

University of Debrecen

Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies

North American Studies Program

**“There are many stories I could tell”: Cultural Memory and
Trauma in Jesmyn Ward’s Fiction**

Dissertation Proposal

Yesmina Khedhir

2nd year Ph.D. student

Neptun Code: OWZ3RR

I consider this proposal ready for submission:

Debrecen, 31 July 2020



Dr. Gaál-Szabó Péter

Supervisor

Statement of Problem

Despite all the achievements garnered by African Americans throughout history, Black people have long been excluded from knowledge production or, as Toni Morrison confirms, “were seldom invited to participate in the discourse even when [they] were its topic” (“Site of Memory” 91). Thus, writing about a “past that is not past . . . a past that cannot and should not be pacified in its presentation” (Sharpe 49) and providing alternative and renewed ways of representing the African American “unfolding experience” (O’Melly and Fabre 3), as understood and articulated by Black subjects themselves, have constituted the essence of a multitude of African American literary works in the afterlife of slavery. Turning to the past by many African American writers is driven, particularly, by a desire to provide a “resistant reading of dominant, culturally powerful historical narratives” (Davis 3) and “reconstruct collective identity by reshaping collective memory” (Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma* 59). To this end, memory and trauma studies, which had come to prominence by the late twentieth century, offer an interdisciplinary tool for literary production and criticism “capable of providing the kind of inward, authentically objective account of the past” (Miształ 3), especially in the context of minority and Diaspora writing.

The utilization of cultural memory in African American literary texts is justified by its ability to reconstruct and reimagine the past “outside the venues of formal historical discourse” (Sturken 6) for “memory rather than history becomes a fruitful strategy for the recovery of the past” (22), as Melvin Dixon indicates. Due to its symbolic capacity to represent and reinterpret the past, cultural memory enables to renew and renegotiate the connections with culturally founding memories and “significant, nodal points” (Gilroy 198) in African American common history in light of present socio-cultural contexts.

Trauma, on the other hand, both in its psychological and cultural dimensions, offers a relevant generative concept to explore the Black experience. The African American past “is

one undeniably littered with traumatic acts, laws, and legitimized behaviors: racially biased laws that relegated Blacks to the status of disposable bodies denied by White culture; the regulated, segregated spaces of Jim Crow; and brutal, repetitive acts of violence that include lynching, incest, rape, and murder” (Hinrichsen, “Trauma Studies” 605). Thus, the expressive representation of Black lives inherently requires the inclusion and the placement of Black historical traumas at the center of the memory work. However, the reproduction of Black traumatic events and experiences and the re-enactment of the violence associated with them in African American literary and cultural expression do not aim to reveal and re-emphasize the extent of their brutality as much as they seek to recreate authentic cultural narratives capable of generating emotional bonding and strengthening communal belonging. Therefore, the revisiting of historical traumatic experiences will not only “rip that veil drawn over ‘proceedings too terrible to relate’” (Morrison, “Site of Memory” 91), over “unspeakable thoughts, unspoken” (Morrison, *Beloved* 199), but will also help the process of working-through and potentially working-over traumas as “[t]he proper mourning of the past can . . . serve in its recovery and possible containment” (Wilker 31).

Both trauma and memory —as they recreate and reconfigure distinct accounts of the past— prove essential for both individual and collective identity (re)construction. As “group identity is constructed from the stories a group tells about itself, prioritizing the inherited values, symbols and discourses garnered from collective memory” (Davis 5), a revocation and reinterpretation of African American memories of subjugation and victimization, as well as of cultural resistance and affirmation and communal survival, have become necessary for the African American community to understand present conditions and lay the ground for a rewarding future.

The recent interest in memory and trauma to reimagine the past beyond and against what is deemed “official history” aims “to refigure culturally prevailing versions of memory”

(Neumann 335) by creating counter-memories and alternative stories meaningful to both individual and collective identities. In the African American context, memory and trauma studies, as two interrelated and intersecting theoretical concepts, allow the literary scholar to gain a deeper understanding of the Black experience and life, not as recorded in dominant historical narratives, but as lived, imagined, and represented in Black artistic expression.

Statement of Thesis

Although conventional historical records render the African American journey from Africa to the Americas and what came afterwards accessible to a certain extent, the “Black Atlantic culture” (Gilroy xi) and the “interior life” (Morrison 92) of the Black community remain “so little known” (Gilroy xi) and insufficiently represented. Cultural memory and trauma as mediated and represented in African American literature have the capacity to challenge the “silence in the archive” (Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts” 2) and the “symbolic annihilation and lack of representation” (Davis 7) of African Americans by countering narratives which “only recorded dominant voices or documents stressing the character of African subjects as objects” (Wilker 46). Thus, the proposed dissertation aims overall to examine the different aspects of African American cultural memory and trauma in the literature of Jesmyn Ward—a major female voice, who speaks about and for the “unfinished project of emancipation” (Sharpe 12), the “incomplete project of freedom” (Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts” 4) for Black lives. The dissertation will look at how past and more recent cultural memories and traumatic events are reconstructed and reinterpreted in Ward’s literary texts to provide a renewed paradigm of reading and understanding the Black experience and culture even today.

