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## *Blogging 9/11 and Memory Discourse*

by Maria Cristina Paganoni

There are 100,000 stories crisscrossing  
New York, Washington, and the world.  
(DeLillo 2001)

### STUDY DESIGN

Perceived as a major trauma and a turning point in the history of the US and the world, the 9/11 catastrophe provoked an “explosion of discourses” (Butt *et al.* 2004: 268) that found an unprecedented sounding board in the blogosphere, a phenomenon well summarized by the assertion that, “when the world changed on Sept. 11, 2001, the web changed with it” (Andrews 2006). Ten years later we may ask ourselves in what relationship the continuous flow of comments, disclosures and news updates published on 9/11-related blogs stands to the making of the history of the event and what followed it, from the emergence of the ‘war-on-terror’ rhetoric (Spivak 2004) to “the violent end to Osama bin-Laden’s violent life [...] bracketing 9/11 and today” (Frank 2011).

The 9/11 catastrophe turned blogs into a memorial practice, celebrating in a sense what has been defined as the emergence of cultural memory as a social phenomenon (Assmann 1992/1997), forcing us “to reconsider the relationship between historical imagination and the new memorial consciousness” (Klein 2000: 129). Not only is the number of blogs dealing with 9/11 impressive, but also the



different perspectives through which the collective tragedy is remembered and brought to bear on the present. Ranging from the victims site and memorial archives<sup>1</sup> to forums reinvestigating the attack and discussing the war on terror, from proponents to debunkers of conspiracy theories,<sup>2</sup> this polyphony of voices constitutes an ever expanding and hardly systematic network of discourses well emblemized by the following description retrievable on the British 9/11 Truth Campaign portal.

This forum currently hosted by [www.911forum.org.uk](http://www.911forum.org.uk) aims to provide access to discussion forums and other online media related to political, economic, social or military events arising from the so-called 'War on Terror'. The purpose of this forum is to provide a safe, respectful, positive space for discussion and information sharing. The forum is intended for the use of people who accept the need for a reinvestigation of 9/11 and the war on terror. Those who believe no new investigation is required should only post in the critics corner. The forum administrators are committed to a non-violent transformation of the world based on truth, justice, peace and unity. The forum is independent and not affiliated to any individual organisation, philosophy or worldview. It finds common cause with the truth, social justice, green and peace movements (*9/11, The Bigger Picture & the Quest for Truth*).

What the above quotation illustrates is that, rather than being confined to the past, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have become a point of departure to conduct an analysis of the present through the contribution of multiple voices that find in the Internet a space to aggregate new discourse communities. Dilating into fragmented recollections and comments rather than narrowing upon an authoritative version of the facts (Papi 1999; Klein 2000; Stamelman 2003), the logic of memory, which is "always transitory, notoriously unreliable, and haunted by forgetting, in short human and social" (Huyssen 2000: 38), follows different criteria from history writing. One of them is the possibility of sharing on the Internet and in real time thoughts and feelings produced and experienced by a large audience that co-constructs a much more comprehensive collective recital: "I share my story on this 9th anniversary not because it's unique but because it's but one of millions and millions of similar narratives of the day" (Levy 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> Funded by the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, the *911 Digital Archive* has collected a vast range of material, from video compilations to audio diaries.

<sup>2</sup> The charge of conspiracy theories is that the September 11 attacks were either permitted to proceed even though known about in advance, or were a false flag operation orchestrated by an organization with elements inside the United States government. Among believers in conspiracy, there is the *9/11 Truth Movement*, "the umbrella term for a coalition of individuals, based both in the US and abroad, who promote the belief that the US government was to some degree involved in orchestrating the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 in order to justify a subsequent course of action including the Iraq War and curtailing of civil liberties in the US" (Jones 2010: 360).



This co-construction of collective narratives is favoured by the format of the blog, a web-based genre that, having originated as a form of online diary, enables free self-expression and community development (Miller and Shepherd 2004).<sup>3</sup> Its frequently updated entries (or “posts”) are uploaded in reverse chronological order and are enriched with user feedback. Blogs thus include a multiplicity of views shared by a community within which – at least in theory – the blogger’s voice sounds much less conclusive than that of the mainstream media. In the case of memorialization practices, as has been seen, their peculiar sense of immediacy would appear to be felicitously enhanced by the correspondence with a rhetorical structure that focuses on what is fragmentary, polyphonic and shareable, an affinity which partially explains why blogs have become popular sites of collective memory. It should also be added at this point that conversation between multiple participants is not limited to blogs but can be extended to similar digital formats characterized by Web 2.0 interactivity. User feedback is now possible on discussion sites, such as forums, and also on online news sites, where news stories are regularly integrated with more informal reader comments, thanks to the so-called “blogging revolution” (Sullivan 2002) which has opened up an alternative to mainstream journalism.

