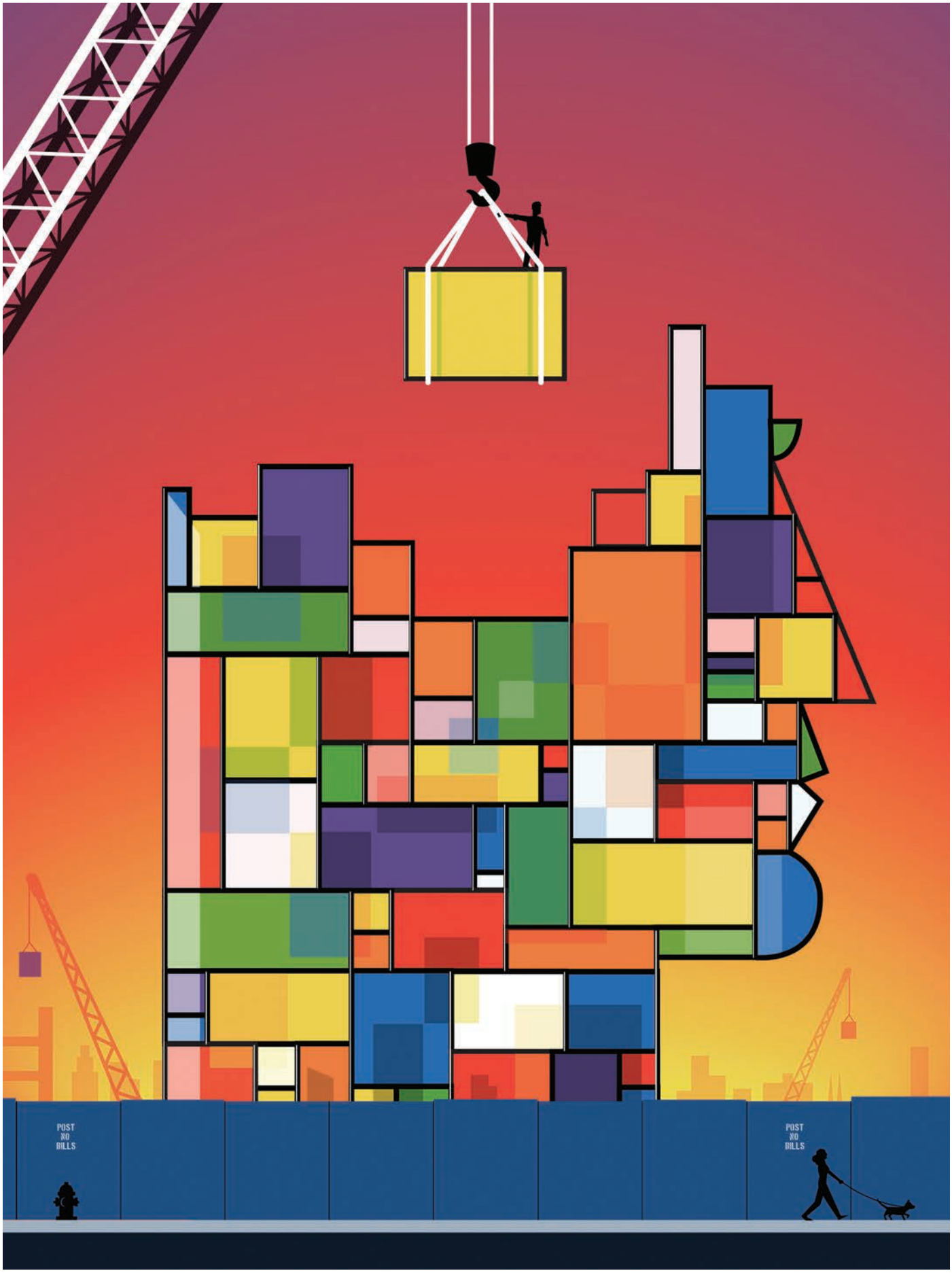
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Committed to Memory

How does memory shape our sense of who we are?

What do we remember? And how do we forget? Complicated questions, their manifold answers are pursued by scholars, scientists, and artists.