Jesmyn Ward, a prominent contemporary African American writer and two-time winner of the National Book Award for Fiction, offers a comprehensive approach through her overarching memory work to reexamine the complexities of the Black experience in the

interplay between the past and the present. I argue that in her revisionist fiction, Ward re-enlivens African American “traumatic memory” and “narrative memory” (see Brogan 155) by revisiting a mostly forgotten and insufficiently known cultural history while showing how “inextricably interwoven the past is in the present” (Ward, *The Fire This Time* 2) and creating counter-memories and thus counter-narratives where “blackness marks simultaneously both the performance of the object and the performance of humanity” (Moten 2). Indeed, when asked in one of the interviews about why she writes, Ward answers:

I think that part of what I am trying to do, especially now as I grow, as I evolve as a writer, is that I am trying to bring stories from that past, that violent past, forgotten stories, forgotten voices, forgotten people, back into the light, back into the conversation, back into the public memory, the public imagination, because I think that, unfortunately, there is a real concerted effort in this country to rewrite that history, to erase that history, to disavow that history, to say that all the violence and pain and trauma, to say that none of that has ever happened. (“Jesmyn Ward, ‘Sing, Unburied, Sing’”)

In my argument, Ward employs mnemonic writing to artistically recycle African American cultural memories and traumas that are rooted in historical events and “publically verifiable fact[s]” (Morrison, “Site of Memory” 93) in order to challenge historical erasure and manipulation, to show how Black Americans continue to “wrestle with the specters of race and history in America, and how those specters are haunting now” (Ward, *The Fire This Time* 8), and thereby and beyond that to re-assert, as she claims: “our existence, our experiences, our lives, through words” (Ward, *The Fire This Time* 9).

Ward’s fiction is deeply rooted in the American South both as a geographical and cultural space that is shaped by the histories of the past and the enduring legacies of slavery

and other forms of racial violence. Though written in the twenty-first century, Ward's narratives, through their continuous alternation between the past and the present and the resulting temporal disjunction, give the impression of being set in an older Southern context. Her representation of the South as a haunted space that ties the characters to a traumatic past and affects their present lives reinforces Faulkner's statement that "the past is never dead. It's not even past" (92). By "revisiting past places, emotions, and events" (Hinrichsen, *Possessing the Past* 215) and exploring "that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals" (Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity" 132), Ward offers a vivid yet poignant picture of both Black suffering and Black struggle until today.

Ward is the author of three novels, one memoir, a self-help book, and the editor of a collection of essays. Out of her works, it is especially Ward's two novels, *Salvage the Bones* (2011) and *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (2017), that lend themselves to the focus of my research, i.e., African American cultural memory and trauma. Through its use of magical realism, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* recreates stories about historical racial violence and discrimination (mainly slavery and Jim Crow/lynching) while connecting them to more subtle contemporary forms of racism, in particular the prison system and non-institutionalized racist ideologies that survive until today in the American South. However, besides recalling memories of subjection and dehumanization, the novel conveys memories of cultural resistance and communal love and bonding. Similarly, in *Salvage the Bones*, hurricane Katrina, as a cultural trauma that reveals America's current racist and unjust socio-economic and political policies, brings forth the memory of past traumatic events, in particular the memory of the Middle Passage and enslavement. Yet, like *Sing*, *Salvage the Bones* tells also other stories of community resilience and survival. Thus, by offering a closer reading and representation of the African American experience, the two novels grant access to parts of "the interior life that was not written" and

leads to “the revelation of a kind of truth” (Morrison, “Site of Memory” 93) that remains quasi-absent in American dominant discourses of history.

Theoretical Background

The close reading of my texts will primarily be based on memory and trauma studies. However, due to the interdisciplinary nature of my research, the analytical framework will also integrate other theoretical strands, among them mainly Black feminist thought, Black masculinity studies, and ecocriticism/ecowomanism.

The argumentation will be structured around some of the major premises and concepts established within memory and trauma studies. In addition to “individual memory,” the notion of “collective memory” as introduced by Maurice Halbwachs and “cultural memory” as further specified by the Assmanns prove essential in understanding the Black experience for the urge to retrospectively reconstruct their shared past in light of present socio-cultural frameworks. Cultural memory as a theoretical concept will be utilized to show how, by re-establishing links with the past, African American cultural memories allow to reproduce cultural meanings (or counter-meanings) in relation to “stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference” (Hall 223) that are constitutive for Black identity and culture.

