields seem to pay critical attention to the ways in which stories, symbols, and perceptions shape our understanding of a place, and how these experiential narratives are never static or singular. Rather, they take place in the 'dynamic and ever-shifting repositories of our cultural frameworks' (576) and, as such, have an almost equal interest in how these places consist of an entanglement of the 'real' and 'imaginary.' This entanglement makes it so that landscapes have a 'collective investment with overlapping, often conflicting significances', which are 'open to constant reinterpretation and reappropriation' (Goodbody 2011, 60). If we aim to truly see spaces as environmental memory landscapes of which we are but one moving part, we should also learn to see how the 'conflicting significance' can originate from our complicated relationships with nonhuman animals. Nonhuman animals can have an equally complex relationship to the landscape and, especially for certain social species, a generational framework that invests specific locations with meaning.

Throughout his novel, Cocker (2007) seems to pay particular attention to places as being invested with not only human significance, but also with generational corvid signification. An example of this is the idea of 'ghost' rookeries that he describes. During their lifetime, rooks constantly oscillate between two different locations: the roost and the rookery. Both these places are often located deep within a forest of large and old trees. The rookery 'is of central importance from late February or early March to June, the period of the rooks' entire breeding cycle' (140). The rest of the year is spent at their roost site, 'to which they will return every evening and leave at dawn, sometimes traveling up to 32 kilometers to the daytime feeding areas' (140). The 'ghost' rookeries are significant because they exemplify an intergenerational memory on the side of the rooks that ties the locations of the rookery and the roost together. Following the work of the English ornithologist Wilfred Backhouse Alexander (1885-1965), Cocker explains that the location of roosts often indicates that a rookery 'had existed on the same spot at an earlier period. In other words, the roost marked the site of a 'ghost' rookery' (143). This connection turns these places into cultural repositories of corvid knowledge and significance. The adherence of the rooks to these specific places goes beyond mere practical utility and moves well into the territory of cultural tradition and 'inherited patterns of association' (148).

By expanding the idea of environmental memory to include nonhuman narratives as well, we can begin to further understand the crucial interdependencies of the physical and the mnemonic. This relationality subsequently helps in foregrounding their implications for human and nonhuman animals alike. It allows a less anthropocentric view of memory to take shape. Returning to Cocker's realization of the rooks' experience, he states that their specific sense of geography and attachment was similarly 'one where significance was unevenly distributed across the countryside' (147). Taking this into consideration, the removal of a thicket of trees that houses a rookery suddenly becomes a heinous act of atrocity. The copse moves from being something that has to be removed to a 'place of high trees, whose engrained familiarity conferred a deep sense of security and comfort' (147). As Rosanne Kennedy states, such a reimagining would, for example, allow for an 'unspoken parallel with the human world of atrocities, and the figure of the executioner/perpetrator' (Craps et al. 2018, 505). Moreover, the large spans of time during which rooks occupy these places offer us new ways of experiencing biogeological time. Cocker (2007) mentions the work of 'Hugh Gladstone, author of *Birds of Dumfriesshire* (1910)' who, at the turn of the century, 'mapped all the rookeries in the county [of Dumfriesshire] and traced evidence for some of them back to the 1650s' (54). Whilst this already indicates a deeply meaningful and biogeological relationship to the landscape, we have mainly been able to trace these locations through the use of human archives. Cocker uses letters, written records, and poems to locate the rook throughout the human habitation of England. The rooks themselves might have an even longer history and memory of their forests. It is estimated that some of the rookeries in England could possibly be over 300 years old, with rooks and jackdaws going there generation after generation. For Cocker, it is exactly 'the length of time, the sheer span of rook lives, that knowledge of a particular roost is passed on from one generation to the next' (56) that fuels his imagination and connection to the rooks and their way of living.

