

Things and Non-things

Memory. Archive. Algorithm.

MEMORY STUDIES

The study of memory is one of the most fashionable branches of scholarly inquiry in a wide variety of disciplines.

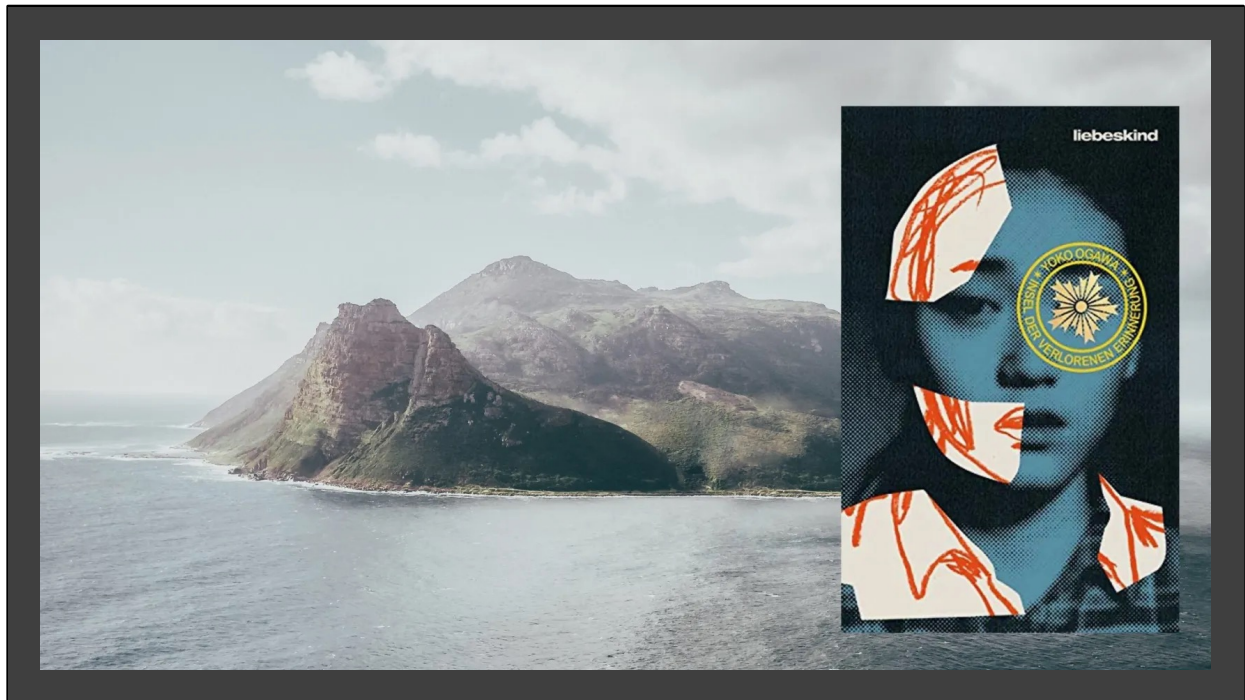


...a deepening sense of crisis often articulated in the reproach that our culture is terminally ill with amnesia.

...a crisis, born of the dangers to memory, perceived in the growth of technology, the image-laden spread of mass communication and the rapid acceleration of modern living.

THEORIST Andreas Huyssen locates the contemporary critical and artistic obsession with memory in "a deepening sense of crisis often articulated in the reproach that our culture is terminally ill with amnesia."

This is a crisis, born of the dangers to memory, perceived in the growth of technology, the image-laden spread of mass communication and the rapid acceleration of modern living.



In her celebrated novel *The Memory Police*, the Japanese writer Yōko Ogawa tells the story of a nameless island. Strange occurrences alarm its inhabitants: particular things start disappearing without explanation, and they disappear for ever. One day all the clocks are gone. Things that smell beautiful, and glittering things, wondrous things: hairbands, hats, perfume, fans, emeralds, stamps – roses and birds, all disappear. Once gone, the people start to forget what all these things were once for. Along with the things, memories disappear as well.



Ogawa's novel describes a totalitarian regime whose Memory Police, reminiscent of George Orwell's Thought Police in his novel 1984, purge society of things and memories. The people live in a constant state of forgetfulness and loss. Anyone found to be reminiscing is arrested. The protagonist's mother, who keeps threatened things in a secret chest of drawers to protect them, is chased and killed by the memory police.

things

According to the contemporary German Korean Philosopher Byung-Chul Han there are strong analogies between The Memory Police, and our contemporary life. Today, things are also constantly disappearing, without us seeming to notice.

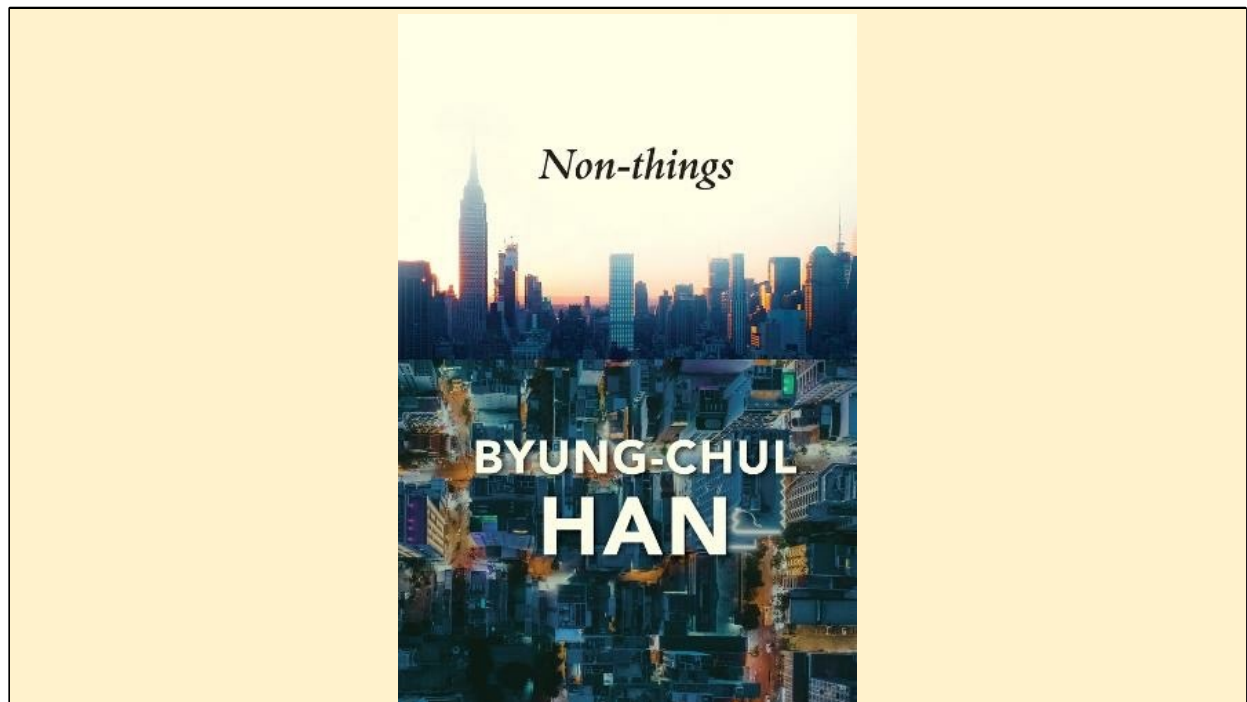
In contrast to Ogawa's dystopia, we do not live in a totalitarian regime whose memory police brutally rob us of our things and memories. It is rather that our intoxication by communication and information has made things disappear.

Vilém Flusser

Non-things

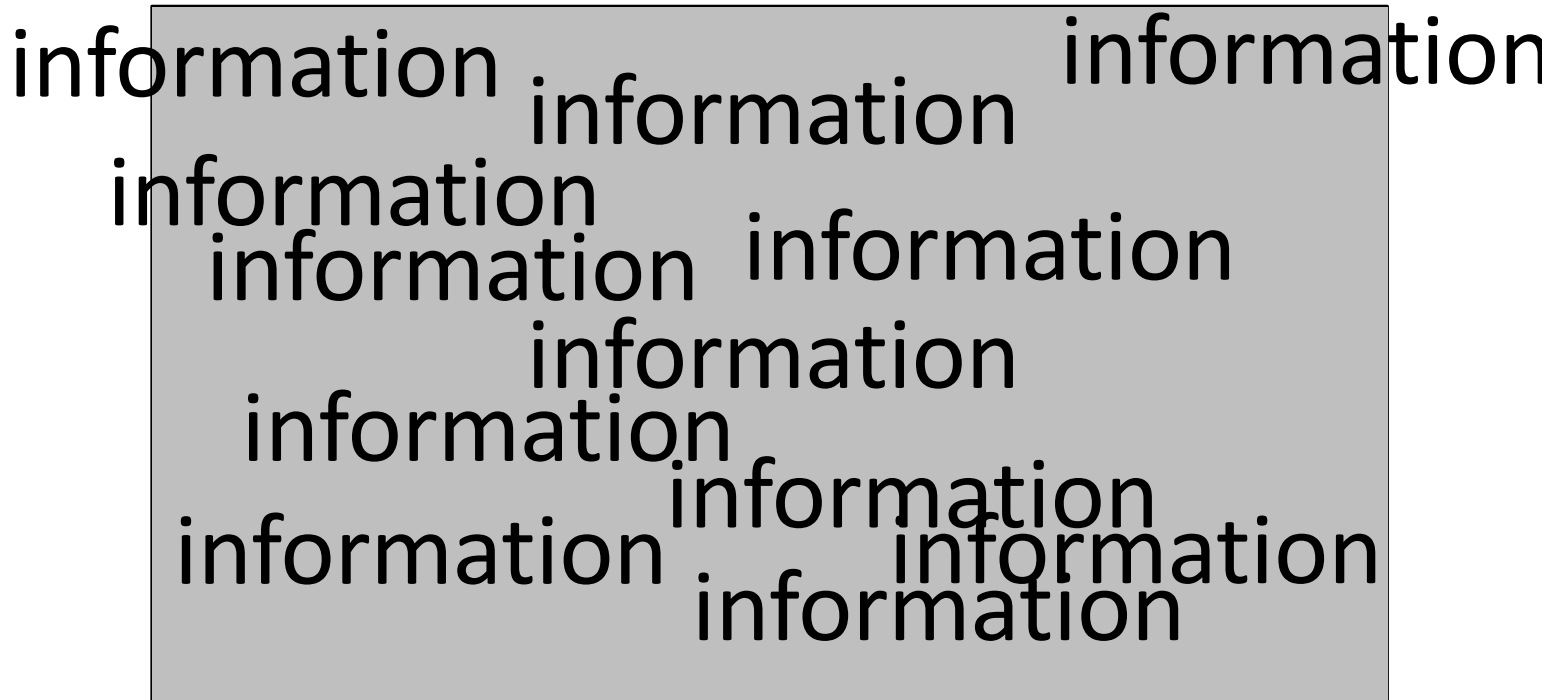
‘Non-things are currently entering our environment from all directions, and they are pushing away the things. These non-things are called information.’

As far back as the 1980's, the media theorist Vilém Flusser was already remarking that: ‘Non-things are currently entering our environment from all directions, and they are pushing away the things. These non-things are called information.’



Byung-Chal Han believes we are today experiencing the transition from the age of things to the age of non-things. Information, rather than things, determines the lifeworld.

