

## For the record...

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Anon was a woman, wrote Virginia Woolf, in the first paragraph of a story I am going to continue...

The editorial makes public an otherwise hidden form of women's literary production, the letters of an editorial collective, and marks the importance of epistolary forms in the history of women's writing. Furthermore, it is effectively dialogic in the sense that it scatters the single, hierarchizing line of Socratic dialectic across fragments of writing. This "writtleness" subjects truth to the letter of the text, to the possibility of grafting the signifier onto an infinity of contexts. The text is also a collage. It is a collage not only by virtue of its material construction, the piecing together of stories, definitions, musings, reservations, and enthusiastic responses, but also by virtue of its developing and disappearing lines of argument, its refusal of a centre, and its compositional strategy of finding inside itself what it might otherwise dismiss as outside. For example, it finds inside itself its object of study and its own literariness. In so far as it brings the "real" within its compositional field and intercalates figure and ground, collage plays out a number of the conceptual possibilities of fiction/theory. Fiction/theory locates the fictional frame that conventionally distinguishes the representational from the real within itself. In so doing, it makes reference an effect of textual composition. Inside and outside are both of language, of representation, but the frame remains an important mark of the representational contingencies of representation, of the fact that texts produce not only effects of the real but also real effects. (Moyes 12-13)

Memory may well be mother of the muses! So many texts in this issue engage the braided strands of memory, mothers and writing. Mnemosyne's daughters have learned her lessons well: the muse has begun to write, write herself into the trajectory of history to leave a record (a memory) for her daughters in place of the empty library shelves that made Virginia Woolf lament the absence of "mothers to think back through." Important questions she raises of mourning, melancholy and the maternal to which I shall return. Questions also of the exclusion of women from the institutions that collect and preserve the records of the past. This creates problems in finding traces of the details of women's lives, of their oppression, producing the public/private dichotomy in writing, in history. A danger this constitutes of erasing the political work of feminism, women's attempt to make their mark on a temporality of a collective subject, of going beyond the abyss separating past and present, to act, to innovate.

Still, few of the muses have answered Memory's call.

Erato alone has proven a faithful daughter, as the number of lyric poems included in this issue testify, poems like Susan Hawthorne's memorial to Audre Lorde or Lisa Dickson's evocation of a memorable literary foremother, Mary Shelley, busy both at memory's work of reviving and retaining traces and representations. Recording to keep alive across distances of space/time which the exile bestrides, as Carmen Cáliz points out, the lost place recalled in the sensory memory of a spoonful of lentil soup is stimulus for powerful affects of mother(land). Silent cry, vertigo of forgetting, as Louise Dupré expands on the hollowing out of memory when only certain kinds of traces are recorded in narrative, hollowing out that

*Jennifer trouve qu'il y a trop de poèmes dans ce numéro...Moi, c'est ce qui me plaît le plus ! Sans doute parce que j'écris la poésie...Mais je pense également que cette forme (le poème) est idoine pour aborder le thème de la mémoire. À l'origine, le poème servait à garder en mémoire : les récits de la création du monde, les rites initiatiques, les faits historiques de la tribu, etc. Sa forme même (les vers rimés) facilitait la mémorisation (moyen mnémotechnique fort connu). De plus, le poème permet des échappées dans le temps et l'espace, des regroupements d'images anciennes ou récentes ; enfin, il retrace les émotions originelles et les réanime (leur donne un souffle, une âme) au présent...Il nous suffira pour nous en convaincre de lire ou relire L'Anthologie des femmes*

must be pursued, however, in the movement toward truth. Painful, these knots most frequently are. Motivated to recall pleasure more than pain, we collaborate in forgetting. Darlene Searcy ironizes this: who indeed is going to read the book of an old pain? Motivated to recall pleasure more than pain, we collaborate in forgetting. (Perhaps this is Thalia, daughter of comedy, arriving late by the back door. Certainly, she

enters with Margaret Webb's memories of meat where the metaphoric work of memory carrying across the temporal gap is satirized from the perspective of metonymic contiguity with the blind spot or hole, the female sexual organs. Ironically signalling the gap between what women have been told and what they know – "Proper deafinitions" (Warland) – Webb raises the issue that concerns virtually all the writers: writing with/against silence.) "Mad Ritas" all these poets scribbling away, jotting down their musings. In a mere fit of abstraction? Or as considered meditation in sound memory (mind)?