Cultural memory is embodied in “the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects” or, what Pierre Nora calls, “lieux de mémoire” (286) that serve as “mnemonic triggers” or “mnemonic aids” (Misztal 3). In the African American context, Toni Morrison specifies how her writing is often triggered by revisiting, envisioning, or coming across a site of memory (“Site of Memory” 91-92). Based on this notion of “lieux de mémoire,” I will explore the texture of Ward’s narratives as constructed around a number of sites of memory that the writer uses to recreate the past and reproduce counter-narratives.

Dealing with African American memory certainly invokes the understanding of “memory as the recovery of trauma” (Misztal xi). As “rememory” (Morrison, *Beloved* 36),

trauma relates to “catastrophic experiences” (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 5) that cannot be forgotten:

Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it’s not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it’s gone, but the place —the picture of it —stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don’t think of it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened. (Morrison 36)

Morrison’s interpretation corresponds to Cathy Caruth’s definition of being traumatized as “to be possessed by an image or an event” (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 5) that remains “unrepresentable and inaccessible” (Bronfen 36), especially in the case of individual traumas. While both originate from traumatic events, individual psychological traumas and collective, cultural traumas represent two different experiences. While individual traumas result from a direct experience of a painful event that is compared by Kai Erikson to a “blow to the psyche” (459), cultural trauma is defined as a “blow to the basic tissues of social life” (460). However, when “transformed and transvalued into a legitimating myth of origin” as a “founding trauma” (LaCapra, *Writing History* xii), cultural trauma may contribute to a sense of recovery by “repairing the tear in the social fabric” (Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma* 4) and “creating, constituting, a collective subject” (Eyerman, “The Past in the Present” 163). Thus, using this framework of individual and cultural trauma interwoven in the African American experience, I will examine Ward’s representation of Black “founding traumas” as defining traumatic memories, whose re-opening and narrativizing enhance “the processes of mourning and working-through” (Hinrichsen, *Possessing the Past* 214) and may eventually establish reconciliation and contribute to historical continuity.

As a female writer, Ward’s fiction entails addressing the Black female experience. Thus, relying both on memory/trauma studies and Black feminist scholarship, I will analyze

the resounding effects of past collective and individual memories and traumas on Black female subjectivity, in particular Black motherhood as a major focus in Ward's novels. To do so, Hortense J. Spillers's notion of the "mother and mother dispossessed" (80) and Christina Sharpe's similar concepts of the "non/former/un mother" (58) or the "non/being of the mother" (59) will be employed to examine the intergenerational and historical Black familial formation and the racial construction of Black womanhood and motherhood as a traumatic experience of "Black un/mothers grieving Black un/children" (Sharpe 58). Insights from other Black feminist scholars (mainly Saidiya Hartman, Patricia Hill Collins, and bell hooks) will also be used to study the motherhood/mothering experience of Ward's female characters as they either embrace or renounce their mother status.

The Black male experience is another primary focus in Ward's fiction. Thus, combining the memory and trauma theoretical framework with Black masculinity studies, I will explain how, similarly to the Black female, the contemporary Black male subject occupies in her works "a violent space haunted by a brutal past rife with underground/underocean black corpses of history" (12), or what Houston Baker calls the "Blue Man," who embodies a "racial memory mythically codified for childhood warning, self-definition, and defense" (11). This combined approach will show how the traumatic history of the Black male subordination and dehumanization shape the contemporary images of Black manhood and affect Black male subject formation. The analysis will also rely on bell hooks's study on Black masculinity, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (2004), in which she also traces the historical and social construction of hegemonic notions of Black masculinity as they condition the current understanding of the precarious experiences of the Black male as a father, brother, son, husband, lover, and so on. The concepts will serve to analyze how and in what ways Ward's male characters achieve or fail to achieve their own

subjectivity as they struggle with the memories and legacies of both collective and individual traumatic experiences.