We no longer dwell on the earth and under the sky but on Google Earth and in the Cloud. The world is becoming increasingly intangible, cloud-like and ghostly. There are no tangible and arrestable things.

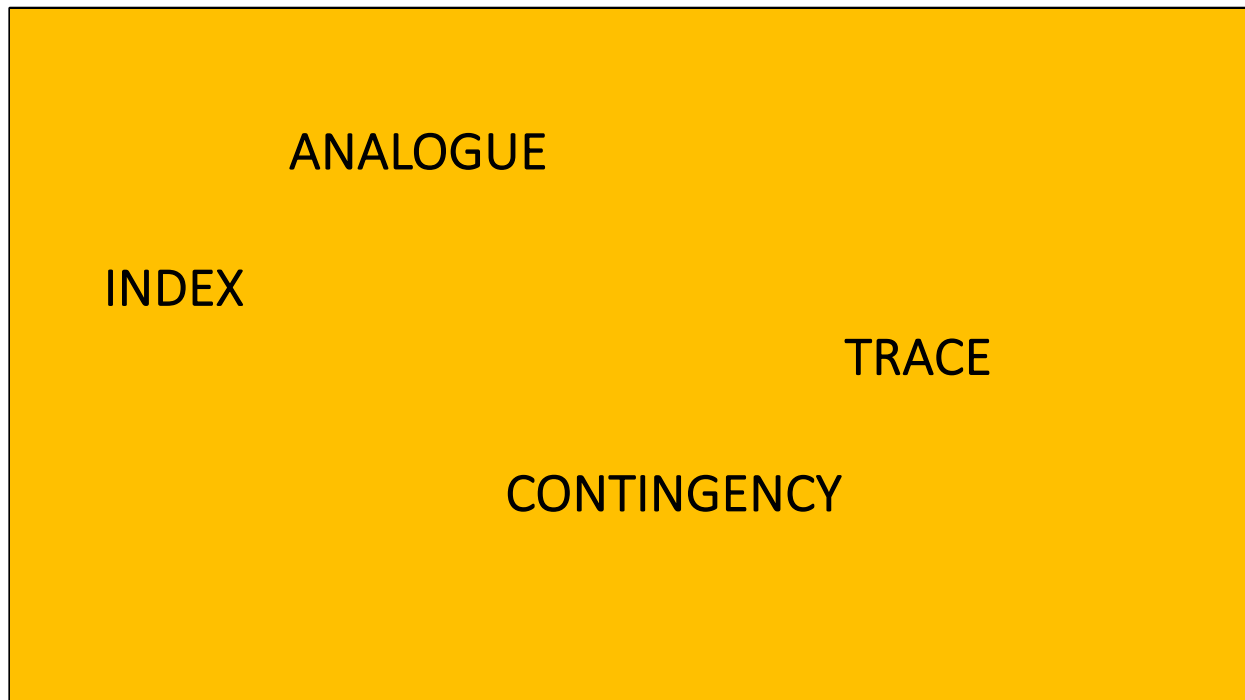


Information – that is, non-things – obscures things and drains them of their colour. Luckily, we do not live under a violent regime but unwittingly, we live under a rule of information that claims to be freedom.

Today's world is fading away and becoming information. Digitalization virtualizes and disembodies the world. It also abolishes memory. Instead of memory, we have vast quantities of data. In the place of the memory police, we have digital media, which does its job without violence and with little effort.



However, Han's and Huyssen's discussion of information and big data is entirely anthropocentric – framed from a humanist perspective
Counter to this, there are those post-humanist voices suggesting other more positive perspectives which we will look at in due course.



Initially though, the lecture is going to address THINGS rather than NON-THINGS via ideas of the analogue, the index, the trace, and contingency.

Analogue recording is an index of what it records, a trace that is **contingent**.

Something is an **indexical trace** when it is produced by contact with that which creates it, just as an analogue audio recording is made by sound waves touching a membrane, or magnetic strip, or a traditional film is made by light transforming the chemicals on a strip of celluloid.

INDEXICALITY

Based on **Charles Sanders Peirce's** semiotic theory of
three types of signs:

INDEXICALITY

Based on **Charles Sanders Peirce's** semiotic theory of three types of signs

SYMBOL

ICON

INDEX

T

- Symbol: signifies through *arbitrary* social convention

CAT

First is the SYMBOL (e.g. a word) which denotes its object solely by virtue of the fact that it will be interpreted to do so

- Symbol: signifies through *arbitrary* social convention

CAT

- Icon: signifies through likeness



Second is the **ICON** - which *resembles or imitates* its object like a diagram or a drawing

- Symbol: signifies through *arbitrary* social convention

CAT

- Icon: signifies through likeness



- Index: signifies through physical connection



Then finally there is the **INDEX** which denotes its object by virtue of an *actual connection* involving them – such as a footprint or a tyre track for example.

Analogue photographs are both iconic & indexical

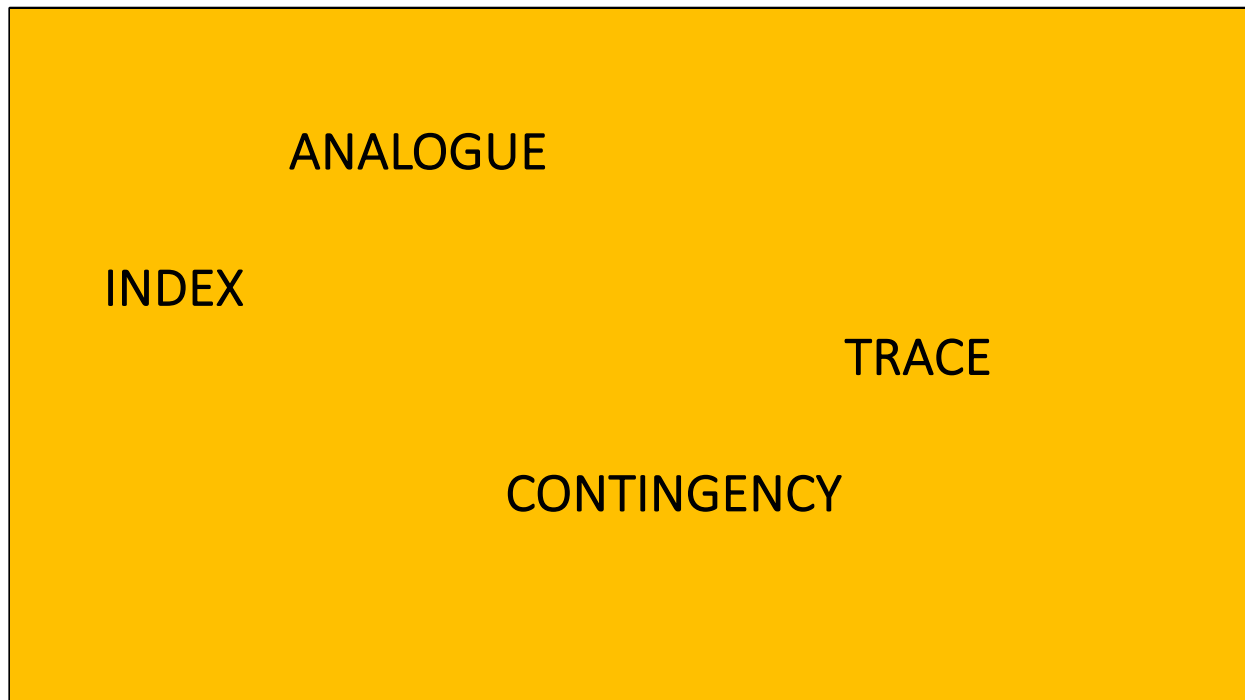
an analogue
photograph is
indexical



the referent is
physically
involved in the
creation of that
representation

An indexical sign is based in cause and effect, so an analogue photograph is indexical, as the light reflected directly off, and the shadows cast by, the subject, affect the light sensitive chemicals of the negative to produce the representation – so it is a representation of something (object, person, scene), the referent, in which the referent is physically involved in the creation of that representation.

Digital recording is not an indexical thing - it is just data, just information, a non-thing.

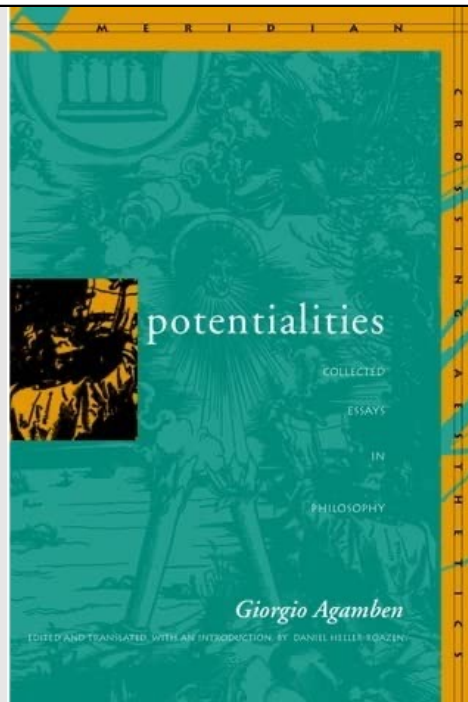


Analogue recording is an index of what it records, a trace that is **contingent**.

Something is **contingent** when it is subject to chance, when it just happens to be that way and could just as well have been otherwise.

GEORGIO AGAMBEN
"Potentialities"

POTENTIALITY



The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, argues that **contingency**, the condition in which things could just as well have been otherwise, involves **potentiality**.

Roland Barthes

‘punctum’

Walter Benjamin

‘aura’

Marcel Proust

‘madeleine’

Within cultural theory many major thinkers have been fascinated by the index and have associated the indexical with with melancholy and affect, most profoundly are three key touchstones within my PhD: Roland Barthes & Walter Benjamin – it is impossible to do justice to these thinkers’ a very short space of time but I will introduce their key ideas relating to the index



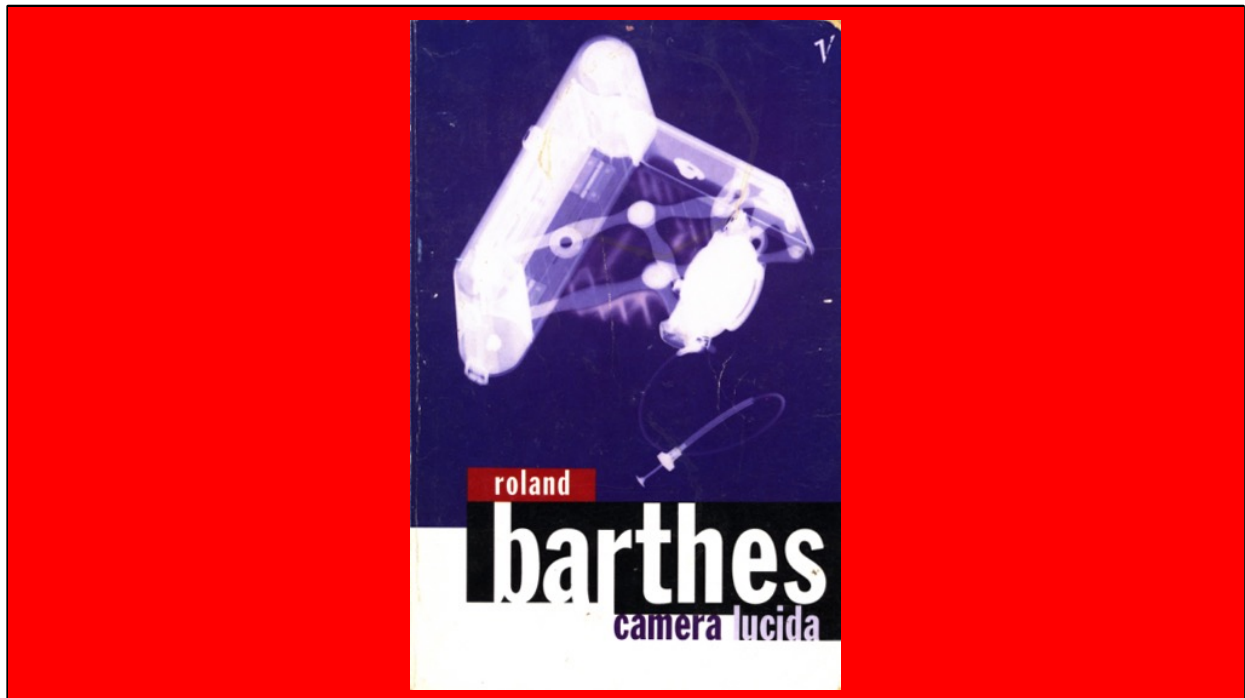
Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes (1915-1980), was one of the most prominent writers on visual culture in the 20th century. Barthes's work embodies a significant diversity, ranging between structuralist semiotics, critical theory and phenomenology.

