IN SEARCH OF TRANSCULTURAL MEMORY IN EUROPE

CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES

MEMORY ACTS: MEMORY WITHOUT REPRESENTATION. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SUGGESTIONS

Steffi HOBUß

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ABSTRACT

In the paper I use arguments from Ludwig Wittgenstein, John L. Austin, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler and the ethnologist Johannes Fabian to show how the concepts of collective memory, of speech acts and of performativity can help to formulate some ideas about what a theory of and research about transcultural European memory can deal with. The positions of speakers or agents and the question of responsibility play a fundamental role in this argument.

Analysing the contextual uses of memory acts will allow not only going beyond the sharp binaries between the individual and the collective and between the national and the global, but also beyond the binary between history- as-it-was and memory. In his so-called private language argument, Wittgenstein argues against theories of meaning that attempt to define the meaning of language in terms of private, mental acts. His argument is to be read as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the idea of a private memory and of the possibility of private language meaning as well. Furthermore, Wittgenstein argues against theories of representation in regard to explain linguistic and cultural meaning. His argument will be combined with Austin's theory of speech acts and Butler's concept of performativity in order to suggest the notion of *memory acts*.

I would suggest that instead of holding on to the distinction between various kinds of memory cases, further research should give more attention to different aspects of memory acts and should avoid talking about representation when explaining the uses of memory.

A Wittgensteinian-Austinian stance can possibly help to analyse the dynamics of "representation" of migrants' memory in the media, the relation between power and memory, and the problem of European memory in relation to the issue of old and new boundaries. The abdication of the master concept of representation will help to examine the present and future of memory negotiation, transmission and construction, not just the past, and to develop first steps of a theory about the relation between memory and truth.

MEMORY ACTS: MEMORY WITHOUT REPRESENTATION. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SUGGESTIONS

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"Not to be tied down by the shackles of time like a mummy, to reject all the techniques of preservation, to shed the layers, undo the knots, to go after the knotting together, to feel for the lumps, to unlace and remove the straps: this is the work of memory."[1]

(Rabinovici & Sharp , 2000, p. 181)

This quotation from Doron Rabinovici's novel "The Search for M." is part of a letter written by Arieh, one of the main characters, to his friend Dani. The novel offers two different Jewish father-son-relationships; the book is entangled in the specific Austrian discourses of victimhood, which are expressed in the relative lateness of the admission of Austria's guilt. With satiric verve, Rabinovici caricatures two sons of Auschwitz survivors both living in Vienna. One of them, Arieh, is driven by the wish to detect crimes and cases of injustice, while Dani, the other, obsessively takes the blame for all kinds of incidents. Arieh's definition describes memory as a "work", a *practice*, as activities that are carried out in order to become free of some "layers" and "knots". This is not only an allusion to Jewish practices. The words "to reject all the techniques of preservation" are directed against a conception of memory as a picture of the past to be preserved, against a conception of memory as *representation* of history-as-it-was. Such a conception means mummification. However, the point is that in the novel Arieh burns his letter. He does not stop at defining memory as a practice, he rather annihilates his definition that remained merely a constative claim, and begins to involve in interactions with Dani, his family and others. On the level of the whole text, even the definition of memory as a practice has to be overcome by doing such practices instead of merely stating the

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[1] The passage in German: "Nicht in den Banden der Zeit eingelegt zu sein wie eine Mumie, allen Techniken der Konservierung eine Absage erteilen, die Schichten abstreifen, die Knoten aufdröseln, ihrer Verknüpfung nachgehen, die Knubbel ertasten, die Riemen umschnüren und ablösen, das ist Erinnerung."

definition. The process does not come to an end: memory cannot be defined (even if a true definition is given), it has to be done.[2]

After an introduction (1.) about Wittgenstein, his arguments against private language and private memory and against representation, my paper aims to show how analyzing the contextual uses of *memory acts* (2.) will allow us to go beyond the sharp binaries between the individual and the collective, between the national and the global, and beyond the binary between history-as-it-was and memory as either something collectively construed or as a representation of the past. Even recent theories of memory might be considered as memory acts in themselves, rather than as true or false descriptions of an 'essence' of memory. A last part (3.) will ask about memory in transnational and polyphonic European contexts. If memory consists of contextual practices, what might be the role of the concepts of truth and truthfulness? Considering memory acts will allow accounting for and evaluating conflicting positions.

1. WITTGENSTEIN, THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT, AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND/WITHOUT REPRESENTATION[3]

In his so-called private language argument Ludwig Wittgenstein (2001, pi 258) argues against theories of meaning that attempt to define the meaning of language in terms of private, mental acts.[4] His argument is to be read as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the idea of a private memory and of the possibility of private language meaning as well. If the notion of a valid or the right memory is not to become completely arbitrary, then there cannot be any memory at all that could be founded in a private manner. Just as we are not able to create a private language, memory has no private, inner foundation. However, Wittgenstein does not want to provide a theory of collective memory, but to show that private memory cannot provide a foundation for theories of linguistic meaning. The

[2] Of course, there is nothing wrong with the act of preserving of something, e.g. historical sites like the place of the Auschwitz concentration camp. However, preserving is not to be understood as a model for memory in the sense of preserving something that existed in any case prior and independently from remembering.