Reading African American cultural memory and trauma inherently entails studying the symbiotic yet ambivalent relationship between people of African descent and nature. Thus, an ecocritical/ecowomanist analysis of African American cultural memory, or what is referred to as “eco-memory” (see Melanie L. Harris 27), will enable me to examine this relationship in Ward’s representation of Black memory. The ecocritical/ecowomanist approach will explore African American eco-memory as it “refers to the collective and individual memory of the earth and relationship to and with the earth” and “is passed down through different generations and considered as part of family and communal legacy and intellectual heritage” (Harris 28). In particular, eco-memory has two essential yet contradictory implications that reflect, to use Kimberly N. Ruffin’s expression, an “ecological burden-and-beauty paradox” (2), i.e., both images of beauty and terror. The first implication relates to “environmental othering” (Ruffin 2) and the inherent historical “connection between racial and environmental injustice” (Harris 7), which itself intersects with other levels of oppression and renders “antiblackness as total climate” (Sharpe 23). The second implication concerns the spiritual and cultural dimension of eco-memory as “reflective of an African indigenous cosmology that embraces interdependence with nature and a reverence of earth” (Harris 56), offering thus a sense of ancestral connection and belonging and inducing a process of “self-recovery from white supremacy and self-determination” (Harris 29). Indeed, Ward’s fiction yields itself to these two oppositional readings of African American eco-memory. Thus, the ecocritical/ecowomanist approach will be used to discuss Ward’s treatment of, on the one hand, environmental injustice and structural racism, especially in her post-Katrina novel *Salvage the Bones*, and, on the other hand, the notion of eco-memory as a form of counter-memory that confirms the African American environmental history and reveals a distinctive

African American cultural identity and spiritual experience which finds roots in Black people's African heritage.

Proposed Structure and Tentative Division of Chapters:

Introduction

The introduction will contextualize the research focus by explaining the connection between memory and trauma studies, on the one hand, and Black studies, on the other. In particular, it will highlight how memory and trauma are used in Black literary expressions to provide a kind of counter-memory, an “inward, authentically objective account of the past” (Misztal 3). The introduction will also establish Ward's importance as a contemporary African American writer in conveying the Black experience and life through the lenses of trauma and memory in her revisionist fiction.

Chapter 1: Theorizing Memory and Trauma

The chapter will outline the methodology and theoretical background of the dissertation. It will be divided into three subchapters.

Cultural Memory and Trauma: Notions and Intersections

The subchapter will introduce the general theoretical framework of the dissertation. It will include definitions of key notions within memory and trauma studies that will be utilized throughout the dissertation, such as collective/individual memory, cultural memory, and trauma and will expound remembering processes and dynamics. The subchapter will also investigate the intersections between memory and trauma, as well as their relation to identity, culture, power, and history and will elaborate on the dichotomy of remembering and forgetting as they collide or complement each other.

African American Counter-memory and Cultural Authentication

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following subchapter will theorize about African American cultural memory and trauma. It will study the intersection of memory and trauma in the Black experience and highlight the major dynamics and processes of remembering in the African American context. It will also show how the reimagination and reinterpretation of past founding memories and traumas provide a framework of oppositionality (counter-memory) to dominant American narratives and of authentication of the African American self and identity.

Memory/Trauma, Literature, and Ward

The subsequent subchapter will explore the relationship between memory/trauma and literature. It will discuss the use of memory in literature and the use of literature as “a medium that simultaneously builds and observes memory” (Terry 476) and as an act of witness “to the crisis within history which precisely cannot be articulated, witnessed in the given categories of history itself” (Felman and Laub xviii). In particular, the subchapter will argue how by producing counter-memories and weaving counter-narratives, literary texts have the power to challenge historical manipulation or erasure and reconstruct cultural histories and identities. At a more specific level, this part will investigate Ward’s mnemonic writing in view of the Black literary tradition of remembering. It will highlight the different aspects of Ward’s memory work, i.e., the mnemonic tropes and techniques she uses to recreate African American memories and articulate her understanding of the Black experience and life.

Chapter 2: Cultural Memory as Cultural Haunting

The chapter will focus on Jesmyn Ward’s novel *Sing, Unburied, Sing* and the use of the metaphor of haunting to recall a traumatic past and tell untold stories. Using Kathleen Brogan’s concept of “cultural haunting” (151) and Avery Gordon’s “theory of memory as

haunting” (xi), the chapter will analyze how the ghost in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* serves—both as a literal and figurative element—to “recover and make social use of a poorly documented, partially erased cultural history” (Brogan 150). I argue that by using the ghost to investigate old histories and highlight how the violent past continues to haunt the present, Ward aims “to make visible what has been invisible, what has been forgotten, unknown, or repressed” (Hinrichsen, *Possessing the Past* 219) and thus provide counter-narratives that act like cultural memorials to forgotten stories and people in American history. By exploring the South as “a site of cultural and psychological conflict” (Hinrichsen, “Trauma Studies” 219) and reenacting and reworking its traumatic histories through the trope of haunting, Ward contributes to a process of healing and working through past injuries and traumas. Thus, this chapter will analyze two major cultural memories conjured up by the ghost in *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, namely the memory of slavery and the memory of Jim Crow/Lynching, that convey collective experiences of suffering, but of resistance too.