There is much opening up to pain in the prose musings or life/writing included here. Aritha van Herk retraces the scars on Djakarta's body, the impress of suffering that has never been recorded and transcended in epics of suffering as men's wounds have. Nadine Ltaif, returning from the exile of (im)migration to her native Mediterranean, searches through archeological traces, noting the erasure of the feminine from this form of material memory: the temple to Ishtar at Byblos has been razed. While the Queen's throne sits beside the King's looking out over the sea, no tombstone or memorial to her can be found. The great gap or "béance" in the public memory around the feminine.

Penn Kemp is unusually blessed in tapping the dream traces in her house of memory, but it is situated in the sphere of the personal unconscious where she makes her way back to the affective stability of a loving

du Québec. *Nous y apprendrons en filigrane, d'hier à aujourd'hui, l'Histoire non-écrite des femmes...*

*Quand je lis "Mémoire creuse" de Louise Dupré, j'entends la mémoire qui creuse et quand Margaret Webb me raconte "Memories of Beef" je retrace en large partie le questionnement féministe effectué depuis plus de vingt ans ! Le poème, la mémoire, un amalgame heureux pour l'expression au féminin. – L.C.*

*Memory mamère mymother. When I think memory, I think mother. This is a mothersickness, but not in the sense of Alice Parker's "mal de mère." I do not think from the site of (a) mother: positioned by, but resisting scrutiny*

grandmother through the stereoscopic superpositions of mnemonic material, surprising in the bizarre configurations of self they stage. Still, her dream memories are recorded by dint of strict discipline under threat of amnesia. Catching pieces of memory at the edge as they slip under the forgetting of sleep, of aging, into the abyss separating past from present. Memory works here in the mode of repetition, or being, to invent a personal identity in the traces of a self, an attempt to deny death.

That women are subject to harm and danger is exposed but without invoking the myth of chivalric protection of romance. Indeed, this is precisely the narrative that is denounced, the old story whose ending as an eclipsing by the masculine is being rewritten as a making-(self)-visible. "(I)mmaterializing" (Warland). Nostalgia or homesickness this is not. Return to the maternal is not always possible, nor indeed desirable, especially where change is at stake. To act or innovate is to engage in a different relation to the future through implication in a collective subject of feminism. For Kathleen Rockhill, the return to home and mother is made impossible by the memories of incest stirred up and the web of

*by discourses of the maternal. I think, write, imagine, rather, as a daughter: towards that conflation, memory-mymother. A discourse inflected not with accusation (as in Luce Irigaray's "Avec ton lait, ma mère, j'ai bu la glace") but with longing. It's a never-ending elegy. One love letter after another, a strange writing only repeating the words, "I miss you." I am inconsolable.*

*But the addressee does not exist. She is the lost object for which there is no literal referent. Like the mother in Claudine Potvin's text, her body cannot be "saved" ; she is "recaptured" only in the moment when she is thought to be lost. Lost-and-found. The retrospective fantasy of a subject drunk with nostalgic memories. The different verb tenses in Potvin's construction, "perdu retrouver," however, inscribe the impossibility of retrieval. Past tense and infinitive: not lost-and-found but lost-to be found. The moment of finding is forever postponed – as in Proust, à la recherche du temps perdu. Instead of moments of recapture there is embodied time – the time of repetition, in which an old sensation is repeated in a new one. The substance of this embodied time is the analogical relation between two sensations. And since remembering depends on such a relation of two, there can be no recapturing of a "one."*

*Remember, recapture, regain, recollect, restore, repair – if in the*

violence in which the mother is implicated. That first deep wound. Home as torture chamber. Memories she worked hard to forget in her drive to be perfect, to do what society told her to, memories that manifested themselves eventually somatized in her body as gestures demanding interpretation, action. As Nicole Brossard writes: "to torture : the memory of women is torrential when it's a question of torture the ravage is great when torture is thousands of years old and memory is short...." Anger is the result, emerging in a tortured style, in tortured texts that pervert by transforming "to rack one's brains" (Brossard 56). For Kathleen Rockhill, as for Alice Parker, it is the institution of the family that is problematic, memorial as it is to compulsory heterosexuality. Whereas Penn Kemp hones her recording techniques to stimulate recall and keep open the channels for material from her automatic memory, Kathleen Rockhill uses the synthesizing powers of conscious memory in her rigorous pursuit of truth. Memory for her bears the marks of power differentials, memory a strategy and resistance for the oppressed making visible the traces of an alternative record to the dominant one. Yet remembering her own pain as hero in a

