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CHALLENGE I

ABSTRACT

Memory processes —as selective displays of the past in the present— are an essential component of the configuration and development of all human societies and affect areas that range from everyday gestures to high-level politics. The unfolding of memory is especially important in the constitution of individual and collective identities, and its enormous potential for cohesion is only comparable to its great capacity to generate exclusion, difference, and dispute. It is impossible to understand historical or contemporary conflicts in depth without analyzing the memory processes in which they are or have been immersed. Hence the strategic importance of this challenge for an institution such as CSIC.

The approach to memory and memory processes is necessarily interdisciplinary, as it can be analyzed through the scientific fields of neurobiology, philosophy, sociology, political science, psychology, literary studies, religious studies, cultural studies, historiography, social anthropology, archeology, or cultural geography, among others. By reviewing the main historical, theoretical and thematic anchors of memory studies —with a special emphasis on CSIC-based research—, as well as their prospects for the future, this challenge proposes to proactively foster this interdisciplinarity to build a common analytical language substantially richer and more sophisticated than each of its individual parts.

MOBILIZED MEMORIES. DEPLOYMENTS OF THE PAST IN THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Executive summary

1.1.1.

Memory processes —as selective displays of the past in the present— are an essential component of the configuration and development of all human societies and affect areas that range from everyday gestures to high-level politics. The unfolding of memory is especially important in the constitution of individual and collective identities, and its enormous potential for cohesion is only comparable to its great capacity to generate exclusion, difference, and dispute. It is impossible to understand historical or contemporary conflicts in depth without analyzing the memory processes in which they are or have been immersed. Hence the strategic importance of this challenge.

1.1.2.

The great expansion of scientific studies on social memory in recent years responds to various factors. Although memory has always intervened in the understanding and construction of the individual and society, the great genocides of the twentieth century and the human rights violations that proliferate throughout the world have multiplied the groups of victims of various forms of violence that demand recognition of their suffering and pose the moral need

to remember the tragedies of the past so as not to repeat them. The Holocaust experience placed the need to drive memory at the center of the spotlight, making it a new categorical imperative. The Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp became a symbolic reference for State crime, as an archetype and metaphor for other past and present tragedies.

1.1.3.

Scientifically understanding memorial processes is an inescapably interdisciplinary task in total harmony with the objectives of the CSIC White Paper 2020-2040. Memory can be analyzed from the point of view of neurobiology, philosophy, sociology, political science, psychology, literary studies, religious studies, cultural studies, historiography, social anthropology, archeology, or cultural geography, among others. This challenge proposes to proactively foster this interdisciplinarity to build a common analytical language substantially richer and more sophisticated than each of its parts.

1.1.4.

In recent years, the analysis of memorial processes in Spain, in all its complexity, has become a very important conceptual laboratory within memory studies at a global level. This underscores the strategic importance of institutionally promoting this challenge.

1.1.5.

The challenge develops transversal themes that affect the research being conducted in the institution, in tune with the central themes of memory studies, grouped under these headings: neurological basis of memory; memory as a logos-with-time and central category of contemporary knowledge; memory and collective identities; memory policies; memory and conflict; diasporas and exiles; memories with a gender perspective; memories of science; materiality; and memories imprinted in landscapes.

1.1.6.

The challenge also lays the foundations for an anamnestic epistemic turn in both theoretical and practical issues, summarized in these sections: alternative epistemologies of memory and time, new horizons of digital memory, new memory technologies, studies of perpetrators, memories of utopia and hope, and dystopias related to climate change and major pandemics (COVID-19).

1.1.7.

The wide spectrum of topics reflected in the writing of the challenge shows that the scientific studies of memorial processes are an area of research of extraordinary social importance and with multiple future challenges. Far from being an area in extinction, the current boom in memory studies is testimony that the past is increasingly present, and that the study of the ways it affects the lives of individuals, groups and societies is a not only a scientific but also an ethical necessity when it comes to properly understanding both solidarity and social conflict.

1.2. Epistemological and ethical bases of memory

Memory is a fundamental category of knowledge because it is a temporal concept and, as we well know, time and space are both conditions of possibility of knowledge. However, memory is not just *any* time. It refers to the past. Moreover, the past is a rich fishing ground of meaning in which all disciplines cast their nets. History is interested in the past but also anthropology, literature, art, religion, science, psychoanalysis, philosophy, etc. This explains why memory has many definitions and why each discipline develops its own particular theory about what is or ceases to be memory. This challenge will be to address all this plurality, but also to order it so we can more easily speak across disciplines about memory.

Memory has acquired over time a semantic capital we have to consider. If for Aristotle, memory was a minor concept (typical of the “internal senses”) that only produced feelings (and therefore did not exceed the scope of the subjective and private), today it is presented to us as a category that, besides feeling, produces knowledge and that, besides being private is public or political, as aptly denoted by expressions such as “collective memory” or “historical memory.”

Memory belong to the order of knowledge and not only of feeling because it captures a part of reality that escapes the modalities of knowledge that focus on facts (such as history or science). What is memorable is the hidden part of reality. This makes memory an eminently hermeneutical faculty, because it not only refers to pastime, but also to the hidden part of reality, which means “the history of suffering” on which factual history is built.

In addition, memory is a duty or, as the philosopher Theodor Adorno would say, it is presented to us today as a “New Categorical Imperative.” This crucial aspect has become evident throughout the 20th century, when humanity faced the experience of a radical project of oblivion represented by the

Auschwitz extermination camp, a terrible event that was previously unthinkable. What is meant by that expression is that if we want to construct history differently, so barbarism does not repeat itself “never again,” we must rethink the pieces that history comprises (politics, ethics, aesthetics, law, education, etc.) considering what man did even if he could not think it. When the unthinkable happens, what happened becomes something to consider. Memory thus becomes the inspiring principle of a new theoretical and practical program, alternative to the one that ruled in the past and continues to govern, capable of novelty.

1.3. What does it mean to investigate memorial processes?

There is no doubt that memory processes are fundamental to understand how human groups selectively establish anchors with the past, and how these connections with yesteryear events and processes influence the formation and transformation of different modalities of communities of belonging. As memory is at the basis of feelings of belonging and community, it is also present in parallel or intertwined processes of exclusion, marginalization, and dispute. For this reason, understanding from the scientific viewpoint the unfolding of the past in identity processes has become a challenge of crucial importance in deciphering solidarity and conflict in contemporary societies. What is the reason why struggles of the past flood political discourses, permeate cultural production, or capture media attention so easily? Why are there characters or events from the past activated at a certain historical juncture, and others are marginalized or silenced? How is it possible that the past can be interpreted from the present in such different, even antagonistic ways, by different social groups? How do we recall episodes of extreme violence, but also of utopia and hope? What are the dialectical relationships established between hegemonic and subaltern memories? What forms did memorials take in the past and how are they taking shape in contemporary societies? What are the tensions and communicating vessels between memory and history? What social actors and institutions promote them and why? What are memory’s rhetorics, aesthetic keys, topographies, formats, and devices? How do monuments, memorial museums, anniversaries, or commemorations originate and evolve over time? How do we listen to and interpret witnesses? How do memorial processes interact with transnational discourses and practices of human rights? To what extent are the new forms of political organization and sociability, and the impact of the new ICT, transforming the modes of relationship with the past? Ultimately, what is the “past” and how is it unfolding and actualizing in the present, and how is it mobilized to anticipate futures?

