

## LANDMARKS 2 – Keynote Speakers

### Towards a Philosophy of the Global Memory Field

Anna Reading, London South Bank University

How are the forces of globalisation and digitisation reconfiguring the philosophy of communication in relation to memory? To what extent does this require the development of a new epistemology of memory? I argue that the combination of digitisation and globalisation suggest a grounds for knowledge that conceptualises these co-extensive dynamics in terms of what I have termed the global memory field.

New communication ecologies, especially networked and mobile media, are reconfiguring the conventional binaries associated with memory, those between human and machine, the private and the public, the digital and the analogue. The relationships between the individual and the media organisation, the local and the national are increasingly fluid and dynamic. Globalisation is resulting in new mobilities in terms of communicative processes that include people, things and data. Digital media enable the creation, management and storage of communication records and experiences in ways that are inexpensive, globally networked and rapidly reproducible worldwide. Communicative memories of events maybe personally and locally produced, before being rapidly mobilised, travelling and settling in multiple, globalised, dispersed technomediated sites emplaced within various local contexts. At the same time, all of these networked and mobile mediated memories of events are intermediated through digitisation, the process of encoding and decoding through binary code.

The keynote explores how the global memory field requires new grounds of knowledge for our understanding of the relationships between communication and memory. In particular I examine how the global is characterised by transformations across six communication dynamics that include (trans) mediality, velocity, extensity, modality, valency and viscosity. I show how we can trace some of the transformations in these dynamics in relation to a recent example of digital communication and memory in the form of mobile witnessing.

**Dr Anna Reading** is Director of the Centre for Media and Culture Research at London South Bank University, UK. She developed and runs an innovative project-centred MA programme in Creative Media Arts. She co-edited with Andrew Hoskins and Joanne Garde-Hansen, *Save As...Digital Memories* (Palgrave, 2009). She is the author of *The Social Inheritance of the Holocaust: Gender, Culture and Memory* (Palgrave 2002) and *Polish Women, Solidarity and Feminism* (1992). She co-edited, *Media in Britain* (Macmillan, 1998) and researched with Colin Sparks *Communism, Capitalism and the Mass Media* (Sage, 1999). She is joint editor of *Media, Culture and Society*, and on the boards of *Memory Studies* and the *Journal of Media Education Research*. She has written seven plays for the stage produced in the UK and overseas (<http://www.doollee.com/PlaywrightsR/reading-anna.html>). She is a partner to the Women's National Commission (Cabinet Office) advising on media and gender issues. Her current research concerns how mobile and social technologies are developing the "global memory field".

## **The Mediatization of Memory: Ubiquitous Media and the End of Collective Memory**

Andrew Hoskins, University of Warwick

A supremely significant and consequential shift for memory (individual, social, and cultural) is embedded in the move from the broadcast to the post-broadcast age. Little of the 'what', 'how', 'why' and 'when' of remembering and forgetting, are untouched by the 'connective turn' in advanced Western societies (but also and unevenly elsewhere across the globe). By this I mean the massively increased abundance, ubiquity and accessibility of communication networks and nodes, and the paradoxical effects of the fluidity and fixity of digital media content. In this way, I am concerned with the simultaneous and paradigmatic shift in two 'ecologies': media and memory, and that we today live in a new memory ecology in which memory is 'mediatized'.

This paper considers the 'mediatization of memory' in light of a tension between a perspective overwhelming informed by the theories, models and methods of an era of unambiguously 'mass' media a corollary of which is the re-establishment of the notion of collective memory, and a diverse if somewhat fragmented scholarship that adopts a more radical position. The latter necessitates a critical reevaluation of the legacy of mass communication/media studies, and proposes a more dynamic and diffused model of 'the mediation of everything' (Livingstone, 2009).

This paper considers the prospects for a holistic or 'epidemiological' approach to the study of contemporary mediatized memory through a critique of the paradigm of media/memory studies and the challenges posed to this paradigm by the connective turn. In doing so, it probes the usefulness of the concept of 'collective memory' as an adequate or accurate description of a memory resonant with our current mediatized experiences and uses of it.

**Andrew Hoskins** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick, UK, and Director of the Warwick Centre for Memory Studies ([memorystudies.net](http://memorystudies.net)). He attained his BA (Hons.), MA, and PhD in Sociology at Lancaster and for most of his career he has lectured in Media and Communication Studies.

His research focuses on the theoretical and empirical investigation of today's 'new media ecology' and the nature of and the challenges for individual, social, and cultural memory in this environment. His *Televising War: From Vietnam to Iraq* (Continuum, 2004) develops his concept of 'new memory' in relation to warfare (memory is 'new' in its continually emergent state forged through the ubiquitous media and technologies (and their metaphors) of the contemporary).