*"re" prefix there is the suggestion of a movement backwards to an original point, there is also the suggestion of repetition, a spiralling forward into the future. A process in which the point of origin is continually displaced.*

*The subject in Potvin's text tears up the sheets of her memory-book in a combative act which is also a self-mediated birth. It's precisely this act of destruction which allows the subject to pull herself together, to remember herself. Giving new meaning to absent-mindedness: a gendered amnesia, the state of having man's memory reach like a sinister presence into the most private spaces. When a woman says, "I must have forgotten myself," she can be understood to refer to the mind-altering effects of "la mémoire de l'homme." Potvin's title goes two ways: either (or both) the memory of that man and Man's memory. The short-circuiting is caused by that man who interfered / Man who interferes. And there is no uncontaminated memory. Why, then, should we want to remember? As Potvin would have it: so that we remember that we don't want to remember?*

*What's left of those feminist sense-making activities: referring to our "experience as women," meticulously recording lives which are otherwise conveniently forgotten? Rather than turning to memory and experience as keys to "truth," Kath-*

narrative of victimization makes her forgetful of other kinds of oppression. Amnesia paradoxically at the heart of memory. Engaging in memory work as she does through her journalanalysis forces her to address power and privilege that constrain whose memories may be told and under what conditions. Through her persistence in recording the details of the everyday and using this record to bring the past back to life, Kathleen Rockhill engages in anemnesis or the "writing cure," analysis (in)terminable for the "mal de mère" she suffers that moves her away from rote repetition to action with other women.

A different mnemonic? Pursuing "the question of surfaces" becomes a question "of perspective" (Brossard 57), a change in the angle of vision that produces a different network of traces, connects images in different combinations to bring into existence another reality. This is the work that Claudine Potvin describes in effacing man's memory, a memory inscribed in an image of a girl sprawled on a beach violated by a man, the mother's body blocked out, that the girl undertakes through a scrap book of memories. She refuses the final scene of violation, attempting to destroy it by rewriting the pornographic film,

*leen Rockhill argues, we must see these things as "interpretations, in need of interpretation." Even that which we want to return to as our "own" has been mediated, regulated, sometimes already chosen for us. Memory work must therefore refuse nostalgic reconstruction and look, rather, toward the processes by which we have internalized the norm. Parker will ask how we come to be introduced to compulsory heterosexuality and reproduction. How do we become initiated to the male? "When we move into culture/society, do we relinquish one of our parents? Is the mother subsumed?" And what is the effect of such a smothering? As Parker suggests, the mother-daughter relationship might be so strong – so lesbian, in fact – that its forgetting supports social structures as we know them. After our girlhood "lobotomies" (Brossard), what happens to the lesbians we might have become? At one time, my explorations of the sexual were a way of breaking with my mother. Was I also, unknowingly, breaking with memory, "interiorizing" and thus smudging out affective bonds which for phallogocentric culture are better forgotten? If there is no possibility of a return to "before" (only the sending of these monotonous letters) those bonds, nevertheless, will bear repeating. – J.H.*

not playing the amnesiac to look for the lost chronicles of the mother like her sisters who are hooked on the real as presently ordered. This work of reorganizing the symbolic to produce the space for another version must be carried out in signifying systems. Writing as apostrophe or prosopopeia launches letters across the void of loss or absence, bridging the break or gap in the distant premonition of another. As Louise Dupré writes: childhood ends between the pages of a book. Then the mother is only one woman among other women. At the end of the story, the woman will have traced all the letters of mo(u)rning. Memory framed at/as work, as mnemotechnics or technology of re-membering.