Chapter 3: Gendered Memory

The chapter will focus on the intersections of memory/trauma and female and male subjectivity. Combining memory and trauma studies with both Black feminist thinking and Black masculinity studies, the chapter will examine how personal and collective memories and traumas either enhance or hinder the construction of Black male and female identities. It will also argue that through her countering portrayal of female and male characters, Ward questions and eventually deconstructs the historical, social, and cultural constructions of gender roles in the Black community. The chapter will be divided into two subchapters.

Memory and Black Female Subjectivity

The subchapter will discuss the role of memory and trauma in Black female identity construction in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* and *Salvage the Bones*. As mentioned in the theoretical

part, this subchapter will examine —based on Spillers’s concept of the “mother and mother dispossessed” (80) and Sharpe’s notion of “non/former/un mother” (59) — how the historical racial construction of Black motherhood as a negation, together with personal and intergenerational traumas experienced by Black women, affect maternal identities and shape the contemporary image of Black motherhood as a traumatic and complicated experience. I argue that Black motherhood represents a complex process due to the intersection of personal and collective traumas that make Black women to either embrace or reject their motherhood status.

Memory and Black Male Subjectivity

The subchapter will focus on how memory and trauma influence the construction of the Black male subjectivity. Similar to the female characters, most of the male characters in Ward’s novels struggle with familial and communal traumas, the persisting legacies of racial violence and generational poverty, and negative hegemonic notions of Black masculinity. Ward deconstructs these stereotypes by diversifying Black masculinity to also include further or different layers in conceptualizing it and thus problematizing the role and place of the Black male in the family and the community. Thus through her counter-discursive portrayal of the Black male as a caring and responsible person or one capable of change amid all the traumas and racial and economic constraints, Ward subverts dominant and mainstream stereotypes about Black men and revises socially inherited and constructed notions about Black masculinity and gender roles.

Chapter 4: Eco-memory: An Eco-critical Perspective

This chapter will provide an ecocritical and ecowomanist reading of African American cultural memory and trauma in Ward’s fiction and will be divided into two subchapters.

Memory and the Southern Landscape

The subchapter will look at the environmentally related African American cultural memories. It will explain how personal and cultural memories and traumas intersect with nature in the American South to shape the Black southern communal consciousness and collective experience. The subchapter will also investigate, through an ecocritical/ecowomanist perspective, the major mnemonic tropes used by Ward to explore the symbiotic relationship between African Americans and nature and to re-enliven the Black spiritual experience by re-establishing connections with an African heritage, namely religious cosmology (Christianity/voodoo/animism) and spiritual and mystical healing, including herbal medication.

Water and African American Memory

The subchapter will be dedicated to an ecocritical reading of waterbodies in *Sing, Unburied*, *Sing* and *Salvage the Bones*. The two novels abound with water imagery and different watercourses: swamps, ocean, river, lakes, and floods. I argue that waterbodies, floods in particular, as emotional, “spatialized sites of memory” (Wardi 7) signify, as Morrison claims, “remembering . . . the route back to our ancestors” (99) and evoke a “transatlantic memory” (Wardi 7) that brings forth memories of other past violent events. This part will provide a specific reading of hurricane Katrina as a “cultural trauma” which “tore at the threads of collective identity” (Eyerman, *Is This America* 6), and as a “weather event” that conveys a general “anti-Black climate” (Sharpe 15) and reveals a rhetoric of environmental and structural racism.

Conclusions

The conclusion will summarize and restate the main notions and arguments developed in the dissertation. It will re-highlight the major tropes and techniques that Ward utilizes to re-

member and explore the Black experience, creating thus counter-memories and counter-narratives about the Black past as it connects to the present.

Implementation Plan

Unit	Length	Months required	Completed by
Introduction	10 pages	2 months	April 2022
Chapter 1	40 pages	4 months	December 2020
Chapter 2	40 pages	4 months	April 2021
Chapter 3	40 pages	4 months	August 2021
Chapter 4	40 pages	4 months	December 2021
Conclusion	10 pages	2 months	February 2022
Total	180	20 months	

Selected Bibliography

Primary Sources :

Ward, Jesmyn. *Men We Reaped: A Memoir*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.

---. *Salvage the Bones*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011.

---. *Sing, Unburied, Sing*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2017.

---. *Where the Line Bleeds: A Novel*. Scribner, 2008.

Secondary Sources :

Alexander, Jefferey C., et al. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. 1st ed., University of California Press, 2004. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pp9nb. Accessed 17 May 2020.

Allardice, Lisa. "Jesmyn Ward: 'Black Girls Are Silenced, Misunderstood and Underestimated.'" *The Guardian*, 11 May 2018, www.theguardian.com/books/2018/may/11/jesmyn-ward-home-mississippi-living-with-addiction-poverty-racism. Accessed 16 June 2019.

