

CHAPTER ONE



Introduction: Measuring Shadows

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Dead Pan”

We know our immediate neighborhood rather intimately. With increasing distance, our knowledge fades, and fades rapidly. Eventually, we reach the dim boundary—the utmost limits of our telescopes. There, we measure shadows, and we search among ghostly errors of measurement for landmarks that are scarcely more substantial.

—Edwin Hubble

The earliest memory I have of an experience of time and space together took the form of a problem. I was nine or ten years old and about to go three blocks from home on an errand to pick up something at a small grocery store—actually at a deteriorating house in which an old man and a young woman had put up a few shelves for cans and boxes of food, a cold box for soda pop, and a refrigerator for milk. I was in a hurry; I wanted to get there before I was there, and I wanted to be back home before I left the store. I wanted to catch up with and overtake some-

thing elusive. I experienced the sensation that I could not be at the end of my steps before I took them, and I could not be at the spot I left as I stepped forward. I could not be at the time I had been or, particularly, at the time "ahead" of me. That made things slower than I wanted them to be, and I fantasized that I was Plastic Man and could stretch my body in an instant to wherever I was going. I did not consider a moment's having duration: that was too short to worry about. But I did feel the impact of the longer stretch of time and space in the middle of which I seemed to find myself, and Plastic Man seemed preferable to me to Captain Marvel because Captain Marvel, like Superman, had to fly to wherever he was going and hence faced the same problem in the air that I was facing on the ground. He was considerably faster than I was, but he seemed to be in the middle of space and time in a way that Plastic Man was not. Stretching in an instant seemed faster even than Captain Marvel, and if stretching were an event of time and space, the elements had gotten so refined that I would not need to worry about them. It was like zap and I could be anywhere, any "there."

As I write of this experience, I have a vivid image in my mind. I remember where I was standing: in the summery yard of my home, looking back across the street, across two other yards that were divided by another street, and to the alley down which I would run as a short cut to the store. I remember that I was arrested by the experience, both surprised and captivated by it and surprised and captivated over being surprised and captivated by it—a double moment to which I gave no thought as I went through it, but one that branded itself on whatever in my mind is susceptible to being branded. I remember that the image came back to me occasionally with happy puzzlement. It also came back to me twelve years later when I read Kant's *First Critique* for the first time, when I was reading "The Transcendental Analytic." I could not believe that he thought that space and time were in our minds and not out there in the yards, across the streets, down the alleys, ahead of us and behind us and, I remember thinking, between us and the stars. Or if he *did* believe that, I wondered why anyone bothered to take him seriously. I did not think that time and space had much to do with imagination or "faculties" of "the" reason. I was shocked that my teacher, Harry Prosch, and another teacher, W. B. Mahan, seemed excited by his ideas.

When I had the experience of standing in the yard and looking toward the alley, I felt very distinctly that I had already lost something that I could not gain back and that I could not catch up with something that

was in front of me as well as behind me. It was as though what I could not catch up with was behind me like lost time, although it seemed like it was ahead of me, like time-to-come. It seemed like lost time with distance in front of me and behind me. I could not overcome or comprehend it. I felt vague about “it” but I “knew” “it” was there in some sense. What is important to me now is that that is what I felt then and that that feeling is connected with what this book is about.

This scene bubbled up to my consciousness once again while this book was well under way. There are specific things about the event that puzzle me. I might have been wearing a white T-shirt. Maybe I was “bare shirted,” that is, without a shirt, a common phrase when I was growing up. I seem to see things in the scene from my position then, standing there, vaguely aware of one shoulder that is peripherally visible as I look across the street. A young tree is to my right, the intersection of East Eighth Street and Brown Avenue is beyond the tree. The two yards, the alley in which Mrs. Patterson grew hollyhocks by her garbage can, and my sense of the stretch of the alley, only a small part of which I can see, stretching long, long up toward Mekusukey Avenue where the store is. (In this remembering I have so many associations with each of these places and parts of these places that I am struggling to stay focused. I am inclined to tell you *and* me stories about each of them.) And I remember vividly the feelings—as though I now experience them—of wanting to stretch over the distances and overcome them. I also now want to stretch—or to be stretched—over the distance to then and find all the details, like a plastic man of time. When the image came to me I first thought that I went to the store to get a loaf of bread—twelve cents a loaf, recently raised from a dime—for Mother, but I am not sure. An old woman—Mrs. Doolan’s mother, whom we called “Grandmother Cox”—was bedridden in the house across whose yard I was looking; I had a sense of death when Mother and I visited, and that sense was there then (and is now) as I looked across the yard—it vaguely colored my experience. I suspect that I was barefooted, but that’s a guess. I am not entirely sure if an old man and a young woman ran the store. Why do I think so? I do not remember the exact location of the store. The memorial losses are beyond my grasp. But I know of them because of the vividness of a few remembered details and the cartoon quality of the scene that is spare of a living texture.

