



Bruna Mibielli

MEMORY
and
IMAGE

...



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MEMORY
AND
IMAGE

o o o

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ooo

THE IMAGES appear.
I AM TRANSPORTED TO A PLACE
WHERE I EXPERIMENT SENSATIONS
THAT SEEM TO BELONG TO THE PRESENT,
BUT THEY ARE ACTUALLY
SCINTILLATIONS OF A REMOTE MOMENT.
REMINISCENCES.

ooo



ooo

VEILS ARE OVERLAIN
MAKING MEMORIES FADED.
I FORGET EVERYTHING
and at ONCE
START INVENTING.

ooo



ooo

I BEGIN MY INVENTORY,
AN ORGANIZED COLLECTION
OF IMAGO AGENS.
SEARCHING THE ARCHIVES,
I CREATE NEW POSSIBILITIES.
IN THE END, I REMEMBER.

ooo



ooo

EX-LIBRIS OF MEMORY

ooo

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



JARDIM DAS ALEGORIAS

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



EDIFÍCIO DA MEMÓRIA

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



MACHINA MEMORIALIS

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



imago agens

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



REMINISCÊNCIA

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



ÁRVORE DA SABEDORIA

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



TEMPLO da imaginação

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



TESSERA

EX LIBRIS

IMAGINE - LOCI



RIO LETE

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



palácio do esquecimento

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



MACHINA OBLIVIONIS

EX LIBRIS

imagine - loci



pervagari

ooo

GARDEN OF ALLEGORIES

EDIFICE OF MEMORY

MACHINA MEMORIALIS

IMAGO AGENS

REMINISCENCE

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

TEMPLE OF IMAGINATION.

RIVER LETHE.

PALACE OF OBLIVION

MACHINA OBLIVIONIS

PERVAGARI

ooo

ooo

THE WORLD OF MEMORY
and
THE WORLD OF IMAGES

ooo



The world of memory

Those who wish to reflect on memory must pay a visit to the goddess of memory, Mnemosyne (*memoria* in Latin), who is close to the light, to the sun. Beside her one can see Lethe, the goddess of oblivion, who, having the shape of a river, is as dark as the night. Humans always set out to the sanctuaries of these goddesses with requests for help to remember or to forget. In the *Divine Comedy*, in the poem *Inferno*, Dante Alighieri mentions a river that seems to be Lethe. However, souls who are in this a stage of damnation are not eligible to bathe in its waters in order to forget their sins. They must remember their mistakes and suffer for them. This allegorical approach brings attention to the importance of the movements of reminiscence and oblivion as ways to relate to the world through images.





When it comes to accessing memory, one must visit the Edifice of Memory. It is composed of many mnemonic places, rooms where recollection-images are stored, much like files in an archive. However, in order to enter the Edifice of Memory, it is necessary to use *machina memorialis*. This machine of memory is a type of clockwork engine that reaches one of the rooms in the edifice, hooks a recollection from the past, uses it to fulfill a present need and then puts it back in its original mnemonic place. In other words, *machina memorialis* is a mental instrument that unites a pure recollection, which is connected to the immediate perception of things, and a recollection-image, which is a large inventory assembled for the recognition of the world.





As we move about the Edifice of Memory, we perceive *imago agens*, the images that trigger the process of remembering, that set the machine of memory in motion. *Imago agens* function as shortcuts to a real recollection. In the process of reminiscence (from Latin, *reminiscentia*), recollections appear due to visits paid to mnemonic places (Latin: *permeare, pervagari, percurrere*). They are coloured sparkles, *phantasiai* (icon images which in Greek are called *phantasmata* and in Latin, *imagines*), which get through the veils of the past and adhere to the present, adding more images to the memory, that expands. This is the imaginative force (Greek: *phantasia*; Latin: *imaginatio*).

In Latin, *inventio* is related to invention and to inventory. Invention and creation, in turn, are linked to the emergence of memory due to an inventory, an organization, an order that puts things in their proper places. This organized material is the foundation for creation.





From the standpoint of mnemonics, everything in the world is image. All that is left for us to do is to identify the relationships between the images. Even the body is an image that relates to other images, that can be external or internal. It is also a centre on which these other images converge and where they seek representation. Sensations connect external images to our body because they enable us to perceive the world. Internal images are mental images, recollections. The brain is a conductor, a machine that enables the connection between external and internal images. No one knows for certain, however, where in our body memory is located.