[3] Some parts of a former version of this paper are published in the J*ournal of Aesthetics and Culture* 3 (Hobuß, 2011)

[4] The argument can only be summarized at this place; for an interpretation of the text in its context in the "Philosophical Investigations" see Eike von Savigny (1994); for further details of interpretation see Steffi Hobuß (2010).

meaning of language and memory are thought in a reciprocal relation: Someone has got the ability to remember only if she is in possession of language, and that is to belong to a group sharing a common language use, and she can use language only if she has learnt a language, and that means, she needs memory in order to learn. Memory is largely framed and facilitated by social factors. Maurice Halbwachs's (1997) notion of "collective memory" is very much similar to the Wittgensteinian account in rejecting a concept of memory as coming into contact with the "innermost part of our self": instead of that, we need common "means by which our mind comes to grip either the given facts of the past, and without those means only a vague and faint memory would remain" (Halbwachs, 1985, p. 52)[5]. These common means like places, names and thoughts cannot be established by any private operation of the mind, but only by social practices of a particular group. We can reconstruct former sensations, past experiences and attitudes only insofar as they are bound to 'pictures of social meaning', as opposed to them providing a foundation for those pictures of social meaning.

Nevertheless, the theories of collective and cultural memory have been criticized from the beginning. The most frequently voiced objections are the following three arguments:

1. The first objection asserts that theories of collective memory deny the existence of individual memory at all. However, this is too counterfactual a claim and surely not held by Wittgenstein nor by Halbwachs. Of course, in some important senses memory can be attributed to individuals: "As a cognitive faculty memory can only be attributed to individual minds [...]; in that sense collectivities cannot remember." (Fabian, Memory against Culture. Arguments and Reminders., 2007, p. 93). Moreover, even if not restricted to memory as a cognitive faculty we commonly talk of the individual as the agency of memory. Using the term "collective memory" does not in any way deny the relevance of personal memory (Fabian, 2007, p. 14f).

2. The second objection starts with the fact that collective or cultural memory is something socially construed by cultural practices. If not tied to the faculty of individual memory that can be right or wrong as a representation of something, according to this objection, memory becomes voluntary. Theories dealing with processes of social construction are often met with this critique of idealism or voluntarism. This misunderstanding comes only if the

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[5] My translation.

collective, social framework of the constructing processes and the impossibility of private remembering are neglected. This point will be discussed later.

3. The third objection asks whether the concepts of collective or cultural memory are based upon an essentialist or unifying notion of the collective and the cultural. It will be discussed in the third part.

Wulf Kansteiner (2002, p. 181), who seems to share the first objection when he talks about the "determined anti-individualism" of the theories of Halbwachs and the like, defines a task for memory research that has indeed been taken up by new memory studies:

> "Memory studies offer an opportunity to acknowledge that historical representations are negotiated, selective, present-oriented, and relative, while insisting that the experiences they reflect cannot be manipulated at will."

(Kansteiner, 2002, p. 195)

Why does Kansteiner uses "representations"? Talking of "historical representations" seems to be important, because memories are not arbitrary, wild constructions; but at the same time, he wants to weaken the role of social conditions, because he obviously is afraid of a theory to be a "social determinist" one. The dangers he wants to avoid are a naïve, realistic concept of memory on the one hand and completely arbitrary constructions of the remembered on the other hand, one as implausible as the other. Kansteiner uses the concept of "representation" in order to avoid this dilemma. But "representation" does not solve the problems, since the word still alludes to ideas of the past on the one hand and the memory on the other hand as two counterparts. The phrase that there are "experiences" to be "reflected" by "historical representations" shows this binary picture. Thinking memory work as a social practice has the advantage that we can avoid the problematic concept of historical representation.[6]

Why not abolish the concept of representation? Thinking about the word „re-presentation", there seems to be an activity of making something present, or to be present again, i.e. something is made

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[6] A philosophical theory of memory meets those methodological needs that have often been reformulated in new memory studies since the 1980s. See Jacob Emmanuel Mabe (2007). At the beginning of his paper, Mabe points out that on the one hand the possibility to remember is attributed to individual persons, whereas cultural and social frames play a constitutive role for the formation of memory in processes of negotiating history. In later passages, he restricts the notion of collective memory to a memory shared by a group of single individuals; further he describes a "transcendental memory" resulting from an "autonomous activity of human mind" (Mabe, 2007 p. 34; my translation, S.H.).

to be present afresh. This making of a presence can either be understood as an idea, as an illustration, or as substitution.[7] What is subject to representation is something absent, or something that is absent and present at the same time. Thus, the concept of representation meets Derrida's argument against the logic of presence: Following Saussure, he holds that all sorts of linguistic signs have their meanings only in relations of differences, rather than as single elements that refer to things in the world.[8] In Derrida's perspective, every practice that is meaningful in a very broad sense is to be understood as a "jeu de differences". By his throughout critical interpretation of traditional ideas of linguistic signs as consisting in themselves and having their meaning from a reference to pre-linguistic existing, present entities, Derrida constantly works on overcoming these ideas. He sees the whole occidental philosophy marked by the faith in *presence*, in a basis: the "ungrounded ground or origin" (Derrida). Fundamental beliefs and convictions in common sense and in philosophy rely on tacit ideas of a "metaphysics of presence" (Derrida, 2007). Such a questioning of the structure of representations goes back to the 19th century[9] and, during the 1980s, led to the so called "crisis of representation" (Berg & Fuchs, 1993). The present situation is confusing. There is neither a consistent sense of the different uses of "representation" nor a

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[7] See Krug (1969), first published in 1828: „Repräsentation (von repraesentare, vergegenwärtigen, vor- oder darstellen) heißt bald soviel als Vorstellung einer Sache, weil sie dadurch dem Gemüthe vergegenwärtigt wird, bald die Darstellung einer Sache zur äußern Wahrnehmung, bald aber auch die Vertretung einer Person durch eine andere, weil diese gleichsam jene als eine abwesende vergegenwärtigt, vor- oder darstellt". According to that, the "Historische Wörterbuch der Philosophie" gives four meanings:

1) "Vorstellung" im weiteren Sinn, d.h. mentaler Zustand mit kognitivem Gehalt;
2) "Vorstellung" im engeren Sinn, d.h. ein mentaler Zustand, der einen früheren mentalen Zustand reproduziert, aus ihm abgeleitet ist oder sich auf ihn bezieht;
3) "Darstellung", d.h. strukturerhaltende Abbildung durch Bilder, Symbole und Zeichen aller Art;
4) "Stellvertretung", (Scheerer E. , 1971). However, it remains open to interpretation what is meant by "preserving the structure"; see below.

