

Call for papers: The American Comparative Literature Association's
2019 Annual Meeting

**The Story of Remembrance: The Future of Memory and
Memories of the Future**

Location: Georgetown University,
Washington, DC.

Abstract Submission Deadline:
September 20, 2018

Time: March 7-10, 2019

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Following the success of its previous ACLA seminar “The Story of Memory: Remembering, Forgetting, and Unreliable Narrators” held in March 2018, this seminar invites paper proposals to discuss how memory is represented and imagined diversely in the works of literature, art, and film from different cultural contexts.

Living in an age saturated with memory and forgetting, we see the protagonists unsettled by their lost memory in films and novels: *Memento* (2000), *The Bourne Identity* (2002), *Remainder* (2005), *The Amnesiac* (2007), *Amnesia* (2014), *The Girl On the Train* (2015), *The Buried Giant* (2015), etc.. These amnesic protagonists, haunted by déjà vu they can never make sense of, often experience trauma and violence. Their attempts to repeat or re-enact the past complicate one’s understanding of temporalities as well as their identity.

On the other hand, the futurist Raymond Kurzweilb (2010) made a bold prediction that with nanobot technology, humans will be able to back up their memories within two decades. This scenario has been fictionalized in two episodes in the dystopian sci-fi TV series *Black Mirror* (2011) and the film *Marjorie Prime* (2017): humans can record, edit, delete, or even “relive” every single memory and experience they have, either with a small device implanted in their brains or with an A.I. built from memories. These futuristic meditations on memory raise questions on the authenticity of lived experience and the limits of memory storage or modifying technologies.

The convoluted relationship between memory and time is also a significant theme in stories like *Minority Report* (2002). The film introduces a whole new relation between the past, present, and future, by showing that one “PreCrime” police must prove he “will not have murdered” a stranger as he is convicted by the Precogs’ “the memory of future.” Mark Currie (2013)’s discussion on “*futur anterierur*” (future perfect)

emphasizes the forwardlookingness of memory as a unique sensory experience in the 21st century. While experiencing a new temporality, we tend to confer the “full substantiality of a past event” to the future.

This seminar aims to explore the following questions: what is the future of memory? How do social media, A. I., and other digital technologies influence the way of remembering/forgetting? How are the past, the present, and the future intertwined in a diverse manner in these fictions? What does it mean to have “memories of the future”?

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

memory and forgetting
memory illusion
nostalgia and anachronism
postmemory, rememory
trauma, melancholy, and other backward affects
collective memory/amnesia
remembrance in the digital age
sci-fi, A.I. and memory
posthuman subjectivity and memory
gendered memories
reenactment/repetition in memory
violence and memory
futur antérieur (future perfect)
time, space, and memory

Please send a 300 word abstract and a short bio through the ACLA portal (<http://www.acla.org/node/add/paper>) by **September 20, 2018**. Please select “The Story of Remembrance: The Future of Memory and Memories of the Future” in the Seminar drop box. If you have any questions about this seminar, please feel free to contact Dr. Mavis Tseng at mavistseng@tmu.edu.tw

<https://www.acla.org/story-remembrance-future-memory-and-memories-future>