

## A Fresh Page – Instructions for Use

*Peau Neuve – Mode d’emploi*

*In het nieuw – Handleiding*

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# A FRESH PAGE – INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

→ By **Philippe Mesnard**,  
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**W**itness, victims, Truth and reconciliation commission, trauma, testify, slaves, refugee, concentration and extermination camps, the rebellious of 1917, rape, post-colonial, perpetrators, pedagogy and transmission, *i nunca mas !, never again*, museum, monument, minorities, memory, memory work, justice, Righteous Among the Nations, grey zone, humanitarian action, human rights, genocide, exodus, exile, ethnic cleansing, displaced persons, discrimination, *devoir de mémoire*, deportation, dark tourism, commemoration, collective memory, child soldiers, catastrophe, asylum, apartheid, anti-Semitism, Auschwitz... These words – amongst many others – permeate our cultural sphere, circulate around us in our everyday lives, instil themselves within our minds and contribute to construct our world view. Yet, do we know how to distinguish within this incomplete enumeration the worn words that now merely function as clichés, the word-answers that reassure us, from those whose meaning invites us, engages us, at times urges us to think: to think about the memory of our time?

**ALTHOUGH QUESTIONS RELATING TO MEMORY ARE A MAJOR CONCERN** in regard to cohesion and visibility for societies and are objects of cultural appropriation, they generate studies beyond the fields where they are recognised and acclaimed. They continue to expand beyond the conventions and the practices which, however, they are regularly called back to. Memory stirs debate. Its omnipresence causes

a sense of lassitude. At the same time, it is said that it is necessary and impossible to be overlooked.

This is why *Testimony between history and memory*, after recognising the borders of its own limits, is undergoing a transformation to better follow current developments on the notion of memory, and to get closer to the critical potential of the questions it raises and voices.

**THIS TRANSFORMATION THEREFORE WILL PRODUCE A MORE HYBRID JOURNAL**, neither totally disciplinary, nor totally cultural, with easily recognisable sections: the academic section consisting in a dossier and miscellaneous column will be placed in the centre, and surrounded by cultural headings, a portfolio, reviews, a laboratory on memory... *A Portfolio*, indeed. The challenge here is to create more than a journal illustrating pictures, rather, a journal of pictures. How, in a society concerned with representation and constantly in self-representation, can one consider the notion of memory without dealing with iconography? *A Laboratory on memory* – a word on this expression. If one heading has this title, it also reflects a more general challenge.

It is the challenge of not doing something “cultural,” or “reporting” (the profusion of both these genres would rather persuade not to create anything more). Nor is it the challenge to follow the acceleration of memory related phenomenon – this would be too much – but rather to develop a way of viewing them and their momentum in a different light. Even if it is not necessarily “new,” but different to what we have become accustomed to through the media. The challenge is also to make research pertaining to the question of memory accessible to a wider audience, in other words, to contribute to ennoble scientific popularisation.

As from issue no.118, the journal shall have two separate versions: one in French and English, and another one in Dutch and English. ■

Traduit par Sarah Voke