I believe that my present experience of loss in this memory mimics part of what I experienced then as lost. But if that is right, that *loss* of memory appears to be part of the vividness of my memory, and it carries over

with no image at all in my memory of this event. Its inchoate quality seems to compose part of the scenic quality. In the lapse I can recognize several aspects of the experience, but I can only guess that they were connected in the experience that I remember. I do not expect to know for sure whether the connections existed then. I “know” there are losses in the images. I am reasonably clear *that* there is oblivion running through them and *that* I do not explicitly *perceive* the oblivion except by abstraction and supposition; and I assume that abstraction and supposition “have” oblivion as part of their origin. I would say that oblivion lets the remembered, vivid things be vivid and appears as “something” abstract and speculative that gives the gaps, as it were, in which other memories and present happenings provide texture and instance. Oblivion *appears* with a degree of abstractness when I imagine that this now tattered and sketchy scene, in its experiential moment, will die with me, that it has oblivion in its (and my) future. That is why, I suspect, a moment ago I wondered if Grandmother Cox figured inchoately into my experience then. Was I also experiencing tacitly something about death and oblivion as I imagined the stretch of Plastic Man in the context of lost time and unovercomeable distance? I really do not know. But I am sure that’s the way it looks to me now.

Perhaps there are ways to speak not only speculatively about loss in memory. Perhaps there are ways to speak performatively and presentatively of such loss, to speak of the occurrence of memory’s loss in ways that allow its nonimagistic, nonsubstantive bearing to communicate nonmetaphorically in the midst of images, metaphors, and nouns. Speaking in such a way is like speaking of emptiness that pervades determined experiences and things in the world or of passage of life in the coming of life. I believe that such speaking need not be mysterious or cultic, even if it departs from our usual manners of expression. Memory’s loss, like loss of life or incompleteness in the “fullness” of present existence, is quite ordinary in the sense that it accompanies other ordinary occurrences of memory. The issue is one of attention—or mindfulness—before “something” that we are prone to overlook and in that sense to forget, to lose in our dealings with each other and with whatever we confront. Perhaps this overlooking itself manifests an aspect of memory’s loss. We shall have to see if that is the case.

Exploration of ways to speak and think perceptively in memory’s loss (as well as about it) thus constitutes part of this book’s subject, and that requires us to be attentive to its occurrence, to carry out an unusual discipline of attention in order to be aware of a usual aspect of memory.

I quoted Edwin Hubble at the beginning of this introduction because of his clarity about what he and his colleagues do not know, and this is a book that deals in part with what I do not expect to know by means of objectivity. I am not writing about “ghostly errors of measurement,” exactly, but the figure of “dim boundaries” does arise frequently, and I suppose that present figurations of past events could compose ghostly errors of measurement. But these “errors” are not ones that I believe will in time be erased by knowledge, and I am looking for manners of expression that give something like a countenance to the erroneousness of the present past. I find myself before “something” that I cannot touch—not quite like the dark matter in the universe that can be seen by telescopes only in its absence, but not completely unlike it either. I hesitate to use the metaphor of *matter* in speaking of past events because they in their past eventfulness do not seem to hold the promise of illumination, much less of touching presence. They “appear” as past and out of sight. Or they appear in remnants of effects and affects and in present expressions and transformations of influence, which I shall call “memories.” The dimension of past events includes loss of touch and sight, loss that I shall name “forgetfulness,” and it includes a ghostly quality of withdrawn presence. Erroneousness is also in the dimension of past presence insofar as past events are not the present events of their memory. So “erroneousness” might name one measure of past events. However we name them and their dimension, they compose dim boundaries in our knowledge, boundaries that measure loss of experience and occurrence, of sight and touch. They appear in recession before occurrences of their recall and presentation.

In my boyhood experience of my inability to catch up with where I could have been had I started earlier—always earlier and earlier and never catching up—I could never be in the moments that I felt that I had lost. And now I cannot regain the palpability of the events I remember—they are always earlier than I am and other than I am. And yet I feel in touch with them in the vividness of my memory and in the influences that they seem to exercise in my puzzlement and conceptions out of which this book arises. My experience then of a lost future belonging to a lost, past possibility is intensified as I write of those events in what I can now say composes for them a future that both loses them and retains them in a dim and ghostly way.

We may know our immediate neighborhood “rather intimately,” as Hubble says, but our knowledge fades in the distance of the past and “fades rapidly,” as we reach the “dim boundaries” of presence. The pres-

ence of the past events is missing. Or I could say that in the presence of past events *their* happening is missing.