In light of the above reflections, this article intends to pinpoint some of the salient linguistic and discursive patterns of 9/11 memorial narratives, as they have accumulated over a decade incorporating multiple perspectives and views from a variety of contexts. The aim of the analysis is to illustrate how the discursive “structuring of memory and temporality” (Huysen 2000: 25), dictated by the fear of forgetting a present hard to interpret, contributes to that excess of recollections that lies at the core of the instability and mutual competition of sources retrieved on the Internet (Soncini n.d.) and that might ultimately lead to a rethinking of the role of cultural memory as a contemporary social practice.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material here analyzed through a qualitative approach is composed of a selection of 9/11 related blog posts, comments and forum messages, retrieved on the websites listed below, each tagged as follows to convey an idea of its contents,

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<sup>3</sup> The diary-like quality of the genre is signalled by the name itself, the neologism *blog* being the short form of *weblog*, the conflation of the words ‘web’ and ‘log’, i.e. a nautical journal which records a ship’s progress at sea. A blog is “a log of thoughts and writing posted publicly on the World Wide Web” (Sullivan 2008).



*911Blogger* (conspiracy theory)  
*9/11 CitizensWatch* (conspiracy theory)  
*911forum.org.uk* (British 9/11 Truth Campaign)  
*911TruthNews* (American 9/11 Truth Movement)  
*911Truth.org* (American 9/11 Truth Movement)  
*George Washington's Blog* (citizen journalism)  
*N2Growth Blog* (corporate communication)  
*PBS.org* (Public Broadcasting Station)

The selection also includes a few online comment articles enriched with user feedback from a variety of news sites representing both mainstream and citizen journalism (*American Thinker*, *eastwickers*, *The Express Tribune*, *guardian.co.uk*, *The-Latest.com*, *time.com*), all three textual typologies – blogs, forum messages and online news – being characterized by interactivity. Finally, the awareness of major phenomena of interdiscursivity in the field of cultural production has led to the parallel investigation of other texts besides posts, messages and the online press, such as De Lillo's essay "In the Ruins of the Future" (2001), *the 9/11 Commission Report* (2004) and Obama's 2010 commemoration of the day as "a National Day of Service and Remembrance", on the basis of the meaningful analogies they show in terms of thematic content but also of similar recurrent rhetorical features.

These materials, heterogeneous as they are and collected over a deliberately ample timeframe, have been selected to provide a representative picture of how the post-9/11 discourse continues to reverberate at different levels of the collective memory. The database ranges over a time span that goes from 2001 to the present, with special attention devoted to the most recent comments on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the catastrophe, the controversies concerning the building of a mosque on Ground Zero and responses to bin Laden's death. Besides, as a frequent accusation in the 9/11 coverage is that of intentional omission of information on the part of both the US government and the mainstream media, the textual selection aims to represent other voices to include diverse political attitudes, ideological stances and insights coming from the grassroots level, as peculiar of civic journalism. The assumption underlying such a heterogeneous collection of texts and divergent views is that, rather than being taken as objective historical accounts, responses to 9/11 should be regarded as a veritable "counternarrative, shaped in part by rumour, fantasy and mystical reverberation" (Silverstone 2007: 66), through which symbolic resources are constantly modified and overwritten (Soncini n.d.).

While the methodology espoused to describe linguistic evidence (from lexis to grammar and sentence structure) is primarily that of Discourse Analysis, further insights are mutated from the literature on blogs (Miller and Shepherd 2004; Herring *et al.* 2005; Miller and Shepherd 2009) and a number of memory studies that



investigate the construction of narratives in the face of traumatic events (Huysen 2000; Klein 2003; Leudar and Nekvapil 2011).

