Introduction: Memory/Counter-memory

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Memories do not simply add up to constitute cultural memory. Instead, they compete and clash, vying for a place in collective remembrance. The many and competing, contested and contradictory memories have the effect of making modern memory markedly counter-memorial. As we explain in the Introduction, the democratization of History into histories has splintered the grand narratives of empire and progress into the many and divergent (counter)-memories of the men and women that felt left out. The positive valuation of memory, Radstone and Hodgkin write, is the result of its being ‘utilised in order to retrieve that which runs against, disrupts or disturbs dominant ways of understanding the past’ (2006, p. 10). By this account, memory is counter-memory. Unsanctioned, subversive, from below or from the margins, it attempts to overthrow or deconstruct the memory-as-history and to dislodge it from its position of authority. Memory resists amnesia. It refuses the political and ideological ‘forgetting’ of people and events and counter-acting the ‘selective traditions’ (Williams, 1961) that overlook or silence the experience of those who are not included in it. It is thus a movement against repressive memorialization emerging from all the nooks and cracks of the present culture of memory.

The view of memory as ‘always already’ a counter-memory can be traced back to Foucault. In his essay ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, he identifies the historical sense as giving rise to ‘a view 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’ (1977, p. 160). Opposing the idea of ‘history as knowledge’, as ‘reminiscence or recognition’, and as ‘continuity or representative of a tradition’ (p. 160), Foucault’s conception of history as counter-memory implies it is actually a use of the past that
is no more organically related to identity and truth than any other narrative use of the past. In fact, it can be understood as 'just one more technology of memory', as Carolyn Steedman says (2001, p. 66). Neither memory nor counter-memory nor history constitutes the destiny of a person or a people. Instead, they are uses of the past that try to mask their own constructiveness as well as the non-neutrality of the subject of knowledge – of the historian, but also of s/he who re-members.

The movement towards seeing history as always already counter-memorial is evidently crucial to artistic projects that remember by way of rewriting. Thus, feminist 're-vision' (Adrienne Rich's term) attempts to intervene in the production of cultural memory by telling 'the other side of the story'. Similarly, postcolonial intertextuality conceived as a 'writing back to the centre,' as Salman Rushdie memorably phrased it, contributed to the characterization of postcolonial literatures as counter-narratives. The essays in this section focus on rewriting as a technology of cultural memory whose meanings, rather than being stable, are seen to change as culture itself, in its relationship to the past and in its understanding of that past, also changes.

Intertextuality, which basically means that texts are made of texts, re-inscribes those texts and thus remembers them. 'Intertextual mnemonics' certainly is one of the 'strategies employed to implant and keep literature in cultural and collective memory' (Grabes, 2005, p. xi). (The other strategies are genre, the canon and literary history.) As the citation of texts that are 'anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet already read' (Barthes, 1986, p. 60), intertextuality itself is also a mnemonics and can thus be understood as a technology of memory. As Bakhtin explains in 'Discourse in the Novel', words remember the contexts in which they have been; they carry the 'taste' of these contexts, are shot through with the intentions and accents of others. Novelists employ the words' heteroglossia to achieve their purpose, carefully orchestrating the echoes of the words' previous contexts to resonate through the novel, using intertextuality as a technology of memory to invoke these other worlds.

Nagihan Haliloglu's reading of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* in Chapter 5 evokes this understanding of intertextuality as reinscription and polyphony in her notion of 'writing back together', while Ann Miller, in Chapter 4, shows how the recent Blake and Mortimer comic-strip albums retrospectively re-contour Jacobs's 1950s moral and political universe, stripping it of colonial overtones unpalatable to a twenty-first century readership. In Miller's analysis the *ligne claire* (clear line) serves as a technology of memory that can summon up 'the lost world of certitudes mapped out in the original albums' only after adjustments
to Jacobs's referential system. Similarly, Plate argues that as re-visions proliferate, 'telling the other side of the story' becomes a kind of shopping for alternative versions. In this (commercial) context, mythical retelling can continue to work as a technology of memory that brings women's stories into cultural memory and thus 'alters or expands the options for the future' (Belsey, 2005, p. 16). Together, the essays in this section demonstrate how rewriting as a technology of memory works to resist the supposed homogeneity and hegemony of 'official' or dominant memory yet is itself subject to change as the meaning of the past itself changes. Rewriting, indeed, enacts 'one of the crucial features of cultural memory', Catherine Belsey writes: 'We remember the past not simply as it was, but... as it will turn out to have been, in consequence of our remembering it' (p. 4).

In Chapter 4, Ann Miller turns to a bestselling series of comic-strip albums, which have resurrected Blake and Mortimer, heroes created by the Belgian artist E. P. Jacobs in 1946. She addresses the question of technologies of memory by considering the ligne claire, the characteristic drawing style used by Jacobs as well as by Hergé, which was subverted by other artists for satirical purposes or postmodern irony. However, when Blake and Mortimer were resurrected in 1996, irony and pastiche were eschewed in favour of a convincing evocation of Jacobs's vision of the 1950s. This was achieved by means of 'a detour and mythological reworking,' Miller argues.

In Chapter 5, Nagihan Haliloglu offers an intertextual reading of Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea, which relates memories that have been hidden in the discursive space of Jane Eyre. She proposes 'writing back' as a technology of memory, an orchestration on the part of the writer that gives expression to memories of certain subjects. She argues that remembering in the form of self-narration and in the narrative space of a single novel reveals the similarities between the experiences of the two different colonial subjects of Antoinette (Bertha in Jane Eyre) and Rochester.

In Chapter 6, Liedeke Plate discusses women's rewriting as a powerful political and ideological tool in the shaping of cultural memory. She highlights the success of feminist re-vision as a technology of memory aimed at affecting how we remember culturally central texts, yet submits that the role of rewriting has altered in the context of the present 'liquid' culture of memory. Taking her cue from Jeanette Winterson's retelling of myth in The Stone Gods, she proposes mythical retelling as a mode of rewriting that is particularly suited to the contemporary condition.