To answer these questions, there has been an explosion of memory studies in the academic field in recent years, as memorial processes have become more complex and diversified in contemporary societies. Thus, there is a need for analysis in order to better understand the reasons why the supposed deficit of the past linked to the vertigo of globalizing processes may be transforming into a surplus or *memory saturation*. This need has propelled the emergence of a genuinely interdisciplinary research space in which, from different methodologies and theoretical frameworks, the relationships that different human groups establish with the past are studied, ranging from individual and family memory to the politics of memory cultivated by nationalist ideologies or that make up transnational spaces, such as the European Union, passing through all intermediate instances. Among the disciplines that contribute significantly to this field, we can highlight philosophy, sociology, political science, psychology, literary studies, religious studies, neurobiology, social anthropology, and cultural geography. A magnificent example of the wide spectrum of topics being worked on in this interdisciplinary field can be found in the program of the III International Congress of the Memory Studies Association, organized by a research team from ILLA-CCHS-CSIC and held in Madrid between 25 and June 28, 2019.

The most contemporary trends in this field of research increasingly conceive of social memory as a fluid, diversified and flexible process rather than as a static object, although not all memory processes are equally dynamic. In this logic, memory migrates, travels, mutates, and is exchanged in global processes, adopting transnational configurations and circulating through new digital technologies. Thus, specialists maintain that memory increasingly has cross-cultural, transgenerational, and transmedia qualities, and that makes interdisciplinary studies such as those presented in this challenge especially recommended. To apprehend the growing complexity, interconnection and fluidity of memorial processes, many contemporary authors have progressively created a new analytical vocabulary. To chronologically place examples of this *cross-cultural turn* —or *connective turn*, according to the authors interested in the intersection of memory with new technologies— of memory studies, we already have at our disposal a wide repertoire of concepts such as *collective memory*, *places of memory*, *communicative or cultural memory*, *cosmopolitan memory*, *multidirectional memory*, *traveling memory*, *post-memory*, *memorial mediation and remediation*, *palimpsestic memory*, *agonistic memory*, *ecomemory*, *memory without borders*, etc. For some leading authors in the field, what keeps seemingly disparate concepts coming from different disciplines

aligned are certain common elements: first, the close relationship of memory with the understanding of times present and the building of the future; second, the fact that commemorative programs are increasingly linked to global human rights regimes; third, the agreement that the comparative framework is key to understanding the intersections between global and local processes; and finally, the focus of analysis has shifted from static memory places to the dynamics and technologies through which memory is articulated in the contemporary world.

In this context, the challenge has the vocation to explore from the neurological bases of memory to its theoretical and philosophical foundations; its modes of representation; its relationship with collective identities in their different scales; its forms of political mobilization; its institutional models; its protocols and rituals; its literary and artistic expressions; its tensions and interfaces with public history, historiography and with other alternative memorial registers; its politics of oblivion; its modulation in diaspora and exile situations; its spatial and territorial dimensions; its connection with trauma but also with utopia and hope; its intersection with gender politics; its forms of materiality; its patrimonial connections; its global and transnational circulation; or their new digital expressions, to give a few examples.

2. BACKGROUND TO MEMORY STUDIES AT CSIC

Memory studies and the uses of the past are a clearly interdisciplinary field, and their processes call on a large number of approaches, some of which are well represented in the social and human sciences at CSIC. A large number of CSIC researchers analyse subject areas that deal with this challenge, either on an intensively or a more complementary basis. A key factor in the strength, solidity and future scope of this theme at CSIC is a result of the series of projects directed by Reyes Mate (IFS), including *Philosophy after the Holocaust*. This project, constructed around studying the reach of victims' memory, began in 1992 under the original title *El judaísmo, tradición olvidada de Occidente [Judaism, the West's Forgotten Tradition]*, and still continues today. The resulting research has produced keys with which to interpret the significance of victims who have been used, both theoretically and in practice, in fields as diverse as terrorism, the Spanish Civil War, slavery and traffic accidents.

Also crucial, in the same research setting, is the memorial dimension of the project *Pensar en español [Thinking in Spanish]*, which advocates a way of

thinking based on explicitly recording hidden experiences in the Spanish language as spoken by both the victorious and the defeated. This project led to *Enciclopedia Iberoamericana de Filosofía [Ibero-American Encyclopaedia of Philosophy]* (1978-2018), a 34-volume encyclopaedia involving 500 Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking authors. The development of this line of research turned CSIC into a national and international leader in thought on the memory derivation of the major tragedies of the modern age. Of particular relevance at IFS are the projects directed: by José Antonio Zamora on memory, social suffering, the victim's condition and the failure of memory in the face of new totalitarianisms; by José María González on political iconography and the image of angels of memory in Walter Benjamin; by Antolín Sánchez Cuervo on the relationships between memory and the experience of exile, with special attention to the exile of Spanish intellectuals in 1939; by Francisco Colom on memorial expression in the urban space, where cities are seen as palimpsests that have to be decoded by their inhabitants; and by María Jesús Santesmases on the gender perspective of memory studies.