Writing Degree Zero, 1968
Mythologies, 1972
The Pleasure of the Text, 1973
Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes, 1975
Image-Music-Text, 1977

(Dates refer to the English translations)

Structuralist linguistic theory and semiotics share the understanding that things in the world – objects, images, sounds, texts – are signs that convey meaning beyond their appearance, and must be deciphered or decoded in order to be understood. Barthes wrote a number of key semiotic texts including *Mythologies*, through to his essays in *Image, Music, Text*.



However, with *Camera Lucida*, his final book, he abandons much of his early semiotic analysis to explore photography's phenomenological properties through a lyric meditation on the nature of death.

After the death of his mother, Henriette in 1977. In his grief he makes an attempt to find the essence of his mother through photography and the second half of the book is dedicated to the pursuit and eventual discovery of a single revelatory image of his mother - a true 'object of remembrance'. Of the many photographs that exist, he rejects all the apparently realistic images of his mother (as he had known her), in favour of a picture made of her long before his birth, beyond his knowledge of her lifetime.

This very famous photograph - known as the Winter Garden photograph - of his mother as a young girl - is discussed at great length - but never shown

STUDIUM

general interest in, or appeal of, a photograph (or work)

PUNCTUM

an added element that disturbs the studium, punctuates or pierces it

In the first half of the book, he establishes these two key concepts – the studium & the punctum.

The studium, Barthes postulates, is the general interest in, or appeal of, a photograph or this could be applied to many other cultural artefacts – artworks, films, texts etc; it is an element that produces “unconcerned desire... of the order of liking, not of loving... a vague, slippery, irresponsible interest”. By contrast, the punctum is the detail or aspect that disturbs that studium, punctuates or pricks it, an “element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me”. He describes a unique and very personal response to the photographic detail that simultaneously attracts and repels, “A photograph’s punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)”.

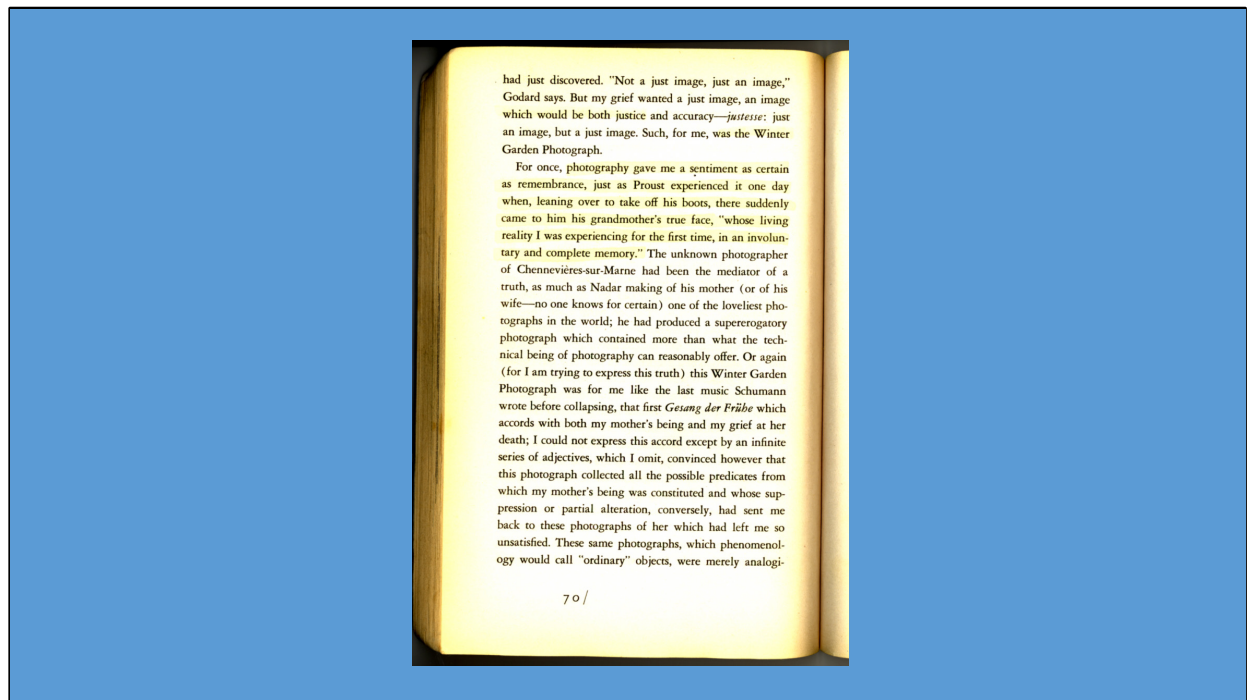


R. Mapplethorpe, *Self Portrait*, 1975. Barthes: "...the hand at the right degree of openness, the right density of abandonment..."



William Klein, *Little Italy, New York*, 1954

Barthes: "What I stubbornly see are one child's bad teeth"



Throughout the book, as in the example shown, Barthes refers repeatedly to the writing of Marcel Proust,



Proust's concept of the *Madeleine*, which incites involuntary memory

Early in Marcel Proust's great novel *In Search of Lost Time*, Proust's main character Marcel is struck by an indescribable feeling when he brings a cake – a madeleine - dipped in tea to his lips.

He experiences a profound sensation in recollection of his childhood.

This phenomenon he terms as mémoire involontaire. INVOLUNTARY
MEMORY



These ideas are possibly influenced by Proust's cousin-in-law, the philosopher Henri Bergson who was one of the first thinkers to proclaim the importance of paying attention to different types of memory. In *Matter and Memory*, 1896) established the concepts of 'habitual memory' and 'pure memory'.

Bergson was convinced that memory should not be considered a diluted or weakened form of perception, but that a clear division needed to be made between the two.

Henri Bergson : we should think of time in terms of duration (durée): “the preservation or prolongation of the past and entailing the co-existence of past and present”.

He suggested that we think of time in terms of duration (durée): “the preservation or prolongation of the past and entailing the co-existence of past and present”.

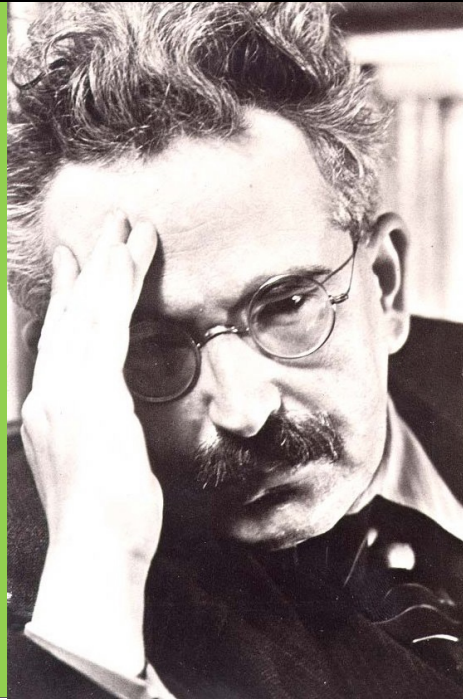
Gilles Deleuze, in his book *Bergsonism* (1966), describes duration as “a becoming that endures”

WALTER BENJAMIN

AURA - a peculiar web of space and time: the unique manifestation of a distance, however near it may be

the tiny spark of an accident

the *Optical Unconscious*



Another great thinker of the last century, Walter Benjamin the German philosopher, critic and essayist associated with the Frankfurt School.

He was also obsessed with representation and the index - and is most known for his concept of AURA. In 1931, five years before *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. His first concept of AURA was conceived in A short History of Photography, relates directly to its indexicality... a peculiar web of space and time: the unique manifestation of a distance, however near it may be.

He talks of photographs inviting you to look for “the tiny spark of an accident” much like Barthes Punctum.

Within a photograph OR any INDEXICAL ARTEFAT , the ‘optical unconscious’ is revealed and *memoire involontaire* is triggered.

Rachel Whiteread

HOUSE, London 1993



We are now going to look at some works that anchor memory through an indexical relationship with the subject represented, works that almost literally ‘trace off’ the actual world. Rachel Whiteread’s sculptures are essentially direct casts taken from objects – or, better, the surfaces of objects that hold traces of the object’s ‘life’ until being frozen in time by the casting process – and whose works, I argue, come as close as can be to a pure indexical relation.



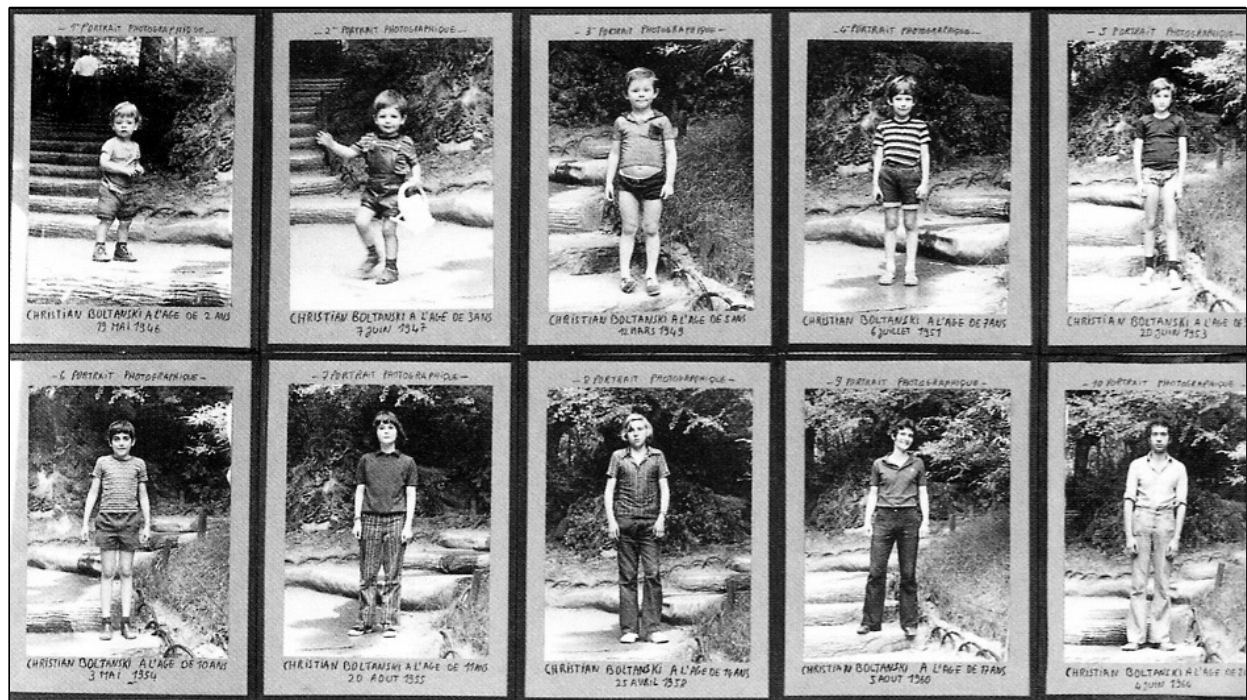


Rachel Whiteread - Holocaust Memorial, Vienna (2000)



Rachel Whiteread – Untitled (1995)

Rachel Whiteread - Holocaust Memorial, Vienna (2000)



Christian Boltanski famously works with ongoing themes of childhood and death, and of memory that shapes our sense of reality.

