

Re-Membering Time: Reimagining Deleuzian Memory through Literature and Theoretical Physics

Presenter

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Session

- [Session 2D: Communicating an Interdisciplinary Language: Zen Literacy, Performance Poetry, Technology, and Mortality \(an Honors Interdisciplinary Panel\)](#)
- 231 MGH
- 3:30 PM to 5:15 PM

In this research, I address an intersection which up until now has been overlooked: that of literary theory and theoretical physics. The research intersects on three levels: Gilles Deleuze's theory of time and memory in his work Cinema II, novelist W.G. Sebald's piece Austerlitz, which traverses the same ground, and finally, physicists Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose's theories of time in relation to the 'Big Bang.' The catalyst for this collision of the conceptual and the literary is rooted in what is this project's attempt to re-imagine Deleuze's theory of memory, which in its current state lays at risk of countering the philosopher's own claim and becoming a linear depiction of time, through the lens of theoretical physics in order to maintain its applicability to representations of non-linear time in literature through the use of memory. To achieve this, I first look into the inherent linearity of Deleuze's current depiction of time: if, as the philosopher claims, memory resembles a layered cone whose base layer represents the beginning of time, then all layers that proceed it will be caused by its predecessor, thus giving us a linear image of time. This being the case, Hawking's conception of the beginning of time in the 'Big Bang' as arising out of a point of temporal vacancy, essentially resembling a black hole, can be applied in order to restore Deleuze's claim of non-linearity. Here, we have a way of envisioning causal time which is not inherently linear, given that it does not arise from a single moment in time, but rather from a vacancy of time, meaning that all proceeding events can be drawn back to its predecessor, but will inevitably be traced to this rapid origin which denies it of its caustic root, and thus, linearity.