Where CSIC's strengths are concerned, another relevant and consolidated line in the analysis of memory processes has been undertaken at Instituto de Lengua, Literatura y Antropología (ILLA), which ran a project on the memory activity generated around the Jihadist terror attacks in Spain on 11 March 2004, called *El archivo del duelo* [The bereavement archive], directed by Cristina Sánchez Carretero. A subsequent project on the Carabanchel prison as a site of memory was directed by Carmen Ortíz. Ortíz's latest project on the cultural heritage of the Canary Islands also intersects with the challenge of memory, in particular her research on the trade in and collecting of archaeological remains, including mummies and other Guanche human remains. Likewise, since 2007 a research group called *Subtiero* [Subterranean] has been studying the memory politics of the Spanish Civil War in a comparative interdisciplinary framework, coordinated by Francisco Ferrándiz. This project analyses the memorial cultures associated with the exhumation of mass graves in connection with transnational human rights processes, and the memorial impact of forensic technologies in the retrieval of the bodies of past conflict (*forensic turn*). Since 2010, this team has been organizing the permanent international seminar *Rastros y rostros de la violencia/Faces and Traces of Violence*, which has already held over 80 sessions and is available on the website (<https://politicadela memoria.org/en/>). In this context, a series of national research projects have been awarded and the team have participated in Marie Curie ITN actions (*Sustainable Peace Building*, SPBUILD), COST

(*In Search of Transcultural Memory in Europe*, ISTME) and H2020 (*Unsettling Remembering and Social Cohesion in Transnational Europe*, UNREST), demonstrating the huge appeal of this type of research for both national and international funding agencies. ILLA's organization (in conjunction with UNED and UCM) of the Third Annual Conference of the *Memory Studies Association* in 2019 is indicative of CSIC's leadership in this challenge and of its growth potential. In the 2008-2014 period, IFS and ILLA groups studying the memory of the Holocaust and the Spanish Civil War joined together in the interdisciplinary line of research *Justice, Memory, Narration and Culture* (JUS-MENACU), conducting debates, arranging international congresses and issuing joint publications. Particularly significant was the extensive investigation undertaken by Carlos Closa (IPP) in 2009 entitled *Study on how the memory of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe is dealt with in the Member States*, sponsored by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security, which provided the basis for a report published by the European Council in 2011.

Other researchers and research groups have made sizeable contributions to this field, although memory studies are not the sole purpose of their scientific programme. At ILLA's anthropological division, Juan José Villarías is undertaking comparative research on the political use of Tartessos in connection with Andalusian nationalism and, on the American continent, of revitalization movements and contemporary conflict between different origin myths in the State of Bolivia. Pedro Tomé and Luis Díaz de Viana, for their part, have conducted research into landscape, territory and nostalgia. At ILLA's Department of Literature, Judith Farré is carrying out a project on the transoceanic mobilization of colonial archives and objects, and the power relations generated on their margins, while Zeljko Jovenovic is studying Sephardic literary output in Judaeo-Spanish in the diaspora, after the expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492 and their settlement in the former Ottoman Empire and North Africa. This challenge has a particularly high profile at the Instituto de Historia (IH). In History of Science, authors like Leoncio López Ocón and Juan Pimentel have devoted considerable effort to analysing the conjunctural and political mobilization or neglect of certain scientists, institutions or scientific facts from the memory perspective, and their insertion in the collective imaginary. Pimentel also studies the relationships between memory and history, the *spectral turn* (the survival of images and their anachronism), and scientific heritage. Antonio Lafuente's work on the influence of new technologies in knowledge production connects with studies on the digital rollout of memory. In Medieval

Studies, Julio Escalona has researched space division methods (plot boundaries, jurisdictional preserves, municipal districts) to understand the role played by local memory as a landscape record and a gateway to land control in societies with no land registries (dense local knowledge). He has also studied the way documents are resignified when they change context in the hands of new actors, acquiring “new lives” and memory triggers, and serving different purposes from those for which they were initially designed. The emphasis here is on the “lie”, in other words on the production of false documents to support a particular discourse about the past which constructs a “desirable” present, and the disputes to appropriate such discourse where it has proved successful. In 2000, Eduardo Manzano was part of the editorial project *La gestión de la memoria: la historia de España al servicio del poder*, and in 2010, with Sisinio Pérez Garzón (UCLM), published *Memoria histórica*, a book that is part of CSIC and Catarsa collection “Debates Científicos”. In History of Art, researchers such as Miguel Cabañas, Idoia Murga and Wilfredo Rincón have studied the mobilization, pillaging, plunder and return of works of art and artistic heritage from ancient times to the present day – including baggage from the Spanish War of Independence, art and artists in exile, the commission and return of icons like Picasso’s *Guernica*, the mobility of art in dance tours, and the museumization of artistic memory. At Instituto de Análisis Económico (IAE) in Barcelona, Laura Mayoral, Hannes Mueller, Joan Esteban and Anastassia Obydenkova are conducting research on the impact of the uses of the past on contemporary mindsets and conflict, and are interested in the creation, persistence and transformation of cultural norms and their moorings in imagined pasts, the cultural and economic components of ethnic conflict, and the impact of historical legacies in migratory policies and attitudes towards immigrants.

Certain common elements of these studies are developed in greater detail as cross-cutting research areas. CSIC therefore possesses a substantial critical mass with huge potential to promote this challenge in a coordinated manner. At the same time, there are real opportunities to connect this challenge with others included in diverse thematic units in the CSIC white book, such as the challenges of digital humanities, digital citizenship, pain and suffering, demographic challenges in ageing societies, conservation and promotion of heritage and territorial development.

Overall, there is clearly a great opportunity to develop this challenge in view of the extensive interest in promoting this type of research in public institutions at both the national and international level. At the national level, research

projects geared to analysing memory cultures and processes fall under the challenges set out in the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2013-2020. The fact that, in 2020, the State Government made the enhancement of “democratic memory” a key legislative concept, placing it at the highest institutional position (Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister), is proof of its political and social relevance. At the international level, in recent years, the European Union has funded major projects directly linked to this challenge in response to the need for a more in-depth understanding of the contemporary management of the memory of European wars and the underlying reasons for the resurgence of xenophobic and populist national movements on the continent in the post-Cold War era. FP H2020 and HERA have led to the funding of a significant number of research initiatives, including *Unsettling Remembering and Social Cohesion in Transnational Europe* (UNREST, which involved both ILLA and IFS researchers), *Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritage with the Arts* (TRACES), and *Critical Heritages: Performing and Representing Identities in Europe* (COHERE). Similarly, in recent years, a large number of ERC projects fall within the area covered by this challenge, including *Bosnian Ghosts and Spanish Bones, Corpses of Genocide and Mass Violence, Digital Memories, Remembering Activism, and Greyzone*. In general, a very extensive network of international institutions and projects, in which CSIC groups have a significant presence, are dealing with these issues. Likewise, both a strength and an opportunity lie in the links which CSIC researchers have forged with the world’s main memory studies body, the *Memory Studies Association* (for which ILLA organized the Third International Conference MSA2019, with more than 1,500 participants, and on whose Executive Committee Francisco Ferrándiz sits), and the flagship journal in the field, *Memory Studies*. In this globalized context, high-impact research is being published, not only of an academic nature, but also of social and political relevance. It is important to emphasize that the strengths of this field include the social impact of studies which often analyse highly relevant social issues, such as management of the past and the conflicts of identity resulting from it. Some CSIC researchers work on memory processes with significant media national and international coverage, are engaged in transfer tasks and regularly work as advisors designing public memory policies at the institutional level.