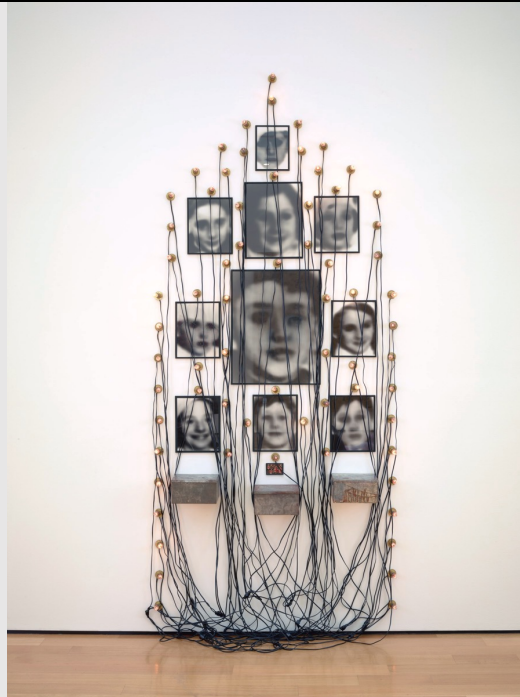
Much of Boltanski's work uses the power of light and shadow to emphasise memory's place in the twilight between past and present

The vast majority of Boltanski's work uses the photograph in some way and the medium has proved masterful at capturing the inconstancy of memory and self identification.

BARTHES "The photograph then becomes a bizarre medium, a new form of hallucination, false on the level of perception, true on the level of time; a temporal hallucination, so to speak, a modest shared hallucination (on the one hand 'it is not there' but on the other' it has indeed been'): a mad image chafed by reality.

Boltanski emphasises the contradictions possible in the photograph to map the contradictions in memory and representation itself.

Christian Boltanski
Monument (Odessa) 1990



Monument (Odessa) 1990

This piece reflects Boltanski's desire to blur the boundaries of life and art by exploring the complex relationship between death and memory.

Christian Boltanski



Consisting of black-and-white portrait photographs of unknown children from Dijon, the series is rendered anonymous by the close cropping of dark, blurry images.

Their identities are further shrouded by tangled electrical cords, which power dozens of small lights that create a glare on the glass over the photographs.

Christian Boltanski



The overall effect is that of a shrine or altar that memorializes an ineffable loss, indicating that life is rarely black or white, but merely filled with ironies and inconsistencies.

Christian Boltanski
Altar to Lycee Chases



The nameless documentation, repetition of images, illusionary sentimentality and unclear references that mark Boltanski's work will only contribute to the irreconcilable pain, loss and erasure of Holocaust victims and their families,

Altar to Lycee Chases, where the graduation photos of a private Viennese Jewish school from 1931 are rephotographed and lit to expose their shadowy skeletal forms;

"the semi-obliterated faces [do] have a moving ability to trace the incomprehensibility of what they are made to stand for".

Perhaps out of the gentle performances of Boltanski's installations once can see how Boltanski uses "...memory as the means through which reworkings, engagements and [physical] confrontations with the past can take place."

Monument Against Fascism

Esther Shalev-Gerz &
Jochen Gerz

Harburg 1986 - 1993



“We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12-metre-high lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely and the site of the Harburg monument against fascism will be empty. In the long run, it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice.”





Memory After Humanism

object-oriented memory
environmental memory
animal memory
Indigenous memory
feminist memory
radical alterity and memory
post-anthropomorphic memory
post-apocalyptic memory
multidirectional memory

Posthumanist thought

Rosi Braidotti revalues memory as one of the “main criteria for posthuman theory,” a positive life-affirming force of imagination

Cary Wolfe - memory has always been posthuman: in its cultural and institutional forms it has historically relied on prosthetic supports, technologies like writing, for the recording and storage of information or knowledge.

The examples and discussion so far have offered a humanist, anthropocentric perspective, but the topic of memory affords unique opportunities for posthumanist inquiry, including (but not limited to): Rosi Braidotti revalues memory as one of the “main criteria for posthuman theory,” a positive life-affirming force of imagination. Cary Wolfe maintains that, in a certain sense, memory has always been posthuman: in its cultural and institutional forms it has historically relied on prosthetic supports, technologies like writing, for the recording and storage of information or knowledge. Of these technical supports, writing is the “fundamental historically identifiable form” of the “exteriorization of memory.” This is the de-ontologization characteristic of modern memory whose roots, of course, are considerably older than modernity—a modern memory now supported by digital audiovisual media.



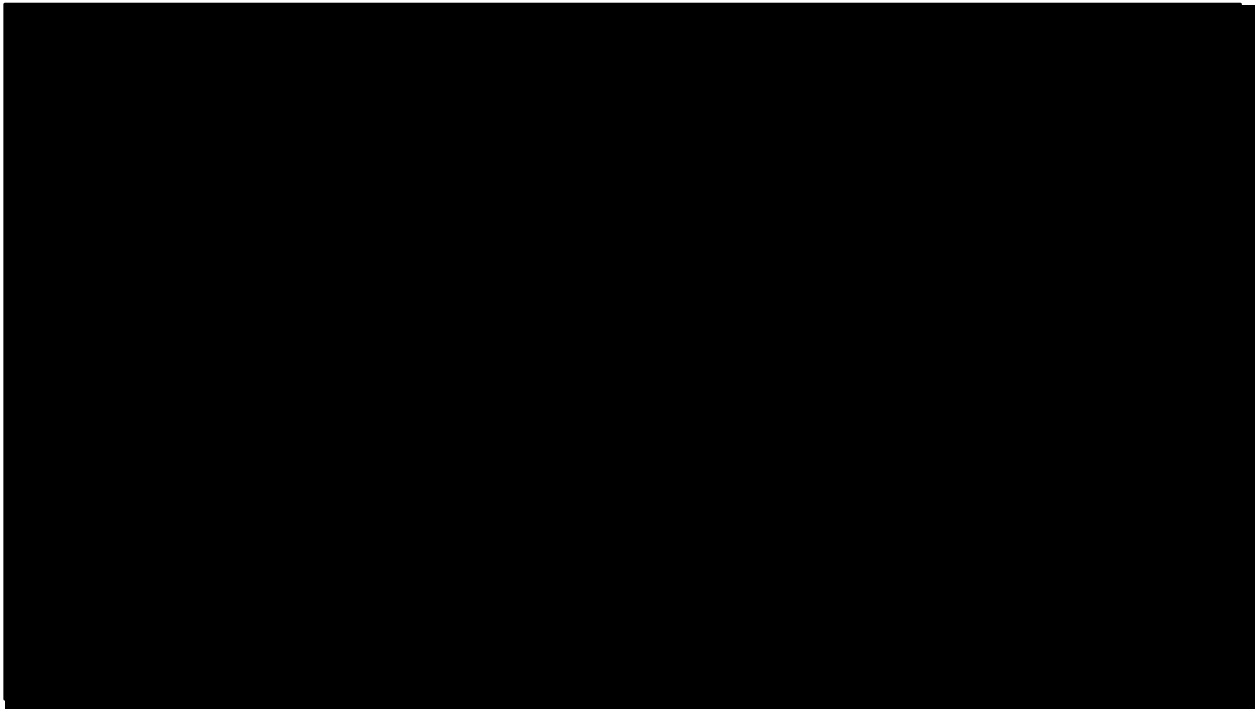
THE ALGORITHMIC IMAGE

The Digital Image in Photographic Culture: Algorithmic Photography and the Crisis of Representation
Daniel Rubinstein and Katrina Sluis (2013)

To start I'm going to borrow from Daniel Rubinstein and Katrina Sluis - 'Algorithmic photography and the crisis of representation'

In this text they celebrate the potentiality of the digital and particularly the algorithmic. In order to illustrate this they refer to two well-known feature films: The first is James Cameron's 1997 movie Titanic

The penultimate scene shows a panning sequence that starts from a close-up of Rose - the elderly survivor of the shipwreck. She seems peacefully asleep & according to cinematic convention she is flooded in a blue light that indicates the liminal space between living and dying





The camera slowly sweeps over her collection of photographs

Rose standing on a yacht next to a shark; Rose in the cockpit of a biplane, Rose on horseback, conveying a life lived to the full - as a succession of privileged moments.

The elaborately framed prints make it known that Rose's life unfolded as a linear progression of structured moments and she is dying peacefully in her bed after completing the course of prescribed adventures, while photographic memories gradually appear, come into focus and fade from view.



The succession of overlapping and fading snapshots is not so much a film within a film but rather an image of a life comprised of perfectly framed, perfectly exquisite motionless keepsakes.

Not snapshots of a life, but a life that is being frozen, arrested and flattened until it itself becomes a photograph.

Visual representation here is subjected to ice cold rationality - the possibility of movement and change is dismissed: photography has become the measure of time in which the whole bio-technological assemblage otherwise known as life - unfolds as a succession of images, each with a different narrative.

Yet this variety of settings and locations is only a cover-up for **identity**: at the centre of it all there is one unified subjectivity with a known point of origin and a predetermined outcome i.e. 'you will die in a warm bed'.



Plato's cave: the human being is someone who mistakes truth for the image on the wall

The image places modern man's existence as a living being in question

What is being offered is life reduced to a sequence of frozen moments: bound to the world of technological complexity, but ultimately detached from expressivity and spontaneity.

Rubenstein & Sluis paraphrase Foucault: since Plato charted the course of Western civilisation with the simile of the cave, the human being is someone who mistakes truth for the image on the wall. However, in the age of late capitalism it is the image that places modern man's existence as a living being in question.