[8] See a passage from a dialogue with Julia Kristeva: "Das Spiel der Differenzen setzt in der Tat Synthesen und Verweise voraus, die es verbieten, dass zu irgendeinem Zeitpunkt, in irgendeinem Sinn, ein einfaches Element als solches präsent wäre und nur auf sich selbst verwiese. Kein Element kann je die Funktion eines Zeichens haben, ohne auf ein anderes Element, das selbst nicht einfach präsent ist, zu verweisen". (Derrida, 1990, p. 150)

[9] See e.g. the debate between the followers of Ranke and those of Nietzsche that had a rather undifferentiated revival in the debate between Anglo-Saxon and continental historians during the 1990s; see Oexle (2000). One of the parties stressed the fictional and narrativ character of every reference to the past, but run the risk of neglecting the difference between facts and fictions, the other party stressed the factual character of the past, but neglected the conditions of the possibility of the knowledge of "the" past.

consequent and definite point of view to abolish the philosophical concept.

How did this come about? The Latin word "repraesentare" appears in Cicero for the first time (Scheerer E. , 1990, p. 5). The meanings range from "to bring something to mind", "imitation", "linguistic, pictorial or theatrical presentation" to "realization" or even "to pay cash". Though there is no consistent sense, the view has been held that there existed a common "kernel of meaning", namely the description of a "reality of an event, an action or its result" (Hofmann, 1974)[10]. This emphasis on the present realization is instructive compared with the meaning of secondary-subsequent re-presentation in later and modern language use. However, this meaning disappears by and by during the middle Ages, while the aspect of subsequent re-presentation begins to dominate. Since then, the central meaning is a relation of similarity that can be seen and displayed. Aquinas distinguishes representations in form of pictures, marks, mirrors and linguistic signs (Scheerer E. , 1971). During the transition to the modern era, representation begins to concern the cognitive faculty. In Descartes' writings, ideas are able to represent things without being restricted to a pictorial similarity. This is the step the concept gets its meaning that will rest until the 20th century. In the 20th century - in the context of a critique of the philosophy of consciousness on the one hand and the rejection of theories of referential or pictorial meaning - , more attention has been paid on the formative force of representational systems and the productive momentum of constructing approaches to reality.[11]

With Wittgenstein, who plays an important role as well in the critique of the philosophy of consciousness and the rejection of theories of referential or pictorial meaning, I would like to suggest abolishing the concept of representation. A passage from his "Philosophical Investigation" deals with referential and non-referential pictures. In the context of Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language, linguistic utterances, sentences and texts are in many *different* ways compared to pictures. Wittgenstein deals with pictures and with texts and investigates the consequences of thinking texts and language as images, and as well of comparing pictures with texts and language. For good reasons he does not introduce a fundamental difference between linguistic and pictorial illustrations. The critical passage starts with PI 518:

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[10] my translation.

[11] For the role of new techniques like photography fort he concept of "representations" Cohnen (2008)

518. Socrates to Theaetetus: "And if someone thinks mustn't he think something?" - Th: "Yes, he must." - Soc.: "And if he thinks something, mustn't it be something real?" - Th.: "Apparently."

And mustn't someone who is painting be painting something - and someone who is painting something be painting something real! - Well, tell me what the object of painting is: the picture of a man (e.g.), or the man that the picture portrays?

(Wittgenstein, 2001, pi 518)

This section belongs to a context where again the question is discussed whether we assure the meanings of words and sentences by mental ideas. Such a theory of meaning would be a kind of a theory of reference, in this case assuming that words and sentences are meaningful because they are related to mental ideas. Allegedly, we are able to speak about absent things, because inner or mental ideas represent the object, or the theories use inner images. Wittgenstein refuses all such theories. After the example with Socrates taken from Plato's "Theaitetos", the second paragraph puts the same question for painting – Wittgenstein shifts from imagining something to painting something. Socrates and Theaitetos, too, in this context talk about *pictorial* ideas or *imaginations*. Thus, we are always not only thinking something, but rather a picture. However, the question is what is the object of painting? What is this something? Wittgenstein points to the possibility of a twofold interpretation, because the question has two different answers. If the act of painting produces the "picture of a man", i.e. the material painting that I can hang at the wall, it is doubtless something, but not necessarily in the sense of an image of something out there in the world. Alternatively, it produces "the man that the picture portrays", whereas in this mode of speaking the object is the portrayed person exterior to the painting. It is important that Wittgenstein is not concerned with giving a consistent or paradigmatic meaning of what should be understood by the "object of painting". Rather he spreads out the different possibilities to understand the phrase. He refuses the opinion that imaging always has to be one and the same, as well as he refuses the theory that talking about something always has to be the same.[12]

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[12] This is the point of using the quotation from Plato as a starting point of the passage: Usually, Socrates is in Plato's dialogues trying to find a unified meaning of a concept. In choosing this quotation, Wittgenstein emphasizes in an implicit way in which the ideas he deals with are potent and influential from Plato until today.

