

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Mediating the past: Memory practices between social cohesion and fragmentation

Braunschweig (Germany), 14 – 16 March 2012

Convened by:

Felicitas Macgilchrist

(Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig, Germany)

and

Geert Jacobs

(Department of Linguistics, Ghent University, Belgium)

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

1. Executive summary

The ESF Exploratory Workshop on *Mediating the past: Memory practices between social cohesion and fragmentation* was held at the Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany, over 3 days (from 14 to 16 March 2012).

Participation numbered 21 people from 10 different countries (Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, Serbia, Lithuania, Spain, Italy and the Czech Republic): the two convenors Felicitas MACGILCHRIST and Geert JACOBS, the ESF representative Naomi SEGAL, the artist Juan GARAIZABAL and Johanna AHLRICHS, Leon BARKHO, Alexandra BINNENKADE, Colleen COTTER, Nevena DAKOVIĆ, Endre DÁNYI, Maria Cristina GATTI, Andrew HOSKINS, Jurga JONUTYTE, Petr KADERKA, Kornelia KONCZAL, Sabine MOLLER, Daniel PERRIN, Ellen VAN PRAET and Tom VAN HOUT. Unfortunately, there were two last-minute cancellations: Astrid ERLI and Els TOBACK could not join us because of illness.

Before the workshop, the convenors assembled a reader with a dozen recently published research articles within the transdisciplinary domain of memory studies and ethnography. All participants were invited to read these articles. In addition, a number of presenters forwarded their data (e.g. transcripts of interviews) to all, to allow for careful preparation.

The participants met on Tuesday evening March 13 and during an informal dinner they were able to get to know each other and exchange expectations on the workshop.

On Wednesday March 14 the convenors introduced the topic of the workshop. Next, there was a welcome word delivered by the ESF representative. This was followed by a lecture by Andrew Hoskins in which he presented a state-of-the-art bird's eye view of the field of memory studies. In the afternoon there was a session on practices with a presentation by Felicitas Macgilchrist and Endre Danyi, and one on linguistic ethnography with a presentation by Geert Jacobs and Daniel Perrin.

On this first day the focus was on a meta-perspective, bringing together concepts and methodologies from wide-ranging fields and bridging the gaps between the disciplines represented. All talks were followed by an initial response by a designated discussant, with extensive time for Q&A and plenary discussion.

The second day, Thursday March 15, was devoted to parallel working groups with a stress on hands-on, data-driven and case-based workshops in groups of 6 to 8 participants (see below for details). Here the focus was on the empirical work and the practicalities of everyday research practice. In the evening, Spanish conceptual memory artist Juan Garaizabal presented his *Memorias Urbanas* project, triggering an interesting debate on research, dissemination and the arts.

On Friday March 16 Maria Cristina Gatti and Ellen Van Praet first presented an informal wrap-up of the previous two days' proceedings. The rest of the morning session was organized in four small break-out groups exploring specific follow-up themes. Each of the groups presented their findings to the rest of the party.

In the afternoon, we travelled to Berlin by train to visit Juan Garaizabal's studio as well as the site of a new memory-related installation.

Generally speaking, the workshop explored how different patterns of memory practices across Europe lead to different forms of social cohesion/fragmentation. Despite the large number of studies across a range of disciplines, it was observed that surprisingly few empirical studies have investigated how interpretations of the past are actually mediated and engaged in specific everyday and institutional settings. This question is increasingly important, given the wide-spread perception that today's world is constantly changing at great speed. So in this ESF exploratory workshop we have brought together for the first time experts from memory studies and linguistic ethnography to explore how to open up 'memory practices' as a substantive field of enquiry. The former shared their expertise in the dynamics and mediation of memory; the latter in how language and interaction figure in struggles over meaning, processes of inclusion and exclusion and the mediation of social cohesion and fragmentation.

2. Scientific content of the event

In his introductory lecture Andrew Hoskins asked what are memory's prospects amidst today's technology-driven emergent transformations and explored some of the challenges for Memory Studies in probing remembering in post-scarcity culture. In particular, he argued that what was once scarce and unrepresentable from the past in the past, is being made increasingly visible and accessible through the digitization of everything. At the same time, digital recording and documenting tools accidentally and intentionally transform the potential for what the past will become. In this way, Hoskins showed, digital connectivity re-aligns pasts and futures in a more complex set of present relations through this 'renewal' (increasingly accessible, searchable, minable post-scarcity present) and through the future being made contingent on a new random mix of digital practices of varying scales of recording, posting and tagging etc.