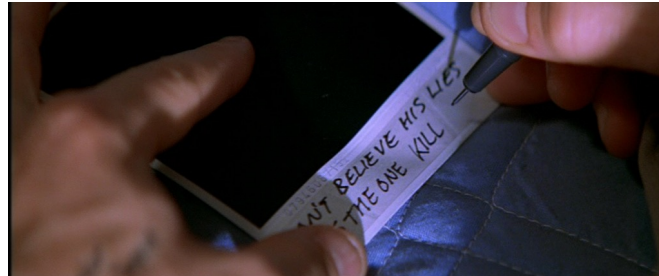


MEMENTO (Christopher Nolan, 2000)

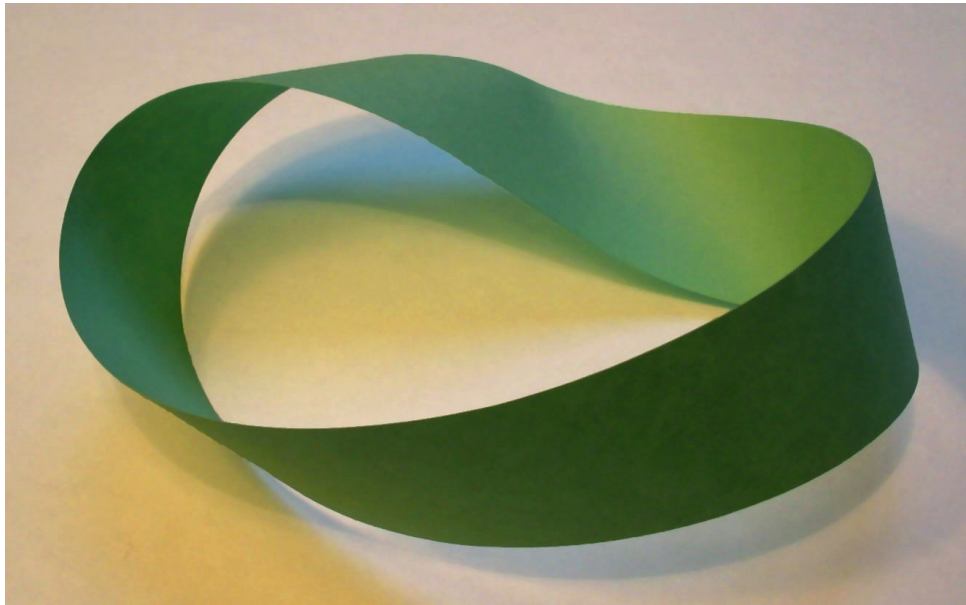
They compare the linearity of time represented through photographic flashbacks in the *Titanic* with the Christopher Nolan's film *Memento*, in which the lead character Lenard (Guy Pearce) attempts to identify his wife's killers and overcome his short-term amnesia through the production of polaroids as memory assistants.

The film itself is structured as two parallel sequences: one in black-and-white that proceeds chronologically forward, and a second series shot in colour shown in reverse order. It is edited in a way that establishes two temporal series that unfold in opposite directions, simultaneously revealing the future-past and the past-future.





The stack of Polaroids carried by Lenard are not seen as a collection of memories, but as points of access allowing movement from one temporality to another, following the topology of a **Möbius** strip.



Möbius strip

Möbius strip or band is a band with only one side and only one boundary curve. In order to present time as an infinite loop with a single surface and a blurred boundary between past and present, the film was edited according to an **algorithm** that combined the last scene of the first series with the first scene of the second series, then the one-before-last scene of the first series with the second scene of the second series, and so forth –

two parallel sequences: one in black-and-white going forward, and a second in colour going backwards creating two temporal series that unfold in opposite directions, simultaneously revealing the future-past and the past-future.



In this film photography is used to represent memory not as a succession of frozen moments but as a way to explore time directly through the impossibility of aligning real lived time with cinematic time, or of memory with photographs.

The algorithmic structuring of the film means that time is distributed evenly between different points of the story in a way that makes it both perplexing and somehow, strangely, still 'making sense'.

Instead of the hierarchical space of Cartesian geometry, with its all-seeing eye in the centre of the visible universe and the clear-cut distinction between the viewer and the story, it produces a temporality that is not chronological but fragmented and recursive.





Space is no longer drawn out of monocular perspective and there are no more privileged 'Kodak moments' as memories no longer imply linear time.

And as there is no spatio-temporal continuity, the meaning of each polaroid is established not only by its visible content but also by its place within sequences: meaning is never stable but changes depending on the location of the event within the narrative.

While in the Titanic the photograph is the visual marker of linear time, the photograph in Memento questions the status of photography as an archive and a memory prosthetic.

Or in other words, the photograph allows for the existence of a multiplicity of narrations and storylines without privileging a single one by referring to some pre-defined notion of 'truth'.



The subjective perspective is not the result of a linear stack of memories, but rather, a position constructed through an inherently imperfect narrative of recollected experiences plus their affective metadata - Braidotti

It is important to bear this in mind in coming to discuss the fate of the digital image online..

The digital image is an image/software machine that operates on several levels at once, some visual, others computational, operating within media ecologies involving both human and non-human actors.

Braidotti says: because memory is not inherently tethered to any objective reality, it can (re)construct the individual perspective through discursive practices. The subjective perspective is not the result of a linear stack of memories, but rather, a position constructed through an inherently imperfect narrative of recollected experiences plus their affective metadata. In this way, the possibility for change is opened, as individuals are no longer tethered to any kind of hard-coded or irrefutable point of reference, but rather, can interpret memories differently given a new set of discursive tools.

DELEUZE – DIFFERENCE



'This is no longer, or no longer only, the indiscernible becoming of distinct images; it is undecidable alternatives between circles of past, inextricable differences between peaks of present' (Deleuze 1989).

These ideas are references to the ideas of Gilles Deleuze, and particularly his concept of 'difference' as it is a model which challenges a singular unified identity as the foundation of rational thinking.

With respect to Memento one could draw parallels with Deleuze's analysis of the film *Last year in Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961) where he states: 'This is no longer, or no longer only, the indiscernible becoming of distinct images; it is undecidable alternatives between circles of past, inextricable differences between peaks of present' (Deleuze 1989).

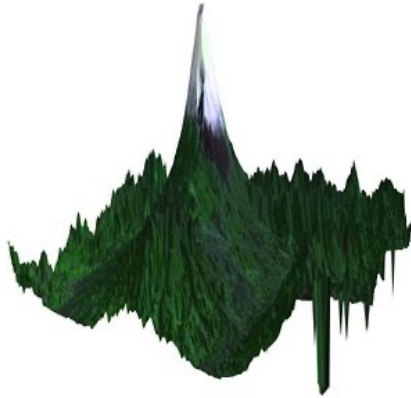
These two films imply that technologies of representation have the potential either to stultify life by reducing it to endless repetition of essentially identical moments and actions or that the same technologies and energies can be harnessed towards a view of life that embraces change, uncertainty, spontaneous becoming and difference.



Since the late 1980s, media artist Masaki Fujihata's work has been concerned with scale, shape, duration, spatial and temporal concentration and sedimentation, as well as with memory: the memory of the world, human memory, and the memory of media.

The 1990 Forbidden Fruits used a mathematical function called B-Spline to create curved 3D models that resembled water drops, peaches, and human torsos created without any reference to natural forms shaped by physical laws

Impressing Velocity 1994



1994 Impressing Velocity. Here Fujihata climbed Mt. Fuji with his assistants carrying (what was then) a bulky and cumbersome Global Positioning System and a video camera to record the time, distance, altitude, and their constantly changing relationship to the human body (Kusahara 2017, p. 65). In the final exhibition, videos, diagrams, maps, and the computer-generated images obtained from the data showed the virtual shape of Mt. Fuji proprioceptically experienced by the climber's body in the process of climbing.

BeHere: 1942 Masaki Fujihata (2022)



Eighty years ago, during World War II, the U.S. government forcibly removed Japanese Americans from the West Coast, incarcerating 120,000 in concentration camps

In the most recent project *BeHere:1942* is simultaneously an interactive augmented reality installation (where real-life objects are enhanced by 3D computer-generated objects) and a smartphone application.

Fujihata draws on thousands of historic photographs of the 1942 removal, including many taken by government-employed photographers Dorothea Lange and Russell Lee.

BeHere / 1942

Masaki Fujihata

With these processed or 'distilled' images, Fujihata reconstructed the relational microphysics the very site where thousands of Japanese Americans living in downtown Los Angeles' Little Tokyo neighborhood were ordered to report before trains and buses took them to the camps. He then re-stages micro-events of the period, filming them with the aid of photogrammetry, and subsequently rendering them as 3D model data. Visitors are then invited to step into those dark days of 1942 through an augmented reality re-creation.

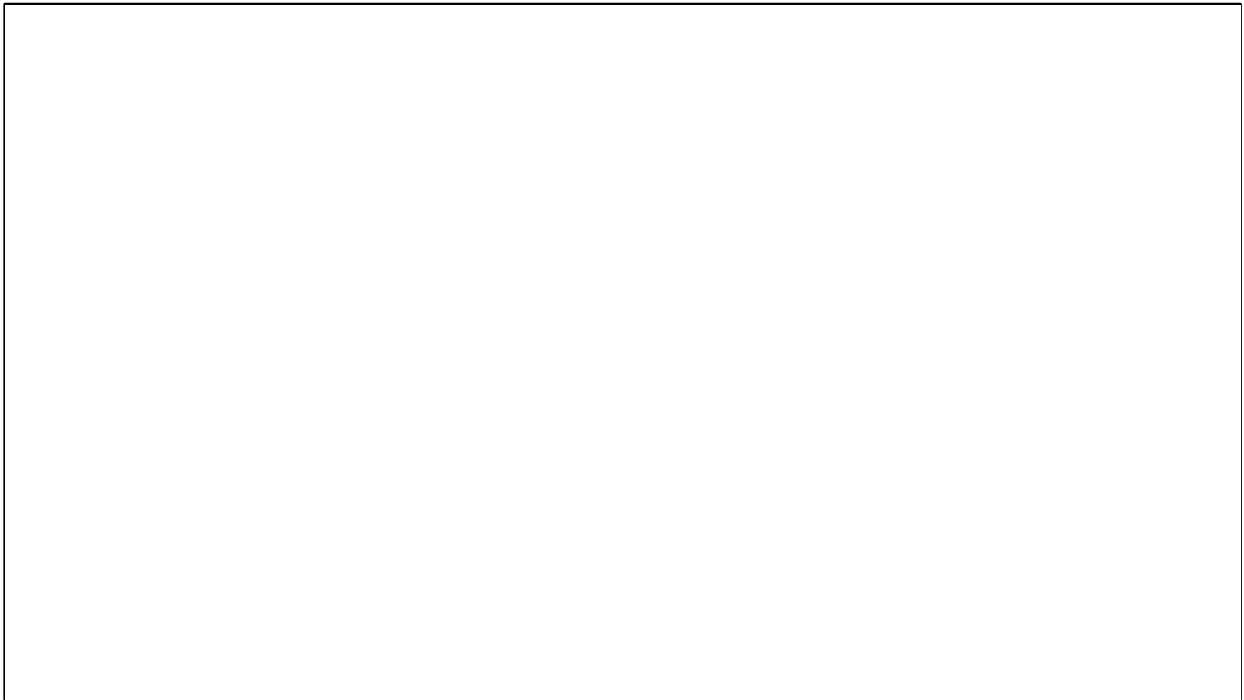
prosthetic memory

a deeply felt memory of a past event through which a person or a group did not live but which has been relationally constructed

Fujihata's work ponders the inter-expression of data, gadgets, people, and media. It ponders prosthetic memory.