If Rockhill, Parker, Potvin and Dupré use writing to realign the narratives of the past and work through their relationships with their mothers and beyond to the Mother as inscription of the feminine in the cultural symbology in order to displace her, as Parker attempts, with anOther woman lover, Carol Laing sends out letters to her contemporaries, letters that are testimonials to some memorable women whose texts she has read, building a record for the future, a dialogic feminist subject. Memory as project connecting past and future through the present tense of writing. For to speak of memory is to speak of the future, of what these writers have given, of the experience of this bequest that is a coming in the future. These letters are a promise, and a demonstration of the written text as promise, as performative, as (im)possible declaration of pleasure/fidelity.

This attempt at re-recovery in/as writing is a paradox in the theo-

*Memory: turning back for a lost strand in the spinning, in the weave of words, the tissue of bodies. Carol Laing's image of a "patterned body" – of needlework surfacing in the flesh, making readable the conditions of women's lives, comes forcefully to mind here. Along with Lisa Dickson's ironic rejoinder, "We've come a long way from simple cottage industry/ Today, we keep the seams and scars under the skin." Only just under the skin, Kathleen Rockhill reminds us as she exposes the ideological scars, the "intricate webs of regulation" through which she and other women reconstruct their histories. This is women writing their way out of the tropes of Western philosophy, tropes that figure them as amnesia, as the gap between remembering and forgetting.*

*Writing is a way of working the fabric of memory. As Gail Scott suggests in Spaces Like Stairs, writing focuses not so much on the past as on the "memory traces of the feminine in our present language" (26). Its*

ricing of memory that poses problems for women, as Lisa Zucker demonstrates. It is just this temporal gap between past and future that is sometimes termed the feminine by Nietzsche, a moment in which his text acknowledges its own suppressed difference and calls attention to its instability. More generally, however, his texts express a horror of gaps with their potential for reversibility in the oscillation between past and future, for these embody the contradiction of the promissory that may fail in its promise becoming the repetition of the eternal return. This is a weak form of understanding or truth, Zucker argues, a version of a prior representation that is gendered "passive" and hence "feminine." As sign, the feminine calls into question the possibility of an original act, and returns to the problem of displacement, of dispersion, a problem always already obliterated from memory. The feminine (as oscillation) is threat to knowledge and truth in Nietzsche's system, yet simultaneously she figures the burden of idealism's amnesia of oscillation. Such forgetfulness of textuality would through its weakness disperse and undo the discourse of mastery and truth. The feminine is thus figured as the vanish-

*challenge is to retrace the historical detours and displacements that have pushed women out of sight. But memory is not simply a question of remembering or not. After all, the guide at the Temple of Byblos in Nadine Ltaif's "Pas de tombeaux pour la reine" "knows everything by heart." The forgetting is far more systematic: the ruins are haunted by the things the guide cannot even conceive of having forgotten. Ltaif's writing, then, is the ghostly trace of the queen, the trace of her absence among the ruins.*

*In the West, writing has long been thought of as a mnemonic device, something that stands in for true memory. In the Phaedrus, for example, Socrates tells the story of the Egyptian King Thamus who is offered the gift of writing by the God Thoth. The King refuses the gift on the grounds that writing would discourage his subjects from looking for truth within their souls, that ultimately writing would create forgetfulness. But writing is no mere substitute; it is the stuff of memory. And its weave depends as much on what is not on the scene as what is, what is forgotten as much as what is remembered. Dreams work this way. Writing them down, as Penn Kemp suggests in "House of Memory" and as Margaret Webb suggests in "Memories of Beef" helps jog the memory, helps us stumble across elements that had seemed to lie*



ing point of knowledge or as “an-aesthesia.”

Nietzsche is not alone in positioning the feminine as both forgetting and memory in opposition to truth. As Zucker points out, this is a characteristic move of the Western philosophical tradition in a history of oedipal-

ization, a history it has itself actively worked to forget, to repress. Under the weight of such a tradition of contradiction, memory becomes problematic for women. How can a woman re-member when she is the very site of memory? Memory, the gap that needs re-recovery and the action of re-calling, both the fact of language (or object of memory) and the act of language that promises to bring it forth. This engages the paradox of “history” where there is “ancientness” without anteriority since there is neither speech prior to the act nor act before speech (Derrida 95). Memory bringing forward a legacy is a performative that carries out its work in the very offering of a promise or gift.