"Memory studies are a burgeoning area of humanistic inquiry that encompasses multiple fields," says Joan Shelley Rubin, the Dexter Perkins Professor of History and the Ani and Mark Gabrellian Director of the Humanities Center. The center chose memory and forgetting as the annual theme for its programs over the past year, with guest lectures, workshops, art exhibitions, and internal and external faculty research fellows in residence.

"It seemed an excellent way to achieve the Humanities Center's goal of fostering collaboration and interdisciplinary exchange. Individual memories are such an integral part of our identities as people, and collective memories—entangled as they are with history and culture—shape the politics, society, and artistic expression of the present," Rubin says.

Jonathan Baldo, a professor of English at the Eastman School of Music, was a Bridging Fellow at the Humanities Center in the spring, working on a project about memory and forgetting in works by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Baldo calls the study of memory "fundamental."

"It's at the basis of nearly every field of intellectual inquiry," he says.

Here is a sample of the ways Rochester researchers are working with memory.

Interviews by Kathleen McGarvey
Illustrations by John W. Tomac

Telling stories

Laura Smoller
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Smoller studies the intersection of magic, science, and religion in medieval and Renaissance Europe.

Memory can mean two things for a historian. Most historical studies that deal with memory are really about commemoration—of events, the memory attached to places, and the shifting memories of historical figures. But we also study memory in the sense that psychologists do: how our memories are distorted, how they shape our identities, and how stories shape our memories.

When I was writing my book about Saint Vincent Ferrer, I was reading miracle stories from his canonization trial. People testified about his life and the miracles he worked for them. I was struck by the way people were telling stories. I come from a Southern family, and my father hails from a long line of storytellers—front-porch storytellers. As kids, we knew how his stories went, and we'd say, "No, no! You forgot that part!" The testimony about Vincent Ferrer reminded me of my father's stories. These people were telling stories they'd been shaping and polishing for years.

I started reading psychological studies of autobiographical memory. The stories we tell about and to ourselves shape who we are and who we want to be. And autobiographic memory is pretty constructed and unreliable. I started applying these ideas to medieval miracle stories, looking for cases where people were telling different versions of the same story. I was investigating what the storytelling tells us about how they're constructing their memories and the way those memories are part of their identities.

If you think about the beginnings of the modern historical profession, in the 19th century, memory was kind of the opposite of what historians were trying to do—in the words of German historian Leopold von Ranke, to get at the past "as it really was." Memory wasn't seen as providing scientific truth about the past. In graduate school, my advisor taught us that if you could just get the right source, you'd have a transparent window onto the past. The idea that memories and the stories people tell are doing cultural work was part of the theoretical trend that came to history later than to literary studies.

Now, when historical sources tell a story and differ in the details, instead of saying, "OK, let's sort out which one is right," we're saying, "What does it mean that people were telling different stories?" It's almost like the focal length of your lens changes, to look at the evidence we have and think about how it was made and what it means that it was made in that way.

Remembering the closeness

Carol Podgorski
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY,
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY

Podgorski is the clinic director of the Medical Center's Memory Care Program.

When memory impairment enters a family, it knocks things off balance. My job is to help people restore that balance. I try to help people understand what someone's cognitive deficits are so that they can focus not on the deficit but on the parts of the brain that are still working well.

When people lose memories of whole events, that can be devastating. But sometimes when people don't remember the event, they still remember the closeness of the person they're with. And then the event itself doesn't matter so much.

The loss a caregiving spouse experiences when a partner no longer interacts with them is often harder than the death of a spouse—just knowing that you're with someone, but the intimacy and things that made you a couple are no longer there.

I tell people that we process behaviors with our heads and with our hearts. And when the heart hurts, I try to move to the head. I don't try to prevent people from hurting, but to help them understand things in a different way, so that it doesn't hurt all the time. And I teach

people to be curious. If you're curious about an illness or a behavior, you're not hurting about it. You're standing outside it, trying to understand it. And that's powerful.

Everybody has their own memories that are most persistent. For some people, it's music. You can give other people a blade of fresh grass, and it will trigger such memories. Or a crunchy leaf during the fall. So many memories can be triggered by that one stimulus.