Three of Jacques Derrida's phrases stood out as I thought of this introduction: "and I am paraphrasing here for whomever no longer recognizes me"; "unless it be so that one should no longer recognize me, another way of saying . . . that people finally recognize me"; "forgetting me on the pretext of understanding me."¹ When he wrote those words, Derrida was struggling with Geoffrey Bennington's effort to show a certain, closing systematicity in his thought, and in this struggle he is also mourning the loss of his mother's recognition of him first through dementia and then through death. In this context I note that the one I remember—me, then, as a boy—does not know me or recognize me at all. I suppose that that is characteristic of most memories, excluding those, perhaps, in dreams in which a younger (or older) 'I' or someone else from the past does know me. But even then I am not so sure who is recognized. Dream figures, for example, who are similar to ghosts in some ways, may know and recognize from all kinds of perspectives including that of a persona from the past. But in the above instance, I—the ten-year old—does not know me now at all. I now seem to be doing all the recognizing. Were I to engage in a process of active imagination so that in my vision he turns around from his gaze across the yards and streets to the alley and looks at me and gains voice, addressing me, not from the grave but from the "imagined" yard of East Eighth Street, he would be speaking now, not then. He would now be someone different from then, in quite different circumstances, and however moved or scared I might be before his gaze and in his recognition, I can know that his body and voice and sight are now and not then. That's what makes such events spooky. Something both "real" and "unreal" is happening. Something, along with all of its emotive and psychological power, happens virtually. I do not mean "unreal" when I say "virtual" in this context, but rather, different, not him then. This instance of active imagining does not overcome loss, is not even an instance of Plastic Man reaching back to "then," but, *like* Plastic Man, the subject of the active imagination is subject to imaginary time and space. I then do not recognize me now, and I now do not recognize a palpable him then.

I do not understand him in many important ways. I now identify him (me), but my living event then is quite lost in its remembered moment. I lose him in recognizing him—like a cartoon, I said above. And I now, as I have noted, am utterly lost to him then. That is a lot of loss that figures in the memory. Returning to Derrida's last quoted phrase, I can say

that “I then” and “I now” are foreign to each other in the memorial event. In getting what came before there is a loss of recognition: in this memory there is a forgetting. If I believe I now recognize him *then*, I do not understand the memory. And if I believe that “I as a boy” recognizes me now, I now lose touch with myself in that experience. Only by knowing the losses and *in* the losses can I remember with some clarity of understanding.

And yet I believe that I recognize something about myself through this memory, and the losses that I have noted seem to be inherent in the recognition and memory. The combination of memory, recognition, and loss of events composes part of what this book is about.



Nonvoluntary memory, for the most part, is not about truth if by truth we mean accuracy and fact. Nor is the issue one of deceit, lying, or misapprehension. Memory occurs in so many ways other than a process of active, factual recall. We speak of genetic memory, its transmission of a past that reaches far beyond human kind. Racial memory; family memory; womb memory; suppressed and secret memories; lost memories; deep, unconscious cultural memories: the “work” of these kinds of memories has little to do with active recall. When we call up memories by imagining or by associations, when we look for the regions of mind that they seem to inhabit, something quite different from merely looking for mental objects occurs. Our looking already involves memories. We happen as memorial events as we function as agents that look for and find remembered things. Memory appears to be pervasive of the activity of looking for memories, pervasive of perceiving, and in no sense limited to looking for and perceiving objects. Mentation seems to belong to memory and memory to mind. Indeed, *mind* and *memory* might name the same “thing.” But whether or not they are identical, they are not separable in our language, and the limits of memories appear evasive, giving one a sense of infinity in their mutable manifestations, their lack of a clearly delineated region or “geography.”

Memory’s “truth” appears to be its manifestation, not its object or an aspect of its object. Memory seems to occur as the manifestation of things in their significance and meaning—to infuse their meaning and significance—in both their generality and particularity. In terror, for example, memory seems to function in an immediate, “animal” way as an overwhelming reminder of fragility and life-threat and as a nonreflective perception (recognition) of extreme danger and the importance of continuing to live. It is neither right nor wrong. It is sheer perception. Further, a sense

of happiness that is associated with the smell of salt in the air is neither right nor wrong, nor is fear of tunnels, love of flying, or attraction to light. But they are all manifest with and in nonvoluntary memory.

I would like to see the extent to which the phenomenological emphasis on appearing and manifestation can help in perceiving and interpreting memory. It is an emphasis that has its own dimension of memory that I will have occasion to consider. It is also an emphasis that will allow me to give disclosure and appearance a privileged place as we consider the truth of memory.

I find an unresolved tension between abstraction and concrete experience as I deal with memory. I can state this issue by saying that memory occurs as feelings, immediate states of mind, lost presence, and determinate senses of life. It happens in the ordinary occurrences of suffering, ecstasy, boredom, recognition of things as some *things*, a sense of identity or lack of it, anxiety, or serenity. Such occurrences do not happen as formulations in their movement and intensity. Abstraction, formulation, and all other kinds of representation have their own memorial dimensions. They too are memorial events. But they are often—I would say usually—different events from those that they address, signify, and understand (or misunderstand). The tension is found in this difference. I wish to underscore, and hence I repeat, that thinking, describing, and formulating are living events, uncircumscribably rich and diverse in their living histories and moments. They too belong to past and future events that they cannot encompass. But most of the time they are not the events that they address—unless thinking discloses with awareness its own memorial dimension and determination as it addresses a given subject matter. One could put emphasis on the limits of thinking, show what it cannot do, establish its finitude. But a further and distinct possibility, a performative one, occurs when thinking gives expression to “what” it cannot intend or “place” appropriately in a formulation. For now I wish to anticipate an effort of attention to what thinking and writing say nonvoluntarily as distinct to what they say representationally—an effort to let them intensify their memorial dimension by cultivation of alertness to thinking’s performative, living event, and thereby to sensitize my thinking to unrepresentable memorial events. Perhaps in thinking’s nonrepresentational aspect we can encounter occurrences without representation or abstraction.