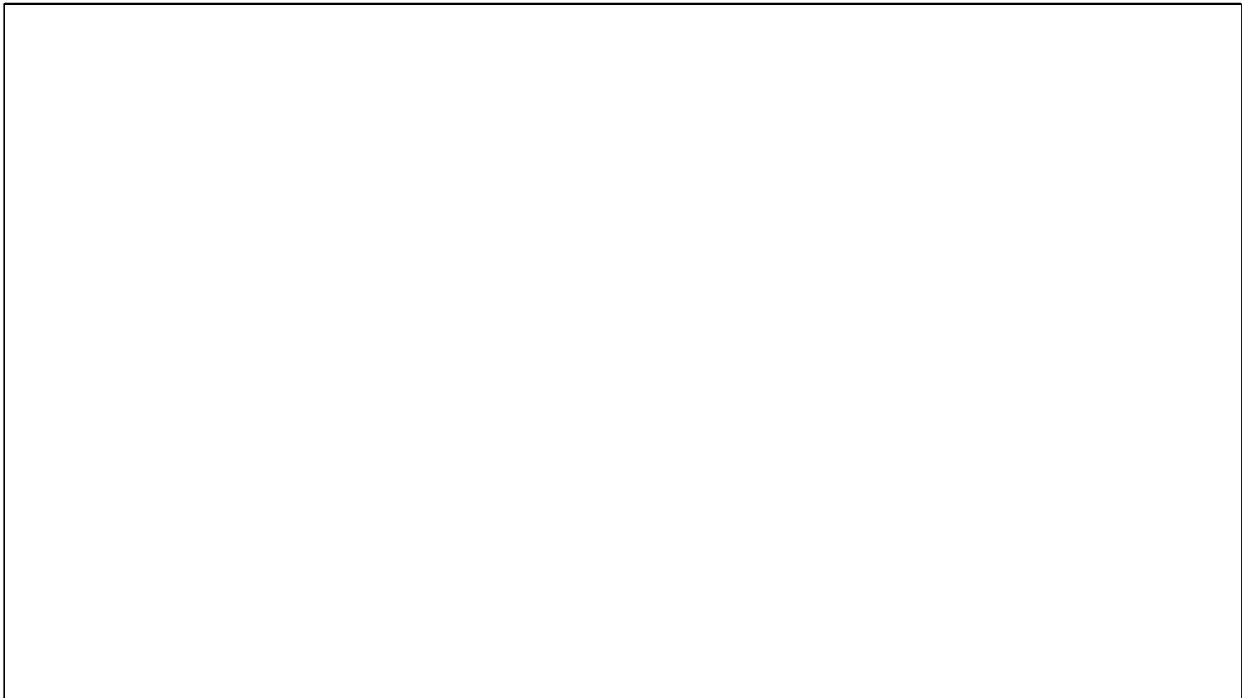
In human terms, prosthetic memory is a deeply felt memory of a past event through which a person or a group did not live but which has been relationally constructed by viewing films or other media, listening to audio recordings or reading books (Landsberg 2004). In medial terms, it is the memory embedded in a medium's "auto-praxis", its manner of processing time, space, energy, and matter.





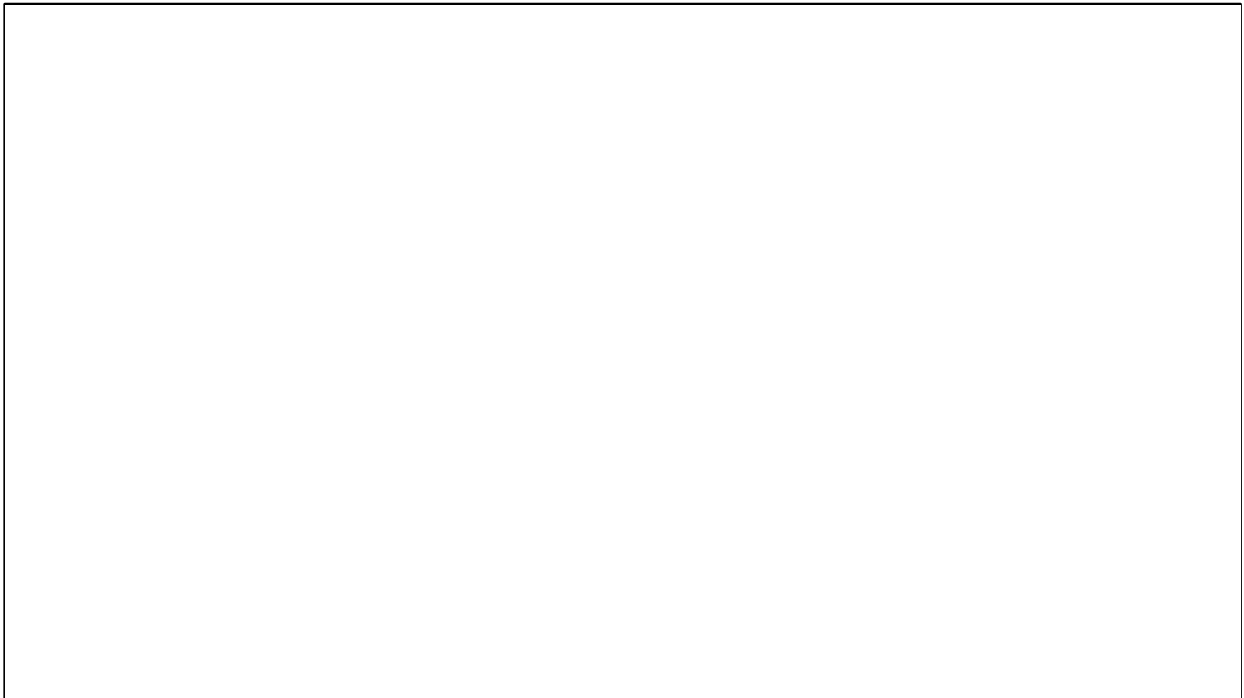
Oral testimony, nostalgia, melancholy and acts of commemoration have been fused together in many contemporary artworks across a wide range of practices. Artists working in this field and addressing these issues include Christian Boltanski, Mirosław Balka, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Tacita Dean, Louise Bourgeois, Rachel Whiteread, Jane & Louise Wilson & Kara Walker.

These artists share a range of common patterns in their works dealing with memory, such as the appropriation of discarded objects & photographs, the representation of absence and void, and the depiction of multiple temporalities within the same artwork. Essentially, their works engage viewers' attention and encourage participation by triggering emotions such as nostalgia and melancholy.



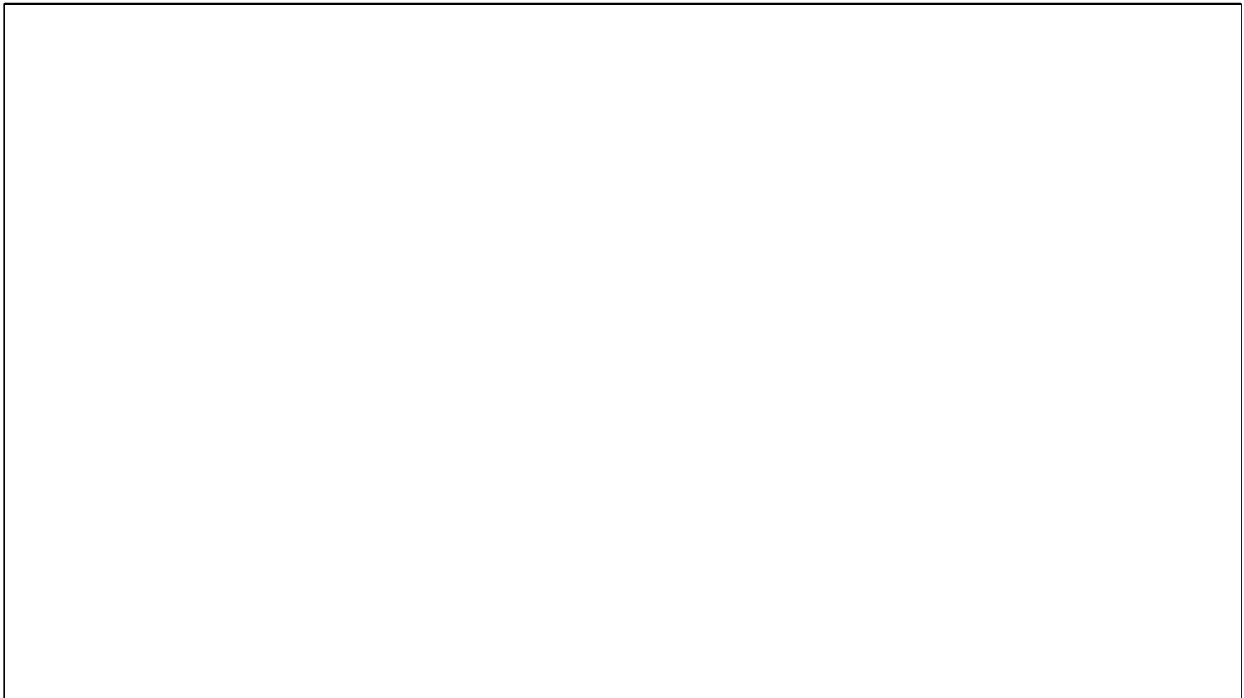
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These artists share a range of common patterns in their works dealing with memory, such as the appropriation of discarded objects & photographs, the representation of absence and void, and the depiction of multiple temporalities within the same artwork. Essentially, their works engage viewers' attention and encourage participation by triggering emotions such as nostalgia and melancholy.