## **The Communicative Value of Forgetting**

Herman Parret, Hoger Instituut voor Wijsgebeerte, University of Leuven

**Herman Parret** is emeritus professor at the Higher Institute for Philosophy, University of Leuven. The fields of specialization and of publication of Herman Parret are: philosophical aesthetics and philosophy of art, the methodology and epistemology of linguistics and semiotics, philosophy of language. His additional

fields of interest are: the history of theories of language, the philosophy of the social sciences, the philosophy of music and the history of modern and contemporary philosophy.

Herman Parret studied at the University of Leuven where he obtained a licentiate in Romance Philology and a Ph.D. in Philosophy. He also studied at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, at M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass., at the University of California at Berkeley and at Stanford University. He was a Director of Research at the Fonds National (Belge) de la Recherche Scientifique and at the same time Professor at the University of Antwerp (till 1997) and Full Professor at the University of Leuven, where he taught philosophy of language and philosophical aesthetics at the Institute of Philosophy and at the Department of Art Sciences. He was promoted Full Professor Emeritus in 2004. He published more than 200 articles in French, in English and in Dutch in the fields of the philosophy of language, semiotics and aesthetics. He was translated into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Korean, Turkish and Japanese.

## **Communication, Literature, Cultural Memory**

Roger D. Sell, Åbo Akademi University

This paper's starting-point is an account of communication in the etymological sense of the term: as a matter of making or consolidating a community. A community, however, is not necessarily a consensus. Rather than consisting entirely of people who are in total agreement with each other, a community is better thought of as a grouping within which people can also agree to *disagree*. The difference between modes of address which seek to coerce us into agreement and those which invite us into a dialogical comparing of notes is something we have all experienced at first hand. And the more generously tolerant people are towards each other, the larger and more heterogeneous will be the resultant community.

The paper then goes on to describe literary activity as one among other forms of communication in precisely this sense. For well over 150 years there have been strong, though considerably varied theoretical objections to such a view, all of which deserve careful re-thinking rather than outright rejection. But literature's communicationality, often taken for granted by pre-Victorian commentators, continues to figure in the way many readers of literature experience their own relation to it even today. So the difference between texts which merely aspire to literary status and those which succeed in winning the admiration of a very large readership over a long period of time is regularly stated in terms of the ethical distinction between a more coercive and a more dialogical mode of address. Similarly, the communicational perspective is not without its consequences for our thinking about literary canons. If the Victorians were mistaken in speaking of literature as a universal in the belief that all human beings are exactly the same, the Postmoderns did not permanently improve matters by speaking of many different canons for many differently positioned readerships. A literary readership, as a community brought into being by writers who are genuinely dialogical, can be at once very heterogeneous and very large.

Finally, the paper raises two questions about cultural memory. To what extent does literary community-making draw on cultural memory as a resource? And to what extent does it consolidate, develop or even change cultural memory? Postmodern accounts of cultural memory, like Postmodern accounts of literary canonicity, have sometimes been too closely tied to identity politics. Like writing, memory is always positioned, but can always frame itself in ways that are also open to empathetic understanding. There is in fact a correlation between writing which is coercive and a use of cultural memory as demarcation. In dialogical writing, conversely, cultural memory may be opened up for sharing.

This three-stage argument will be illustrated with examples of literary communication discussed in Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson (eds), *Writing and Religion in England, 1558 – 1689: Studies in Community-making and Cultural Memory* (Ashgate, November 2009).

**Roger D. Sell** is currently H.W. Donner Research Professor of Literary Communication at Åbo Akademi University in Finland. He has published on a wide range of writers from different periods of English American history, and has also sought to develop interfaces between literary theory and linguistics. During the 1990s he was developing a historicist theory of literary pragmatics. More recently this has grown into a theory of literature as one among other forms of communication. Books include (ed.) *Literary Pragmatics* (Routledge, 1991), *Literature as Communication: The Foundations of Mediating Criticism* (2000), *Mediating Criticism: Literary Education Humanized* (2001), and (ed.) *Children's Literature as Communication: The ChiLPA Project* (2002), all published by Benjamins. Forthcoming are (co-ed.) *Writing and Religion in England, 1558-1689: Studies in Community-making and Cultural Memory* (Ashgate, November 2009), *Literature as Dialogue: Communicational Criticism in Practice* (Benjamins, 2010), *Shakespearian Communication* (Ashgate, 2012), and *The Complete Poems of Sir John Beaumont* (OUP 2012).