Introduction: Producing Memory

Loïs van Albada* and Hester Groot♦
*Utrecht University, the Netherlands; ♦Leiden University, the Netherlands

We find ourselves in a time where our daily lives are inundated with news stories and narratives, on- and offline, wherever we turn. These often competing narratives range from localized cultural debates to severe political conflicts. But narratives are, of course, defined by who tells them. No portrayal of an issue can be entirely neutral, and recognizing the motivations and biases behind the narratives presented to us is an increasingly important skill in a time when more people than ever before have the ability to broadcast their own narrative to the world. At the same time, storytelling and the documentation of memory can be a powerful way to reframe the dominant narrative that persists about a topic or about oneself. Take the example of Chanel Miller, who writes in her autobiographical novel *Know My Name*: 'My name is Chanel. I am a victim, I have no qualms with this word, only with the idea that it is all that I am. However, I am not *Brock Turner's victim*. I am not his anything. I don't belong to him' (Miller 2019, viii). In doing so, Miller demands that the framing of herself only in relation to Turner, as occurred throughout the court case and ensuing media coverage, be challenged in a manner that acknowledges her personhood and autonomy. By taking control of the narrative, her depiction of events grew to become the defining one, which had far-reaching consequences: the judge that gave Turner a mild sentencing was suspended and the safety mechanisms in place at Stanford University, where the assault took place, were reevaluated. Documenting and spreading one's own experiences can not only make it possible to reframe and add nuance to the popular narrative, but it can also beget accountability, as long as the world listens.

With modern technological advancements, the production of memory is rapidly becoming easier and more accessible to individuals. This development presents possibilities regarding the amplification of voices of those who might have otherwise gone unheard. While we are inundated with narratives from powerful actors, such as governments and mainstream media, counter-messages can be used to disrupt those dominant stories. The spread of narratives originating at individual, grassroots level is in many cases aided by social media campaigns and activist movements, allowing such messages to reach wider audiences than previously imagined. Individuals have been livestreaming arrests, the footage of which can be and has been used in court (while at the same time, conversations surrounding the wearing of body cameras by police officers highlight the importance of documentation and the increased accountability that such

devices create). At the same time, young Ukrainians are documenting their everyday experiences via TikTok following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022; war refugees are able to raise awareness and share their stories more easily, made easier through the possibility of online dissemination and discourse. For all these people spreading their stories and searching for truth, there now exists a platform for telling and broadcasting stories that throughout history has seldom had the potential to reach as far.

Of course, with these sources comes great social and individual responsibility. Given the possibility to look at a broader array of story- and memory-making than previous generations have ever had access to, we have the means and the duty to evaluate the narratives presented to us and consider the different viewpoints that they offer. Grassroots narratives have great power to contest or support the dominant story that might otherwise go unchallenged; but the possibility of devising falsified memories or experiences to further personal agendas is available to individual actors just as it has historically been for hegemonic powers.

Beyond these recent developments in memory-making tools and opportunities, traditional forms of media have long served and continue to serve as means to produce and broadcast memories, both personal and collective. Authors have long documented their memories and viewpoints through fiction: for instance, Ocean Vuong traces familial trauma and the generational memory of the Vietnam War in his fictionalized autobiography *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019); Art Spiegelman explores visual diaries depicting traumatic and transgenerational memory as a way of processing and protesting events in his acclaimed graphic novel *Maus* (1986); and Behrouz Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains* (2018), an autobiographical account of his imprisonment off the coast of Australia due to his immigrant status, has been highly influential as a form of political protest. Traditional media continue to aid memory production, even as they are joined by a new wave of narrative meaning-making. People are sharing their stories, and we can hear them, learn from them, and share in them; we just have to listen.

This issue of *Junctions* seeks to explore these issues of narrative and memory production and their relation to both form and power. We aim to examine both traditional and new forms of memory production through a broad range of discussions of not only novels and other media, but also of physical space, to help us understand the role memory plays in the creation of narratives in the past, present, and the future.