This prefigurative movement of memory has been termed allegory. In contrast to the simultaneity in the symbol, the relationship of signs in allegory is constituted in respect to a temporal distance that implicates a negativity, a recognition of a relation with a non-self. Consequently, allegoresis is a figure of reading. Meaning is constituted in the repetition of a previous sign with whose anteriority it can never coincide. This anterior sign is constituted as a promise for re-collection that is un-realizable. Memory which produces the re-collection is the voice of the other speaking before in citations, hence its doubling and simulation, its effect as revenant. As a figure of temporality, allegory is predicated on the discontinuity of a break or disjunction: like irony it performs a critique or demystification of a symbolic mode of correspondences or a mimetic mode where fiction and reality coincide (de Man). Against the nostalgia of unity of nature and consciousness, the synthesis of object-subject, irony affirms the impossibility of such reconciliation of fictional and real worlds and exposes a temporality that, relating only in terms of difference, is non-totalizable. Allegory is hence the memory of (im)possible mourning. Though given to memory with the death of another and to the interiorization of the other within ourselves, since without an “us” the “other” is nothing, this irrevocable absence resists the closure of memory

*beyond recollection, outside the frame. Memory work becomes a way of generating movement between prevailing discourses and their over-sights, between what women can imagine for themselves and (self)representations that are as yet unimaginable. – L.M.*

and of mimetic interiorization, and demonstrates the limits of an “us” by the appearance of another as “other.”

This rhetoric of temporality is gendered in French, where the meaning of the word changes according to its gender and its number, changes which are aligned along the axis of “interiorizing idealization” (Derrida 34) against which allegoresis would externalize. In the feminine, memory encompasses both the faculty or site of gathering thoughts (“la mémoire”) and the name or object of these thoughts (“une mémoire”). In the masculine (“un mémoire”), the term applies to a document, a report or “memo,” brief statements of facts, or to the abbreviated academic thesis for an M.A. A written form is implicit in the term, something approached from the outside in a spatial inscription which is not necessarily entailed in the feminine term. Moreover, these written forms have mainly institutional functions. The polysemy of the term is complicated by the existence of a form in the masculine plural which translates into English as “memoirs.” Not an autobiographical genre or necessarily confessions, these are nonetheless writings that relate a life or a history to which the author bears witness. Testimonials. English retains this gendered distribution of memory in the opposition between life writing and history exposed by Virginia Woolf.

A binary separates the interiority of memory from the graphic or spatial exteriority of memory, that is the dark regions of the heart from the artificial memory of the archive, two different types of memory work: learning by heart and building data banks, systems of preservation. Within the idealist heritage of Western thought, this dividing line articulates relations to truth, separating the intuitive or psychic from the simulacrum, spirit from matter, truth from illusion. Both the contemporary prodigious multiplication of technologies of externalizing memory and the focus on memory work as act or event – performative or writing – destabilize this opposition. So too do allegory and prosopopeia whose structure prefigures “being-in-us” in which the self appears to itself in “the other who speaks in me before me” (Derrida 28-9). Instead of the sign arising only in the gap, in the silence or interiority, requiring discovery in alethic interpretation in a theological moment of truth, meaning is made through the superposition or concatenation of signifiers, jostling, proliferating and serially combining in libraries, galleries, computers bringing forth possibilities to intervene in the future. Memory work or the art of ordering. The coterminacy of writing and speech or of exteriority and interiority undoes the hierarchy privileging the spirit over the letter.

Urgent and telegraphic, this section of the editorial propels itself along on participles, nouns, and sentence fragments. It disrupts its enunciation in ways that draw attention to its status as a language practice. Like fiction/theory (and like the manifesto), the editorial is aware of itself as a language practice that cannot differentiate its activity in any absolute way from the language practice it discusses. Other sections of the editorial are not as dense or pronouncedly rhythmic as this one, but they nevertheless have a number of the discursive marks of the manifesto. Among these marks are the first person plural "we," the loose weave of theses about writing, the call for more critical re-writing, the questions that enlist the reader, and transformations implied by constructions such as "the feminist reader gone co-creator. Turned writer" and "no longer a statement of truth but words which construct truth." The latter evokes the distinction made by J. L. Austin between statements of fact (constatives) and expressions whose enunciation accomplishes an act (performatives)... As a declaration and a promise, the editorial constitutes one of the disruptive language acts about which it writes. (Moyes 8-9)