Music's power

David Temperley

PROFESSOR OF MUSIC THEORY,
EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Temperley is a music theorist, cognitive scientist, and composer.

When people talk about memory in a nontechnical way, I think they usually mean what psychologists call "episodic memory"—the memory of specific experiences in one's past. It's distinct from what's called "semantic memory," which refers to more general knowledge of the world. My main area of research is music psychology, and I'm interested in the way that episodic memory figures into it.

Episodic memory plays a big role in musical emotion. If a piece of music makes us feel happy or sad, that's often because we associate it with a specific time in the past when we were feeling that emotion. Perhaps you heard it on the radio on your first date or were listening to it on the radio when you got a piece of bad news. It's obviously very subjective; two people might have quite different emotional associations for the same piece. Music psychologists distinguish this "felt" emotion from "perceived" emotion—the emotion that we perceive a piece of music to express. The two are related, but they're not the same thing. A piece we perceive as sad won't necessarily make us feel sad (though it might). Perceived emotion, though also subjective, is more consistent across listeners than felt emotion. Partly for this reason, music psychologists tend to focus more on perceived emotion.

A remarkable thing about our memory for music is that it can often remain largely intact even when the rest of memory, both episodic and semantic, has greatly deteriorated. This is very evident in elderly people with severe cognitive deficits, such as Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. They may be unable to have a conversation or even to recognize their family members. But when you play them a favorite song—especially a favorite song from their youth—they perk up and start singing along. This special power of music can be used therapeutically to help revive other cognitive abilities, albeit temporarily. Once a piece of music has brought people with Alzheimer's out of their shells, they're often more aware, responsive, and enthusiastic.

A complex construct

John Foxe

KILIAN J. AND CAROLINE F. SCHMITT CHAIR IN NEUROSCIENCE

Foxe is the director of the Ernest J. Del Monte Institute for Neuroscience.

Memory is one of the major areas we study in the neurosciences. It's such a profound part of what makes people human.

All thoughts, all actions are physical because they begin with the brain. It's actually a very complex construct, memory. There are many different types, from short-term and working memory—holding onto that phone number somebody just gave you—to longer-term memories: your childhood, where you grew up. We have people working across all those domains, trying to understand the basic neurophysiology of how neurons instantiate and solve memory problems.

Neurons communicate with each other across synapses, and we now understand that memories are changes, essentially, in the strength of communication across those synapses. The brain is changing itself structurally and functionally.

Short-term and long-term memory rely on different parts of the brain. We have circuits in the prefrontal cortex and in the parietal cortex that hold onto short-term information over the course of seconds and minutes. And we have structures in the medial temporal lobe—the hippocampus—that are key in consolidating short-term and medium-term memories into long-term memory. Quite a lot of the consolidation occurs while we're sleeping. The hippocampal circuits are busy all night long, while we're sound asleep, reestablishing these longer, more durable connections, so that information is "locked in."

We've gained exquisite knowledge of how memories are formed. We have fundamental understanding of how memories are laid down and the circuitry involved in it. And that's allowing us to have insights into neurodevelopmental disorders, where memory formation is an issue.

Amplifying and erasing

Kristin Doughty

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Doughty studies violence and collective memory, especially the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

People remember events of the past as cultural memories—ones that are passed down and socially learned and transmitted, but also ones that they remember in relation to how they understand who they are.

I began my work in Rwanda with an interest in understanding how on earth people collectively put their lives back together in the wake of violence. And that's what brought me to think about questions of collective memory. Rwanda put genocide suspects on trial in public, in grassroots courts. People were debating collective memory over the course of several years, with complex consequences.

Collective memories sediment into recognizable narratives. And those narratives usually have good guys and bad guys and clear forms of causality. The Rwandan government has worked to solidify one particular narrative. They officially changed the name of the Rwandan genocide in the late 2000s to "the genocide against the Tutsi." It was a move to solidify an ethnic genocide in which the victims were Tutsi. That's not contested—but there were also victims who weren't Tutsi. Over time, the category of Hutu victim can be erased.