There seem to be two types of memory: the memory of past events, which is presented in the form of recollection-images, and the memory related to movements, to exercises, which is linked to the present. Of these two memories, one is imaginative and reminiscent, and the other is repetitive, related to the things one learns by heart. It is also possible to identify two types of recollection: one is real, a recollection of facts or remarkable things, which is like a bright spot of vivid colours; the other is invented, and arises when a real recollection makes an attempt to hook itself to the present, overcoming the veils of memory. Invention takes place when a weak recollection gets a little faded while passing through the veils of memory and ends up becoming an invention.

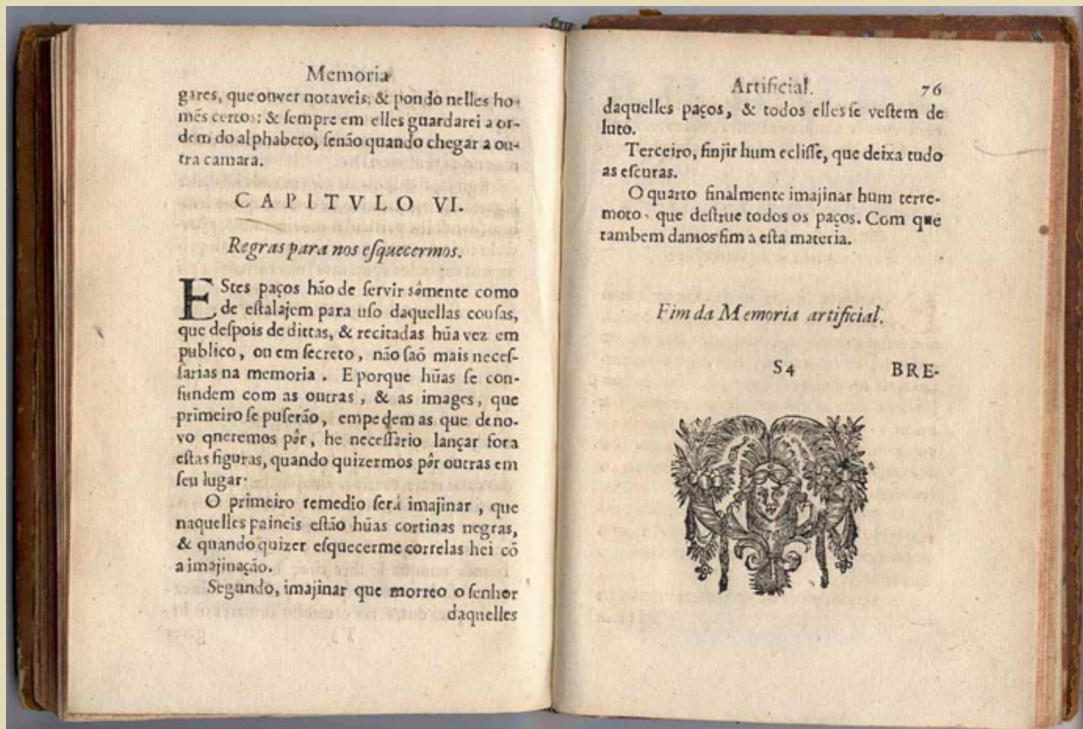




Invention is, therefore, a good friend to memory. They wander together in the Edifice of Memory. Invention is what protects us from oblivion. When we forget some very important thing from our past, we look for a hint or small recollection that can lead us to one of many possible hooks, so that memory can reinvent itself each time it is accessed.

Oblivion is often linked to madness. Amnesia of important facts in our lives is considered a loss of the knowledge we have about ourselves. On the other hand, forgetting is similar to filing and is, therefore, important, because it makes room for new memories. This process is called lethotechnics, a technique of forgetting founded in Lethe, the river of oblivion. Alvaro Ferreira de Vera's treatise deals with artificial memory, and in Chapter VI, approaches issues of oblivion using very strong mnemonic images.





Memoria
 gares, que onver notaveis; & pondo nelles ho-
 mões certos: & sempre em elles guardarei a or-
 dem do alphabero, senão quando chegar a ou-
 tra camara.

CAPITULO VI.

Regras para nos esquecermos.

Estes paços hão de servir sômente como
 de estalajem para uso daquellas cousas,
 que depois de dittas, & recitadas hũa vez em
 publico, ou em secreto, não são mais neces-
 sarias na memoria. E porque hũas se con-
 fundem com as outras, & as images, que
 primeiro se puserão, empedem as que de no-
 vo qneremos pôr, he necessário lançar fora
 estas figuras, quando quizermos pôr outras em
 seu lugar.