Where weaknesses and threats are concerned, we should highlight the ageing workforce; a problem that exists right across the institution and which is hampering the consolidation of the challenge for the future. The lack of, and at times unsuitability of, technical and support staff is another of the problems endemic to the institution, which will naturally also affect the challenge. The

provision of human resources, particularly young researchers, is therefore crucial. Although CSIC researchers have shown a remarkable ability for interdisciplinary cooperation, this is an area that will require greater effort and stable coordination in the years to come. The articulation of this challenge is an opportunity to overcome another weakness, namely the current dispersion of research teams, especially after the JUSMENACU line ended in 2015.

In short, the challenge is built on very solid foundations at CSIC and has achieved international recognition, but its future viability requires the institution to make a firm commitment to the provision of resources in the years ahead. Its future also depends on establishing a stable coordination structure, bringing on board an international team of top-level advisors, and on drawing up a roadmap for future research. The main tasks in this coordination will include driving the growth of the critical mass of researchers involved in this challenge (both the existing workforce and new recruits), setting up a think tank, steering researchers towards funding opportunities from national and international calls, promoting top-level international publications and seminars, consolidating the incorporation of the challenge into international networks, generating autonomous teaching resources in coordination with academic institutions, promoting transfer activities, consolidating the public and media presence of its members and, where necessary, mobilizing rapid-response research capacity in the face of social issues where the memory dimension calls for scientific analysis.

3. LINES OF TRANSVERSAL RESEARCH

3.1. Neurobiological bases of memory

This challenge aims to incorporate the most contemporary research on memory processes at the neurobiological level. The contacts with Thematic Unit 5 have brought to the fore the many intersections and common interests between studies of a more biological nature and those of a more sociocultural nature, from memory diseases (which can be expressed both in the biological and in the social field) to the dynamics of active forgetting, as present in brain studies as in institutional memory policies.

The most innovative studies in memory neurobiology use state-of-the-art visualization technologies to detect the processes and patterns of brain activity at the base of memory, both in animals and in humans, and the functioning and limits of neuronal plasticity –the ability of neurons to

reorganize their synaptic connections and underlying biochemical processes. Among the challenges they face in their search for traces of memory in the brain or engrams [*engrams*]*—*which integrate at the neuronal level visions, smells, sounds, and a multitude of sensations and emotions that are mobilized by all regions of the brain*—*, neurobiologists try to understand the biological bases of learning, the morphology of storage and activation of the memory, the specific characteristics and interactions between short and long-term memory, the relationship between memory and sleep, spatial memory, memory loss (linked to aging, strokes or specific diseases), learned fear, specific circuits of declarative or semantic memories, implicit unconscious memories *—*linked to reflexes or emotional associations*—*, the interaction and overlap between memories, the capacity for recreation and their evolution over time, or the mechanisms that give rise to so-called false memories.

3.2. Memory, a logos-with-time, central category of contemporary knowledge

Memory, besides referring to a physical function, is also a meta-physical category. Our working hypothesis is that it has become the fundamental philosophical category of the way of knowing of our time. Our rationality is anamnestic or memorial because of an epochal trauma that humanity experienced in the last century and that we symbolize in the term “Auschwitz.” The unthinkable happened, and that fact forces us to think otherwise. This is meant by the formula “duty of memory”, or “new categorical imperative.” It breaks the enlightened trust in reason based on the certainty that the human mind could know everything and anticipate reality. From Galileo’s concipient mind to the ornate dictum “letting suffering speak is the condition of all truth.” The conviction emerges that the advent of the unthinkable, the fact that it actually took place, should give us something radical to consider. This anamnestic imperative should guide our work as it requires us to profoundly reexamine the pieces with which history is built in a new way. It would therefore be necessary to rethink politics (our understanding can no longer pivot on the concept of progress), ethics (moving from a discursive ethics to an interpellative one), law (doing justice should not consist so much in punishing the guilty as it is satisfying the victim), science, religion, aesthetics... Aesthetic representation must also deal with the hidden side of reality, with making present what is absent, which, in key “Auschwitz,” is a painful, failed or defeated past. Representing what is not, what is nothing, is a major challenge that artistic creation has to face, as exemplified in extraordinary pieces such as Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* film, Peter Weiss’s *The Indagation*, or Juan Mayorga’s *Himmelweg*.

3.3. Memory processes and collective identities

Renan said there was no nation worth its salt that did not invent its past. Benedict Anderson emphasized the importance of the dialectic between memory and forgetting in the constitution of *imagined communities*. The past is the one material with which collective identities are forged. The price normally paid is, on the one hand, that of arbitrariness when selecting and interpreting certain moments of the past and, on the other, the forging of individual-masses, willing to sacrifice their subjectivity in the interest of the public group where they feel more protected and where they can develop a sense of belonging.

These mechanisms may often times foster a type of authoritarian personality which is as submissive to the strong as it is oppressive to the weak. In recent years, as a response to a growing social problem, studies on the connection between memory and new forms of authoritarianism are of particular interest, like as those conducted by the CSIC research group coordinated by Reyes Mate and José Antonio Zamora. The insufficiency or failure of the critical memory of the authoritarian past is a condition of possibility, although not the only one, of the resurgence of authoritarianism today. Both the mainstream media and political discourses show surprise at the emergence of racism, xenophobia, nationalist chauvinism, the dehumanization and stigmatization of groups, the restrictive interpretation and application of rights, etc. They were considered already residual and marginal phenomena in “advanced” democracies and, suddenly, they are surprisingly increasingly accepted. There is also a correlation between these reemerging phenomena and the multi-crisis experienced by more developed societies. Nonetheless, social analysis shows that this is not enough. It is also the forgetfulness of populations that decisively contributes to making them more vulnerable to false responses to the deep social, economic and political crisis that Western civilization lives.

Both the events we are witnessing today and the astonishment about them are indebted to the same ignorance of yesteryear, now fed by active forgetfulness. This is confirmed by a trait that all neo-authoritarian movements share: trivializing and minimizing authoritarianisms and dictatorial forms of government of the past, and the rejection of historical memory, while constructing and disseminating antagonistic memory imaginaries. Critical historical memory is identified by these movements as an affront to national identity and national pride. Remembering that past enlarges the narcissistic wound opened by the crisis and becomes unbearable for those weakened by it. That authoritarianism identifies

historical memory as the priority enemy of its cultural and political conflict is a revealing index that it can only grow and impose itself on the silence and oblivion of the barbarism that authoritarian regimes have produced in the past. Thus, to understand neo-authoritarianism, it is necessary to conduct in-depth investigations on the limits and insufficiencies of historical and political memory, even in contexts where it has been officially made a political objective. It is necessary to understand the reasons, motives, and mechanisms of the social production of forgetting, and its cultural, social, and psychosocial roots.