All collective memory has amnesia built into it. All memory amplifies some things and erases others. The question is, what are the implications of those erasures? What is forgotten over time is an important part of the process of forming collective memory. And what falls out and what gets amplified is a function of politicization. I don't mean party politics—I mean the politics of power dynamics: who is in charge and who is more likely to amplify particular parts of the story?

People pass on stories about the genocide in so many ways: at memorialization events, at museums, through art projects, and through school curricula. I've had people grab me by the hand and say, "This is where I was hiding," or, "I don't like to go to this place because that's where I last saw my family." I don't pretend that the way they tell the story to me, as an ethnographer, is the same way they tell it to their family and friends, but it gives me a glimpse of how the memory is passed on.

Does memory divide or unite?

Jonathan Baldo
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT, EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Baldo is a specialist in Shakespeare and early modern culture who was a Bridging Fellow at the Humanities Center in the spring.

Memory studies has become a large and growing part of the study of early modern English literature in general, and of Shakespeare in particular. Shakespeare was born in 1564 into what appears to have been a Catholic family, only 17 years after the beginning of the often-violent Edwardian Reformation, 11 years after the abrupt and equally violent return of Catholicism under Queen Mary, and six years after a sudden return of the nation to the Protestant faith under Elizabeth. Having been born a few years after many of the most violent and disruptive events of the Reformation, Shakespeare belongs to what critic Marianne Hirsch calls a "generation after." She's referring to the experiences of people born a generation after a cultural trauma, who remember the events only through stories, images, and behaviors they encounter growing up.

I'm examining Shakespeare now as a "traumatist": that is, as a dramatist who helps his audiences process traumatic memories and who also explores with his audiences various healthy, just, and productive ways of recalling the past. His history plays ask whether memory divides rather than unites the English people.

Interest in memory for early modernists surged in the 1990s. And those two periods—the 1990s and the 1590s, when Shakespeare was writing his history plays—both experienced technological changes that altered how the culture as a whole remembered. In Shakespeare's time, it was the proliferation of print. It was a new technology for remembering—or, in some people's eyes, for attenuating memory: if something was in print, you didn't have to remember it. It's an old argument of Plato's, that writing actually diminishes or impedes memory. And in our own time, there have been all the changes made by electronic forms of storage and retrieval. There's interesting work being done on the possible consequences of the fact that now nothing disappears.

Teaching historical memory

Kevin Meuwissen
CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF TEACHING AND CURRICULUM, WARNER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Meuwissen directs the Warner School's teacher-preparation program.

The act of remembering, individually and socially, is central to social studies education—even if students and teachers don't explicitly discuss the nature and consequences of that act. I aim to help beginning teachers support young people in doing just that: considering what people remember, how they remember it, why they remember it that way, and what ends those memories serve.

In the field of history education, the term "collective memory" represents resilient, predominant narratives and themes that are perpetuated over time and serve a harmonizing function. But they can also be divisive, particularly when we examine who is represented and mythologized in—and who is omitted from—those narratives and themes.

I ask teachers in my social studies education program to examine how kids conceptualize historical memory and its consequences. In one experiment, teachers and students look together at conflicting sources of evidence about a contested historical event, discussing how testimony taken several years after the event might compare in reliability to immediate recollections. The benefits and drawbacks of hindsight and reinterpretation often play a prominent role in those conversations.

Questions about remembering and forgetting permeate civic education, too. How should teachers address citizens' propensities to forget inconvenient truths and turn misinformation into memory as they defend committed party-group positions? And, at a time when our cultural and civic identities increasingly are curated and archived online, should we have a right to expect that past transgressions might be forgiven and forgotten and perhaps disappear completely when—to borrow a phrase sometimes used by politicians—our "thinking on an issue evolves"?

Enacting memory

Katherine Ciesinski
PROFESSOR OF VOICE, EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Ciesinski is an opera singer who has performed at the Paris and Metropolitan Operas, as well as at Covent Garden.

For singers, memorizing is what we do—we perform from memory. In terms of opera and recital performances, we are out there with no physical separation between us and the audience.