AFFECT AND REPERTOIRE

In the previous section, I have shown how and why the lived experience of nonhuman animals should be considered a key aspect of environmental memory. It provides us with a deeper understanding of landscapes and environments as places in a temporal dimension that are not solely inhabited by humans. Memories and meaning are not only attributed to places through anthropocentric rituals and traditions, but also through the lives of other nonhuman creatures. Cocker's relation to birds in general and his way of experiencing the land of Norfolk seem almost sensuous at times. Jamie Lorimer (2015) notices a similar disposition toward the environment and animals in a conservation biologist studying corncrakes on the Hebrides. Training and experience have taught the biologist 'to tune into the birds' acoustic ecology,

calibrating his body to "learn to be affected" by the corncrakes' calls' (35). It is a knowledge based on affect and embodiment that allows the biologist to 'attune a listening body to the landscape' (43). From this listening body come 'multisensory familiarities that are often unconscious and difficult to articulate' (43). The emphasis on the body as a repository of knowledge created by a close awareness of the different senses provides another way in which attention to the nonhuman animal can be included in an environmental memory. Affect, which Lorimer sees as the energy that flows between bodies and emerges from 'embodied encounters and adhering in particular places and landscapes' (39), is central to this embodied and more-than-human knowledge. The process of affect occurs before cognitive thought takes place but nonetheless has an important impact on the way in which humans relate to the world. As such, it can be said that affect also shapes the 'cultural phenomena emergent from bodily encounters' (9). Buell's (2017) definition of environmental memory as a 'sense' that occurs 'whether or not conscious, whether or not accurate, whether or not shared' (96) subsequently seems particularly well suited to engage in a conversation with the notion of embodied affect.

Cocker's (2007) *Crow Country* further explicates what such an affective and embodied relationship with the landscape would entail. During his many wanderings through the Yare Valley, looking for rookeries, Cocker developed a deeply embodied knowledge of the place. He explains that '[w]ith each fresh visit to a site there come those microscopically small encounters with fragments of the landscape that possibly only I might have noticed or can recall from year to year' (117). For him, these 'details create the sense of a private relationship with a countryside' (117). He knows, for instance, that near Hospital Carr in Halvergate there is a 'line of pollarded willows' with 'a beetle-gnawed hollow where the dead leaves gather through winter' (117). This is where the hedgehogs sleep. He continues that 'behind the Church Farm barns, there is an odd sort of pleasure in greeting once more the smashed horse-chestnut stumps and the dead octopus-limbed sycamore where, despite all this infirmity, the rooks still build and breed' (118). Cocker knows where the winter crop for the barn owl is and finds in the owl pellets 'hieroglyphs on life's mystery straight from the gut' (118). The barn itself has 'held onto that immensely comforting reek of cattle and straw for 150 years' (118). Throughout these encounters he 'cannot avoid the feeling of a landscape watching' (118). All of these places have been invested with affect through a long and invested relationship with the land and the nonhuman animals that live there. This causes his body to listen to what the landscape can tell him. A kinesthetic knowledge directs Cocker's experience of his surroundings. While this is an account of an extremely idiosyncratic and singular experience, Cocker's prose does manage to mediate his intricate connection to the land. In comparison to large sections of the rest of the book, the language used in his minute descriptions is evocative and appeals mainly to the senses. 'Microscopically small encounters'

convey visual impulses, whilst words like ‘beetle-gnawed’ bring an auditory level to the text that is missing from the sections where he describes his more historiographical and factual narrative. The ‘reek of cattle and straw’, meanwhile, illustrates the tendency of smells to conjure up distant memories. Schliephake (2016, 576) states that whilst ‘our perception of a particular environment or site associated with a specific past may be dominated by a certain narrative’, there are often multiple, sometimes conflicting, stories associated with it. Stories like Cocker’s can help us reimagine landscapes as places of multispecies gatherings, each with their own distinct history and sense of the land. They add to the cultural memory that surrounds these spaces and help communities imagine themselves as an integral part of these locations.

