Keeping the past in Mind
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KEEPING THE PAST IN MIND

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> It was lost to sight but kept in memory. —Augustine, *Confessions*
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> Memory, therefore, is certainly not the mental process which, at first sight, one would imagine. . . . —Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*

"KEEPING the past in mind": where *else* is it going to be kept? We could perhaps try to keep it in the past itself; but then we'd have the past containing itself, swallowing its own tail. An event would die out the moment it was born: it would have no continuing protentional halo—fulfilled or unfulfilled—nor would it be remembrable. Yet an event shorne of all these attributes would no longer be an event at all. To keep a past event entirely past, with no possible repurcussions in the present, would be to deprive it of its very eventfulness. "Remembrance is now," says George Steiner in *After Babel;* but this is so only because the past itself is now: is now being re-enacted, re-lived.

I

What is bound to mislead us is the dichotomist assumption that keeping in mind must be either an entirely active or an utterly passive affair. This assumption has plagued theories of memory as of other mental activities. On the activist model, keeping in mind would be a creating or recreating in mind of what is either a mere mirage to begin with or a set of stultified sensations. Much as God in the seventeenth century was sometimes thought to operate by continual creation, so the mind was given the same lofty powers in the Romantic thought that represented a reaction to much of what the seventeenth century stood for. But the activist model is by no means limited to the Romantic idealists or *Naturphilosophen.* It reappears in more than one phase of phenomenol-

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ogy, and it informs the sober theorizing of Bartlett and Piaget on the nature of remembering.[1] On the passivist model, on the other hand, the mind is mute and unconfigurating. It takes in but does not give back other than what it takes in. It is a recording mechanism only. Something like this view is at work in empiricist theories of memory, considered as restricted to the contents of Humean "impressions" and arranged according to their order and position in time; it continues in Kant's notion of "reproductive imagination" as operating by association alone; and it is found flourishing today in psychological accounts of what is revealingly called "human associative memory."[2]

It is all too evident, I think, that where the activist model gives too little credit to the incomings of experience, the passivist model gives too much. To begin with, there is too much *there* in experience, too much density in it, to claim that we are continually creating or constructing it.[3] And yet it is equally mistaken to believe that it is *all* there, graven in pre-established tablets of truth. Mere "registration," as Sokolowski has recently shown, is only one epistemic stage among others. It is not an adequate analogue for such diverse activities as evocation or reporting.[4] And if it is not all there to begin with, then we have much to do with what we end with, including what we remember of what was there.

II

The extremes of activism and passivism rejoin curiously in their exaggerated monisms, leading us to look elsewhere for a suitable model of keeping the past in mind. Let us begin by asking

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[1] For Bartlett, the "schema" is a strictly constructivist notion; for Piaget, the "scheme" serves to "assimilate" experience in keeping with the exact stage of one's cognitive development: both views are decidedly Kantian in their stress on the mind's actively shaping role. See F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. 199 ff., 300 ff.; and Jean Piaget and Bärbel Inhelder, *Memory and Intelligence*, trans. A. J. Pomerans (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pass.

[2] Cf. John R. Anderson and Gordon Bower, *Human Associative Memory* (Washington, D.C.: Winston, 1973).

[3] A phenomenon like nostalgia, with its almost irresistible pull to the past, testifies to the already informed ingression of events we undergo rather than bring forth.

[4] Robert Sokolowski, *Presence and Absence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 7–9, 100–102.

ourselves what *keeping in mind* amounts to and how it bears on remembering the past. "Keeping" is, to begin with, more than retaining—where "retaining" may mean such diverse things as the mere retention of facts and formulas, the fringe-like retentions that cling to each successive now-point in Husserl's version of James's idea of primary memory, or that "retaining-in-grasp" in Husserl's later conception of a memorial capacity that lies between primary and secondary memory and is considered essential to the method of free variation in imagination. In fact, keeping in mind is more even than secondary memory, "recollection" in the ordinary sense of a depictive representation of past events. The tendency to reduce keeping in mind to recollection is a powerful one, despite early warnings from Bergson (who found "habit memory" an at least equally significant form of keeping) and more recent ones from Heidegger, who inveighs against confining memory to the recovery of the past in the form of "remembrance" (*Wiedergedächtnis*).[5] The "wieder" of *Wiedergedächtnis* or *Wiedererinnerung* (both of which signify secondary memory) is especially telling, as is the semantically equivalent "re-" of "recollection." Secondary memory is secondary precisely because it is somehow a *re*-enactment of the past, its return in representational guise. No wonder so many theories of recollection have emphasized its reproductive aspect—without paying sufficient attention to the fact that re-production normally includes a simulacrum of the scene recaptured. But the past can be recaptured in non-isomorphic modes of representation, just as it can be kept in mind in a more fundamental way than that of explicit recollection or secondary memory.