Sending testimonial letters in premonition of the other who, absent, lives only in the writer, the letters reversibly traversed by otherness, women writing (of) their memory work participate in this economy of dispersion. Writing from, writing through. But do they disturb its gendering? Is the ground and vanishing point of (their) writing always a woman's silent body? Is this memory work also a dis-semination? Are they exposing the sublation (or *Aufhebung*) in the moment of discovery as an instance of re-recovery by synthesis, or covering up of the feminine by the masculine? How much of the heart's knowledge is at stake in this memory work? It is precisely the "mal de mère" or "Love as homesickness," in Freud's words, that these women are suffering, from the confinement of the mother and of love in interiority, in silence and absence, as other within the self to be overcome in the entry into representation through acceptance of one's castration or lack – the Oedipal narrative of subjectivity, identity.

Trauma, repression, transfer of affect onto an analyst for recovery –

this is the psychoanalytic narrative. Since Freud, the "normal work of mourning" has been described as memory and interiorization. This entails a movement where an "interiorizing idealization" or introjection takes into itself the body and voice of the other. "One must always begin by remembering," affirms Derrida, and "the trace must be followed." This makes a "place for the body" which though "ours" did not exist before the possibility of incorporation and remembering (Derrida 34-35). What Derrida does not address in his focus on the paradoxes of temporality as the always already is the materiality of the bodies in question. For the introjected body is that of the mother whose breast is the object that inaugurates the process of splitting and transference or substitution of a bundle of affects that is "bound up with the process of symbol formation," of identity formation, itself caught up in the Oedipus complex (Klein 50). The loss of the mother's breast not acknowledged as loss, and hence object available for a play of substitution and transference productive of subjectivity, constitutes melancholy and abjection where the individual is situated in a-subjectivity, non-objectivity, that is, in the flux and flow of pre-objectal relations prior to the violence of the separation of body from body. This is the "maternal space," territory of the "imaginary mother" of primal narcissism (Kristeva 1983, 57). In these first object-relations with her body, emerges the "repetition compulsion" (Klein 51) or the rule of endless substitution and the law of the signifier, a doubling that functions as a defense where the ego projects material outward as something foreign, this "haunting" in the return of the repressed or "ghastly multiplication" (Freud 376) working to protect against the destruction of the ego in the "castration complex" (Freud 366). Most terrifying is the fantasy of intra-uterine existence, the fear of being swallowed up by the hole, by absence. The uncanny and horror of the abject thus weaves its "effect of silence, darkness and solitude" (Freud 369) at the site of the female genitals, in the place of the mother's (unspeakable) body.

In its rush to closure with the solitary ego fixed in the centre of its object-relations, the psychoanalytic anemnesis in all its variations focuses on the object of memory, either sign or signifier, and not the process of selecting, linking. Lacan ostensibly displaces this movement that makes castration a contract of truth by focusing on the bundle of signifiers and their endless substitution of affects. The subject and object of desire are nonetheless always substitutes for something simultaneously both present and absent. This synthesis presupposes a successful

sublation of which the phallus is signifier, initiating the sublation by its disappearance. A reversal of the Hegelian and idealist tradition, in that the sensory signifier is not sublated in the ideal signified but is simultaneously both present and absent, this displaces the privileging of presence. Metaphorical though it may be, the Lacanian phallus is nonetheless an indivisible, not a partial object, and as such retains the identity function of phallocentrism for the psychoanalytic system. The gendered configuration masculine/present, feminine/absent persists.