Anderson, Jeffrey E. *Conjure in African American Society*. Louisiana State University Press, 2007.

Assmann, Aleida. "Canon and Archive." *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, Walter de Gruyter, 2008, pp. 97-107.

Assmann, Jan. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

- Assmann, Jan, and John Czaplicka. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." *New German Critique*, no. 65, 1995, pp. 125–133. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/488538. Accessed [17 May 2020](#).
- Baker, Houston A. "Blue Men, Black Writing, and Southern Re-Visions." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 101 no. 1, 2002, p. 7-17. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/article/30740.
- . *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature A Vernacular Theory*. University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Baptist, Edward E. *Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. Basic Books, 2016.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 2004.
- Brogan, Kathleen. "American Stories of Cultural Haunting: Tales of Heirs and Ethnographers." *College English*, vol. 57, no. 2, 1995, pp. 149–165. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/378807. Accessed [16 May 2020](#).
- Bronfen, Elisabeth. *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and Its Discontents*. Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2006.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.
- Caruth, Cathy, editor. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.
- Casey, Edward S. "Public Memory in Place and Time." *Framing Public Memory*, edited by Kendall R. Phillips. University of Alabama P, 2004. Pp. 17-44.

- Cash, Wilbur Joseph. *The Mind of the South*. Vintage Books, 1991.
- Chireau, Yvonne Patricia. *Black Magic: Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition*. University of California Press, 2003.
- Clark, Christopher W. "What Comes to the Surface: Storms, Bodies, and Community in Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones*." *The Mississippi Quarterly: the journal of Southern culture*, vol.68, no. 3, 2017, pp. 341–358.
- Coleman, James W. *Faithful Visions: Treatments of the Sacred, Spiritual, and Supernatural in Twentieth Century African American Fiction*, Louisiana State University Press, 2005.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. "Black Women and Motherhood." *Motherhood and Space: Configurations of the Maternal through Politics, Home, and the Body*, edited by Sarah Hardy, Caroline Wiedmer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 149-160.
- Cone, James H. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Orbis Books, 2011.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- . *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Davis, Patricia G. *Laying Claim: African American Cultural Memory and Southern Identity*. The University of Alabama Press, 2016.
- Davis, Thadious M. "Expanding the Limits: The Intersection of Race and Region." *The Southern Literary Journal*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1988, pp. 3–11. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20077924. Accessed 17 May 2020.

- . *Southscapes: Geographies of Race, Region, and Literature*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Translated by Kamuf Peggy, Routledge, 1994.
- Diedrich, Maria, Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Carl Pedersen, editors. *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage*. Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Dixon, Melvin. "The Black Writer's Use of Memory." *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, edited by Geneviève Fabre and Robert O'Meally, Oxford UP, 1994, pp. 18-27.
- Douglas, Ellen. *Witnessing*. University Press of Mississippi, 2004.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Eckstein, Lars. *Re-membering the Black Atlantic: On the Poetics and Politics of Literary Memory*. Rodopi, 2006.
- Erikson, Kai. "Notes on Trauma and Community." *American Imago*, vol. 48, no. 4, 1991, pp. 455–472. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26303923. Accessed 16 May 2020.
- Erll, Astrid. *Memory in Culture*. Translated by Sara B. Young, New York, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011.
- Erll, Astrid, et al. *Cultural Memory Studies: an International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Walter de Gruyter, 2008.
- Erll, Astrid, and Ann Rigney, editors. *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, Walter de Gruyter, 2009.

Eyerman, Ron. *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Cambridge UP, 2001.

---. *Is This America? Katrina as Cultural Trauma*. University of Texas Press, 2015.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lamm Markmann, Pluto Press, 1967.

Faulkner, William. *Requiem for a Nun*. Random House, 1951.

Felman, Shoshana, and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. Routledge, 1992.

Fett, Sharla M. *Working Cures Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*. University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Fine, Gary Alan. *Difficult reputations: Collective Memories of the Evil, Inept, and Controversial*. U of Chicago P, 2001.

Fischer, Michael M. J. "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory." *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by James Clifford, George E. Marcus. U of California P, 1986. 194-234.

Forster, Kurt W. "Aby Warburg's History of Art: Collective Memory and the Social Mediation of Images." *Daedalus*, vol. 105, no. 1, 1976, pp. 169–176. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20024391. Accessed 16 May 2020.

Foucault, Michel. *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard, Sherry Simon, Cornell UP, 1977.