Memor, the root of *memoria* or memory, means "mindful." Being mindful of something differs from retaining it in any of the senses just discussed as well as from recollecting it or even being reminded of it.[6] Being-mindful-of is being *full of mind* about some-

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[5] "Retention is mostly occupied with what is past, because the past has got away and in a way no longer affords a lasting hold. Therefore, the meaning of retention is subsequently limited to what is past, what memory draws up, recovers again and again. But since this limited reference originally *does not* constitute the sole nature of memory, the need to give a name to the specific retention and recovery of what is past gives rise to the coinage: re-calling memory—remembrance (*Wiedergedächtnis*)." (Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray New York: Harper, 1968, pp. 140–41; his italics.)

[6] Plato's use of *anamimnēskesthai* is normally in the passive form of "to be reminded of," as when some particular equal things remind me of

thing: being or becoming *in mind* of it, heeding it in a way that exceeds the simple apprehension which lies at the core of retention, recollection, and being-reminded. It exceeds all of these precisely by virtue of keeping something in mind. What then is such keeping? Its main action is one of *remaining* or *staying with* what we come to be mindful of. Instead of just grasping, or noting, or pigeon-holing, or stockpiling, we remain with what we have become mindful of. Remaining-with is a form of abiding by, and it is compatible with *not* representing the minded item or thinking of it in any express form. It is staying alongside the item, letting it linger longer than if one were to classify it, shunt it into a convenient position in secondary memory, or act upon it in some immediately effective way. Such staying has staying power; it stays on beside what is minded.

If remaining or staying with is the essential action of keeping in mind, conservation or preservation is the essential result: hence the "keep," "the innermost and strongest structure . . . of a medieval castle, serving as a last defense" (O.E.D.) as well as the "keepsake," which I give to you so that you will keep me in mind. But conserving often involves concealing, *keeping hidden*, keeping out of the daylight of open perception by remaining within the dank cellars of the mind's keep. Far from this being a cause for regret—something to be overcome with an efficient mnemotechnique—it tells us something important about remembering, namely, that it is as much a withholding of the past as a holding of it in mind. We preserve the past as truly in *not* exhibiting it to ourselves or others in so many words or images as in re-presenting it in these ways. Consider only the way the body keeps the past in a veiled and yet entirely efficacious form in its continuing ability to perform certain skilled actions: I may not remember just how, or even when, I first learned the breaststroke, but I can keep on doing it successfully—remembering how to do it—without any representational activity on my part whatsoever. In such a case, the non-exhibition of a particular past is clearly an advantage, since its sudden rec-

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Equality. Reminding is a matter of being put in mind of X or Y (not themselves necessarily belonging to the past) by a presently perceived particular, and it can be so associative or automatic as not to include being-mindful-of at all. On reminding in Plato, see Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory* (London: Duckworth, 1972), pp. 35 ff.

ollection might impede my spontaneous bodily movements. Many instances of habitual or skilled remembering how to do (or say, or think) things are exemplary of a keeping that, withholding its own historical origin, nevertheless re-enacts it in our conduct in the present.

When we play the game of memory we play it *for keeps*. Remembering consists in a keeping action that combines elements of remaining and preserving, holding and withholding—all held within the keepful reach of mind. Even the breaststroke is kept in mind as it is displayed bodily; for "mind" is itself a vast keep that guards the past in more forms of re-appearance than the apprehension-based notions of retention, recollection, or reminding can sustain.

III

Here we must ask: how do things stand now with regard to the vexing issue of whether remembering is an active or passive affair?