This effort does not suggest that a thinking event is the same as what is thought about when we address another occurrence, and it does not sug-

gest that if we are alert in the memorial occurrences of thinking we will have immediate access to other memorial occurrences. It does suggest, however, that encounters with what is unrepresentable can occur with alertness and without a dominance of representation or reflection.

Nothing will be captured by the thinking and writing of this book. Rather than a system of memory that can be reproduced, I find memory's escape from systems and formulations: as I describe aspects of memory—especially nonvoluntary memory—the active memorial dimension of the descriptions as well as of what I describe will often elude me, show only a little of their differences as they withdraw from my determinations, and their withdrawal will make ill-advised the idea of their capture by thought or perception (or by words, categories, and systematic laws).

Memory in human life might be likened to a huge sponge in the sea, stretching the extent of the sea, pervaded by the sea, differentiated from the sea, and yet codeterminant with the sea of its "place" and the "water" that it absorbs.² But although something like this metaphor, memory is also not at all like this. Lost to its metaphors, lost to its determination, yet disclosive, passing, seemingly everywhere in human life: memory in its loss is the subject of this book.

One kind of movement that occurs in memory is the turning of one thing into another thing, a play of transformation with a carryover, a trace, of what is lost. The word *trace* for this kind of 'carryover' does not do justice to the turning movement that it names. Although one thing's signifying or symbolizing another is an important aspect of memory, I do not have that in mind now. As when love turns into hate, in one of the most astonishing experiences we can have, or equally astonishing, when hate turns to love, an event can turn into its opposite or into something else. There are occasions in which we can show what was the case—show in the probable sense that it is accessible to careful perception and mutual agreement by those who care to look or listen. I do not mean that the aspect of loss in a memorial event exhausts or adequately describes the event. I wish to emphasize, rather, that in memory radical transformations can occur and can be shown to occur, and those transformations are crucial for an understanding of memory. A little boy, for example, can turn in memory into a little girl, or a recorded touch on the cheek can transform in memory to a slap on the mouth. I believe that such transformations are common in dreams and in both voluntary and involuntary remembrance of things past, and often one is not sure when or whether the transformation takes place. It is as though new differentiations were continuously taking

place, making transformation available to whatever took place.³ With these shifts, a specific time can appear to alter in its specificity, bringing with the alteration degrees of disorientation, differences of perspective, a feeling that something unknown is arising out of the bygone event, as though a new future is occurring in the context of a mutated past-present event. One may simply and quietly be aware of being alert and present with the past in a way distinct to his or her awareness before the transformation took place.

The transformation, I shall say, is itself a memorial occurrence for the mind that experiences it. Such transformation shows memory as surely as the presentation of past things does, and it makes questionable any fixed identity that we give to memories as well as to "memory." This transformational fluidity makes questionable my use of the proper noun *memory*—another tension that I struggle with in this book.

This kind of transformation appears also in transferences of meaning from one situation to another. The misidentified 'Giotto' frescoes of Francis of Assisi in the Cathedral of San Francesco, for example, might carry in their attribution to a well-known artist the meanings of deception, regional competitiveness, desire for recognition, and avarice in the presentation of this saint of truth, divestiture of power, and self-sacrifice. Or the etchings of cruel events by Hogarth might carry the meaning of compassion in their commemoration of terrible acts. The therapist becomes the father, the father becomes the mother, the sea becomes the god, and the hero becomes a substitute for my weakness. Memories may also carry and fuse with other different memories and experiences by which memories are borne (and sometimes born) through transformations. And the newly met man might mean to me both father and mother and hero and devil all at once in a flashing complex of memorial associations. Consistency and literal accuracy do not have much value in the transformative dimensions of memories' happenings. Much can be lost in the creative transformations of memories.

Steeped as I am in these thoughts and their experiences of loss and creativity, I feel a sense of sadness and exhilaration at once. So much impermanence, so much dying and fading; the wonder of this man who died, now remembered, his incomparable life, his laughter and pettiness, his presence and density, his struggles and failures and courage, gone as though in a gust of wind, passing and over while I remember him. And yet—listen and look again. *Copyrighted Material*
He, there, smiling, beckoning, very present

with a faint scent of some flower—what was . . . what is that scent? Was it in the field on a spring day?