In the session on practices, Felicitas Macgilchrist and Endre Danyi started out from the idea that the hegemonic status of parliamentary democracy in Europe depends on the continuous elimination of political realities defined in opposition to it, including monarchy, communism and fascism. They went on to examine two sets of memory practices associated with parliamentary democracy as the single best model of governance. By focusing on the work that goes into the making of remembered pasts and forgotten presents, they problematised this singularity and explored fissures not outside, but within hegemonic formations. The first case explored the writing of a history textbook in Germany and unfolded the practices involved in shaping what counts as worth remembering about the revolution in 1918/19 and the early days of the Weimar republic. The second case explored how conflicting memory practices unfold in the Hungarian parliament building, a gigantic neo-Gothic palace in the centre of Budapest, built at the end of the nineteenth century. Drawing on the two cases, they raised questions about how memory studies can observe the making of memory objects, about non-coherence and messiness, about humanism, and about the analytical concepts used to explore memory practices (materiality, discourse, text, practices).

In the session on linguistic ethnography, Geert Jacobs and Daniel Perrin explored ethnography as a research framework and demonstrated how it can contribute to the study of memory practices. Following Perrin (2012) and drawing on fieldwork in Belgian and Swiss newsrooms, they showed how ethnography relates researchers' prior knowledge with insider perspectives and how data are gathered by sustained engagement in the field. In addition, they showed how ethnography is focused on understanding participants and discussed issues of generalization. Other topics that were raised included the delicate and complex

interplay between discourse and remembrance, re-present-ation in the news and post-memory, and preconceptions and truth.

In the data-driven parallel sessions on Thursday the following cases were presented:

Jurga Jonutyte presented work based on her investigations of conflict memories in Lithuanian borderline towns.

Nevena Dakovic analysed the memorialization of the Holocaust (in Nazi-occupied Serbia) and its (political) instrumentalisation – in the new millennium – for the reinterpretation of the recent ex-Yugoslav wars (of the 1990s) and the role of Serbia in these.

Drawing on interview data gathered in 2011 in the Boston area Alexandra Binnenkade focused on what teachers do in their classroom when they address past social violence as it has occurred during the Civil Rights Movement.

Tom Van Hout explored how theoretical concepts and analytical procedures drawn from linguistic ethnography align with memory studies.

Colleen Cotter examined issues of recurrence and circulation in news discourse and how it creates and is created by social memory alongside journalistic practice.

Sabine Moller's study of a media-based transmission of contemporary history focused on two, nationally as well as internationally, very successful history based comedies, viz. how students in Germany and the United States make sense of the tragicomedies *Forrest Gump* (1994) and *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003).

In the evening session Spanish conceptual artist Garaizabal presented his *Memoria Urbana* project at the Bohemian Church of Bethlehem in Berlin.

On Friday Maria Cristina Gatti and Ellen Van Praet presented a summary of the previous two days. Next, in small break-out groups the participants brainstormed on the extent to which our goals have been reached and on the potential for follow-up collaboration.

In the afternoon, we travelled to Berlin and visited Juan Garaizabal's studio and the site for his forthcoming installation remembering the Bohemian church.

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field, outcome

We believe the workshop was a great success in working towards the four specific goals that were spelled out in the original proposal and reconfirmed at the start of the workshop:

- Sketch the *contours of a new field* emerging from what could be called a paradigm shift from a traditional focus on relatively static cultural 'products' and 'representations' to dynamic and heterogeneous cultural 'processes' and 'practices',
- Establish a *network* of expert EU scholars with shared interests across disciplines,
- Develop a *clear focus for high-impact breakthrough research on memory practices*, i.e. a research agenda for those issues which should be consolidated to have the highest breakthrough impact on both scholarly and public debates, and
- Establish the groundwork for *future collaborative actions*.