### TEXT ANALYSIS

While historiography builds an interpretation of the past by critically scrutinizing different sources often remote in time, memory “projects an immediacy we feel has been lost from history” (Klein 2003: 129), being more of an antonym than a synonym of history. This sense of immediacy certainly applies to 9/11 memorialization practices, as a considerable part of blog posts is phrased as eyewitness testimonies or, at least, mentions involvement in the attacks in the form of direct experience. The peculiarity of this kind of participation framework, however, lies in the fact that, for the majority of participants, the experience of the event appeared to have been highly mediated (Hoskins 2006), since the act of seeing took place not by actual eyewitnessing but through repeated exposure to TV coverage and its framing of visual discourse (Chouliaraki 2004). 9/11 was watched by a “global public” (Fairclough 2006: 111), while the Internet was flooded with requests for information, exchanges of communication, uploaded videos and repeated hits, almost to the point of collapse,

1. I was in the 4th grade, yet I remember that day like it was yesterday. The day started out like any other. We lived in Hanau, Germany at the time, on an army base, my father is in the army. [...] Our neighbour from upstairs came bursting through our door screaming “turn it on turn it on!!” I remember my mom jumping up, clearly worried that our neighbour was going mental. But our neighbour grabbed the remote control off the table and turned on CNN. It was showing the towers falling (*PBS.org*, n.d.).

2. I was driving to my office when I heard a sketchy report of a “small plane” hitting the WTC. My thoughts raced. Some people from a neighboring business had set up a TV, and we all watched as the horror unfolded (*N2Growth Blog*, 11.9.2010).

3. When my husband was killed on the morning of 9/11, television stations around the world ran split-screen video. They showed the buildings still burning juxtaposed against young Arabs celebrating in the streets. That disturbing vision left me incredulous; it was forever emblazoned on my psyche (*911TruthNews*, 2.5.2011).

The above quotations, in which the private and the collective dimensions are intertwined, as typical of blogs, well illustrate how “to be traumatized is to be





possessed by an image or event" (Caruth 1995: 5), which was produced by TV coverage in most cases. In the words of the witnesses, the vision was quickly internalized as trauma, 'emblazoned' on the psyche, where it has remained as a non-effaceable flashbulb memory. Lexical intensification is reached through repetition of evocative adjectives like "indelible", "most memorable", "unforgettable", while the rhetoric of the incomprehensible spells the event as "indescribable", "unaccountable", "unbelievable", "unimaginable", "unprecedented", an "unspeakable horror" (Garzone and Santulli 2004: 359).

4. In New York, the FDNY, NYPD, the Port Authority, WTC employees and the building occupants themselves did their best to cope with the effects of an unimaginable catastrophe – unfolding furiously over a mere 102 minutes (9/11 Commission Report, 26.7.2004).

In the face of such a catastrophe, the number of victims and the courage of rescuers, the only possible response to the intensely visual horror of an indelible and ever-present past is offered by strategies of memorialization that work as a form of resistance against forgetfulness. The proactive stance of "productive remembering" (Huysen 2000: 37) is often explicitly signalled by the use of the modal will as a marker of futurity, especially in the recurrent refrain "I/We will never forget".

5. I will never forget the day the world changed after I heard the news. I ran to my apt and sat on the floor with a friend watching the coverage as my heart broke looking at the devastation (N2Growth Blog, 11.9.2010).

6. We will never forget the images of planes vanishing into buildings; of photos hung by the families of the missing (Obama's address, 11.9.2010).

As typical of exceptional traumatic experiences and the consequent urge to inscribe trauma into the symbolic by means of language to counteract the risk of oblivion, 9/11 oscillates between the unspeakable horror of the attacks and what can be expressed about them, in particular their inscription in the individual and collective consciousness through the metaphors of 'emblazoning', 'etching', 'marking' and 'searing' of the following quotations.

7. That part of the experience left an indelible mark on my soul (N2Growth Blog, 10.9.2010).

8. 9/11 will be etched in our hearts and minds forever (N2Growth Blog, 10.9.2010).



9. That image remains etched in my mind and heart (*N2Growth Blog*, 10.9.2010).

10. 9/11 has become a day that is etched in our collective memories (*N2Growth Blog*, 12.9.2010).

11. The passage of time will never diminish the pain and loss forever seared in the consciousness of our nation (Obama's address, 11.9.2010).

In the database here examined two recurrent topics have been found to receive special emphasis. The first is the exceptional character of the tragedy, a limit event after which things will never be the same again for the United States and the world (Fairclough 2006: 114). Marking "Time Zero" (Bousquet 2006: 739), i.e. a traumatic 'before' and an 'after' in the flow of memories and the history of the nation, 9/11 has disrupted master narratives, emerging as a turning point in the individual and national consciousness, respectively indexed by the use of *I*, *my* and *we* and *our*. The inclusive use of first-person plural personal pronouns and adjectives would also seem to indicate the rise of "forms of community (however fragile or contested) through processes of identification" (Luckhurst 2003: 35) in discourse that over time have also been translated into social praxis, as in the case of the 9/11 Truth Movement.

