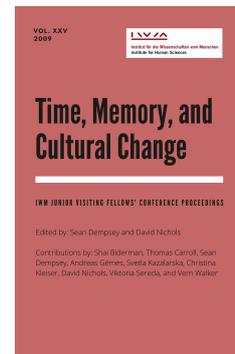


# Time, Memory, and Cultural Change – Introduction

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As all who have spent time at IWM know, one of the joys of participating in its scholarly community is the sense of neighborliness that reverberates within its walls. For me, reflecting upon such neighborliness is particularly fitting because part of my research in Vienna investigated how recent theoretical concepts of the neighbor—that peculiar figure residing at the crossroads of ethics and politics—can help articulate the boundaries of secular responsibility. Sigmund Freud claimed that the neighbor, or what he calls the *Nebennensch*—the fellow or adjacent human being—“falls apart into two components, of which one makes an impression by its constant structure and stays together as a thing [*als Ding*], while the other can be understood by the activity of memory—that is, it can be traced back to information from [the subject’s] own body.” I think this logic of the neighbor is also useful for understanding how the following collection of essays speak to each other, because despite our variety of backgrounds and perspectives each of us address how subjective memories and desires attempt to make sense of the often indifferent “thingness” of the world. By interrogating relationships between history and memory, theory and method, home and homelessness, and by exploring how art and culture disclose our place in the world, each of us seeks the means to respond to and thus become responsible for the fractured and often conflicted world in which we find ourselves.

Within the larger framework of the conference from which these essays originated, several more localized conversations developed between the papers. **Andreas Gémes** and **Viktoria Sereda** are both interested in the tension between memory and historical materiality. In his paper “Deconstruction of a Myth? Austria and the Hungarian Refugees of 1956-57,” Gémes explores the disjunction between the highly positive impressions generated by Austria’s embrace of refugees fleeing the militant Soviet response to the Hungarian Revolution and the more complex light archival documents shed upon the same events. Using the archive as a lens to help correct widely held naïve myths of Austria’s humanitarian response to the crisis, Gémes not only offers a more realistic view of the 1956 crisis, but also acts as a witness to the difficulty of working through an

international crisis even when the actors have the best of intentions. Viktoria Sereda's paper "Politics of Memory and Urban Landscape: the Case of Lviv after World War II," is also interested in the tension between memory and the material record. She explores how Lviv, an East European city located in the Polish-Ukrainian border zone has become an urban palimpsest upon which different factions in the politics of memory have left their mark. By focusing on a content-analysis of the city's monuments and plaques, she demonstrates how a new Ukrainian political regime competes with both the remnants of a Soviet past and also with efforts to re-inscribe the city into a larger European historical continuum. Interestingly, while Gemes is working to use the archive to more accurately portray an imagined past, Sereda's paper suggests that Lviv's urban dwellers are recognizing that the room to imagine themselves occurs between the gaps of variously imposed systems of memory.

Finding sufficient space for self-definition is also an issue touched upon by two papers connected by their mutual interest in Ludwig Wittgenstein : **Vern Walker's** "The Poverty of Pacifism" and Thomas Carroll's "Wittgenstein and Method in the Study of Religion." Walker provides unusual insight into the Catholic Workers "pacifist practice of living in precarious poverty." Formed by Dorothy Day in 1933, the Catholic Workers live their lives hovering in a paradoxical position between lack and plenty: wanting nothing they want for nothing and lack even the desire to calculate where their next meal will come from. Such a practice leaves its practitioners precariously exposed to the myriad momentary elucidations and chance encounters the world freely offers. Walker helps unpack what such precariousness might mean for a radically refined concept of pacifism by connecting this logic to Wittgenstein's belief that philosophy is above all a practice for clarity, to Antonio Negri's estimation of the tension between the common and the immeasurable, and to Ingeborg Bachmann's novelistic use of the figure of the desert. Questions of practice are also at issue for Carroll, and his paper interrogates Wittgenstein's occasional remarks about a method for the study of religion. Although other scholars have attempted to build a system around the handful of notes about religion Wittgenstein produced during the course of his career, Carroll stresses the occasional nature of this writing, and emphasizes how these texts were "driven by exposure to a particular interlocutor or author." Like Walker's interest in precarious poverty, Carroll focuses upon Wittgenstein's desire to be perspicuous in his philosophy and clear in his interpretative location. Such clarity can only be obtained through an aversion to system-building and in an embrace of a method that functions as a kind of philosophical therapy, uprooting habits of thought that produce errors and cloud clear thinking.