In the case of the pictorial image in PI 518 it is difficult to give a context-independent of an image. The twofold interpretation of the "something" leads to the result that *the concept of the image or picture is used in a highly problematic way*. The next section, PI 519, makes it even worse:

> 519. One wants to say that an order is a picture of the action which was carried out on the order; but also that it is a picture of the action which is to be carried out on the order."

(Wittgenstein, 2001, pi 519)

For the future case, it is impossible to give a picture in the sense of a copy. Wittgenstein argues – as in many other section of the PI – against his own early philosophy, where he held the theory, sentences are *pictures* of facts. This might be plausible in the case of the sentence "A is sitting next to B". Nevertheless, the picture theory of meaning is difficult to hold in the case of all sentences other than declarative sentences. What fact is pictured by the utterance "Who registered for the excursion to Auschwitz?". Or by a request or an order? The words „one wants to say" refer exactly to that case one wants the picture theory to apply for the order. Then we could be inclined to say the order was a picture of the action, which was carried out on the order. However, if the order precedes the action, it will be difficult to understand it as an image of the action carried out afterwards. Moreover, what about the order that has not been carried out yet? The concept of the picture is again used in a very problematic manner. Wittgenstein does not suggest abolishing the concept of the picture overall. However, when we are looking at a picture alone, we cannot see whether it is a picture of an existing state of affairs or not. The difference to Wittgenstein's own earlier theory consists in his higher emphasis on the fact that the character of the picture as picture leads to *forgetting* that the pictured fact need not be an existing state of affairs. Wittgenstein delivers a critique of the picture as a critique of our *practices* in using pictures. We are seducible to think that the pictured fact is an existing state of affairs. Wittgenstein throughout doubts that pictures and sentences have structural features those tell us whether the picture or the sentence or the text might have a meaningful use. It does not depend on the structure or the features of a state of affairs whether we accept or reject its 'representation' as senseless or not. Sentences can be compared with different sorts of pictures, while the use of the concept of the picture sometimes is unclear or ambiguous. And this is important for the alleged relation of 'representation' between a state of affairs and its picture.

PI 522 continues the investigation of the picture theory, now again the picture theory of language. Wittgenstein undertakes a distinction within the realm of the theory itself.

522. If we compare a proposition to a picture, we must think whether we are comparing it to a portrait (a historical representation) or to a genre-picture. And both comparisons have point.

When I look at a genre-picture, it 'tells' me something, even though I don't believe (imagine) for a moment that the people I see in it really exist, or that there have really been people in that situation. But suppose I ask: "What does it tell me, then?" [13]

(Wittgenstein, 2001, pi 522)

A portrait may be understood as a picture of an existing state of affairs, a more or less appropriate description of a living or dead person. A genre-picture might be understood as a picture of an only 'possible' fact. One could wonder whether it belongs to a *different* kind of picture or description – e.g. you *might* say, a genre-picture were a picture of fictitious or virtual persons, in opposite to the portrait. But this is not what Wittgenstein says. He does not furnish the second case with the logic of the first one. He says, the genre-picture "tells me something"; of course we can say that it "pictures something", but it is no description of one or more persons, neither historical nor fictitious persons, because this would be the wrong model. The mistake in the case of the wrong argument consists in the transfer of the portrait-like model to the case of the genre-picture.

Wittgenstein does not develop a theory of different ways of picturing or reference to either existing or 'mere possible' states of affairs. In both cases there is a *real* existing picture. In the case of the genre-picture it is the picture in itself that is important rather than the reference to a state of affairs. What the fine arts or other picturing practices deliver cannot be captured by using the difference between a 'real or fictitious picture of an existing or mere possible state of affairs'. *If* we are seduced by that model, we are inclined to construe the genre-picture as a picture of a state of affairs that exists only in the picture itself – and that means: there is *no such thing* like a relation between a picture and a state of affairs. There is no relation between state of affairs and picture that were constitutive for the character of a picture. Wittgenstein (2001, pi 43) shares Derrida's (1988, p. 298)

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[13] My interpretation does not claim to give correct definitions of portrays or genre-pictures like those given in art history; Wittgenstein just deals with two typical practices in the context of talking about pictorial images.

argument against the logic of presence and the opinion that no object of reference existing independently was needed for a picture or a sentence to mean *something*.[14]

What are the systematical consequences from this exegesis? There is neither "theory of meaning" nor a theory of representation in the PI. Rather, Wittgenstein throughout avoids the concepts of meaning and of representation because they are too seductive. If we can understand sentences like portraits and/or like genre-pictures, then any theory of sentence-meaning as reference to a reality will be outdated (Frege, 1980).[15] Often something (a sentence, a picture, a phrase, a photograph, a movie) plays an important role in our lives and our communication, and this can be expressed in saying "this sentence (picture, movie) 'tells me something'". However, this expression should not lead us to the wrong idea, we knew about its 'real-world reference'. Sometimes there is simply no 'real-world reference' like the model of the portrait or the naïve idea of representation.

Not the structure or the features of texts, movies or pictures tell us how they work, whether like portraits or like genre-pictures or perhaps completely different. It will be helpful to follow Wittgenstein and stop talking about representation because of the seductive force of the word. There follows another result: Not certain pictures or texts or practices are on their own politically helpful, socio-critical or mere affirmations, but it always depends on their readings, their interpretations, their uses in the Wittgensteinian sense that let them gain affirmative or subversive forces. Nevertheless, in certain contexts certain readings or uses are *made possible* or are *offered*, and thus they are – in opposition to some objections – not completely arbitrary. Among these contexts are conventional rules of reading and picturing, but also historical and societal positions of speakers and agents.[16] And this holds for memory practices as well.