CONTRIBUTIONS

In 'On the Will to be Free in Spite of History', Dominique Ankoné investigates what philosopher Tran Duc Thao taught the Parisian intellectual scene concerning colonialism, freedom and democracy. Tran Duc Thao's activism is herein discussed as having shaped his anticolonial philosophy. Ankoné emphasizes the fact that Tran Duc Thao believed capitalism and colonialism to be related phenomena exploiting conscripts of modernity in a broad sense; that his anticolonial philosophy was a means to explain why people in France did not perceive this; and that his philosophy of freedom better fits contemporary postcolonial philosophy and environmental philosophy.

In 'The Un-Prosecuted Perpetrator', Anne van Buuren aims to shed light on the failure to make explicit the wartime responsibility of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito following the Second World War, through the investigation of various cultural products, such as museums, propaganda, manga and film. The consequences of this failure to adequately address wartime responsibility is also investigated through the prism of cultural memory studies. Van Buuren hopes exposing this may provide room for doing more justice to the Japanese national and cultural memory and preventing international fallout.

In 'Is The Dialectical Biologist Dialectical?', Nils Deeg challenges the way in which the Marxist dialectical materialist approach to biology presented in the 1985 book *The Dialectical Biologist* has long been dismissed by scholars as confused. By articulating and highlighting how the authors of this book practice the dialectical materialist approach to science that they put forward, Deeg contests the legacy of this text and opens up new avenues of engagement with its message.

In 'Media Representations of the Refugee', Moira Grant McLoughlin explores the importance of community-based media practices and organizations, and investigates their role in challenging mainstream media portrayals of migration and 'the refugee'. Grant McLoughlin describes the potential that community-based media organizations can have in creating spaces for supporting people in refugee camps and empowering them to tell their own stories on forced migration.

In 'War on the Posthuman', Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi posits the memoir kept by the protagonist of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) as a revolutionary act. The memoir not only reveals the inhumane practices exercised by the state, but it also provides a fictional space for the self to be perpetuated. Katsorchi argues that ultimately, the preservation of one's memories constitutes an act of agency that illuminates the dark, silenced side of history.

In 'Hegel and the Untranslatable', Thomas Meijs posits that the particular form of self-reflexive movement inherent in Hegel's dialectical method forms a relatively unmined source for broadening our understanding of translation. By explaining the relationship between the dialectical method as present in Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* and structural characteristics of the process of translation, Meijs considers a notion of translation which not only takes the transformation of the translated into account, but also enables us to think about how the act of translation shapes and shifts our understanding of the position of the translator.

In 'Space Nostalgia in *The Old Drift*', Maria Menzel analyzes how the history of Zambia's participation in the space race is fictionalized in Namwali Serpell's *The Old Drift*. The novel creates a fictional account of the youth of Zambia's first female Afronaut, Matha Mwamba, filling the silence in the archives regarding the life of this marginalized historical figure. Menzel investigates the form of the Bildungsroman and reflective nostalgia, in an attempt to understand how past visions of the future can serve as inspirations for the present in Serpell's work.

In 'From Roost to Rookery', Pauw Vos discusses the notion of environmental memory from a perspective of non-human animals, whose relation to their environment has gone underexplored in conceptualizations of environmental memory. By focusing on the representation of both human and crow memory in *Crow Country*, Vos explores what a less anthropocentric approach to memory studies might look like and how literature might help us understand the new perspectives this development evokes.

In 'Constructing Memory Through Communal Praying', Marjolein Uittenbogaard discusses how the Portuguese Synagogue (Esnoga) in Amsterdam serves as a site of memory for the Sephardic community. Using ideas from the field of memory studies and psalm analysis, Uittenbogaard discusses the practice of communal praying in three Orders of Service from the Esnoga as a way not only to engage with a shared knowledge of the past, both distant and recent, but also envision a collective and communal future.

In 'A Language of Hope', Wenjia Yang uses Khodadad Mohammadi's short story *The Translator's Tale* to explore themes of diasporic memory and trauma theory. The act of translation is used as the basis for discussing the importance of non-traumatic narrative and the power of agency and hope in connecting diasporic communities, and how they lead to the building of collective memories.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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