Let us go back to the language of "keep" for a moment. It is a striking fact that both as a noun and as a verb this word has both active and passive meanings. As a noun, "keep" can mean either "the act of keeping or maintaining" *or* "the fact of being kept." As a verb, it means either "take in, receive, contain, hold" (and more specifically to "take in with the eyes, ears, or mind") *or* to "guard, defend, protect, preserve, save." These bivalent meanings, differing as they do, are not at all incompatible. Indeed, precisely by means of the component actions of keeping traced out just above, they are complementary to each other and (more crucially) *simultaneously realizable*. Thus "the act of keeping," by virtue of its remaining with what is kept, helps to constitute "the fact of being kept." And the taking in or holding *is* a guarding or saving thanks to the element of withholding that conceals the keeping and thus the kept itself.

Consider how this occurs in a concrete case of remembering: I remember my attending a philosophy conference in New York at the New School for Social Research and having to change lecture halls at the last moment to accommodate Hannah Arendt's talk, for which a large crowd had showed up. Since I had helped to plan

this conference, I felt responsible for things going smoothly. After the new hall had been arranged, I walked over with Arendt, who had been quite upset over the change. But she cooled down in the course of the walk and went on to deliver a marvelous lecture on the Socratic conception of virtue. As with so many memories, this is very schematic in character: I remember little more of the occasion than I have here reported. Yet I would certainly want to say that I have kept it in mind all these years, and in precisely the bivalent senses just discussed. The memory has been actively maintained by being revived from time to time (e.g., whenever I think of Hannah Arendt for whatever reason), and by this very revival it has attained a state of "being kept" in mind throughout. At the same time, it was received, taken in, at a most impressionable point (both in my life and during the meeting itself) and preserved or saved thanks to this very receptive sensitivity.

What we can observe in any such example is a delicate dialectic of the active and the passive, the receptive and the spontaneous. There is, at the very least, a constant going back and forth between these dimensions. Heidegger was attuned to much the same thing when he wrote that "what keeps us in our essential nature holds us only so long, however, as we for our part *keep holding on to what holds us.*"[7] "The hold is held"[8] in remembering, and this is accomplished by its keeping. The hold, what holds me, is constituted by the particulars of a memory (Arendt's ire, her piercing dark eyes, the mollifying walk) as they are assembled by the setting in which they inhere (here the New School meeting itself). These are givens of the past of which I can be no more than a more or less receptive witness; they bear down upon me and may even burden me if I become obsessed by them. But I bear up on them in turn by holding, keeping hold on the memory itself. I bear it in mind actively, keeping it on the agenda there. It is not that I simply store this experience and regain access to it as if it had been packaged or pickled on some psychical or neuroanatomical shelf. Having taken in the experience, being kept by *it* initially ("impressed," "struck," we say inadequately), *I* keep it subsequently by bringing it back to mind again, thereby restoring it. And *myself* as well: for not only

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[7] Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* p. 3; my italics.

[8] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible,* trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 266.

Hannah Arendt but my-being-in-her-presence is kept on, re-collected from the shards of the scene so imperfectly recalled in terms of detail. No matter: the experience has been kept in mind. It has been remembered, and in a way that is at once active and passive—so much so that we are no longer constrained to choose between these traditional alternatives.

IV

Now that we know something about how the past is kept in mind, its basic holding action, we must pursue a quite different line of thought by asking: is the past kept within the mind alone? Can we confine it to this tenure, critical as it is—and important as it is to stress in the face of efforts to locate remembering elsewhere? Such efforts currently tend to seek the essence, or at least the formal structure, of memory either in the functioning of the brain or in information-processing mechanisms. Neither is adequate to the task of providing a truly comprehensive account of remembering. Neurophysiologists are still bitterly divided over determining the minimal unit of memory—whether it be cellular, molecular, synaptic, or holographic—and cannot begin to explain its higher-order operations (except to say that these somehow involve the rhinencephalon, the mamillary bodies, and various parts of the cerebral cortex). In fact, the most significant work to emerge from this perspective concerns the *pathology* of memory as this is occasioned by the brain's malfunctionings, and, in this respect, the contribution of neuroanatomy to the understanding of human memory curiously rejoins the findings of psychoanalysis, also adept at telling us about the misfortunes of remembering but inept at explaining how memory functions in the normal case. As for information-processing models, they are elegant but only pseudo-explanatory. Their stage-wise approach to memory breaks it down into such plausible units as iconic, short-term, and long-term stores; but they fail to explain how coherent experiences of remembering emerge from the concatenation of these phases and must resort to such stop-gap notions as "encoding," "rehearsal," and "transfer" to fill in the gaps. Concerning these two dominant modes of construing memory, we can say that each possesses what the other lacks: brain physiology is persuasive as to flow and transmission of memories (given a view

of the brain as a dynamic field of electrochemical forces) but disappointing as to ultimate units, while information-processing is lucid on the modular level but opaque when it comes to circulation and development.