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[14] The difference between Wittgenstein and Derrida: In Wittgenstein, there is no emphasis on the structural features of language like it can be found in Derrida's writings, rather the uses of the signs plays the most important role. See Derrida (1988, p. 298) and Wittgenstein (2001, pi 43)

[15] According to Frege (1980), only such sentences have meaning that work like the logic of the portrait.

[16] The validity of such conventions is explained by the theory of performativity according to Austin, Butler und Derrida: The standing of conventions presupposes their repeated performance again and again, and there are always failures, miscarriages and shifts of meaning. Here lies the theoretical fundamentum of the possibility of change.

2. SPEECH ACTS, PERFORMATIVITY AND THE CONCEPT OF *MEMORY ACTS*

The main two points so far concern that there is no such thing as a "private memory" in the sense indicated above, and the suggestion to abolish the concept of representation. Memory and processes of remembering cannot be controlled by an autonomously and voluntarily acting subject, nor by a representational connection or reference to history-as-it-was, rather they are negotiated, consensual or not, sometimes even violently or in forms of war. This does not weaken the category of responsibility; to the contrary, it stresses the important role everybody takes in these processes of negotiation. And it does not weaken the concept of truth.

Instead of working about the distinction of various types of *memory cases*, in further research should be given more attention to different *aspects of memory acts*. Classifications of types of memory (case distinctions) include the following distinctions: individual – collective, cultural, communicative memory; cognitive – narrative; canon-like – archive-like memory; social – autobiographical – communicative memory; "direct" vs. prosthetic or post-memory, and many more. Classifications of aspects of memory acts should be understood as aspect distinctions.

A useful account for looking at aspects of memory acts is Austin's theory of speech acts (Austin, 1975). In developing this theory, he changed it in an important way. Initially he suggested the distinction between constative and performative utterances - that constative utterances give factual descriptions of the world and are either true or false, while performative utterances are acts that do not describe the world, but do something by speaking, e.g. give a promise or cry out for help. But then Austin came to notice that utterances cannot simply be divided by a sharp distinction between cases of constative utterances on the one hand and performative utterances on the other. He changed his theory and stopped looking for different *cases*, but for different *aspects* of utterances. The case distinction has been replaced by a distinction of aspects. One and the same utterance can have a descriptive force and an acting, performative force at the same time[17].

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[17] Austin then analyzed the performative force in further detail and distinguished between the well-known locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. See eighth and ninth lecture (Austin, 1975).

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Theory of speech acts:              │  │ Theory of memory acts:              │
│                                     │  │                                     │
│ world ↔ language                    │  │ history ↔ memory                    │
│              ↓                      │  │              ↓                      │
│        case distinction:            │  │        case  distinction:           │
│    constative ↔ performative        │  │      true/false ↔ narrative         │
│             utterances              │  │      memories                       │
│                                     │  │      individual ↔ collective        │
│                                     │  │      memories                       │
│ Aspect distinction:                 │  │              …                      │
│                                     │  │ Aspect distinction between memory acts: │
│ speech  acts  (locutionary,  illocutionary, │  │   1.  Remembering-that (x)       │
│ perlocutionary)                     │  │   2.  Remembering-as  negotiation/narration/… │
│                                     │  │   3.  Social effects of remembering │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────────────────────┘
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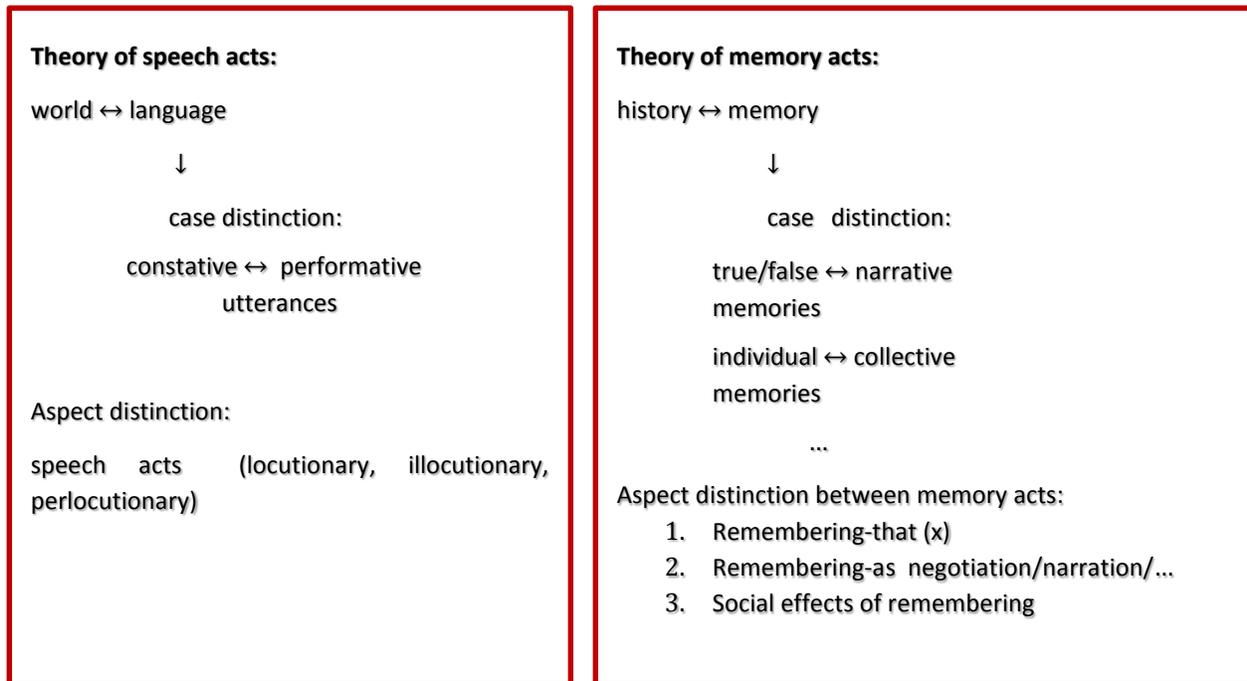
FIGURE 1: THEORY OF SPEECH AND THEORY OF MEMORY