The next two papers are interested in a different way we can open ourselves to the world, namely through the artist's disclosure of the world's buried meanings and significances. In "The Big Leap: Heidegger, Nietzsche, Kafka," **Shai Biderman** explores how Martin Heidegger constructed a hermeneutic picture of the world as a dynamic set of interconnected relations and attributes, and saw art as a key means of revealing this basic field of significance. Biderman specifically focuses upon the way in which two very different writers--Friedrich Nietzsche and Franz Kafka--exemplified Heidegger's vision

of the artist as the one who discloses being as such. Albeit in different ways, metamorphosis plays an important role for both writers and Biderman is interested in the way in which metamorphosis is a necessary precondition for exploring the entirety of life.

**David Nichols'** paper, "Antigone's Autochthonous Voice: Echoes in Sophocles, Hölderlin, and Heidegger," also explores the relationship between philosophy and art by highlighting implications found in Heidegger's 1942 lecture on Friedrich Hölderlin's poem *Der Ister*. Poetry is important for Heidegger because it is the primary way in which language enables beings to emerge into our awareness. What is particularly suggestive about the *Ister* lectures is how they provide Heidegger with an opportunity to reexamine Sophocles' *Antigone*, a play he had already explored in the 1935 lectures on the *Introduction to Metaphysics*. However, whereas in his earlier reading Heidegger emphasized how Antigone is an ecstatic and rebellious voice standing out from the *polis*, in his revised reading he associates Antigone with the kind of peculiar dwellings that poets make when they offer the uncanny strangeness of Being a home in language. Nichols sees this turn in Heidegger's thinking as indicative of his relationship to National Socialism, for whereas before Antigone was seen as articulating the need to raise one's voice against the *polis* in the hope of forming a new beginning, his revised reading is willing to sacrifice Antigone's agonistic self-assertion in service to the autochthonic roots of the *polis*.

Our last two papers explore how pledging alliance to our roots is often more difficult than we think. In her essay "Avishai Margalit's Idea of an Ethics of Memory and its Relevance for a Pluralistic Europe," **Christina Kleiser** builds upon Avishai Margalit's argument in *The Ethics of Memory*, in order to illustrate the challenges to constructing a "shared memory" within a pluralistic Europe. Shared memory, which is something that cannot easily be taken for granted as it is interwoven into everyday fabric of monument, memento, and street name, becomes for Kleiser a kind of regulative idea that challenges the historian's desire to analyze and distill people's earlier experiences, expectations, and desires, into some official version of collective memory. Pondering the ethical intricacies of collective memory enables Kleiser to lay the groundwork for questioning the challenging issues surrounding how scholarly interest in memory relates to the arbitration of divergent narratives of those conflicts that have their roots in a totalitarian and criminal past.

**Svetla Kazalarska** is similarly interested in how memories are curated, and in her paper "Contemporary Art as *ars memoriae*: Curatorial Strategies for Challenging the Post-Communist Condition," she explores how exhibitions and museums become sites that display how the representational and mnemonic power of artists and curators becomes a potent force in the politics of crafting cultural memory. Although she acknowledges the centrality of the artist's work, Kazalarska is particularly keen on cataloging how the curator's capacity for creating and controlling exhibition narratives enables the curator to become an unacknowledged legislator within the politics of memory.

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