It has been characteristic of phenomenologists to underline how much *mind matters* in a fundamental experience like remembering. This is imperative when confronting expressions of the "natural attitude" such as are found in neurophysiology and information-processing: for them, only *matter matters* in memory (whether the matter be that of the brain or bits of information mechanically conveyed). Husserl's 1905 lectures on inner time-consciousness, which did so much to inaugarate phenomenology as we now know it, can be read as an extended plea to consider remembering from an exclusively mental perspective. The "exclusion of objective time" with which the lectures begin is tantamount to a suspension of naturalistic models of memory, and it is telling that this first use of the phenomenological reduction bears directly on remembering—rather than on, say, perceiving or imagining. For indeed the urgency surrounds memory, which is unusually tempting to grasp in naturalistic terms. The temptation is due to the fact that recollection rescues experiences from "death's dateless night," the oblivion to which *every* human experience is subject and against which mechanical and physiological models seem to promise hope of fixity, of stable storage of the past.

Against *this* against, phenomenology offers the counter-defensive of an understanding of memory in strictly psychical terms. Thus Husserl denies that we recover the past in any pristine format, a format that continues to be a working assumption in trace and storage theories of memory: "I can re-live the present, but it [the present] can never be given again."[9] One thing Husserl does *not* provide, oddly enough, is an explicit intentional analysis of memory in terms of its various noetic and noematic phases. In work in progress I have tried to make up for this lacuna by discerning not just two main act-forms of remembering (i.e., primary and secondary) but a plethora of such forms, including remembering-to (do X or Y), remembering-on-the-occasion-of, and several species

[9] Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 66.

of remembering-that and remembering-how. On the noematic side, I have found meaningful distinctions to be made between the mnemonic presentation, the specific content remembered, the world-frame of remembered space and time, and an encircling "aura" (as I call the fading fringe of what we remember).

Yet an intentional approach to memory is still not sufficient to capture the full phenomenon of keeping the past in mind. We can no longer assume, in polemical opposition to naturalistic models, that memory is played out on the surface of the psyche—that mind qua "consciousness of X" is the only, or even the main, arena in which the past abides and is recovered. Where then are we to turn? We already have on hand one instance of extra-mental memory, habitual memory, wherein the past is sedimented into the *body*, becoming amassed there. Not only in the case of skilled actions of the breaststroke sort but in many other ways as well memory moves massively into the body, as we can see in the case of certain ritualistic actions, in dancing (which can be densely memorious without being highly skilled), and even in plain walking (where our body "knows the way" along a familiar route without requiring any recollection).

Habitual remembering of various sorts thus leads us out of mind. Into what? Into the WORLD, which is where the body takes us in any case. *And this is just where we must now take memory itself.* Remembering has been ensconced too long in the cells of the brain, the vaults of computerized memory-banks, and the machinations of mentation. Let us try putting it back in the lived world, where it has always been in any event, though barely recognized as such at the level of either description or theory.

Think of it: *the past kept in things*, those very "things themselves" that phenomenological method was designed to bring us to. It doesn't matter that it didn't always do so in its haste to reabsorb the world into the sphere of immanence known as "pure consciousness." For the things will bring themselves forward *to us*, and in fact are never *not* doing so in some fashion. They come to us bearing the past manifestly in monuments, relics, and mementoes, less obviously but just as forcefully in the dwellings we inhabit (buildings bear memories as much as our bodies do), and still less obviously but crucially in the collective memories we share with each other as co-experiencers of certain situations. This is not even to mention such evident keepers of the past as archival documents,

the casually and yet tellingly left-over marks of human and non-human activities, or, for that matter, the automobiles in which so much of our lives can come to be encapsulated.