Austin's starting point for his earlier theory was his argument against theories of descriptive meaning, i.e. against theories of language as a representation of the world. Thus, his first step was directed against representation, a stance that is preserved in his later theory of aspect distinction. Both arguments can be applied to memory studies, as shown in the diagram.

We can understand Austin's change as a methodological paradigm for memory studies and ask: How are memory acts carried out in specific contexts?

How can memory acts be explained in different contexts of research? What are the specific performative forces and implications of doing so? By asking how memories are negotiated, we can find different uses of memory in research contexts and in historical, empirical contexts.

Types of memory acts could be (this open and preliminary list has to be completed):

1. the dimension of remembering that can be classified by true/false-judgments and/or the way of referring to the past,
2. those dimensions of remembering that are not accounted for by terms of correct/false representation,
3. those dimensions of remembering that concern the effects of memory acts.

These acts are not always carried out explicitly, often they remain implicit acts. It is important to note that memory acts can be such different *things* as

- illustrating[18] a past event or process (by linguistic, nonverbal, pictural, aesthetic, scientific or other means) as an individual, e.g. talking about my past experiences,
- illustrating a past event or process (by linguistic, nonverbal, pictural, aesthetic, or other means) as a member of a specific group,
- sharing memories with others,
- claiming that a specific memory tells the truth,
- asserting that a specific memory is a lie,
- acting in political struggles,
- claiming that something should be remembered by others (another individual person or a representing group),
- claiming that something should be forgotten or left to oblivion,
- doing empirical memory research in form of case studies,
- inventing theories of memory,
- inventing methods for memory research,
- and many more.

Austin always stressed the importance of the social conventions as limiting and facilitating performative acts. This can be useful for cultural memory studies in order to illustrate that as there are limited speakers' rights, there are limited rights to do certain memory acts. You need to be in an adequate position to perform certain memory acts. According to Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler, we can take into account some important further features of linguistic performativity in order to talk about other acts and practices as well, not only linguistic acts, and in order to formulate a theory of memory. The most important feature is that contexts of uses cannot be fully controlled by single individuals in intentional ways. Because linguistic meaning cannot be achieved by private acts of meaning, it exists only in forms of social practices. Thus, single individuals cannot fix meanings or new contexts arbitrarily. But they are responsible for their uses of words, especially if the words and utterances have been used before in dangerous or controversial contexts before, as Jacques

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[18] This is the place where the notion of "representation" is often used. But it is better to avoid the word and the misunderstanding as 'simply' copying something original that were there before that act of representation. Rather it is to be understood as memory work or process that in some cases illustrates something that exists only in the specific means of illustration. For further details about representation see: Steffi Hobuß (2012) (In this article I tried as an experiment to save the concept of representation.)

Derrida puts it with his concept of the "iterability" of signs (Derrida, 1988). Something can become a sign if and only if it can be repeated and thus "re-iterated", i.e. a sign must be quotable or repeatable in order to be meaningful. Every single word, every sentence, every meaningful action is a quotation in this sense. And in using signs, symbols, and specific actions, we set them free, we spread them into the world, so that others can and will quote and repeat them again. Thus we cannot control or restrict the future understanding and uses of our signs, sentences, and actions. Speaking and acting are not conceived of as sovereign, autonomous practices. And all signs, symbols, and actions can be *resignified* by others in new contexts, if they are in an adequate position to do so - but again, this resignification is not something that can be completely and intentionally controlled (Butler, Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative, 1997, pp. 1-42, 72-102).

All this applies to cultural memory acts as well. Meaningful social practices like memory exist only in their relative contexts, stem from certain contexts, in some sense are repeated by us and cannot be arbitrarily controlled. We can ask here not only about the rights of agents or speakers to do certain acts, but about the responsibility for these acts as well.[19] To consider memory acts as performative cultural practices and quotations does not weaken the concept of responsibility. It would be wrong to conclude from this view of memory as an active process of constructing to think of memory as the autonomous ruler of the past.

Because memory is based upon performative social practices, an individual or a group needs the social authority and must be in the right position to claim that certain memory acts should be done or what should not be remembered any more. For example, groups and agents who suffer violence, hate speech, or suppression are in a position to claim certain memory acts, while the perpetrators and related groups or agents are in a very different position.

What are the consequences for research about the dynamics of "representation" of migrants' memory in the media, the relation between power and memory, and the problem of European memory in relation to the issue of old and new boundaries? One example is the research about constructions of the self and the other in TV-documentaries about Muslim migrants in Germany. Here has been made use of Foucault's theory of productive power: Coming from Foucault's theory,

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[19] Judith Butler (1997; 2009) investigated utterances of hate speech and looked for possibilities of putting these utterances into new contexts. In her recent works, she has turned to questions of ethics and investigated the ethical implications of putting utterances, actions, and images in new contexts.