Psychoanalytic anemnesis is concerned with fixing the affective content of substitution, working through screen memories to disengage the (absent) bundle of affects or signifiers in play in the substitution. It attempts to get back to those first relations with the mother's breast (and/or the missing phallus) in an effort to acknowledge its loss and to make possible separation from her body, requisite for access to language and representation. The failure to do so leaves an individual struggling with the alternatives of psychosis or with troubled representation which is the predicament for women under current social arrangements where the "christic sublimation" of maternity (Kristeva 1983, 313, 325) is held out as the feminine ideal, one where the feminine is completely absorbed in the maternal and becomes an abstraction, leaving the body for the soul and fusion with the Ideal. Kristeva does outline a centrifugal scenario that moves toward the other through the "corps à corps" of one woman with another, with "her mother, of course, the absolute because primeval seat of the impossible – of the excluded, the outside-of-meaning, the abject" (Kristeva 1982, 22). This is the struggle taken up by Alice Parker, but her attempt to find the other woman is blocked by Kristeva's scenario which retains the maternal body as the site of the un-signifiable engulfing the individual in a narrative of abjection/melancholy. For the relation with the other woman in a lesbian relationship is characterized by Kristeva as a faint and unhappy displacement of the primary identification with the mother, just as much a prop of the Ideal as the abstraction of the Virgin Mother. The other woman is foreclosed by both these substitutions: separation from the mother is impossible in Kristeva's system, as in psychoanalysis in general, without the intervention of the third term or masculine (the imaginary mother's desire which constitutes the imaginary or archaic father) that effects a separation of inside and outside, of feminine from masculine. The feminine remains the site of the theological moment of signification effected through her silence, her absence, the work of signification that must be developed through a

narrative of re-mem-bering, re-covering the affects around the lost breast (or the lost phallus), musing with/against lack, death. Psychoanalysis makes use of the ordering action of memory without theorizing the temporality and situatedness of anemnesis in terms of different discursive sites.

How to get beyond this narrative of foreclosure, of sublation, to the other woman, to engage the other within as anOther woman? This necessitates another relation of inside and outside where these are not fixed in a gendered opposition but are, like the moebius strip, moveable sites along the same surface serially differentiated by a shift in angle of perspective. A change in frame puts in what is usually left out and exposes out at the very heart of within. This foregrounds the aporia of prosopopeia where the sender's message is read backwards as traversed by the message of anOther so that inside and outside, absence and presence, are confounded. Even the failure or impossibility of mourning succeeds, for not properly interiorized as our loss, the other makes her otherness visible. This is the strategy of emptying out mourning that Louise Dupré advocates, writing out all the letters of mourning that will write mourning out, write the absent mother out, not in, and make her visible as just anOther woman, no longer the site of an amorphous devouring, of an uncanny dread.

*"As for Denver, the job Sethe had of keeping her from the past that was still waiting for her was all that mattered)... Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody knew her name. Disremembered and unaccounted for."*

*For Toni Morrison in Beloved, memory is political. How can the unspeakable thoughts of slavery be spoken? How can one remember something that one tries so hard to forget? Sethe's memory excludes nostalgia, she cannot yearn for a golden era. No, memory for Sethe is, literally, a dis/memberment. A political memory (not a memory of politics) registers as a disrememory, that is to say, a memory that re/members in order to forget. Disremembering is not so much a forgetting but a remembering that is also a forgetting, the ability to understand the past in order to act and be in the future. The process of disrememberment for the black women in Beloved is the collective project of re/mem-bering the self. For Carmen Cáliz-Montoro, remembering "Three Exiles and an Autobiography," the process of disrememberment entails accounting for "the centuries already hurt." Memory as the inscription of a collective*

This is no longer a story that will go around and around and down to death/absence. It is a story of beginnings, of action. Memory working. Drawing attention to the compulsion to repeat, to the work of repeating as memory work. This is not the rote learning of childhood with its focus on reproducing the same signified, seamlessly integrating present and past, but an active selection and connection or interpretation in a painful exploration of the differences, the discrepancies in the repeated action of substitution. Hard work it is, persistently linking past and present, making something different in the process. It is this work of tracing the disjunctions in the organization of signifiers as these relate to power differentials that Kathleen Rockhill records in a movement toward changing the alignments of present and absent terms. The work of prosopopeia is foregrounded in Carol Laing's letters that in addressing anOther woman bring her to being in herself as writing. The violence of the letter is exposed. The work of woman as silent other propping up the work of sublation and its economy of truth as castration is laid bare in these letters that posit women as readers and foreground the work of allegoresis as a reading from anOther (feminist)

history of oppression.