V

I shall, however, restrict consideration here to one basic dimension of the world in which the past is kept. This is *place*. Despite its primordiality in human experience, place has been conspicuously neglected by philosophers. As for memory of place, this is hardly considered a topic worth pausing over, even though an ancient (and still quite effective) method of memorizing used an ordered grid of places as its main device: the "place method" about which Frances Yates has written so eloquently in *The Art of Memory*. Moreover, many memories are, if not expressly *about* places, richly rooted in them and inseparable from them. Even the idea of "keeping the past *in* mind" carries with it distinct echoes of location in place, albeit a non-worldly mental "place."

Notice, to begin with, that it is the body itself that establishes the felt directionality, the sense of level, and the experienced distance and depth that together constitute the main structural features of any given place in which we find ourselves and which we remember. But granting that it is by our mobile bodies that we become oriented in place, what is place itself? Aristotle's definition in the *Physics* remains apposite: "the innermost motionless boundary of what contains" (*Physics* 212a 20–21). The operative notion here is that of the snug fit of the container, and Aristotle's own favorite analogy to place is the vessel, whose inner boundary coincides exactly with the outer boundary of what it contains: "just as the vessel is transportable place, so place is a non-portable vessel" (212a 13–15).

Although Aristotle does not discuss memory of place as such, his basic conception of place is highly suggestive in this regard: a given place may derive its haunting power (a "haunt" is certainly a memorable place) from its "distinct potencies" as a container which exerts an "active influence" on us, whether by way of attraction or repulsion (cf. *Physics* 208b 10–25). A place is not a setting of indifferent space, homogeneous and isotropic (I prefer to call this characteristically seventeenth century view of space a

"site"). Place works on us, and on our memories, by its very peculiarities and tropisms, its inhomogeneity.

If we begin pressing in this direction, we very soon reach the notion of *landscape*, which is where the Aristotelian idea of place naturally leads us when we extend the idea of a particular place with its irregular protruberances and non-metrically determinable enclosure to a simultaneously given collocation of places as these form part of our ongoing experience. What holds the collocation together is the landscape's horizon—within which I am situated by means of a distinguishable here vs. there that form the epicenters of the place where I am at. Moreover, within a given landscape, I am always moving from place to place. I am never *not* in place, not placed, even if I do not know precisely where I am in geographic space, the space of sites.[10]

Place as it effloresces in landscape is, therefore, one of the main ways in which my being-in-the-world manifests itself. If landscape can be said to constitute the world's felt texture, place is the congealing of this texture into discrete here/there arenas of possible action. In and through places, what Husserl called the "rays of the world" illuminate the landscape as their horizoned setting. And, through the movements of my "customary body," I come to find something abidingly familiar in the landscape I inhabit, now or formerly.[11] I feel attuned to its sympathetic space—or out of tune when I have been away too long or when painful memories disorient me.

I do not want to suggest that place only draws us outward into the landscape. There is a counter-movement as well. Not only do I inhabit a given landscape but it can be said to inhabit me. The "in" of "inhabitation" is bidirectional. And thanks to this doubly pervasive action, we can begin to grasp one basis of the power of place as remembered. For when I recall myself in a particular place set within a lanscape, I am not only recollecting how it was *for me*, but how it, the whole visible spectacle, came *to me* and took up dwelling *in me*, as henceforth part of me. It is no longer a

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[10] "In a landscape we always get to one place from another place, each location is determined only by its relation to the neighboring place within the circle of visibility." (Erwin Straus, *The Primary World of Senses*, trans. J. Needleman [Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1963], p. 319.)

[11] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), p. 82.

matter, as in the experience of site, of parts merely alongside other parts. Place in its landscape being im-parts itself to me, permeates me. And, as the "spirit of place," the *genius loci*, enters me, the visible becomes increasingly invisible. As Rilke has it in the ninth *Duino Elegy:*

> Earth, isn't this what you want: an invisible re-arising in us? Is not your dream to be one day invisible? Earth? Invisible?