12. The events of September 11, 2001 evoke painful memories, tinged with a powerful nostalgia for the way of life before it happened (*911CitizensWatch*, 22.2.2006).

13. As the fifth anniversary of September 11 draws to a close, millions have reflected on just how much that day forever changed our country (*eastwickers*, 12.9.2006).

14. 9/11, the day the world stood still, was the day everything changed, when Muslims and the rest of the world went from a somewhat stable coexistence, to the current war-like state (Rashid, *The Express Tribune Blogs*, 14.11.2010).

15. It's a date that changed the world, prompting the ongoing war on terror and ushering in a decade of heightened security and increasing Islamophobia around the world (*time.com*, 7.12.2010).

Interwoven with the first one, the second dominant topic describes the shock at feeling attacked, mixed with fear, vulnerability and patriotism, a shock increased by the shattering of "the already precarious distinction between domestic space within a sovereign state, and more global space" (Hyndman 2003: 1).



16. After that moment... my life was lost... nothing would ever be the same for my family or me again... we thought we were under attack (*PBS.org*, n.d.).

17. It was then when the second plane flew over us and slammed into the south tower. The force of the blast knocked a couple of people standing with to the ground. That's when we all realized we were under attack (*911forum.org*, 26.10.2006).

18. It's been nine years since that horrific day on September 11, when America was attacked (*American Thinker*, 11.9.2010).

A. Kelly claims that "short-term post-9/11 discourse across the political spectrum was steeped in the vocabulary of the new and unprecedented" (2009: 55), while a recent analysis of Bush's and Blair's speeches immediately following the attacks has noticed that for both politicians history seems to begin with 9/11 in a more or less explicit obliteration of historical connections (Leudar and Nekvapil 2011). What is remarkable of the blogosphere is that this same exceptionalist rhetoric reverberates across the comments of ordinary people, as they also "do history in everyday activities" (Leudar and Nekvapil 2011: 68). Besides, despite the unique character of 9/11 that would seem to defy historical analogues, the attacks engender associations with prior catastrophic events in the national past, such as Pearl Harbor,<sup>4</sup> another act of aggression that resulted in a declaration of war and over time has become a recognizable media template (Hoskins 2006: 455), while "Ground Zero", i.e. the target point over which a bomb is exploded, is also remindful of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Stamelman 2003: 13), though the fact that in that case the United States was the aggressor remains obliterated as repressed memory.

However, even though things may be 'past', the constant ongoing discussion around stories brings them back into the present, as Hoskins makes clear: "it is to the present rather than to the past that memory is oriented" (2006: 464).

People do not just talk and write *about* the past. They also bring the past into their activities, by creating settings infused with history for those activities. In this respect, they are concurrently users and producers of histories. As history users, they relate contemporary activities to historical narratives available to a community and through doing this provide the activities with history-contingent meanings (Leudar and Nekvapil 2011: 68).

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<sup>4</sup> "This is the Pearl Harbor of terrorism" writes Walid Phares (*American Thinker*, 11/9/2008), while *TIME's* special report on the top ten unforgettable days narrates: "On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor suffered a surprise attack. The next day, the U.S. declared war on Japan, formally entering World War II. Marking the anniversary of the attack, *TIME* takes a look at dates stuck in the consciousness of world history" (*time.com*, 7/12/2010).



On account of its same inexplicability, the blogosphere has been flooded with multiple narratives that, taking the catastrophe as a point of departure, elaborate on a number of related events in search for an explanation. The fact that blogging has become a sort of talking cure can be ascribed to the fact that, “where trauma is characterized as a collective experience, accounts of the injurious collective experience are already manifest and made knowable through communicative and representational practice” (Pickering and Keightley 2009: 241), which explains the outburst of storytelling. Instead of being lost for words, 9/11 blogs strike readers exactly for the opposite characteristic, their tendency to expand, their multifarious nature and mutual competition of sources (Soncini n.d.) On the one hand, for example, we can find the *911stories* blog, run by families of the victims and invoking global peace rather than retaliation, as well as the *Memo Blog*, which contains news, discussion and information about the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, though not escaping the marketing of sentimentalized 9/11 memories deplored by Spivak (2004: 85). On the other, several blogs concentrate on conspiracy theories, from the cover-up of the attacks to an interpretation of 9/11 as a false-flag operation (dealt with on *9/11 CitizensWatch*, *9/11Truth.org*), which have been deployed “as one particular form of public response to those events and to an increasing sense of global contingency and risk regarding America’s place within a changing geopolitical landscape” (Jones 2010: 361).<sup>5</sup> Partly generated by what was perceived as the ambiguous role of the media in their coverage of the event owing to their reluctance to address the gaps and contradictions in the official explanations, the conspiratorial mode of thought stands as a consistent thematic thread across the 9/11 blogs representing,