Generally speaking, memorization is a very private process, one that's not uniformly codified in our training. But each musician has to learn how to be a proficient memorizer. We have a score, something tangible that holds the basic information we're responsible for, and we have to enact that score. As a singer, I enact my breath, my posture, my face, and my articulators: tongue, jaw, mouth, palate, and other physical structures. Those things become part of how I memorize a piece.

Opera singers also work in different languages. You're memorizing the text you see on the page, but also the word-by-word meaning; the grammatical, syntactical meaning; and the emotional meaning. Staging rehearsals requires another distinct memorization process. You have to know where you are, what you're doing, to whom you're speaking, and other spatial and aural markers that orient you and make you a believable stage character.

An astute listener can easily tell when a performer has frozen in fear or is running the ticker tape of the music in front of their mind's eye. One can sense that distance and an unnaturalness within a performance. But when the performer is fully working from memory, audiences will feel that this singer truly inhabits the character and is spontaneously producing the character's thoughts, emotions, and actions. It then becomes a compelling and viscerally exciting performance.

Mind and body

Alison Peterman
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Peterman studies the philosophy of science and mind and was a fellow at the Humanities Center in the spring.

Memory is such a common and important phenomenon, but still a very mysterious one, so it's not surprising that thinkers have long been fascinated by it. One area of my research is 17th- and 18th-century philosophers' conceptions of the architecture of the mind. Many

of these philosophers were trying to understand how we make inferences or mental associations, and to characterize the difference between different kinds of mental states, like beliefs, hopes, imaginings, and memories. There was also lively interest in how mental states correspond to body and brain states, just as people are interested in that today, although instead of neurons, they talked about "impressions on the brain" and "movements of animal spirits." Philosophers also discussed memory in connection with other philosophical questions. For example, John Locke, one of the most influential philosophers of the early modern period, argued that the continuity of your memories is necessary for you to be a single person over time. And many people were interested in the connection between knowledge and memory: when do our memories justify our beliefs? Today, lots of philosophers, sometimes working alongside cognitive scientists, are still interested in questions like these.

Recently, I have been studying the 19th-century philosopher Mary Shepherd. She has some fascinating ideas about how the mind works and how our perceptions and memories justify our beliefs, including some that anticipate later important developments in the philosophy of mind. She was widely read and respected in her time, but like a lot of other women philosophers, she has been forgotten until recently. Now we're at an exciting time in the history of philosophy as we're starting to recover and study these wonderful thinkers. We're bringing back into memory women and many other forgotten philosophers, with the aim of rethinking ossified narratives of the historical canon.

Collecting memories

Joanne Bernardi
PROFESSOR OF JAPANESE AND FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES
Bernardi is a specialist in Japanese cinema and culture and material culture studies.

I engage with memory through my research on silent films and ephemera—much of which is from the same period as early film, the beginning of the 20th century.

People often talk about film as similar to dreams, as if through film you can see the thoughts of others. And I think there is something dreamlike about my experience when I go to a silent film festival, watching these films for 10 days and becoming immersed in their world.

The films help me learn about the past. It's a way of collecting knowledge and collecting people's experiences, even if most of the films are fictional. The narratives are grounded in events, relationships, or circumstances that would have been familiar to people at the time.

It's the same with collecting objects: I'm really collecting other people's memories. It concretizes other people's thoughts, fantasies, and perceptions. That's what I'm trying to investigate with my work on Japan—the "idea" of Japan that people had.

Some of the objects I'm attracted to are really very mundane, like train schedules or guide books—although guide books are interesting for lots of reasons. Once you start thinking about these objects, what interests you becomes complicated because you realize just how much is involved in that object. Guide books, for instance, can tell you not only about how places have changed since the guides were written, but also about the people who created them and the people who used them—what they valued, what they wanted, how they viewed the world, and how they lived their lives.

When people are dealing with historical objects and practices, they're trying to put a puzzle together, learning about the past through the ways we can fit things together. It's always going to have some kind of personal bias, but I try to see things from as many possible angles as I can.

Mental space

Ehsan Hoque
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
AND ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING
Hoque, the Asaro Biggar Family Fellow in Data Science, is a specialist in human-computer interaction.