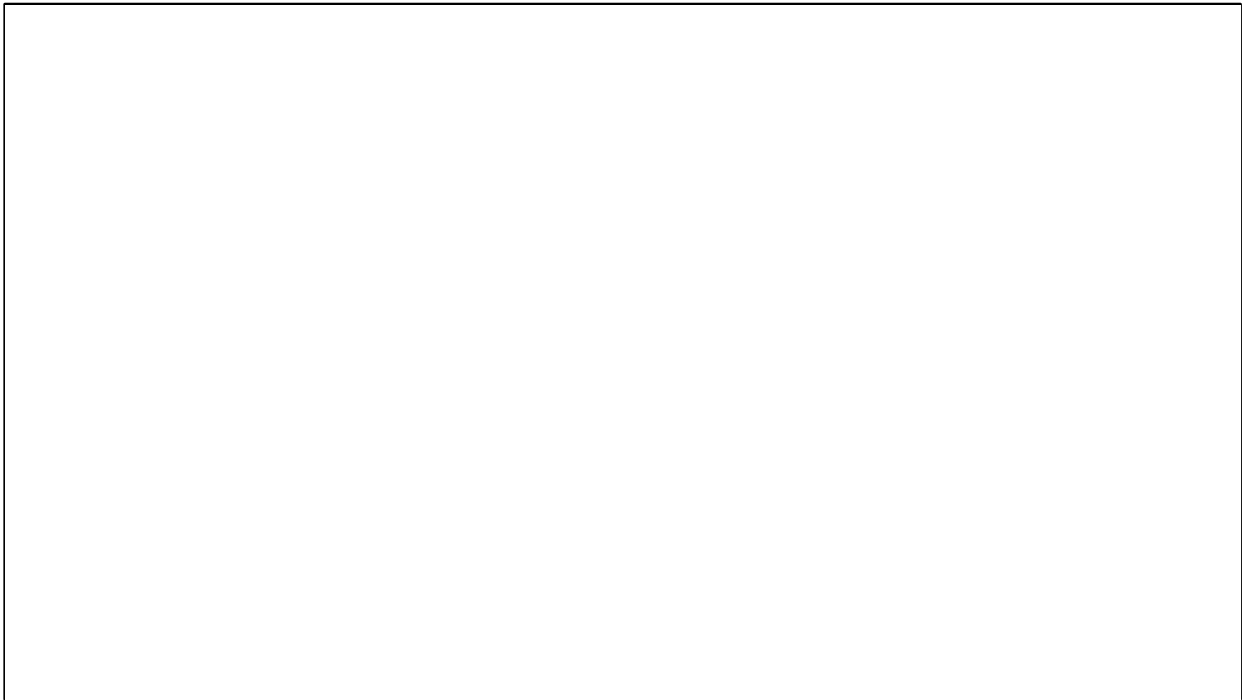
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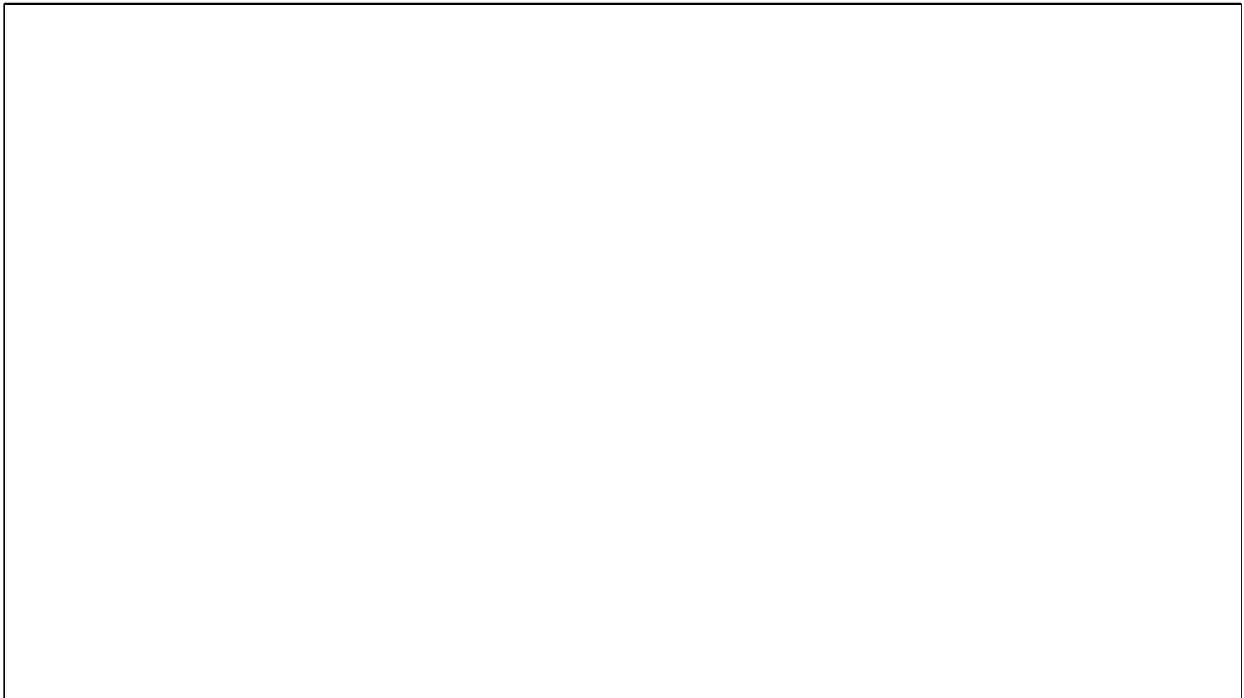
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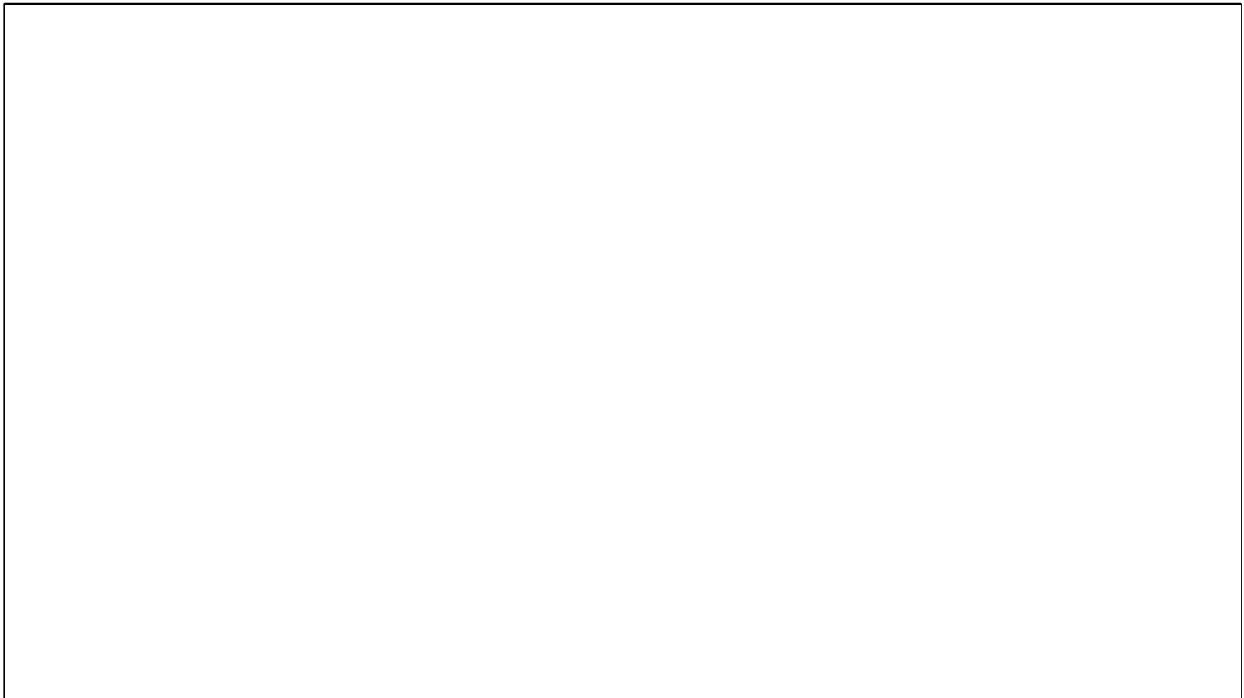
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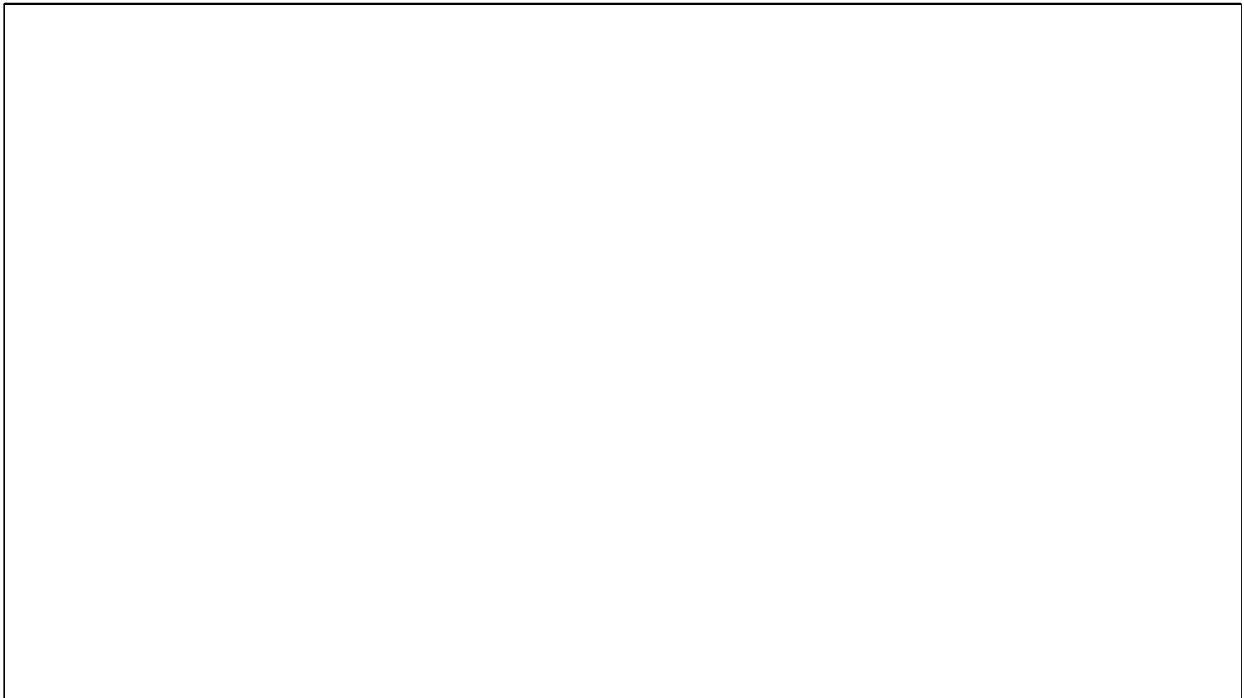
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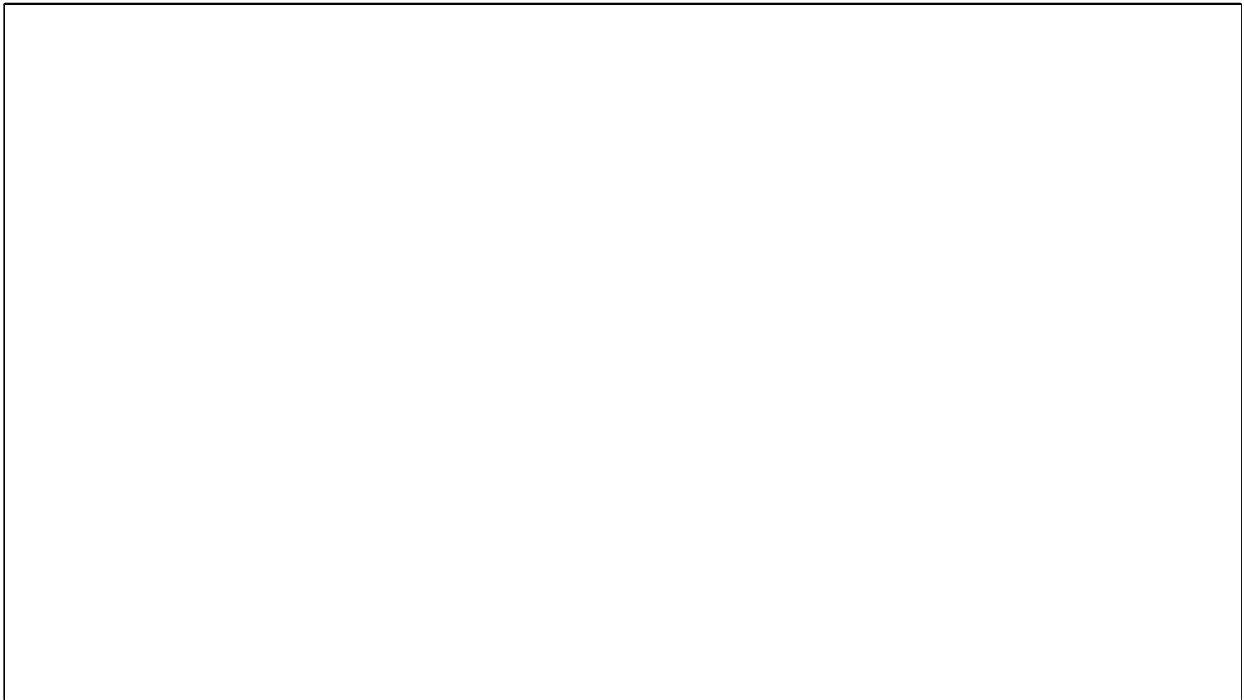
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“Memories are **potential**,
simultaneously irretrievable, instable,
fluid, transient, poignant, melancholic
and goldenly nostalgic.”

However, he highlights this in order to encourage an engagement with memory:

Memories are potential, simultaneously irretrievable, instable, fluid, transient, poignant, melancholic and goldenly nostalgic.

