9-17-2020

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The vernacular as method for memory and time: A philological and cultural exploration of Filipino concepts for Memory Studies

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Article available through https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1750698020944978

Abstract
This article proposes the vernacular as a discursive methodological entry point to Memory Studies. A bottom-up approach, this article theorizes memory and time starting from a close-reading of signifiers from the Filipino language, thus allowing its culture to be considered in its own terms first. The first part of the essay examines a set of terms that show equivalences with Western conceptions of memory. The second set of signifiers—(ma)tantâ(an), agam, limot/limôt and panahon—reveal that they are actually more illustrative of the current trend of movement in Memory Studies; and that they translate more accurately both the nonlinear and linear dimensions of time. The third part of the article considers cultural concepts namely, kapwa, utang-na-loob, bayanihan, Manilaner, and desaparesidos, which challenge and enrich Trauma Studies’ Freudian and Holocaust-based history. With a perspective of memory and time from the Global South, this study also demonstrates how one can share space and time with (the wrath of) nature in a society of impunity while emphasising the importance of spirituality, humour, group culture, and hospitality. The existence of the Manilaners and the desaparecidos also shifts the perspective and experience of the Holocaust and the disappeared to a Filipino context.

Keywords
apophatic listening, climate, Diksyunaryo ng Wikang Filipino, translation, trauma