3.4. Memory policies

In the academic field of memory studies, the analysis of memory politics has a privileged place. The politics of memory refer in a broad sense to the struggles that occur between various types of social actors —states, memorial associations, groups of victims, groups of power— to promote certain versions of the past. Some authors attribute this intensification of memorial policies to the traumas of World War II and the transnational unfolding of the Holocaust memory already referred to. These memory conflicts always exist, but they are exacerbated in certain historical moments —for example, in transitional moments from a dictatorial to a democratic regime, or in periods of generational questioning of the arrangements of their elders regarding a traumatic past, as has been the case with the mass graves of the Civil War in Spain and the complex memorial process they have triggered.

It is worth highlighting the importance that the analysis of the institutional modalities of managing the violent past has acquired, always considering that they do not operate in a vacuum but in very complex social and political fields, and that they are always the object of pressure, debate and controversy by part of other institutional and non-institutional social members. These policies can incorporate reparative measures, retroactive justice, opening of archives, construction of places of memory, museums and monuments, new commemorative cycles, formulation of new categories of victims, and so on. In the contemporary world, the globalizing processes of memory to which we have referred have a marked influence on the reconfiguration of institutional memories, easily framed within the concept of multidirectional memories —memories in continuous negotiation, and with constant references and reciprocal loans. Even though the framework of memorial policies is usually that of the nation-state, or even that of a specific region, they are necessarily globally oriented, and influenced —sometimes in unsuspected or not immediately detectable ways— by these transnational processes.

3.5. Memories of conflicts

The historical experience of the Holocaust is at the base of the contemporary boom of memory studies, just as its renewed strength is connected to the resurgence of national-populist movements and of identity-based conflicts that, it was mistakenly thought, certain ethical components and pedagogical memory, such as the duty to remember tragedies so they “never happen again”, had contributed to deactivating for good.

The relationship between memory and conflict is broad and complex. In a H2020 project in which researchers from ILLA and IFS have participated (UNREST, 2016-2019), a new theoretical approach was used to analyze the reappearance of memories of wars and past violence and the proliferation of aggressive and threatening notions of collective membership, which put at risk the basic principles that gave rise to the EU. In this context, UNREST proposed that three main models of memory can be defined in contemporary societies. First, the *antagonistic* memory model is very widespread, and is easy to digest in situations of potential social tension. It is monological and “intuitive”, and therefore it lacks any reflexivity. It works by building homogeneous communities based on myths of origin and confronted with others of the social and political environment, in binary terms of “good” and “bad.” Second, the memorial model derived from the effort to recall the horrors of the Holocaust is known as *cosmopolitan*. Memorial cosmopolitanism puts the figure of the victim at the center of the mediations with the traumatic past. This memorial mode is based on the testimony and experience of the survivors, a theme where the work of Primo Levi is central. It is a memorial mode that makes the past categorical and, in this process of abstraction and by focusing on human suffering and compassion for the victim, it risks decontextualizing and even depoliticizing the past. It is a dialogical and reflective model currently hegemonic in transnational discourses and practices of human rights and in many institutional and memorial activism spheres.

Finally, although the hegemony of cosmopolitanism seemed sufficient to stop the return of the opposing identities through the belief in the social and political efficacy of the lessons learned from the past, the resurgence of antagonism has called into question its efficacy in the medium and long-term. The most recent proposals advocate the promotion of a third model, called *agonistic*, which, although also reflective and dialogical like cosmopolitanism, also advocates multi-perspectivism and the acceptance of differentiated and even opposed memories of the traumatic past in complex democratic

environments. Proponents of agonism also emphasize the importance of memory not marginalizing the political aspects of the past and emphasizing the need to understand the unfolding of memory in its social, historical and political concrete contexts, including paying analytical attention to the perpetrators' viewpoint. Not to endorse or suspend the trial on perpetration, but to understand the complex causes that led to it.

3.6. Memories, diasporas, and exiles

Two levels can be distinguished when relating memory to exiles and diasporas. The first of them has a subjective scope, it articulates from the autobiographical experience (individual or collective), and is the most explored academically, thus being the source of most analytical common places. Due to the anxiety, discontinuity and rupture that this experience introduces in the life of the people who experienced these historical forms of disarray, it becomes an unavoidable source of reflection on subjectivity and its temporal dimensions, on identity and its narrative needs. There is a vast literature related to re-signifying the concepts of subject and identity in the memory of the exiles from different angles and nuances (sociological, anthropological, cultural, literary...). It refers to very diverse cases, always showing how these concepts are complex constructions and proving that memories (individual, collective, testimonial, generational, transmitted, or "historical" ...) play a fundamental role in them. In other words, exile (and the diaspora if applicable) is an experience that, because of its "traumatic" condition, forces memory to be (re)introduced into the life of the subject, sowing it with paradoxes and altering its narrative representations.

This descriptive memory with a subjective angle leads us to a second epistemological and moral level in the relationship between memory and exile, more ambitious and challenging, and more problematic. It is related to the impact that the memory of Auschwitz has generated in contemporary critical thought. It is no longer an epistemological and interdisciplinary turn, but a whole epochal change that forces analysts to unmask the violence inscribed in modern rationality (because of its vocation of oblivion) and to re-signify it in an anamnestic sense. In this context, the exiled memory would not only translate into an immanent descriptive narrative embodiment, but would also have a critical scope and would be the bearer of a new objectivity. It would have a self-reflective and challenging content, beyond the merely private or sentimental sphere.

The memory of the exiles recollects an absent past that questions the present successively built on it, thus noting its exclusionary and violent condition, opening

the possibility of other ways to reconstruct the past and transform the present. Very importantly, the exiled memory questions the narratives of the nation with which the state and modern communities legitimize exclusion, not to construct other narratives, more integrating but analogous and therefore doomed to reproduce this exclusionary logic, but to propose other ways of narrating, in accordance with new ways of understanding citizenship, more plural, democratic and with a transnational profile. This may be the main challenge of the exiled memory, playing against the grain of the current wave of national-populisms and the particularistic universalisms characteristic of many of the current global logics. The memory of the exiles and even more diaspora, is a great source of inspiration to unmask the nationalist matrix inscribed in modern nation stories and to illuminate new ways of narrating the latter, based on otherness, dislocation, and plurality, much more than identity, territory, and unity.