TV documentaries – like every other visual and textual description - can be analysed as "technology of power" (Paulus, 2007, p. 279).[20] According to Foucault, the connection between knowledge and power leads to the result that our perceptions and our knowledge are guided by conventions in all pictorial, textual, and any other descriptions. This is a perspective very critical against the idea of representation: illustrations and descriptions of something are "not to be understood as (more or less) accurate picture of a [...] reality" (Paulus, 2007, p. 280). In the case of TV documentaries, programs about Muslims are not to be analyzed as programs *about* a group of people, but with regard to their ways of producing a specific normality. (Paulus, 2007, p. 280) Thus the most important question is no more, whether "the others" are false or correct or how they are 'represented', rather the most important aspects are the practices of illustration itself and first of all the own identity produced by the illustrations. But this research perspective still concentrates on documentaries not produced by the Muslim migrants themselves – future research will have to investigate their own productions.

In Germany of the 1990s, by the so called "Wilkomirski case" a debate about particular features of memory was initiated that had been conducted as the "False Memory Debate" in international contexts before. If memory is conceived as always codetermined by collective frames, and that it always has to fit in social patterns, the authenticity and correctness of memories cannot be assured with reference to past individual experiences and their correct reproduction.[21] 1996, under the name of "Binjamin Wilkomirski" and entitled „Bruchstücke. Aus einer Kindheit 1939-1948", an autobiography of a survivor of the holocaust was published that later turned out to be a fake. The described situations had not been merely imaginary; therefore the book met approval by other survivors. But in contrary to his depiction, the author had nothing thereof experienced himself. Journalists, historians and publishers had held the reported things for true and reliable, and after the detection the authenticity and correctness of memory was put in question in general (Diekmann & Schoeps, 2002). The case demonstrated explicitly how difficult it is to apply the categories of authenticity and correctness to memory, because nobody has full certainty concerning his/her memories. Always, the past is overlaid by too many incidents and negotiations. (Mächler, 2002). This accords with Wittgenstein's conclusion that without shared practices anything that seems right

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[20] my translation.

[21] This is one more of several ways to show that it is misleading to talk of "historical representation" (Kansteiner, 2002, p. 195)

to me could be called right, and that means we cannot talk of "right" at all. Memory does not only depend on the past, rather it constitutes the past in this sense. Just as Paul de Man (1993, p. 132) says for the case of autobiographical memory: The autobiographical enterprise creates life (instead of the other-way round). And Hartmut Seitz (2004, p. 17) writes about "narrative constructions" ("*narrative Konstrukte*") and explains the aspect of construction as much more important than the aspect of reproduction. Admittedly, it would be wrong to conclude from these thoughts about memory as a process of constructing the past to think memory as the autonomous ruler of the past. In this sense, theories dealing with processes of social construction often meet the critique of idealism or voluntarism. This misunderstanding comes if and only if the collective, social framework of the construction processes and the impossibility of private remembering are neglected. There is no such thing like an individual and sovereign mastery of memory that could be a foundation for commonly shared processes of remembering. Thus, Katherine Nelson writes about the narrative constructing of memory:

> "[...] like language, narrative is assumed to be a group construction, one that turns individual emotions into shared conceptional systems."

> (Nelson, 2003)

In this quotation, Nelson compares autobiographical narration with language, with regard to the role of commonly shared systems of concepts. This comparison can be generalized in order to compare language with memory. Just as language is spoken by individual speakers while the determination of meaning does not result from a representing depiction of the world or by private acts of reference, whilst the meaning of language consists (in most cases) in the practices of its use (Wittgenstein, 2001, pi 43), memory is accounted for by collective practices, frames and conceptual systems.[22]

Remembrance instead of representation: The abdication of the master concept of representation will help to examine present memory negotiations, transmissions and constructions, not just the past, and to develop thoughts about the relation between memory and truth. The theories of collective, cultural or group memory have met some criticism for being unifying or universalizing. Martin

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[22]Nelson puts it a bit misleading, as if individual emotions existed for them themselves and are later translated into collective systems of symbols and concepts. But the various theories about the formation of the subject by cultural imprint, performative acts, invocation or disciplinary power, developed by Sigmund Freud, Judith Butler, Louis Althusser or Michel Foucault, provide arguments against the misleading idea.

Saar (2002, p. 268) pointed out that they were a variation of theories of cultural identity. Because memory is seen as securing identity on the individual and on the collective level, there has been a close connection between theories of memory and theories of culture. But these theories of culture, Saar is trying to show, are always in some sense unifying, and his text is an argument against this universalizing stance of all "memory-based theories of culture" (Saar, 2002, p. 269) and therefore of cultural memory. He mentions Halbwachs, Assmann, Benedict Anderson and Pierre Nora as examples for this type of thinking. Instead of he holds a plea for revisited concepts of culture and memory that include their radical plurality. According to Saar, the criticized theories shared the following implications: First, that cultures are memory communities. Second, those communities are based upon shared memory or communicative memory. Third, that a structure of common references to the past in forms of institutions, rites, narratives and objects produces a framing cultural memory that is not only individual but collective. Fourth that the stability of such cultural arrangements depends upon their successful and unifying production of a common past.

But it is the third argument in this chain that might be understood in different ways. We should note the difference between the Halbwachsian and Wittgensteinian stance that there is no individual memory without collective framework and the thesis that the cultural shared memory must always be unified and unifying. The "danger" Saar ascribes to all the theories of cultural memory comes if and only if the fact is neglected that memory acts are always carried out in contexts and situations and thus are negotiations. Even if some memory acts are successful in unifying some sort of cultural memory, they are always to be seen as negotiations. Even hegemonic memories have to be accounted for their negotiated parts and contradictories. And perhaps even the so-called pre-plural societies might in a retrospective view turn out as plural ones. What Saar articulates about "plural societies", that they cannot get rid of the "agonic" negotiations, (Saar, 2002, p. 275) might hold for all societies. But the concepts of the collective and cultural memory remain important as reminders to the fact that "articulating and representing of the past are never private affairs"[23], as Saar (2002, p. 276) admits.