Indeed, this can occur to such an extent that I may need geography (a map), a painting or photograph, just a fresh look at my surrounding, or (most pertinently) a remembering to make visible again what has become so thoroughly embedded within. By speaking of "embedded within" or "incorporation," I do not mean to suggest that the landscape has been internalized by a voracious *res cogitans*. The invisibility in question can just as well be described as my getting lost in the landscape: as my becoming one with it.[12]

If this is beginning to sound increasingly implausible (have we not merely moved from one kind of invisible, that inherent in mind, to another, that found in the empathic experience of landscape?), consider a concrete case, your own circumstance as you read these lines. You, too, are in a particular place, wherever this may be: and you are also situated within a landscape, whether this be part of unfettered nature, a university campus, or a set of city blocks. Unless you are deeply alienated from them, such a place and landscape offer a snug fit indeed—so much so that it would be difficult to establish the exact boundaries of either. As you inhabit your place so it in-habits you, while landscape provides an abiding setting for habitations of many kinds (cognitive and social as well as corporeal). If and when you come to remember this present experience, place and landscape will together hold and preserve its explicitly recalled content. This latter need not concern place *per se*. Indeed, place and landscape may be more effectively operative in memories when they are *not* the focus of what we remember but are merely adumbrated: their most forceful position is often a marginal one. Yet however indistinctly a given place-*cum*-landscape may have been experienced at first and will be subsequently remembered, it offers enclosure for whatever we do recall in detail. It is the circumambience of our ongoing remembering, that which

[12] On this point, see Straus, *The Primary World of Senses*, p. 322.

gives place to the focally remembered. It is the scene for the proscenium brought back to mind.

VI

Back to *what?* Haven't we just been trying to transcend mind by resolutely moving out into place? Is any mediation possible between anything so diaphanous and lambent as mind and something so dense and obdurate as place? If mind is still to matter to us in an account of memory—if we are still to be able to speak of keeping the past genuinely *in mentis*—it becomes evident that mind itself must be reconceived. And it is precisely mind as an internal theater of representations that is at once too confining and incompatible with something as blatently worldly as place. Before we can get out of mind, however, we must get mind out of itself, out of its own self-encapsulation, its epistemological primary narcissism. It is, in short, a matter of mind-expansion, and one key to it is to be found precisely in memory of place. If we are not to keep the past in a mind from which there are no meaningful exits, we must come to appreciate how it is kept in place.

How then is this possible? Primarily by place's "active power" of holding memories for us. The hold is held—in place. This is not mysterious; it does not require invoking a World Soul. It is a given particular place which holds significant memories of ours, acting as a veritable gathering-place for them. When I remember certain experiences that took place there, my mind and my past coalesce in, and around, such a place. Each is drawn out of the isolation, the undifferentiation, of forgetful non-remembering and drawn *into* the re-differentiation which remembering realizes.[13] Place furnishes a matrix for mergings of many kinds—most obviously of past with present, a process which could be called "presentment" and which itself has many forms. (Indeed, the remembered past does not merely terminate in the present of remembering but can be said to *begin* there, and to do so every time we recall it. Keeping in memory is a continual re-keeping: hence the many variant versions of the "same" past with which we regale ourselves in

[13] For further on this conception of forgetting, see Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible,* pp. 196–97.

remembering and which lead us naturally to assimilate remembering to story-telling.)

Yet a remembered place can also present us not just with a fusion of past and present but with a merging of itself and the remembering mind that wanders freely into its midst—much as happens with the body in its moving insertion into the perceived world. Such a place, a genuine memory-place, gathers in to keep; it not only keeps my past and my memories alive by furnishing them with a "local habitation and a name," it moves my mind there for the duration of the remembrance: *out there*, outside of its own self-imposed strictures.

Notice that I am saying more than that mind is itself some kind of place—which it also is, whether we conceive it (with Aristotle) as "the place of forms" or merely as a passing place for imaginations, recollections, and thoughts. Being mindful, as I remarked earlier, is allowing the mind to fill, to distend, with memories. It is only when we take mind-as-place too literally, getting carried away with its own containing capacities, that the slippery slope to idealisms and representationalisms of many sorts starts in earnest. In fact, the mind is only a "quasi-locality." Merleau-Ponty, who employs this last term, also says that "the mind is neither here, nor here nor here [which it would have to be if it were a genuine place]. . . . And yet it is 'attached', 'bound', it is *not without bonds*."[14] The bonds are not just to body, itself a "place of passage" as Bergson called it, but to place.[15] And mind is attached, and continually re-attached, to place precisely through memory, which is the main means by which we keep the past in mind.