3.7. Memories with a gender perspective

The space that memory and oblivion receive in historiography, anthropology, and studies of the humanities and social sciences are adjusted to a large extent, like the societies and cultures they relate, to gender hierarchies, and collect the perspectives of the men to an extent much greater than women. Feminism has contributed to alleviating this circumstance and there are many published memoirs of women, included in studies, and collected in prominent bibliographies. Yet we are still far from granting women their social, cultural, and political authorship in constructing our time. It is mostly the memory of men that is deployed to analyze events and propose measures that contribute to preserving memory and avoiding forgetfulness. Incorporating women and the gender perspective means contributing to the recovery of an inclusive memory, in which agency is awarded not only to men, those who had power and especially those who lacked it, but rather to the work performed by women, the social and productive spaces that they contribute to create, their tasks inside and outside the home, and the domestic space as a generator of knowledge, practices, subversion and repression. Focusing on the role of women in the practice and study of historical memory, in terms of collection, archive and agency of historical memory, as well as in the fight to overcome gender stereotypes and prejudices, constitutes a great challenge. There are more and more collectives of scholars who have taken seriously the account of women about their lives, their aspirations, their jobs, and their activities as policy makers, who have taken the memories of pain and desire as a source to renew the historiographical account of culture, society and politics.

A memory with a gender perspective proposes to look for the women's sources and tasks, to include them in the spaces and narratives of historical memory and also in the analysis of practices of forgetting. There are many testimonies available from a gender perspective whose display and analysis would contribute to a more inclusive memory.

3.8. Memories of science

Mobilizing the memory of science may seem like a contradiction in terms. Science is often seen as advancing and unfolding by solving successive riddles and by discarding theories and interpretations from the past. Thus, once a problem is solved, new questions are generated that mobilize researchers and allow the sciences to evolve, enabling new interpretations of matter, life, and human societies.

However, it is not convenient to relegate to oblivion the set of ideas, knowledge, and practices that have shaped the global history of knowledge for various reasons. On the one hand, because in the production of knowledge that has shaped the science-world, multiple human and non-human actors have intervened and intervene. Their contributions over time deserve to be highlighted in order to contribute to combat the cognitive and socio-historical biases with which we interpret the world, at least on two fronts. First the memory of science needs to incorporate the knowledge of native populations of non-European continents, who have accumulated ancestral wisdom about their bodies and environments as revealed by ethno-sciences. Similarly, it is crucial to avoid underestimating the contributions of those who are contemptuously considered profane, or lacking expert knowledge, but who may be carriers of an experience that deserves to be recovered, shared and valued.

Given the global nature of the challenges that humanity faces, it is necessary to recover and activate the memory of the initiatives accumulated by human societies to confront the challenges it has had to face over time to have a long-term perspective of the adventure of learning. This memory of knowledge has been activated by cultural initiatives such as *Memory of the World Program*, promoted and coordinated by UNESCO since 1992, to ensure the preservation and access to the documentary historical heritage of greatest relevance to the peoples of the world, in which scientific materials are strategic.

Secondly, this challenge should contribute to mobilize that memory of science stored in the very institution, CSIC –the most important research center in the country—, in its archives, libraries, depositories and museums as

exemplified in SIMURG, the platform hosting the digital heritage collections of the institution. This database provides witness and testimony of the transformations and changes in the patterns of scientific knowledge production, as well as in their avenues of transmission. Historians of science have to explore the tensions between memory and oblivion, particularly exploring the processes of forgetfulness and concealment of certain scientific traditions, left behind at the margins of the historical process.

3.9. Materiality of memory

Materiality is inseparable from memory. There are two main types of materiality. First there is a conscious or intentional materiality displayed in constructing collective memory (museums, memorials, monuments, counter-monuments, heritage elements, photographs, plastic arts). Second, we can define an unconscious or unintended materiality, represented by the ruins and the traces of past events, often associated with traumatic events. The first form of materiality has received the most attention from historians, art historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists. Unintentional materiality as a form of memory, which would fall within the field of archeology, forensic anthropology, and psychoanalysis, has only recently been the object of systematic study, both from the perspective of studies of political violence and from post-humanist paradigms. The tension between both types of memory materiality—voluntary and involuntary, conscious and repressed—is one of the most productive fields of analysis of collective memory and represents a methodological and epistemological challenge, because it requires the concurrence of very disparate disciplines.

Materiality has been one of the most debated elements in the struggles to establish hegemonic narratives about the recent past both in Spain and in other countries: consider the case of the statues of confederates in the United States or the Topography of Terror in Germany. In Spain, the controversies cannot be understood without the physical reality of the Valley of the Fallen, the documents from the Salamanca archive, or the human remains recovered in the mass graves. The question about materiality and the tension between its active and unintentional dimension is a central aspect that raises questions about the selections and criteria in the activation and mediatization of the sediments of the past. Some events lead to the recovery of the physical place and its inscription as a place of memory, whereas others do not. The materiality of memory invites to an interdisciplinary analysis that pays attention not only to the physical object itself but also the methods of recuperation

and archive, as well as to the social and political context that invest them with meaning, transforming them into memory.

3.10. Memories of natural spaces

The starting point to understand the relationship between memory and natural spaces and landscapes is that they both are and tell a story shared by those who have built them. In this sense the landscape is culture before nature. Therefore, participating, passing, or perceiving through a landscape implies a perceptual commitment to a socially constructed environment. It is not, however, that the culturally produced nature we observe is a mere “document” of the past. Rather, they are spaces of the present time in which material and immaterial, tangible, and intangible, public and private components are tied together, all loaded with personal experiences that can have different meanings depending on the cognitive maps of the environment produced by differences in gender, class, age, social position, etc.

Natural spaces not only tell us about who has inhabited them, but also about the cultural mediations that have operated in the past and in the present and, the relationships they have fostered and still foster with the “natural.” Therefore, the first characteristic of the landscape is that of being memory. A memory that can be appropriated—like nature—in multiple ways (destroying it, symbolically representing it, reproducing it in different places and formats, etc.). In this sense, any appropriation of the natural materialized in the landscape is susceptible to receiving ideological meanings. One privileged area in which this can be seen is by analyzing the role that landscape memory plays in constructing national or regional identities, in constructing “patriotic topographies” through literary and artistic productions, or otherwise. National memories cannot be understood without taking into account the production (reproduction, revitalization, reinvention) of symbolic landscapes on which / from which such memory is projected.

Linked to this, it is necessary to consider what is happening with the protected areas from which, on occasions, the population has been expelled, or some specific relationship between the natural and the human is prevented to favor an uncorrupted vision of nature outside the social construction. This long-standing perception can also be connected to the imperial-colonial production of landscapes, either through a radical economic transformation (extractive), or through symbolic changes derived from changes in toponymy, otherwise. If a large part of natural spaces is produced in the long term, they

exhibit certain values that are apparently aesthetic but that in a deeper reading reveal how ethical and political values have transformed the cultures of those who have inhabited them. This implies that each landscape, no matter how much they may resemble each other, is simultaneously unique and the product of multiple interactions in which there are not only varied ways of reasoning but also multiple sensory forms (*smellscapes, soundscapes, etc.*) when it comes to approach the natural and apprehend the historical.