Saar recurs to Foucault (and thus to Nietzsche) in order to stress the agonic, polyphonic and normative processes of memory politics (2002, p. 276). If we conceive history as discursively (re)produced and "truth effects" as a continuing process, there will never be a final 'correct' or 'true' memory. Therefore in

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[23] my translation, S.H.

cases of conflicting memories the conflict cannot be settled by looking for the truth of memories and comparing memories on the one hand and the 'real' past on the other. For example, the question whether any memory act has got the right to be represented cannot be decided in this way. But in the case of political conflicts, e.g. when conflicts deal with the acceptance of groups of victims or hierarchies of victims, there are truth claims raised in connection with the claims of collective memories. And often truth claims are raised in order to enforce some versions of collective memory against others. In sum, Saar's argument against homogenizing culture and memory is connected with the critique of the concept of cultural memory and the suggestion to look at memory as fragmented and polyphonic while the concept of collective memory stays important as the reminder that memory is no private affair.

In his book "Memory against Culture", the anthropologist and ethnographer Johannes Fabian (2007, p. 92) advocates what he calls "a dialectical view of memory". Beginning with the notions of collective and individual memory, he points out that this seemingly clear distinction brings about a conceptual problem:

> "The problem with a notion as plausible as collective memory is that its opposite, 'individual memory', is, strictly speaking, as implausible, indeed impossible as a 'monologue' in a strict sense of the word".

> (Fabian, 2007, p. 93)

Fabian refers to Habermas for the impossibility of the monologue, but it is exactly the argument used by Wittgenstein when he says that there is no such thing like a private memory. Thus we can reformulate Fabian's impossibility as the impossibility of the private memory, and this concerns the notion of the collective, because 'the collective' cannot be accounted for as the simple counterpart of 'the individual'. As a conclusion, there is no simple binary any more.[24] And like Saar, he connects this issue with the concepts of truth, lie and the selectivity of memory. He begins with the observation that we are inclined to call memory being "selective", as one of several "attributes that tend to attach themselves to memory in a predictable and quasi- obligatory manner". (Fabian, 2007, p. 96) But

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[24] Fabian also deals with the important distinction between the cognitive and the narrative understanding of the term, again putting into question the "essential difference" (Fabian, 2007, p. 93) between the two concepts.

"to diagnose selectiveness clinically requires a position above or outside the acts or practices of remembering, a position that enables the researcher to compare input and output and to sort out what, in a given experiment, protocol, and so forth is being remembered and what forgotten. Such a position often goes together with ontological claims. It puts inquiry, as it were, on the side of a reality that must exist before it can be either remembered or forgotten. In practice it may look as if that position could be attained for instance, when the clinical report is compared to independent evidence such as historical records. But that works only as long as one brackets, holds in suspense, the question of how 'independent' (or 'true') historical records are."

(Fabian, 2007, p. 97)

Fabian begins with the "clinical" diagnose of selectiveness because he does not refer to the trivial understanding based on observing ourselves and others not telling everything that we recall. If we want to ascribe selectiveness to memory in a theoretical meaningful way, the concept seems to require the possibility to distinguish between the selective and a non-selective memory. If memory is considered as always selective, he argues, we are inclined to think of reality as existing in itself before being remembered or forgotten, existing as the full scale measure, and to think of memory as a selection compared with this reality accessible independent of our acts of giving meaning and of our memory acts. And in practice "it may look as if this position could be attained", because in given contexts like e.g. a clinical examination of somebody who forgets too much compared to other persons, there is indeed a measure. But this measure is not 'full reality' but the perspective of the other members of the group.

This argument works exactly like Nietzsche's epistemological perspectivism, for example in the beginning of his "Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense". And it means that there is no chance to attain that context-independent position in order to compare reality with our memories, no "view from nowhere", rather there is no other chance than "immanent critique". The situation is much like going round in circles as productive as possible. There is no solution given by a universal perspective, but at any time other perspectives of other persons.

In the same time, the words of truth and lie do not lose their meanings (as sometimes has been argued). As Fabian points out,

"Remembering, especially in the hortative sense of commemoration, that is, something that is to be done, performed, or fulfilled, calls for stories to be told (songs to be sung, rituals to be performed, plays to be staged, images and monuments to be created). Yet stories (...) are lies.

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Elsewhere I called this a dialectical conception; here I only want to bring it up as a as a critical reminder: Especially in a constellation where where theorizing about memory and practical needs for commemoration come together we should not lose sight of truth and rationality aspects of memory."

(Fabian, 2007, pp. 99-100)

"Truth", however, does not mean a relation between a Person/a mind and a (historical) state of affairs it does not mean any relation between two sides. The question of truth arises if and only if there are negotiations between people; it always requires more than one person.

"Telling the truth", "asking for the truth" or "claiming the truth" are specific speech acts among others, neither more nor less.

Because memory acts are in first instance inventory practices based upon performative social practices that give meanings to experiences, an individual or a group needs the social authority and must be in the right position to claim that certain memory acts should be done or what should not be remembered any more. (No context-independent authorization is possible.) For example, groups and agents who suffer violence, hate speech, or suppression are in a position to claim certain memory acts, while the perpetrators and related groups or agents are in a very different position (resignification and responsibility). Instead of a universal „view from nowhere", perspectivism concerning situations and contexts of memory acts as inventory practices, intersubjectivity dialogues preserve the important role of negotiations about true memories.

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