And *mind in place*, which is to say, out beyond its own internally generated indices and icons of a world outside. If the self is mainly what we remember it to be, and if its remembering is inexorably place-bound, bound to be implaced in *some* locale (for not to be so located is not only to be profoundly disoriented; it is not to be at all), then the mind will always already be out there

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[14] Ibid., p. 222; his italics.

[15] The body is "a place of passage [for] movements, received and thrown back" (Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer [New York: Doubleday, 1959], p. 145).

in place, clinging to it as to its own self-definition.[16] Narcissus, after all, gazed at himself not in a mental image but in a reflection given back by a pool, that is, in a place that exceeded his own self-infatuation even as it supported it. Mind and place lose their antithetical relation to one another once they are brought together in remembering, which binds itself to place even as it constitutes the self who remembers. One might say therefore that mind and place are both modulations of our being-in-the-world, along with body, language, and history. Or perhaps even that place is "the body of the mind," its extra-organic organ.[17] More than a simple *Spielraum* for mind's effusions, more than a mere scene for its actings-out, it is that "other scene" (in Freud's descriptive phrase for dreams) in whose very alterity mind comes to know itself as it is and to keep itself as it has been: two activities not separable from each other in the end—or even in the beginning. . . .

Memory recalls mind to place—takes it decisively there and not to its mere representation. We revisit places in remembering (just as we do in dreams), and in so doing our minds reach out to touch the things themselves, which are to be found in the very places they inhabit. *Mind coadunates with world in memory of place.*[18]

VII

Place, then, plain old place, proves to be a liberating factor in matters of memory and mind. An appreciation of the place of place in our experience helps to free us from the naturalistic and men-

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[16] "The self can only be remembered" (Louis Dupré, *Transcendent Selfhood* [New York: Seabury, 1976], p. 72). "The non-existent is nowhere" (Aristotle *Physics* 208a 30).

[17] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 253.

[18] It ensues that in this situation mind's modes of operation do not merely correspond to the structures of the world: they *are* the latter, or at least become profoundly akin to them in remembering. Plato, precisely when discussing recollection, remarks that "all of nature is akin" (*Meno* 81d). Merleau-Ponty, who speaks of "the 'Memory of the World'," says that "Being is the 'place' where the 'modes of consciousness' are inscribed as structurations of Being. . . ." (*The Visible and The Invisible*, p. 253; preceding phrase from ibid., p. 194).

talistic straitjackets within which both mind and memory have for too long been confined. Memory of place offers a way out of this confinement and back into the lived world, while encouraging us to rethink the mind itself as continuous with this world, conterminous with it, and actively passive (or passively active) there. This is not to say that when we begin to reconceive memory and mind in terms of place we are without problem or paradox. For instance, why is it that place, itself best understood on a container model, aids us in overcoming the persistent temptation to regard mind and memory as themselves forms of strict containment? Meditation on place leads paradoxically to the opening out from within of that which it encloses from without.

Nonetheless, I have persevered in underscoring the primordiality of place, and I have done so not just because it is a generally neglected topic in philosophy (Norman Malcolm's recently published *Memory and Mind* does not deign to mention it), but because most discussions of memory in Western thought (including Aristotle's own seminal discussion in his short treatise on the subject) have emphasized the primacy of *time*, particularly *past* time, in remembering. Almost all such consideration, from Plato to Husserl, Heidegger, and Minkowski, has subsumed memory under a temporal problematic: as if remembering were just one more way of being in time. It matters little in this regard whether we place memory (as *anamnesis*) under the sign of eternity or reduce it to the reproduction of expired durations. Either way, it is assumed that remembering, since it has to do with the past, is exclusively a temporal affair. But is it? Doesn't place, which is at least equiprimordial with time, require us to reconsider this assumption? Thus when Heidegger claims that "what is past, present, [or] to come appears in the oneness of its own *present* being," we cannot help but notice that "present being" (*An-wesen:* literally, "being *at*") always occurs in place, the arena wherein both temporal and spatial determinations are at once rooted and specified.[19]

The poet puts it best:

> I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say [just] where. And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.[20]

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[19] *What is Called Thinking?* p. 140; his italics.
[20] T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton" (*Four Quartets*); his italics.