O primeiro remedio será imaginar, que
 naquelles paineis estão hũas cortinas negras,
 & quando quizer esquecerme correlas hei cõ
 a imaginação.

Segundo, imaginar que morreo o senhor
 daquelles

Artificial. 76
 daquelles paços, & todos elles se vestem de
 luto.

Terceiro, fingir hum eclipse, que deixa tudo
 as escuras.

O quarto finalmente imaginar hum terre-
 moto - que destrite todos os paços. Com que
 tambem damos fim a esta materia.

Fim da Memoria artificial.

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A recurrent issue related to the techniques of oblivion is the relation between forgetting and the written word. Writing imprisons memory. Isn't it true that writing something down can stimulate not only memory but also its opposite, oblivion? The simple exercise of putting language down on written form can lead to two different outcomes. The author may, after the exercise, read his own notes and retain the text. Alternatively, once he has freed himself from the responsibility to remember it, he may forget it forever. Apparently, the art of memory is built on the verge of oblivion. It's undeniable that the invention of writing made it possible for humanity to have access to an enormous cultural memory, but when it comes to people's natural memory, clearly writing has relieved us from the task of passing it on from generation to generation orally, like it used to happen in the past.







The world of images

Photography plays a curious role in the arts of memory and oblivion. Photographic images, once assembled, are an inventory of life and are related to the mnemonic space, since they function as agents that trigger *machina memorialis*. In this process, Photography seems to favor memory. However, like writing, it may as well favor oblivion.

Photography is an instrument of perception. To photograph is to put yourself in relation to external images. It is a tool that modifies and selects the look, which is mediated by cameras that act as visual prosthesis. The body is a center on which external images converge, causing an awareness of its surroundings, and thus making the external images internal, expanding memory.





The photographic image is an access to memory, an agent for evoking memory. The reason why people are so interested in photographing nowadays is perhaps because they are concerned with remembering their past, since families are smaller and not as closely knit as they once were. Some people have been told little about their life story by his relatives. Maybe Photography is a current need created by oblivion, in a time when people are overloaded with daily tasks and responsibilities and use Photography as a calendar or diary, “writing down” through images what they need to forget in order to unburden memory. Men seem to need that record to guarantee the existence of memory. Men seem to need a camera, so that they are able to relate to the world, to see the world.





The role of Photography as an agent that evokes memory does not nullify its role in favor of forgetting – in fact, Photography ends up serving both purposes. It is clear that Photography has a direct relationship with reality, but that it is not faithful to reality, since it is a limited eye that is able to see what the human eye wants it to see within a given format. Thus, both the photographic image and the act of photographing are based on the perception of reality as something immediate and encompass the possibilities of deconstruction and withdrawal from reality. That is how Photography is reinvented and is interlaced with the memories that it inspires and creates.

The relationship between a man and his family album, which is a collection of “dummies of reality” that facilitate access to memory, is a curious one and is full of mnemonic loopholes. When one looks at a photograph, memories, knowledge, details and perceptions are evoked and that is how later associations are formed, choosing what is most useful for the moment.





But not every photograph allows easy access to memory. Some memories are stored and others, forgotten. When a person looks at a photograph of him or her at an early age, he or she often does not remember that moment or the relationships that took place at the time when the photograph was made. Forgetting part of the past brings out a feeling of loss of important references and of information that should be a part of the construction of that individual. When it suits us, our memory starts trying new hooks, searching for the memories that fit best that need to remember, and thus we invent large portions of our history. We relate personal memories to stories that others told us about our lives and to the images we see in the photos. We make a fertile inventory that will lead us to a new memory. Real and invented memories occupy the same space and live together, often without distinction, because what matters is to give new meanings to the present and turn it into a past which is connected to previously existing memories. That is the process from the inventory to the invention.





The relationship people have with a photograph from their childhood establishes a mnemonic circle. Memory is accessed through *machina memorialis*, that is moved by any interest able to carry a strong image of a reminiscence to the present. This process occurs because people need their past in order to be able to see what lies ahead of them.

The dissemination of Photography made people responsible for recording their history and the history of their families. What instigates people to produce photographs and sets memory in motion is the interest to increase the knowledge we have of ourselves and of the world.





The many relationships between men and the world of images indicate that there may be a dialogue between memory and Photography, which is evoked in this project. The main interest of this research is to visit memory and its veils, colours, hooks, its relationship with knowledge and invention, with the operation of *machina memorialis*, with the Edifice of Memory, the use of Photography as an instrument of evocation or fading of memories and, especially, the discovery of mnemonic places.







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