But there is a severity in these transformations that my nostalgic indulgence does not reach. The severity is found in the coming of memories as well as in their passage. Severity is found in the loss that invests their memorial return, in the loss of presence in the return of what was and now, transformed, is contemporary. It is like the severity of being in an accident, of being confronted by eminent and unavoidable danger, of losing the life of something important, of the futility of wanting “now” to last forever, or the severity of any other passing event. Events take place, make demands, and persist for a while. They are severe in the sense that they are quite singularly as *they* happen to pass, and in their occurrences they seem often to efface other bygone events whose meaning and images they carry. How are we to speak and think of them appropriately before the severity of their coming transformatively to pass? How do we measure the appropriateness of our response? How do events figure a forgetfulness of the other events that they present? How might we recognize and speak of the forgetting that appears to accompany memory? By means of awareness *in* the transformative memorial occurrences? A group of hypotheses of this book constitutes an affirmative answer to this last question.

I do not intend that the word *awareness* suggest a unitary consciousness. Awareness specific to a singular but complex situation is what I have in mind. This intention might not succeed. ‘Awareness’ might inevitably suggest something too encompassing, something too indebted to transcendental structures, too subjective. My effort will be to show that the “place” of remembrance and awareness is often found in events that are not in subjective actions or states, that memorial awareness is found in arrangements, institutions, rhythms of movement, and lineages of development. By showing that awareness is not necessarily an event that describes individual people, I wish to show that it is characterized by an unencompassable “quality,” by difference from an individual’s consciousness, and that part of its difference is found *in* events of loss and forgetting. *Indeterminate determination* is one experimental phrase I use in this attempt to describe some occurrences of awareness that accompany non-voluntary memories. The genealogical projects of Nietzsche, Foucault, and Derrida might help in this descriptive effort. We will see.

Like ‘awareness,’ ‘memory’ does not suggest one thing or a unitary phenomenon. It is not a same thing of which there are more or less dominant and subordinate parts—a hypothesis that my language will both sug-

gest and violate on many pages. We cannot say that memory as such "is." So what are the strategies, in the case of memory, to contrast the kind of identity and sameness that the word seems inevitably to suggest?

I am working toward an emphasis on singularity of awarenesses and memories. In addressing remembering and forgetting I will attempt to valorize such occurrences as gatherings and dispersions, differences in gatherings, differences of gatherings, gathering indifferences—differential gatherings—dividing in constituting, and constituting by differentiation. If this strategy succeeds, I will counteract by my language its own direction toward generalization in the descriptive processes. I do not know how else to proceed in order to speak about memory in "its" appearances, "its" multiplicity, "its" difference from an "it" or an "anything." That is part of what I am attempting to do by describing the play of losses in memorial presentations and in my effort to keep memory in mind in our encounters with legacies of mentation and experience. Memories are already "there" when we speak or think, not as an origin, but as inheritances, structures, associations, inevitabilities, possibilities, forms of enactment. Protean, fluid, in constant differential continuities and enablements—we do not seem able to step outside of memories as we speak of them, to bracket them or neutralize them. We seem to be in and through them. They are already "there," in their losses and appearances, stitching us together in a ghostly, changeable fabric of determinations, combinations, and regularities that carry—transfer—memory's nondetermination, a very strange 'already-being-there' that manifests a shadow of 'not there at all' and 'it was otherwise.' Memory I believe pushes us to this kind of language, not because 'it' is an essence, but because 'it' lacks essence in giving determinations. As I address memory's loss, and hence forgetting, I am thus addressing occurrences that are located in situations and that are not fully defined by their situational determinations. But their transcendence of their situations is found in the losses they figure and by a mutability that leaves them without an essence. If one overlooks the situatedness of even our most open events, however, one denies crucial aspects of those events and engenders ideals and language that embody destructively such denial. Even our deepest silences and most radical beginnings bear memories, some of which appear obliquely and faintly and some of which disappear in arousal of other memories. One of my primary contentions is that memory and its loss accompany all events to which we can refer in any way. 'Memory's loss' addresses occurrences of time—happens as timing—and indicates that 'timelessness' is as temporal, as saturated by memory and memory's loss, as

is any 'now,' any 'eternity,' any seeming indeterminacy. Loss of memory happens with memory as well as with a dimension of nondetermination; such loss composes a strange occurrence of forgetting and a withdrawal of events in the coming of events. There is no haven of pure loss—that would be death—or pure beginning which in its indeterminacy would be dead too.

This book proceeds in an ambiguous relation to psychology. I have not valorized psychoanalysis or any other therapeutic method of remembering, nor have I paid close attention to neurological accounts of memory. These strategic omissions do not indicate a lack of respect or appreciation. They indicate, rather, a different language and conceptuality from those of these disciplines. I also do not wish to engage in a deconstructive study that shows that these disciplines in fact are permeated by the complex kind of event I am calling "memory's loss." On another occasion efforts to find common ground for translation of the different conceptual grounds could be worthwhile. But not now.

However, I welcome the finitizing and singularizing occurrences that are peculiar to individuals and groups of individuals. I find it apparent that no act of mentation occurs without the direct influence of individual and social "histories." How such influences occur in situations that often have been interpreted in Western traditions as "pure," as free of all singular determinations, constitutes a recurring issue throughout this book. I suspect that the act of bracketing the unique "psychologies" of individuals in association with what they think and how they are able to think (and how they think they think) is an aspect in the production of the idea of transcendental consciousness, a production, I suspect, that carries blindly many inchoate feelings about loss, finitude, uncertainty, instability, and meaninglessness.