I would suggest that "where have we been?" is often a more appropriate heuristic device in matters of memory than "when have we been?"—providing that we do not restrict interpretation of the "where" to the shrunken sense of site. Site is levelled-down place, and is functionally and metrically defined (as in a "building site"). To reduce place to site is comparable to reducing lived time to date. The "*just* where" is homologous to the "*just* how long." The where that counts in remembering is, as Eliot indicates, a *there* and thus a matter of place, which we have seen to be structured by a here/there opposition played out within the horizoning spread of landscape. To remember is in effect, and often in fact, to claim that "*there I was* doing X or Y in the presence of A and B." Place is the operator of memory, that which puts it to work in presenting past experience to us in an inclusive and environing format.

VIII

The most insistent direction, the main drift, of this essay has been from the inside out—from the innards of memory to its exoskeletal outreaches. Most accounts of memory try to keep all the significant action contained within, within the inner acrobatics of representation or within the microstructures of neuroanatomy or of information flow. In this internalization of memory phenomenology has played its part by conceiving of remembering as a "'positing' presentification" of the past, its re-presentation to mind by mind.[21] And mind, being thought of almost entirely in terms of consciousness and intentionality, has served as a psychical container for the remembered. In questioning this deeply interiorizing tendency I have had recourse primarily to place, still another form of containment, but one considerably more diffuse, elastic, and porous. Mind and memory exfoliate in place, even though place's own activity is that of closing in or down (*not* pinning down: that is site's task). Time's basic action is one of breaking out (out of the fixed boundaries of calendar and clock) and breaking up (of all that wastes away in time). Time "disperses subsistence," and it is not at all surprising that our distressful thoughts concerning the obliv-

[21] See Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. Boyce Gibson (New York: MacMillan, 1931), sects. 99, 111.

ion to which the past is prone are tied to time, to its dispersing movement.[22] The same movement is evident in the more hopeful, but still threatening, thought (implicit in Nietzsche as in Freud) that "the past begins now and is always becoming."[23]

Place offers protection against this very dispersal, against time's diasporadic or "ecstatic" proclivity which Heidegger made so much of in *Being and Time*. By its encircling embrace, place shields, holds within (and withholds) rather than scattering subsistence in dissemination.[24]

In contrast with time, therefore, place is eminently suited for the keeping operation which we found earlier to lie at the core of remembering: as remaining-with and conserving, holding and concealing, taking-in and protecting. In fact, it becomes clear that the past itself can be kept in place, *right in place*, especially when place is taken in its full landscape being. This happens saliently in the simultaneously given, vertically arranged strata of geological formations, which compress their own amassed past within them. Places, even ordinary places, often do much the same, presenting to us their unreduced verticality over against the already reduced horizontality of temporal dissolution.

Place, then, not only offers aegis before time's ravages but may take time into itself, encasing its disarray in its own structure. Something like this happens in all remembering even when it is not explicitly of place. In keeping the past in mind, it is safekeeping it from an inherent temporal dispersiveness. But we keep the past most effectively in mind when we also keep it expressly *in place*—when mind embraces place and not just its own representations. This is one more reason why memory of place is liberating, since it frees us from time's dissevering action, its disbanding of human experience into the antagonistic segments of "past" and "future," the "no longer" and the "not yet."

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[22] Aristotle *Physics* 221b 2. I owe this felicitous translation to Peter Manchester.

[23] Stanley A. Leavy, *The Psychoanalytic Dialogue* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 94. Cf. also pp. 97, 110–11.

[24] I take this last word in Derrida's sense, and would like to remark that place as I have described it does not fall prey to his critique of the metaphysics of presence. The outgoing "there" of place prevents its collapse into that proximity of the "here" which is of the essence of presence as Derrida interprets this latter term.

That leaves us, as remembering always does leave us, *in the present*, a present massively enriched through the coeval actions of presentment and implacement (as we may call the "placing" action of memories). Remembrance is indeed now. It is also *here*, reminding us that remembering begins and ends in place even as it traverses the most distantly located personal past, a past it brings incisively into present place, into the now-and-here of remembrance.

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