Finally, it is necessary to address the re-spatialization processes inherent to globalization in three dimensions: urban relocations and dislocations; extension of urbanization processes that have transformed the (rural) landscapes arising from daily productive activities; and those derived from tourism. These processes, sometimes divergent and other convergent, have given landscapes new social, political, and economic values, mobilizing memorial processes.

4. FUTURE SCENARIOS

Some main future research scenarios that must be developed in the medium and long-term are summarized below.

4.1. Alternative epistemologies of memory and time

Social memory is determined by collective frameworks, but also by cultural paradigms. The concepts of the past and of time managed in the West that are at the base of the scientific investigation of the unfolding of the past in the present, are not universal. The studies of memorial processes must be open to other epistemologies of the past which differ from our forms of perception of the historical evolution of time and allow us to understand the richness of pasts that exist in human societies across the world. This is important beyond any scientific program because the lack of understanding between the different memory paradigms, and the hegemony of Western ones over others, is at the base of much of the current social conflict, and can produce serious interference in, for example, humanitarian actions or institutionalized processes of reconciliation or bereavement.

Therefore, one of the future horizons of this challenge is to understand not only these peripheral epistemologies of the past but also the different ways of constructing and transmitting stories, and the different specialists—from shamans to folk historians—and memorial actions—from healing rituals, to

initiations, to spiritualistic ceremonies or funeral arrangements— that are meaningful in local contexts, and that have remained off the radar of studies of relations with the past in the West. In a globalized world these epistemologies of time, which sometimes have circular references, or are related to the flow of the tides, or to ideas about the eternal return or the morphology of landscapes, are not isolated in closed worlds. They interact and feedback with Western hegemonic epistemologies and, despite their subaltern character, they operate in fields of reciprocal fertilization, as well as friction. Disciplines such as social anthropology have historically paid more attention to these indigenous or culturally alien ways of relating to times past, in an exercise of knowledge production whose objective is to get as close as possible to the native point of view. It can be considered that the large number of studies that anthropology has conducted on rituals, shamanism, spiritual possession, beliefs in spirits or phantasmagoria, can be considered antecedents of this new trend. These studies on the specific characteristics of the different regimes of historicity that coexist and contaminate each other in global society aim, on the one hand, to challenge the universality of concepts of time, chronology or progress. And, on the other, to contribute to generating more open and informed memory policies in places worldwide where situations of conflict or natural disasters are endemic and social memory operates with very different keys than those managed, for example, by humanitarian actors or transitional bureaucracies.

4.2. Digital memory

The analysis of how and with what depth new technologies, devices and digital platforms are affecting the production, circulation, and consumption of knowledge of the past, and how the images of the past in their different formats become part of virtual circuits, is a field of enormous potential. The intersection between social memory and digitization is transforming the relationship with the past. We are witnessing the emergence of new memory communities, new circuits of diffusion, new forms of experience, new modes of visibility, new expressive forms, and new repertoires of manipulation and falsification. The growing interest in this approach in memory studies is illustrated, for example, in the special section of the journal *Culture, Media and Society* entitled “Digital Media-Social Memory” in 2014. Let us take the example of the transformations that have occurred in memorial processes in Spain, especially those related to the exhumations of mass graves in the 21st century. In the last 15 years, the appearance and increase of access to digital technologies have changed and accelerated the process of rebuilding the

memory of the Civil War, projecting it on a global scale and profoundly transforming its media and broadcast networks. The wide availability of digital devices (especially smartphones) that can be used in the field and the growing preeminence of cyberspace in the transmission of memory also mean its profound reconfiguration as a social construct.

One of its most salient characteristics is the astonishing speed with which traditional black and white family photo albums and the associated social contexts of memory circulation have given way to a memory landscape dominated by digital technologies. Images and information related to the past in all its variants appeared and be frequently recycled in blogs, PowerPoint presentations, web pages and, as they were created and popularized, platforms and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This new ecology of digital media is drastically transforming the temporality, spatiality and, without a doubt, the mobility of memories. This is the case, for example, of photos or videos taken with mobile phones at commemorative events quickly distributed to certain memory recovery networks via WhatsApp, Facebook or, at shorter distances, via Bluetooth. With the proliferation of digital devices and social media services, new equipment and platforms are paving the way for the production, circulation, and consumption of memory, and creating new genres, iconographies, and styles in general that represent, imagine, and recycle the past. The potentially instant accessibility of content and images in real-time digital cultures allow also creates new ways of witnessing, new subjectivities, new political identities, and new places for the configuration of multidimensional memories. Likewise, it places local memory processes closer to a cyberspace that is necessarily global. Thus, contemporary social memory is deeply imbricated in a technological drift, in which a dynamic coevolution of memory and technology takes place, effecting a radical transformation of memory processes whose analysis is unavoidable and necessarily transversal to any research on this topic.

4.3. New memory technologies: memory and the *forensic turn*

Contemporary memory processes, narratives and devices, in all their variants, are subjected to profound transformations as their expressive repertoires expand and the structures of sociability that frame them are modified. Some authors are developing research on the processes of bureaucratization or medicalization of memory, and on the colonization of social memory by various systems of expert knowledge that range from the biomedical

elaboration of memory pathologies —Alzheimer’s, amnesia, dementia, and so on— to developing technical procedures that deeply condition memory. In relation to the new configurations of traumatic memory, some authors call the *CSI effect* the new fascination for the corpse and bone and the gradual penetration of forensic logics and rhetoric in the transnational popular imaginary, and its great explanatory and analytical power to establish frames of reference to give meaning to violence, death, crime and all its derivatives. Television series with a forensic plot, such as *CSI* or *Bones*, or the contemporary crime novel itself, are not the only causes of this phenomenon —which is more profound, globalized, and extensive. Nonetheless, they indicate a new order of reality and evidence transforming our conception of the world, of life and death, of the human body, of the relationship between science and truth, of justice, of repairing damage, of funeral protocols, or even the criminal mind. Thus, television series and novels that trap us in their sophisticated technical plots are part of a broader and still under-understood process where scientific-forensic practices and discourses have inaugurated a new epistemology of memory in which the violent body, and its scientific-technical decipherment procedures, has been placed at the center of the stage and attracts all the focus.