Knowledges of both psyche and logos are now in question, and I wish to make a turn toward rethinking such knowledges by considering genealogical thinking, first broadly and then in some of its particularities that are relevant for this study of memory and memory's loss. In this way, I hope to divide the importance of personal and cultural singularities from the dominant value of subjectivity and to allow a singular impact by singularities to engage the ways we understand such generalities as time, memory, and truth. I want to pay attention to ways in which we are ignited in awarenesses, not necessarily into a conflagration of ecstasy or rapture, but into recognitions, evaluations, and insights that are memorial events. It is as though 'we' are like embers, already alight in memories, and thereby

subject to burning brighter or to going out. It's a rough image, but perhaps it will lead to something brighter.

I imagine that usually there has been disagreement in Western culture over the question of whether the gods are (or a God is) actually present and if they are, whether they can be understood literally and directly or only indirectly through experiences—like gifts of fiery ecstasy—that cannot be communicated adequately by human speech. People are certainly able to experience passions so intensely that they feel “outside” of themselves, transported to dimensions of “reality” that seem far beyond the limits of ordinary, normal life. In such experiences they might think that they are not the subjects of memorial passions that take them into a reality that is vastly different from any that they otherwise know, that they undergo something that they cannot create or explain. Those kinds of interpretations can lead to all manner of religious or quasi-religious meanings that are attached to the experiences. Some people are overcome by inexplicable desire for another person, so overcome that they have neither justifications nor interpretations, but are drawn and driven by the other as though by a power that they do not own or control. Language becomes simpler then. People do not need the complications or subtle distinctions that theoretical language requires. They can state simply and directly that this is what happened: “I was so overcome by a passion so strong that everything in me was alive, drawn, transformed by this energy. There was only the experience. I was lost to everything else, completely without other thoughts, completely without distraction. I had never before felt so—ALIVE.” And that experience can be seen as free of determining memories, as composing something like a thoroughly mysterious participation in a “higher” reality or in another dimension when compared to everyday life. People are transported into ecstasies of love, sight, pure and simple conviction in which something transcendent speaks so unmistakably that normal language appears to be a source of mistake and unworthy of deep trust—as though these “spaces” and “times” were independent of the memories that compose them and make them very much a part of a culture, of an individual's identity, and of one's everyday life.

I could not write as I have in the last paragraph if I were a devotee of such experiences or if I believed that such experiences do not happen. I view them to be as moving and transforming as they can be deceptive and misleading. I think of them as normal under certain circumstances, as reasonably predictable in those circumstances, as utterly human and, in the light of this book's theme, as filled and determined with nonvoluntary

memories. Change the memories and the circumstances and possibilities change. Change circumstances and possibilities, and the meaning of the experiences change. But when we deal with nonvoluntary memories we *are* dealing with one of the most elusive, evanescent, and transcending aspects of human life, an aspect that effects and affects bodies, gives power and perception to ideas, and provides senses of reality that can be radically contradictory and hostile to each other. Memories and their syntheses give a sense of illusion in some experiences of reality and a sense of reality under some circumstances of illusion—as when a person in an extremity of fright remembers that he is not about to be abused by a remembered, angry, and powerful individual but is in a therapeutic setting that “holds” the frightful event with him. But we also might not be able to be sure about the edge between “reality” and “illusion” in memories’ occurrences. As reality occurs in memorial syntheses, even the idea of empirical occurrences is in question: the “empirical” might well be aborning in the memorial event, and what once seemed so utterly clear now is beginning to appear obscure in a new figuration that provides a different kind of real clarity. Memories’ seemingly infinite flexibility (because of their syntheses) gives most (I believe all) experiences to shimmer in nondetermination—in mere capacity for change—as they establish specific and indubitable events. It’s not that overwhelming experiences are wrong. It’s that they are overwhelming by virtue of very transitory, embodied memories, whether those memories arise out of an individual’s past or out of a culture’s memorial dimensions. They do not seem to merit the unquestioning certainty or the blind dedication that they can arouse. They can be worshipful if they do not destroy too much or take themselves with metaphysical certainty, but in most cases they become like tyrants or addictions that forget much in their spasms and inspirations of power or pleasure. Memories, on the other hand, with their apperceptive qualities—their alert ways of holding, by mutable syntheses, many things together and providing situations in which recognitions and other perceptions are possible—give experiences of transcendence to states of affairs. They embody processes of transformation and mutation and thereby add a dimension of transformability to any experience or occurrence of awareness. That transformability seems to me to compose, at times, a sense of transcendence and of a dimension radically different from situations in which people find themselves. This is a transcendence of evanescence that allows us to experience the memory-infused instability of any experience, no matter how rapturous or important it may appear. In the work of memories, one need only pause for a

while to allow other memories their arrival and displacement of those that had seemed so overwhelming and transfixing—"a while" might be a few hours, a few days, or a few years. We might well call such pausing 'memorial *phronesis*' in which an image of the flow of memories replaces images of "nonmemorial" substance and conditions for experience. Then a practical wisdom concerning memories' occurrences affirms the flow of recognitions and passions and displaces expectations for stasis without memorial synthesis and for a static transcendence of evanescence. This would be a practical wisdom that recognizes in all human events the power of memories and the irretrievable losses they carry, both of which give vital figurations in the depths and heights of awareness, sensuality, and affirmation. In this context, the book addresses apperception *in* memorial events, especially in nonvoluntary memorial events over which usually we exercise no immediate control.