*Memory as the collective project of a feminist politics – that is to say, as disrememberment – flows throughout this issue of Tesseract. The project of memory is inscribed along a range of different political possibilities in these texts – relations to mothers, to history or to other writers re-configure the past in order to envision a disremembered future. What do we know, or what can we learn through reading these texts, about the feminist memory and about disrememberment?*

*The feminist memory concerns motherhood. Rememory for Toni Morrison is re/memberment with the mother – literally and figuratively. The mother who chopped her daughter's head off rather than send her into slavery must be re/membered. The history of slavery, a history that has separated mothers from daughters, must be re/membered. For the women writers in this collection re/membering the mother is an important theme. For Parker, the question is how can one be a mother, specifically a lesbian mother, in a matrophobic culture? Or for Dickson, it's the image of "Mother Frankenstein," the woman-monster. With reference to Wittig's claim that motherhood is a counter-revolutionary term, how can motherhood be figured radically? Through Rich, Kristeva and Brossard, it is a project, a disremembering that is just beginning.*

Their texts juxtapose discursive codes, representational frames, writing and graphic art, writing and photography. They insist on the role of the reader in the production of texts and on the possibility of misreading the theoretical as the literary, the fictional as the political, and so forth)... [C]hange as an effect of a discursive process...mine[s] the prevailing order from within. (Moyes 7, 9)

angle. Love letters these are, bequeathing a different future.

Significantly, few of the texts included in this issue explicitly tackle the problem Virginia Woolf laid out, the problem of a history of women's activism. Implicitly they do so by turning the valuation of life writing inside out, making it a matter of public address between one woman and another, the matter of apocryphal figuration and consequently the origin of fiction. In this they engage in a project of making audible what has been silent, foreground this absence as a forced silence. But the building of museums that would change the categories of private/public, of interior/exterior by their systems of classification and order, upsetting the normal so that it is not the spoil of exploration and conversion that constitutes the "content" of museums but the traces and mementos of domestic life or life of the body, is engaged only by Andrea Ward in her

*The feminist memory involves hard work. It is not a simple remembering of the past, of childhood, of youth in order to fully understand the personal present. It is the work of understanding how the present experience is always ideological. In "Home Cries," Kathleen Rockhill does this work. She writes of her memory of incest not out of a self-absorbed pity, a relation to memory that would excuse present action due to past harm, but out of a desire "to expose how power circulates in its most localized, visceral forms." As she quotes Rich, "Telling our tales, is not enough." The tales must be worked and analyzed.*

*The feminist memory as disrememberment is a project – dis/membering the past in order to re/member the future takes place in the present. The tale the child would tell is different from the tale we are telling of our childhood. As Rockhill notes, "Memory is influenced by the context, the conditions, of remembering." What we choose to remember and when we choose to remember it*



project of investigation and preservation that is the constitution of a Gynaeceum. Clio arrives here to trouble the opposition between life-writing and history, between being and doing.

"Hairstories" is a collection, mounted in archival display cases, of clippings of women's hair, arranged, framed and accompanied by a narrative recording the affects of a particular woman's relations with her hair-object. The process of separation, the acknowledgement of loss and the work of mourning is engaged by the woman in relation to her own body in a process of desacralization. The humour and irony in the stories play against the elaborate arrangements of some of the hairpieces to displace the horror and dread inspired by the "crowning glory" of women that is source of Medusa's power. Pubic hair is included too mocking the dread as a purely masculine terror of being engulfed by the feminine. Putting in what has been outside, this museum project calls into question the classifications and categories by which social meaning is made and the traces and values of the past remembered.

As many of these texts point out, memory work is re-membering, the production of differences over/as time. By paying attention

*must be accounted for. Carol Laing writes her letters of memory, not to return to the past but to have them read in the future. The project of accounting for the importance of memories to our present and our future also entails understanding the significance of what culture chooses to forget. Lisa Zucker asks the question, "What kinds of forgetfulness will have been necessary for the discipline of philosophy?" How women are forgotten is equally as important as how they remember.*

*The feminist memory works within a collectivity. Women from the past are re/membered in the collective project of re-inscribing women's voices in history, a project that enables women to write into the future. Ltaïf's marking of the queen that has no tomb, Dickson's attempt to speak in the shadow of Shelley speaking in the shadow of Shelley, or Hawthorne's recounting of her first meeting with Audre Lorde work to collectively remember a tradition of women's voices.*

*The feminist memory is not nostalgic for the past. It is only relevant in so far as it shapes our future. Perhaps, paradoxically, what we learn about the feminist memory through reading these texts is precisely that it is not about memory but about disrememberment, which is to say, the feminist memory is about project. – K. B.*