This forensic turn in the understanding of memories of violence, largely framed in police plots, has reached strikingly the practices of human rights and the clarification of war crimes and crimes against humanity, by verifying the death of perpetrators, recovering and identifying victims, or amassing criminal evidence that, often, becomes part of criminal proceedings. This is a wide-ranging paradigm shift, which raises new kinds of questions. Why this growing need to get closer to the injured body? What are the reasons for the increasing predominance of forensic sciences in contemporary memorial recycling processes of the violent past? What are the historical roots and characteristics of the contemporary unfolding of this process? What consequences are they having on human rights discourses and practices in the 21st century? To what extent are they displacing methods of memorialization that seemed already consolidated since long ago? In what contexts, with what legal and institutional procedures and structures, and for what reasons are various forms of violence being excavated and exposed with forensic methodology in many parts of the world? What are the mechanisms for grief and reparation for the victims put in place and what are the potentials and limitations of this new *corpocentric* model of management of the traumatic past?

4.4. Perpetrator studies

For decades, memory studies linked to the reworking of past conflicts and traumas have focused mainly on analyzing the testimony and viewpoint of the victims, and their collection of facts. The Holocaust inaugurated the so-called “era of the witness,” which has given rise to heated debates and a very extensive bibliography. Although there are very important antecedents in this field, such as the work of the well-known writer and philosopher Hannah Arendt on the Nazi Adolf Eichmann and her elaboration of the thesis of the *banality of evil*, it has not been until recent years that many researchers are turning their focus toward the study of the viewpoint of the perpetrators, or how they reconstruct the memory of their acts, to understand more adequately and with greater density the social, cultural, political, economic and identity circumstances that give rise to certain types of perpetration, in a range that goes from selective small-scale violence to genocide. In this particular field, ethical positioning is especially important, because studying the conditions and processes of perpetration and how the perpetrators memorialize their acts cannot lead to their endorsement, but just the opposite, to the prevention and early detection of situations of possible violence.

The founding in 2017 of the international and interdisciplinary *Journal of Perpetrator Research* shows the strength of this new specialized field of memory studies. The end of the cold war led to the opening of numerous archives of totalitarian regimes previously very difficult to access. The consolidation of transnational discourses and practices of human rights, the establishment of international criminal tribunals (Yugoslavia, Rwanda) and the institutional mobilization of the legal figure of crimes against humanity also contributed to placing a new focus on the perpetrators, such as with the emergence of Truth Commissions. Likewise, new technologies and the trans-nationalization and transformation of conflicts have opened the way to new forms of perpetration whose keys it is crucial to decipher. Thus, both the novelty of the field and its permanent mutation make this subject a frontier research field in which disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, political science, gender studies, criminology, forensics science, philosophy, literary studies, cultural studies, psychology, ethnic studies, film and media studies, or education may converge.

4.5. Utopias: memories of activism and hope

A retrospective look at the studies of memory processes shows the predominance of traumatic memories and violent pasts. The influence of the Holocaust, genocide studies or the connection between memory and human rights

or transitional justice have deeply conditioned its exponential growth in recent decades. In recent years, a growing trend within this scientific field is trying to shake off the shadow of past tragedies in the constitution of individual and collective memories, focusing on memories of utopia and hope. This emphasis on rescuing utopias itself has a utopian twist, because its reason for being is to rescue forgotten or abandoned projects in the face of great tragedies, and thus inject optimism toward the future in a time marked by hopelessness. Especially, these memory studies try to denature a relationship of memory with the past that is conjunctural, avoiding frames of violence, atrocities, traumas, suffering, injustice, and victimization. The traumatic paradigm of hegemonic memory studies is considered as having several dangers. Research becomes repetitive and predictable, as catastrophic studies accumulate, and prevents the emergence or consolidation of other research registers or models. Also, the focus on violence in the study of memory processes may be contributing to feeding stories of victimization of a populist, nationalist or xenophobic nature in an epistemological loop in which critical scientific evaluation can be recycled as an apology for victimized identities.

Happiness and utopia also have representation problems, undoubtedly very different from those of the memories of violence. Precisely because of the hegemony of traumatic memory, there are few analytical tools to capture the memorial transmission of optimism and happiness. Neither their stories, nor their devices, nor their commemorative forms, nor their materiality, are well known. The authors promoting this new approach also try to differentiate positive memory from nostalgia, which is just one modality of a much broader spectrum of recreations of the past. This current trend in memory studies gravitates toward topics such as the memory of social movements and activism, the struggles for gender equality, the memories of the political processes that led to advances in social and human rights, the daily memories of “little happiness,” or the relationship between memory and humor. This approach allows revisiting past stained with tragedy with another look, rescuing other experiences and memories colonized by stories of trauma.

The uses of memory are multiple: there are abuses of memory and there are memories that are full of forgetfulness. Now, a substantial part of the semantic content of the concept of memory is the idea of “never again” and, therefore, the proposal of a strategy that prevents the repetition of barbarism. We associate the concept of memory with the creation of a time that is new and the overcoming of the traumatic past, with all that that entails.

4.6. Dystopias: ecotrauma, environmental memories, and pandemics

As shown, memory processes are in continuous transformation, and are extraordinarily sensitive to social, political, technological, and environmental changes. The latest trends in the studies of the connections between memories and spaces, landscapes, territories, and geographies point to the impact that the climate crisis is having on these processes. Authors such as Stef Craps have coined concepts such as *ecotrauma*, *pre-traumatic stress syndrome* (mirroring the clinically established *post-traumatic stress syndrome* (PTSD)), *so-lastalgia* (to miss the place where you still live), *preliminary* or *proleptic mourning*, or *climate anxiety* to analyze a type of memory based on nostalgia, for the past and present, in the face of an uncertain future of destruction or radical ecological transformation. Sometimes, memories of the present, or *anticipatory memories* lead to anxiety before presumably apocalyptic dystopian scenarios. Thus, the present is valued (and “remembered” in real time) in the face of an uncertain future. Memory goes from being fundamentally connected with the past to depending on and being conditioned by expectations for the future on a personal and global level. The classic parameters of memory studies are subverted in terms of scale and directionality.

These memory studies analyze, specially, the growing cultural production built around dystopias. They are also linked to the new epistemologies of the Anthropocene, to the growing awareness that the impact of humans on the planet is comparable to geological eras, implying that the human is the protagonist of a new planetary destructive era. In this paradigm, the clear boundaries between nature and culture, or even between human and non-human beings coexisting in the planet are blurred, unleashing new interdisciplinary challenges. From this viewpoint, the social memory that comes from the future can be activated to create a global awareness of the dangers that lie ahead and contribute to combat or mitigate climate change. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in writing this challenge and the dizzying construction of its chronicle and memory, especially in digital formats, is an example of the analytical potential of this perspective.

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