I am writing this part of the book at some distance from city (or town) lights, and the range and brightness of the stars return to my experience with unusual force. I am impressed with the strange process of giving names to stars. They are so distant and other. When I look at them and do not think of their names—either Greek or contemporary names—I am surprised by the intensity of my astonishment in their lack of identity. I do not mean to suggest that my response is either appropriate or inappropriate, and I know that it has a history that goes back as far as I can remember, memory of being held by my mother, for example, wrapped in a blue blanket, in the middle of the night to see a lunar eclipse when I was very young, but also as far back as I can read in literary sources. Memories, both personal and cultural, are already there as I look up at the stars. But "we" know also that some of the lights I see in this clear atmosphere are from sources that have ceased to burn. They "are," "we" know, burned out, not glowing anymore, and the light I see started its traversal of space before *Homo sapiens* were on the earth—possibly before large mammals were on this planet, perhaps even before our solar system took shape. And we give them names such as—MI29476. I can see why, and I can see why our ancestors named them after other figures—such as Orion or Virgo or Draco. As a boy I was always pleased with the names the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper, rather than Big Bear and Little Bear, because the names reminded me of grandmother's house, the well, the bucket, the dippers, and the novelty of no faucets, the happy smell of the dipper and the freshness of the earth-cooled water in summer when it was hot. But here, now, the stars override their names and the associations that come with their

names. Their distance in the darkness is so immense, so singular and absolute. And some of “them” shine and are not “there.” I suppose I tame them to a degree by thinking that memories are like they are. I’m especially struck by their twinkling, which means intermittence of their light, and by the abstract knowledge, which sometimes seems more concrete than I “know” that it is, that some of “them” are not there anymore, but I still see “their” light. And I know that, while it is not now true but will be true at some distant time, Polaris, the North Star, by which we take our bearings, will not mark the north (although it will still shine for centuries). I also think of memories’ bearings and wonder how many still shine in the absence of their origin, burned out signals for knowledge of where we are, markers that will change and mark no longer a stability, light by now dead stars.⁴



Throughout the book I describe and refer to a variety of mythological figures. I find in these figures patterns of memories, experiences, and occurrences that have been exceptionally affective in our lineage. They are also helpful because in them connotations of universality are severely restricted. The mythological figures are diverse and complex in their historical developments and contexts and in their incorporation of events, as well as of many other local and regional figures. The divergence of many elements that define them allows them to figure highly complex and subtle happenings and dimensions of experience and to open up for us many strands of memory and perception in the fabric of our cultural inheritances. Their affectiveness, I repeat, is in their suggestive and disclosive powers, not in universal, narrative forces, and I refer to them heuristically and strategically, not in order to establish something substantive about the world, but rather in order to indicate memorial figurations of culture-forming perceptions and interpretations. In this study I take them as “embodiments” in images and texts—as comprising remembrances of determinate kinds of experiences. These remembrances are carried in part by the dispersed and ununified mythological presentation of the figures. These “presentations” have an illusive and shimmering quality. They are multilayered, frequently composed of opposing elements, held together at times by personae that seem whimsical and daunting in the force of their arbitrariness. Their presentations appear both fragile and compelling, not subject to the clarity of a system, and usually resistant to whatever defines them with objective rigor. Sensitivity to their presentations and their con-

tinuation in their complex and divergent identities are germane to the memorial events that are important for this particular writing. They give an opening to several of the questions that arise in this book. To attempt to nail down the origins of the mythological figures or to prove the superiority of one hypothesis over another or to elaborate or contrast the scholarship that makes possible these observations would be inappropriate here, since my intention is to allow these figures in their multiple, often divergent dimensions to help us along our way toward developing language and concepts that expose us to the loss of memory in memorial occurrences and also to expose us to a striking kind of occurrence in which lack of determination in some situations seems also to engender other determinations. As historical, mythological, and familiar in their strangeness, as both not literal and yet disclosive of perceptive, if often inchoate formations, they can indicate experiential directions and dimensions of ways in which things come to appear with us and to appear with more affectiveness at times than characterizes clearer and more manageable concepts. I am looking for a reciprocity among some of these figures and some of the concepts in this study—a region of interplay—that can intensify our alertness to occurrences of memory's loss and to images of 'what' is not an image.