A further way in which this affective and embodied relation to the environment can be studied, especially with regard to memory studies, is through Diana Taylor’s (2003) notion of the repertoire. Coming from performance studies, Taylor opposes ‘the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)’ (19). The repertoire, then, is a way of taking embodied expression seriously ‘in the transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity pre- and postwriting’ (16). This not only helps to problematize the Western paradigm that only writing can necessarily equate to memory and knowledge, but it also creates a space in which the bodily practices and experiences of nonhuman animals can be viewed as distinct ways of knowing and transmitting knowledge. As Taylor explains, ‘[t]he repertoire, on a very practical level, expands the traditional archive used by academic departments in the humanities’ (26). At the beginning of his book, Cocker (2007) relates how he moved to the Yare Valley and consequently connects this to the yearly migration south made by many birds. He explains that this behavior has ‘persisted for 10,000 years, ever since the last Ice Age’ (12). It even seems likely that birds have been exploiting the ‘seasonal abundances’ (12) ever since they came into existence a hundred and fifty million years ago. During each interglacial period ‘they reacquired the art and science of migration like some cosmic weaver on the great loom of time’ (12).

Cocker (2007) goes on to explain that warblers, a species of small, passerine birds, migrate every year ‘from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe by stopping at a sequence of places that are known and learned from generational journey to journey’ (14). It is no coincidence that in his description of the warbler, Cocker seems to pay careful attention to the bodily being of this perching bird: ‘those tiny sheaves of feather wrapped around a thimbleful of blood, few grams of wing muscle and some twiglets of bone’ (14). Returning to the ephemeral repertoire, we can begin to see how the warbler’s migratory patterns are examples of a specific type of more-than-human knowledge and

memory that is stored within these fragile bodies. They show how certain '[f]orms handed down from the past are experienced as present' (Taylor 2003, 24), and Cocker's textual description helps us reimagine warblers as beings with history, memory, and experience. His emphasis on the physique of the bird helps us see migration as a biannual performance of flight that transmits an embodied knowledge and memory of place to the next generations of warblers. By connecting the repertoire with environmental memory, it becomes possible to imagine how nonhuman animals have their own, distinct, embeddedness in the world, sometimes even on temporal scales that go far beyond human time spans.

CONCLUSION

Cocker's *Crow Country* (2007) is a novel that both in its biotemporal and biogeological scale presents a striking account of the entangled relationship between birds, humans, and landscape. In doing so, it provides ample evidence as to why Buell's notion of environmental memory should aim to pay more attention to the role nonhuman animals play in our narratives of community and identity. By tracing a history that goes back to prehistoric times, the book shows how our cultural memory has long been influenced by our interrelations with nonhuman animals. Human life on this planet can never be seen as static and isolated, but should rather be conceptualized as relational and always evolving. The focus on different ways of knowing and remembering that are present in Cocker's novel shows the discursive gaps that memory studies should aim to fill. By moving beyond a focus on solely anthropocentric modes of cognition and representation, memory studies can not only look critically at its own humanist foundation, but would also be able to provide meaningful insights into how we should relate ourselves to the many organisms that make up the planet. A genre such as New Nature Writing further shows us how literature can become a meaningful carrier of a more inclusive environmental memory. It does so not only by influencing our conceptions of 'nature', but also through a textual emphasis on other ways of (bodily) being and knowing. These aspects become ever more important as the Anthropocene moves incessantly forward and its effects become increasingly and terrifyingly clear. By focusing on the embodied and affective ways of knowing that both Taylor (2003) and Lorimer (2015) gesture towards, it becomes possible to find different and more-than-human ways of remembering the past, being in the present, and imagining the future. When I return to the IJssel now, I feel the lived generational experiences of not only my own family but also those of the countless other, nonhuman, creatures that call this place home. Reading novels such as Cocker's allows me to imagine this distributary as a place of environmental memory and envision it as something more-than-human.

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[1] Whilst Taylor's notion of the repertoire originates from the field of performance studies and Latin-American studies, its emphasis on embodied experience as an alternative way of knowing makes it especially suited to expand environmental memory's anthropocentric focus to also include nonhuman animals.

[2] Astrid Erll, in her article 'Travelling Memory' (2011), identifies three phases. The first phase was mainly influenced by Maurice Halbwach's notion of collective memory. A second phase started with Pierre Nora's publication of Lieux de Mémoire in the late 1980s, which placed an explicit emphasis on the nation-state. With the turn of the twenty-first century came a more transcultural, transnational, and global perspective (see for instance Michael Rothberg's notion of multidirectional memory).