Also, the workshop has actively contributed to international debates on contemporary links between collective remembering and social cohesion in general, and on how memory constitutes a sense of exclusion and/or misrepresentation in particular. The key concepts that were explored include collective, cultural and social memory, practice theory, memory in action and linguistic ethnography. More than ever, we have experienced that the only way to approach these issues is to work across disciplines, involving scholars who are not directly working on memory.

In concrete terms, the convenors will be taking steps towards the publication of a special issue on memory practices in a leading international journal, including a full version of a position paper and selected papers. In addition, various participants have announced that they will apply for funding for follow-up network meetings with their national funding bodies. Finally, based on the discussions at the Braunschweig workshop, the two convenors, in conjunction with Andrew Hoskins and Jurga Jonutyte, have submitted an Outline Proposal to the HERA JRP 'Cultural Encounters'. Project title: "Turbulent memoryscapes: Institutional mediations of past conflict in journalism and educational media".

4. Final programme

Tuesday 13 March 2012

Afternoon Arrival

*8pm Informal drinks; dinner and snacks
(Siebenschläfer Bar, Scharmstrasse 22, 38100 Braunschweig)*

Wednesday 14 March 2012

10.00-10.10 **Welcome by Conveners**

Felicitas Macgilchrist (Georg Eckert Institute, Germany)

Geert Jacobs (Ghent University, Belgium)

10.20-10.40 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**

Naomi Segal (Standing Committee for the Humanities, SCH)

10.40-11.00 **Participant introductions**

11.00-11.15 *Coffee /Tea Break*

11.15-12.30 SESSION 1: Memory Studies

11.15-12.00 **Remembering in post-scarcity culture**

Andrew Hoskins (University of Glasgow, UK)

12.00-12.45 **Discussion**

Led by Felicitas Macgilchrist (Georg Eckert Institute, Braunschweig, Germany)

12.45-14.00 *Lunch*

14.00-15.30 SESSION 2: Practices

14.00-14.40 **Memory Practices: Remembered pasts, Former presents**

Endre Danyi (University of Lancaster, UK)

Felicitas Macgilchrist (Georg Eckert Institute, Braunschweig, Germany)

14.40-15.30 **Discussion**

Led by Leon Barkho (Jönköping University, Sweden)

15.30-16.00 *Coffee / Tea Break*

16.00-18.00 SESSION 3: Linguistic Ethnography

16.00-17.00 **Linguistic ethnography: Understanding practitioners' perspectives**

Geert Jacobs (Ghent University, Belgium)

Daniel Perrin (Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland)

17.00-18.00 **Discussion**

Led by **Alexandra Binnenkade** (University of Basel, Switzerland)

19.00 *Dinner*

Thursday 15 March 2012

09.30-17.00 **SESSION 4 & 5: Memory Conflicts, Cultural Memory and Social Change**

Parallel Working Groups:

Memories of conflicts: Narration of trauma and guilt in Lithuanian borderline areas

Jurga Jonutyte (Vytauto Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania)

Digital memories of the Holocaust: Jewish identity in Belgrade

Nevena Daković (University of Belgrade, Serbia)

Unraveling memory practices: The multiperspectivist case of a teacher. A hands-on discussion of theory and practice.

Alexandra Binnenkade (University of Basel, Switzerland)

Memory work, professional vision and expertise

Tom Van Hout (Leiden University, Netherlands)

The cyclicity of news: How memory motivates news practice

Colleen Cotter (Queen Mary University of London, UK)

Watching contemporary history: Methodological explorations

Sabine Moller (University of Flensburg, Germany)

17.30-18.30 SESSION 6: Memorias Urbana: Art and Memory

Juan Garaizabal (Memorias Urbanas Project, Spain)

19.30 *Dinner*

Friday 16 March 2012

09.30-12.00 **SESSION 7: Follow-up activities**

09.30-12.00 **Discussion of follow-up activities and future plans**

12.00-18.00 **EXCURSION**

12.00-18.00 **Excursion to Berlin: Memorias Urbanas Art Project**

Including simple lunch

18.30 *End of Workshop and departure from Berlin*

5. Final list of participants

Convenor:

1. **Felicitas MACGILCHRIST**
Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale
Schulbuchforschung
Celler Str. 3
38114 Braunschweig
Germany
macgilchrist@gei.de

Co-Convenor:

2. **Geert JACOBS**
Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Ghent University
Tweekerkenstraat 2
9000 Ghent
Belgium
geert.jacobs@ugent.be

ESF Representative:

3. **Naomi SEGAL**
European Cultures & Languages
School of Arts
Birkbeck
University of London
43 Gordon Square
London
WC1H 0PD
UK
n.segal@bbk.ac.uk

Participants:

4. **Johanna AHLRICHS**
Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale
Schulbuchforschung
Celler Straße 3
38114 Braunschweig
Germany
ahlrichs@gei.de

5. Leon BARKHO

Jönköping International Business School
Jönköping University
P.O. Box 1026
551 11 Jönköping
Sweden
leon.barkho@jibs.hj.se

6. Alexandra BINNENKADE

Fellow of the Swiss National Science
Foundation
Universität Basel
St. Galler-Ring 158
4054 Basel
Switzerland
alexandra.binnenkade@me.com

7. Colleen COTTER

School of Languages, Linguistics and Film
Queen Mary
University London
Mile End Road
London E1 4NS
United Kingdom
c.m.cotter@qmul.ac.uk

8. Nevena DAKOVIĆ

Department of Theory and History
University of Arts in Belgrade
Kosancicev venac 29
Belgrade 11 000
Serbia
danev@sezampro.rs

9. Endre DÁNYI

Department of Sociology
Lancaster University
Bowland North
Lancaster University
Lancaster LA1 4YT
United Kingdom
edanyi@gmail.com

10. Astrid ERLI

Institut für England- und Amerikastudien
Goethe Universität Frankfurt
Grüneburgplatz 1
60323 Frankfurt/Main
Germany
erll@em.uni-frankfurt.de

11. Juan GARAIZABAL

Studio Juan Garaizabal
Gallarza 11
28002 Madrid
Spain
juan@memoriasurbanas.com

12. Maria Cristina GATTI

Faculty of Foreign Languages and
Literatures
University of Verona
Via San Francesco 22
37129 Verona
Italy
cristina.gatti@univr.it

13. Andrew HOSKINS

College of Social Science
University of Glasgow
Florentine House
53 Hillhead Street
Glasgow G12 8QF
United Kingdom
Andrew.Hoskins@glasgow.ac.uk

14. Jurga JONUTYTE

Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy
Vytauto Magnus University, Kaunas
Gedimino g. 44
44240 Kaunas
Lithuania
jurga.jonutyte@gmail.com

15. Petr KADERKA

Institute of the Czech Language
Academy of Sciences of the Czech
Republic
Letenska 4
118 51 Praha 1
Czech Republic
kaderka@ujc.cas.cz

16. Kornelia KONCZAL

Polnisches Institut Berlin
Burgstr. 27
10178 Berlin
Germany
konczal@panberlin.de

17. Sabine MOLLER

Institut für Geschichte und ihre Didaktik
Universität Flensburg
Auf dem Campus 1
24943 Flensburg
Germany
sabine.moller@hu-berlin.de

18. Daniel PERRIN

Institut für Angewandte
Medienwissenschaft
Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte
Wissenschaften
Theaterstrasse 15c
8400 Winterthur
Switzerland
daniel.perrin@bluewin.ch

19. Els TOBBACK

Centre Applied Linguistics
Faculty of Business Economics
Hasselt University
Campus Diepenbeek
Agoralaan - Gebouw D - Kamer B60
3590 Diepenbeek
Belgium
els.tobback@uhasselt.be

20. Ellen VAN PRAET

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Ghent University
Hoveniersberg 24
9000 Ghent
Belgium
Ellen.VanPraet@UGent.be

21. Tom VAN HOUT

Faculty of Humanities
Leiden University
Witte Singel-complex
P.N. van Eyckhof 4
2311 BV Leiden
Netherlands
t.van.hout@hum.leidenuniv.nl

6. Statistical information on participants (age bracket, countries of origin, M/F repartition, etc.) The statistics to be provided under section 6 can also include repartition by scientific specialty if relevant.

Not including ESF representative:

12 female, 8 male

5 Germany, 4 Belgium, 3 UK, 2 Switzerland, 1 Sweden, 1 Serbia, 1 Spain, 1 Italy, 1 Lithuania, 1 Czech Republic