In a word, these figures can enact a combination of contradictory elements—often radically contradictory elements—which occur simultaneously with each other in the figurations and which exclude or resist each other in their differential simultaneity. In such enactments each figure suggests multiple capacities and directions in which opposition, contradiction, or strong divergence takes place. These enactments compose losses by means of differentiations, losses of identity as one aspect composing a figure ceases to be itself and loses its movement and force at the border of its occurrence, loses its effectiveness and reach as one aspect comes to be dominated by another aspect. Apollo's aspect of order and proportion, for example, loses force and fades into the background of the force of his violence and pride as well as before his divination and dream aspects. The "whole" identity of these figures is riven by borders of "internal" differentiation and the losses that occur as one aspect or another exercises its power at the expense of other aspects. These losses are losses in the interstices of differences within the mythological figures, and the losses are embodied in the figures along with the positive power and meaning of these aspects. The figures' mythological enactments thus include considerably more than values and truths. They often include losses of the values and truths that they also enact. They perform losses of their own positive determina-

tions. Mnemosyne, for example, enacts in her figuration, as we shall see, events of presentation and the loss of presentation regarding bygone times. I shall say that the loss of recall is also a kind of memory, one that is to a degree describable, and one that accompanies the divergent elements that determine who these mythological figures are in their connection and differences with other figures.

Although these mythical figures usually do not play parts in contemporary rituals and thus do not compose ritual enactments, they carry in their figurations—in the very complex formations in which they are presented, textualized, and remembered—what we may call “genealogical memories,” memories that are embodied *in* the mythological figures. They can show, in addition to their own histories of formation, movements and forms of experience and perception that are deeply a part of our culture. Such mythological enactments can be found in the performances of our cultural activities and awareness. The play of determination and loss of determination, for example, that are found in both Dionysus and Mnemosyne may well carry and show not only something about Western experiences of tragedy and artistic memory but also something about a deep uncertainty in Western culture concerning clarity and oblivion.

The mythical gods were given a more focused and more unified presentation by Homer and Hesiod, who de-emphasized their multifarious, local significances. These limiting presentations in fact increase the genealogical importance of their multifaceted, submitted aspects within their dominant, unifying Olympian identities. Their poetic and political unification as Olympian figures nonetheless retained internal diversity within their personae, bringing to expression a persistent problematic of identity that marks our lineage and one that is germane to this study: Identity is found repeatedly in question by virtue of internal conflicts among incompatible or conflicting forces of memory. The unified figure manifests deep resistance to its own unification. It figures if not a war of differences at least a dynamic struggle of marginalized but nonetheless operative centripetal forces. Those forces are like memories of differences and differentiations in the appearance of established identities. They are affective in their differences from the dominant identity, differences that are “at work” in the constitutive whole. Apollo, for example, is rent by oppositions to the clarity of his shining order, rent by the dark and chaotic aspects of his own figuration and by the juxtaposition in his “identity” of promise and threat. Hermes carried aspects of both deceiver and guide. Mnemosyne carries in her memorial figuration a force of oblivion.

In this approach I thus understand these figures to show more than systems of explanation, classification, and order. They do show varieties of order, but they also show complex interplays of divergent aspects of experience, perception, and presentation. They constitute spacial figurations—regions—of identity and conflict in the forces of which our cultural world is in part manifest. They present aspects of perceptive awareness in our tradition which can be suggestive as we attempt to describe how the world comes to appear as it does. Those figures can suggest to us something about the complex enactments of conflict, question, nonresolution, undecidability, and differentiation in the memorial dimension of our language, thought, and practice, as well as suggest to us something about troubled orders, classifications, virtual presence, and established identities in our lineage. I emphasize their suggestive power. While I presuppose that they show us something about the constitutive elements in our cultural memories, I do not take them to prove anything. They rather show us aspects of our heritage, aspects that are uncovered and expressed more readily in art and story than in conceptual systems that are governed by traditional logics or mathematical formulations. They are closer to works of art than to informational networks. I do not wish to diminish the importance of traditional logic, mathematics, informational systems, or what we traditionally call “systematic philosophy.” I wish rather to point out also that the appearing of things happens in a dimension to which we find access in the special language and narration of myth, a dimension that can be, but need not be, experienced religiously and ritually. Mythical figures play an important disclosive part in our lineage, a part characterized by good and ill. They constitute figurative aspects of our historical existence, and they are especially important in their connections to their early, often Titanic lives as instances of ambiguity and conflict in which occur both nonvoluntary memory and loss of memory.

The art of mythological presentation is two-fold in this sense: on the one hand, mythical figures are extremely complex constructions that are like some works of art. They draw from many histories and cultures, and they are given established identity in one culture that is dominant in the “official” figure. Their forms and narratives carry forceful, effective traces of many differential aspects along with their primary meaning. On the other hand, they have, in their complexity, nonvoluntary power in forming peoples’ experiences and perception. In addition to their former and now largely dead ritualistic force, their influence is usually in usually unnoticed aspects of language, thought, and practice—in perceptive for-