The conscious mind can only process 40 bits of information per second. It's not a lot. Let's say I'm speaking in front of an audience. My conscious mind is thinking about what I'm going to say next—and it's getting overwhelmed. What am I going to do about my nonverbal actions? I don't have space in my conscious mind to do anything with that. And so it goes to the subconscious mind, which can process up to four million bits per second.

When you're talking with people face to face, your nonverbal

behavior is communicating most of the information—but it's your subconscious mind that's managing that, and you can't control your subconscious mind the way you can your conscious mind. Can computers help make you more aware of what your subconscious mind is doing? I design algorithms that help people use their mental bandwidth more effectively, so that they can train themselves to think not just about what they're going to say, but also about what's happening with their hand gestures, their voice intonation, and so on.

Computers can also help desensitize people to a frightening memory, so that at some point it doesn't hurt anymore. Virtual reality can be a part of exposure therapy to help people with post-traumatic stress disorder and phobias.

Human working memory is finite, and we can use computers to augment it. Google and other search engines have access to unlimited information. It's liberating to be able to look up a wide variety of information with a few mouse clicks. It's much more efficient than trying to remember it all. Now I can decide deliberately what information I want to remember. In most cases, I remember the trace or path toward the information rather than the information itself. The fact that we're able to share how we retrieve information imposes more transparency, objectivity, and repeatability on anything that we do.

Being present

Susan Dodge-Peters Daiss

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, MEDICAL HUMANITIES AND BIOETHICS

Daiss oversees "Meet Me at the MAG," an art museum program for people with dementia.

The visual arts can elicit deep memories for people whose short-term memory has begun to diminish. One of the wonderful gifts of the visual arts is that they stand still and allow us to catch up with them.

We've been offering "Meet Me at the MAG"—first monthly and now almost every Tuesday—at the Memorial Art Gallery since 2009. We partner with the Alzheimer's Association and also provide programming for people who have moved to elder-care facilities. Specially trained docents, including some Rochester undergraduates, help people to be in the presence of the work of art. We simply ask, "What do you see?" We're engaging people first in describing what they're looking at, and then inviting any connections they might have.

Narrative paintings—and occasionally sculpture—that can easily suggest connections with daily life tend to work best. There's a still-life painting with a young woman in a kitchen. In front of her are fruits, vegetables, and an unplucked chicken. Participants share memories that range from recipes to plucking chickens. There's absolutely no right and no wrong response in these conversations. It's really personal stories that we're evoking in the presence of these works of art.

The memories can be quite concrete or might not make immediate sense to those of us who are listening. But we never challenge the memory, because it's making sense to the individual.

Extended periods of quiet are always welcome. And for people who are having challenges finding words, language isn't the only way to be present with a work of art. Being present is of value in and of itself.

The ice remembers

Vasilii Petrenko

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Petrenko runs the University's Ice Core Lab, studying ancient ice to learn about changing climate conditions.

Glacial ice is a kind of memory of climate and the atmosphere. This memory is much better than human memory in some ways and much worse in others.

The ice faithfully records the atmospheric composition and climactic conditions over very long periods of time. The oldest continuous ice cores we have right now go back about 800,000 years.

They're from interior Antarctica, and with them we can very accurately reconstruct both the temperature at that location in Antarctica over time, as well as what was in the atmosphere.

Things don't get forgotten in the ice—while the ice is still there. But ice moves through the ice sheet, down from the very top, where it was deposited as snow, and slowly sinks down toward bedrock. Eventually it either flows out to the margins, where it collapses into the sea as icebergs, or it melts very slowly at the base. It's perfectly preserved while it's there, and then it's gone.

We think there's ice in interior Antarctica that goes back more than 1.5 million years. The ice cores have excellent long-term memory, but it isn't "high resolution" because you might only get a couple of centimeters of ice per year.

Closer to the coast, ice cores have excellent short-term memory. Snowfall rates there are much higher, and the snow transforms into a relatively large thickness of ice for every year. It's so thick you can even tell seasons apart and know what the conditions during them were like. But because it snows so much, the ice flows faster and you can fit fewer years into the same thickness of ice. So there, the entire thickness of your ice core might show only a couple thousand years.