The mapping of memory offers history a chance to reinvent itself and yet concurrently exposes the uncrossable voids; those irreversible wounds that remind us of what humanity is capable of.

“It does not require much theoretical sophistication to see that all representation--whether in language, narrative, image or recorded sound--is based on memory.

In constantly questioning memory, we then hover in the in-between LIMINAL SPACE, neither the true and exact presentation of a past event, nor an entirely contemporary reinvention.



**when software and image collide the result is...
a paradigm shift with implications for thinking
about the ontological link between
representation, memory, time and identity.**

Paradoxically, photography points in two directions at once: one side faces the objects, people and situations THINGS as they appear in the 'real' world and is occupied with the representation of events by flattening their four dimensional space onto the two dimensional plane of the photograph (Flusser 2011).

The other side points towards photography's own conditions of manufacturing, which is to say towards the repetition and serial reproduction of the photographic image. When software and image collide the result is not just a different, processual image,

but also a **paradigm shift with implications for thinking about the ontological link between representation, memory, time and identity.**

Memory Perception Imagination

“a diverse set of cognitive capacities by which we retain information and reconstruct past experiences, usually for present purposes”.

The psychologist John Sutton defines the word *memory* as a label for “a diverse set of cognitive capacities by which we retain information and reconstruct past experiences, usually for present purposes”.

Memory Perception Imagination

We remember experiences and events that are not happening now, so memory differs from perception.

Memory Perception Imagination

“Memory is often suffused with emotion, and is closely involved in extended affective states - love and grief - and socially significant practices - promising and commemorating.”

We remember events which actually happened, so memory is unlike pure imagination.

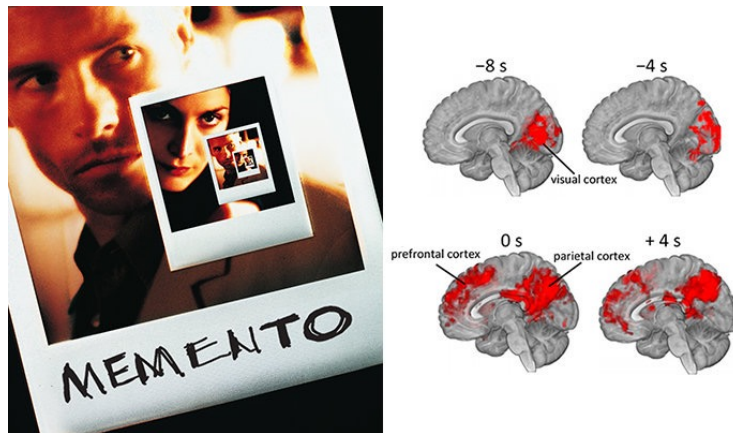
Yet, in practice, there can be close interactions between remembering, perceiving, and imagining.

Memory Perception Imagination

memory emotion affect love grief promise commemorate

As John Sutton reminds us “Remembering is often suffused with emotion, and is closely involved in both extended affective states such as love and grief, and socially significant practices such as promising and commemorating.

Much of our moral and social life depends on the peculiar ways in which we are embedded in time.



He goes on to say that: “Most notably, the human ability to conjure up long-gone but specific episodes of our lives is both familiar and puzzling, and is a key aspect of personal identity.”

Memory is *puzzling*, particularly because it’s a reconstruction of past events in which the reconstructed events have similarities with, but differ from, those original events.

“An understanding of memory has often been
curiously neglected by philosophers...

...even though it is so important in making sense of the
continuity of the self, of the relation between mind and body,
and of our experience of time.”

Memory is a fundamental part of what makes us human but as Sutton goes on to say, even though it is so “important in making sense of the relation between mind and body, and of our experience of time”, that an understanding of memory “has often been curiously neglected by philosophers”



Henri Bergson

One of the first thinkers to proclaim the importance of paying attention to different types of memory was the philosopher Henri Bergson.

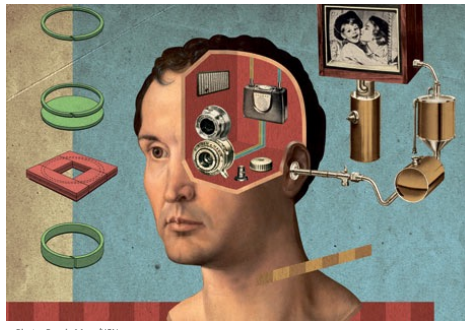
Bergson was convinced that memory should not be considered a diluted or weakened form of perception, but that a clear division needed to be made between the two.

Henri Bergson : we should think of time in terms of duration (durée): “the preservation or prolongation of the past and entailing the co-existence of past and present”.

He suggested that we think of time in terms of duration (durée): “the preservation or prolongation of the past and entailing the co-existence of past and present”.

Gilles Deleuze, in his book *Bergsonism* (1966), describes duration as “a becoming that endures”

“there is no perception which is not full of memories”

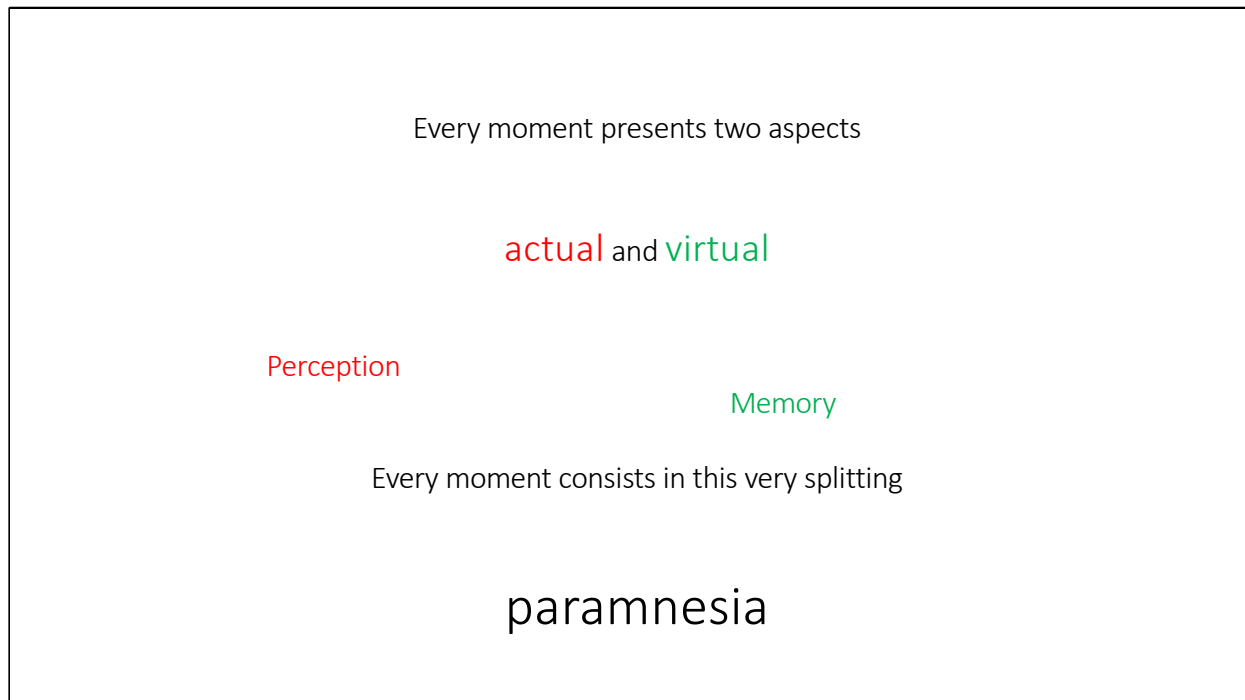


Henri Bergson, Matter and Memory (1912)

Bergson insists that “there is no perception which is not full of memories”

and that at every second of our lives we are presented with two facets, the actual and the virtual:

Our actual existence, then, whilst it is unrolled in time, duplicates itself all along with a virtual existence, a mirror-image.



Every moment of our life presents two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on the one side and memory on the other. Each moment consists in this very splitting

This is Bergson's explanation for the phenomena of paramnesia or of déjà-vu. Because the past, rather than merely preceding the present, effectively coexists with it, a recollection of the present can sometimes occur simultaneously with the present itself.

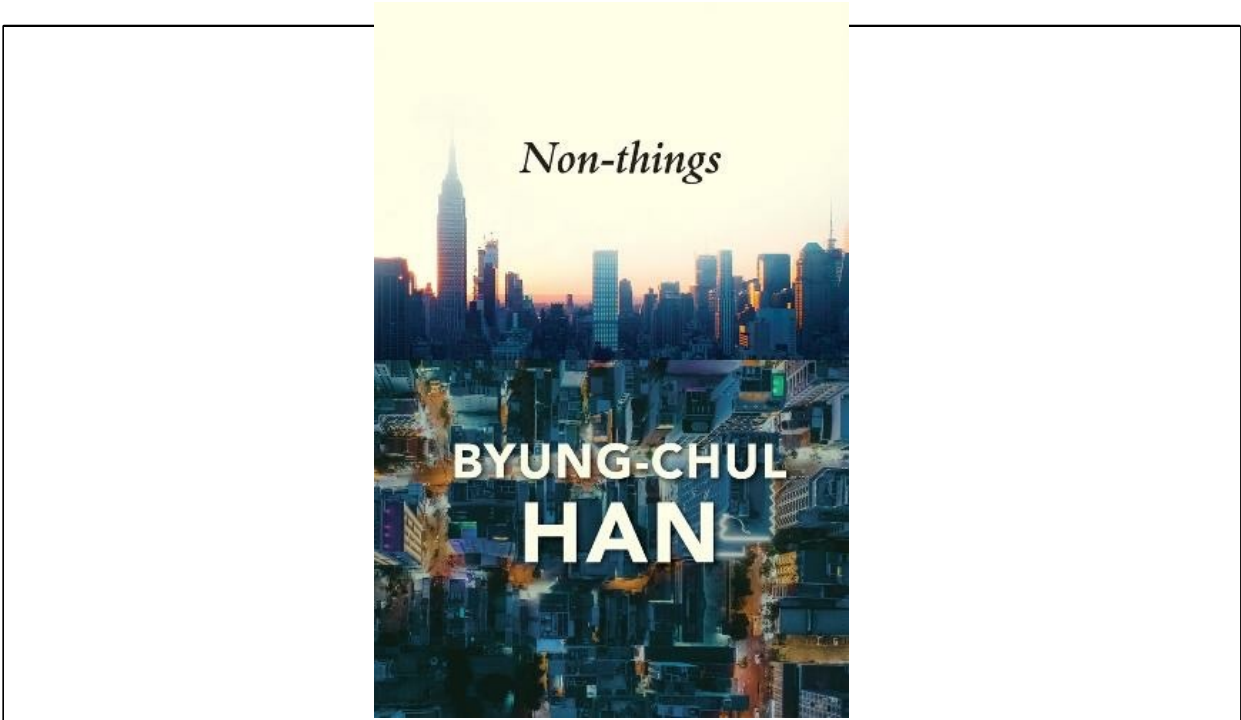
DÉJÀ VU

We believe that we have already experienced something
that is, in fact, happening for the very first time at this very
moment.

A FALSE RECOGNITION

The sensation is caused by believing we are undergoing an experience that we have already lived through, when in fact what is happening is a perception of the duplication we do not normally perceive, that of time into the two aspects, the actual and the virtual.

We mistake current experience for the very faithful copy of an original that never really existed... a false recognition



ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY



Big Data—A New Medium?

Edited by Natasha Lushetich