- Gaàl-Szabo, Péter. “Cultural Memory and Countering History through Memory in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Sermons.” *Intertextuality, Intersubjectivity and Narrative Identity*, edited by Péter Gaàl-Szabo, Cambridge Scholars, 2017. pp. 77-90.
- Gates, Henry Louis. *The Signifying Monkey: a Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Verso, 2007.
- Giroux, Henry A. “Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability.” *College Literature*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2006, pp. 171–196. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25115372. Accessed 16 May 2020.
- Glave, Dianne D. *Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage*. Lawrence Hill Books, 2010.
- Glave, Dianne D., and Mark Stoll. *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Gorn, Elliott J. “Black Spirits: The Ghostlore of Afro-American Slaves.” *American Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 4, 1984, pp. 549–565. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2712750. Accessed 16 May 2020.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser, University of Chicago Press, 1992.

---. *The Collective Memory*. Translated by Francis J. Ditter and Vita Yazdi Ditter, Harper & Row, 1980.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Theorizing Diaspora*, edited by Jana Evans Briziel, Anita Mannur, Blackwell, 2003, pp. 222-237.

Hansen, Elaine Tuttle. *Mother without Child: Contemporary Fiction and the Crisis of Motherhood*. University of California Press, 1997.

Harris, Melanie L. *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faith*. Orbis Books, 2017.

Harris, Melanie L., et al. "Silent Scripts and Contested Spaces." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2016, pp. 101–114. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jfemistudreli.32.1.10. Accessed 17 May 2020.

Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. Macmillan, 2006.

---. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

---. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe*, vol. 12, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 1-14.

Hinrichsen, Lisa. *Possessing the Past: Trauma, Imagination, and Memory in Post-Plantation Southern Literature*. Louisiana State University Press, 2015.

---. "Trauma Studies and the Literature of the U.S. South." John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2013, doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12079.

- Holloway, Karla F. C. "Cultural Narratives Passed on: African American Mourning Stories." *College English*, vol. 59, no. 1, 1997, pp. 32–40. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/378796. Accessed 17 May 2020.
- Hooks, bell. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Routledge, 2015.
- . *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*. Routledge, 2004.
- Hutton, Patrick H. "Sigmund Freud and Maurice Halbwachs: The Problem of Memory in Historical Psychology." *The History Teacher*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1994, pp. 145–158. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/494716. Accessed 16 May 2020.
- Kirmayer, Laurence J. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, edited by Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, Routledge, 1996.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. Cornell University Press, 1998. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv5rdzk1. Accessed 16 May 2020.
- . *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.
- Lambert, Raphaël. "The Slave Trade as Memory and History: James A. Emanuel's 'The Middle Passage Blues' and Robert Hayden's 'Middle Passage.'" *African American Review*, vol. 47, no. 2/3, 2014, pp. 327–338. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24589757. Accessed 17 May 2020.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*. Oxford UP, 1977.
- Lloyd, Christopher. *Corporal Legacies in the US South: Memory and Embodiment in Contemporary Culture*. Palgrave Mcmillan, 2018.

MacKendrick, Karmen. *Fragmentation and Memory: Meditations on Christian Doctrine*.

Fordham UP, 2008. Print.

Martin, Kameelah L. *Conjuring Moments in African American Literature: Women, Spirit*

Work & Other Such Hoodoo. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Marotte, Marry Ruthe, and Gleen Jellenik, editors. *TEN YEARS AFTER KATRINA: Critical*

Perspectives of the Storm's Effect on American Culture and Identity. LEXINGTON

BOOKS, 2016.

Meckein, Richard. "Cultural Memory: the link between past, present, and future." IEA, Jun

03, 2013. www.iea.usp.br/en/news/cultural-memory-the-link-between-past-present-and-future.

Medina, José. "Toward a Foucaultian Epistemology of Resistance: Counter-Memory,

Epistemic Friction, and Guerrilla Pluralism." *Foucault Studies*, no. 12, October 2011, pp. 9-35. doi.org/10.22439/fs.v0i12.3335.

Middleton, David and Steven D. Brown. *The Social Psychology of Experience: Studies in*

Remembering and Forgetting. Sage, 2005.

Misztal, Barbara A. *Theories of Social Remembering*. Open University Press, 2003.

Morrison, Toni. "The Site of Memory." *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*,

edited by William Zinsser. Houghton Mifflin, 1995. pp.83-102.

---. *Beloved: A Novel*. Knopf, 1987.

Moten, Fred. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. University of

Minnesota Press, 2003.