As humans, we've evolved to store memories to help us learn and cope with what we encounter in the present. I think that's a good analogy for ice cores, as well, because they record the earth's climate memory. It has recorded some intervals that were at least a little bit warmer than today, and we can try to understand why and what the atmospheric composition was like. They can inform us about our current climate trajectory and where we're likely to be headed.

Between memory and nostalgia

Allen Topolski
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ART
Topolski is a sculptor who examines nostalgia and memory through material objects.

Most of my later teenage years were spent in frequent contact with my grandmother, whose dementia I came to understand in very subtle ways—I was often able to see the threads that bound her seemingly dissociated ramblings. Objects and places were catalysts for stories she relived in the telling. Her reality wasn't bound to the same moment as mine. But it was just as real.

I mostly come to memory through objects, which I see as remnant, component, evidence, keepsake, memento, document, heirloom, or souvenir—and I enjoy the investigation of the subtle differences between them.

Desire differentiates between nostalgia and memory. Especially in academia, I sometimes find myself needing to tread lightly between them. The former is all too often dismissed as emotional, with the implication that it lacks intellectual rigor. We teach ourselves to generate the comforts that we think we need, and nostalgia is one way to do that.

Nostalgia is a longing for something from the past that is unattainable. It gets folded into our futures, and objects become receptacles for nostalgia because we think that they're static and that we can anchor ourselves to them and spare ourselves the discomforts of change. I want my art to prompt what feels familiar, but I also want it to point to the fragility of that comfort.

I'm trying to use the familiar language of objects, putting the tangible into the service of a process that is not unlike remembering. Disparate parts are assembled along a singular line that may make sense to one, but of which others are ignorant. When a viewer can imagine the process being put to the making of something, their imaginings can be likened to the construction of memory.

Cultures of remembrance

Bette London
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
London studies 19th- and 20th-century British writing and culture. She was a Bridging Fellow at the Humanities Center last fall.

In Britain after World War I, an obsession with remembrance, marked initially by a frenzy of war memorial construction and the launching of a minor culture industry in commemorative art and literature, made "Lest we forget" a national watchword. But as scholars of memory and commemoration have demonstrated, remembrance practices invariably negotiate a complex calculus between remembering and forgetting, both in their own time and in the ways their meanings are reinvented to speak to new historical circumstances and new constituencies of spectators and readers.

I've been studying work often dismissed as ephemera—eclectic, often privately published, memorial volumes, compiled by family members of dead soldiers and published as posthumous tributes to loved ones.

They're extraordinarily miscellaneous volumes. They're trying to produce something that will contain and sum up the soldier's life—but there's not really enough life to do it. They might include a remembrance from a sibling, or the parents, or a friend. There are often extracts from letters he wrote as a schoolboy, or from the front. Or a poem he wrote to his mother when he was seven years old. It's as if somehow the only way to make sense of this loss was for them just to collect everything that they possibly could. It's incredibly poignant.

I've also investigated the fate of the "shot at dawn" soldiers, who were executed for cowardice, desertion, and other military offenses. They were excised from official casualty lists and excluded from local war memorials and remembrance celebrations. Most of the approximately 300 soldiers executed were noncommissioned officers or private soldiers. Their families didn't receive pensions or other benefits. There was a lot of shame and silence.

But the turn of the millennium brought a contentious campaign to secure posthumous pardons and recognition for the executed soldiers. Many of those who were executed experienced post-traumatic stress disorder—then, it was called shell shock. Exonerating them became a grassroots cause, and the stories of individual soldiers were taken up in the press. In 2006, the British government agreed to retroactively pardon all of the soldiers. Public opinion changed radically for people formerly seen as threatening and shameful. And the change came at a time when there was almost no one left with a living memory of the war.

The tradition of listing the names of all the dead, which has become typical of memorials, was something new after World War I. And for those omitted, it was like being unnamed, unremembered. It was a deliberate effort to erase memory. And so, 90 years after the war, their names were added.

With the campaign for restitution came this odd moment in British culture when the most famous people who fought in the war were these soldiers. To me, it's a dramatic shift that illustrates how memory works and what it is that people choose to remember.