- Moynihan, Sinéad. "From Disposability To Recycling: William Faulkner and The New Politics of Rewriting in Jesmyn Ward's 'Salvage the Bones.'" *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2015, pp. 550–567. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26365201. Accessed 16 May 2020.
- Neal, Arthur G. *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Extraordinary Events in the American Experience*. M.E. Sharpe, 2005.
- Neumann, Birgit. "The Literary Representation of Memory." *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Herausgegeben von, Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, Walter de Gruyter, 2008, pp. 333-343.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*." *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, edited by Geneviève Fabre, Robert O'Meally, Oxford UP, 1994. pp. 284-300.
- O'Meally, Robert and Fabre, Genevieve, editors. *History and Memory in African-American Culture*. Oxford University P, 1994.
- Olick, Jeffrey K. *The Collective Memory Reader*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Parham, Marisa. *Haunting and Displacement in African American Literature and Culture*. Routledge, 2009.
- Pryse, Marjorie, and Hortense J. Spillers, editors. *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*. Indiana University Press, 1985.
- Renan, Ernest, and M. F. N. Giglioli. *What Is a Nation? and Other Political Writings*. Columbia University Press, 2018.

- Rico, Patricia San José. *Creating Memory and Cultural Identity in African American Trauma Fiction*. Brill Rodopi, 2019.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey, David Pellauer, University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Rodriguez, Jeanette, and Fortier, Ted. *Cultural Memory: Resistance, Faith, and Identity*. U of Texas P, 2007.
- Rogers, Kim Lacy. "Lynching Stories: Family and Community Memory in the Mississippi Delta." *Trauma: Life Stories of Survivors*, edited by Kim Lacy Rogers, Selma Ledesdorff, and Graham Dawson, Transaction Publishers, 2004. pp. 113-31.
- Rothberg, Michael. "Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux De Mémoire to Noeuds De Mémoire." *Yale French Studies*, no. 118/119, 2010, pp. 3–12. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41337077.
- Ruffin, Kimberly N. *Black on Earth: African American Ecoliterary Traditions*. The University of Georgia Press, 2010.
- Russell, Nicolas. "Collective Memory before and after Halbwachs." *The French Review*, vol. 79, no. 4, 2006, pp. 792–804. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25480359. Accessed 16 May 2020.
- Ryan, Lorraine. "Memory, power, and resistance: The anatomy of a tripartite relationship." *Memory Studies*, April 2010, pp.154- 169. DOI: 10.1177/1750698010366502.
- Schaub, Danielle, et al., editors. *Topography of Trauma: Fissure Disruptions and Transfigurations*. Brill Rodopi, 2019.

Sharpe, Christina Elizabeth. *In the Wake: on Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Sheldrake, Philip. *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity*. John Hopkins UP, 2001.

Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American GrammarBook." *Diacritics*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1987, pp. 65–81. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/464747. Accessed 16 May 2020.

Stevens, Benjamin Eldon. "Medea in Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones*." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2016, pp. 158–177., doi:10.1007/s12138-016-0394-6.

Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories the Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. University of California Press, 1997.

Terry, Jennifer. "'When the sea of living memory receded': Cultural memory and literary narratives of the Middle Passage." Sage, 2013, DOI: 10.1177/1750698012467999.

Theile, Verena, and Marie Drews. *Reclaiming Home, Remembering Motherhood, Rewriting History: African American and Afro-Caribbean Women's Literature in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge Scholars, 2009.

Valk, Anne, and Leslie Brown, editors. *Living with Jim Crow: African American Women and Memories of the Segregated South*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Ward, Jesmyn. "A Conversation With Jesmyn Ward: A phone Call from Paul." Sep. 2017, *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/episode/662Gi1lpjYo60fyYjATAuk

- . "Jesmyn Ward: Beating the Drum." Interview by Dwyer Murphy. *Guernica*, 17 March, 2014, www.guernicamag.com/beating-the-drum/
- . "Jesmyn Ward on Salvage the Bones." Interview with Elizabeth Hoover. *The Paris Review*, August 30, 2011. www.theparisreview.org/blog/2011/08/30/jesmyn-ward-on-salvage-the-bones/
- . "Jesmyn Ward, 'Sing, Unburied, Sing'." *Youtube*, 11 May 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c01ALVz6Zqw&t=141s>
- , editor. *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race*. SCRIBNER, 2016.
- Wardi, Anissa Janine. *Water and African American Memory: an Ecocritical Perspective*. University Press of Florida, 2016.
- Weinbaum, Alys Eve. *The Afterlife of Reproductive Slavery: Biocapitalism and Black Feminism's Philosophy of History*. Duke University Press, 2019.
- West, Elizabeth J. *African Spirituality in Black Women's Fiction: Threaded Visions of Memory, Community, Nature, and Being*. Lexington Books, 2013.
- Widdowson, Peter. "'Writing Back': Contemporary Re-Visionary Fiction." *Textual Practice*, vol. 20, no. 3, 18 Feb 2007, pp. 491-507, DOI: 10.1080/09502360600828984
- Wilker, Frank. *Cultural Memories of Origin: Trauma, Memory and Imagery in African American Narratives of the Middle Passage*. Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017.
- Yaeger, Patricia. *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990*. U. of Chicago P, 2000.