a ‘knowledge-producing discourse’; that is a collection of statements, representations and practices which are drawn upon, articulated and performed across a range of subject positions and spatialities, ‘elite’ and ‘popular’, and within formal political institutions and everyday life, which promote a particular type of knowledge about the way the world functions (Jones 2010: 359).

The recurrent key word on conspiracy theory blogs is *truth*, a value-laden term which is antonymically contrasted with the “official story” (example 19), quite

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<sup>5</sup> On this point it is worth quoting a paragraph from a *Guardian* article: “The failings of the official investigation have fuelled too many half-baked conspiracy theories. Some of the 9/11 ‘truth’ groups promote speculative hypotheses, ignore innocent explanations, cite non-expert sources and jump to conclusions that are not proven by the known facts. They convert mere coincidence and circumstantial evidence into cast-iron proof. This is no way to debunk the obfuscations and evasions of the 9/11 report. But even amid the hype, some of these 9/11 groups raise valid and important questions that were never even considered, let alone answered, by the official investigation” (Thatchell 2007).



meaningfully labeled as “official lies” (example 20) and associated with hidden plans and plotting whose aim is to ‘manufacture’ the enemy “for worldwide military hegemony” (example 21).

19. It is time that the entire progressive movement come to the most sobering, horrific, yet vital realization we can imagine. It starts with the realization that the truth of the attacks of 9/11 is yet untold and unreported in any coherent fashion. The movement must come to terms with the obvious fact that simple logic defies the official story.

We can continue to struggle in fragments while avoiding the larger implications inherent in the notion that 9/11 was a self-inflicted terrorist attack with a manufactured enemy to blame it on (*9/11 CitizensWatch*, 19.1.2005).

20. TO EXPOSE the official lies and cover-up surrounding the events of September 11th, 2001 in a way that inspires the people to overcome denial and understand the truth; namely, that elements within the US government and covert policy apparatus must have orchestrated or participated in the execution of the attacks for these to have happened in the way that they did (*911Truth.org*, n.d.).

21. The Need for a “New Pearl Harbor”  
Principals in US foreign policy under the current Bush administration (including Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Perle and others) have been instrumental in developing long-running plans for worldwide military hegemony, including an invasion of the Middle East, dating back to the Ford, Reagan and Bush Sr. administrations. They reiterated these plans in the late 1990s as members of the “Project for a New American Century,” and stated a clear intent to invade Iraq for the purpose of “regime change”. After 9/11, they lost no time in their attempt to tie Iraq to the attacks (*911Truth.org*, 16.5.2006).

From the above comments we can see that the constant reinvention of the past or, rather, of “the many pasts” (Wodak and Richardson 2009: 231)<sup>6</sup> with the purpose of challenging official explanations tends to be the dominant characteristic of those blogs that do not focus exclusively on the memory of the terrorist attacks, but take 9/11 as a key moment to interrogate the present and problematize mainstream versions of facts.

22. A great deal of controversy has arisen about what was known about the movements and location of Osama bin Laden in the wake of his killing by US Special

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<sup>6</sup> “The many pasts, we claim, can never be entirely silenced; specific aspects, forgotten details, new information and new insights due to re/discovered information and historical sources trigger new debates” (Wodak and Richardson 2009: 231).



Forces on May 2 in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Questions about what intelligence agencies knew or didn't know about al-Qaeda activities go back some years (*911Blogger*, 23.5.2011)

In this type of argumentation two rhetorical strategies can be identified. One is the frequent use of questions to contest a univocal interpretation of events and, at the same time, advance speculative hypotheses dialectically, engaging the entire discourse community and ideally the nation itself in this process of self-scrutiny.

23. If bin Laden and his followers were merely a limited number of fanatics living in Afghan caves, as we were assured at the time, why did the Bush administration relentlessly advance the meme that a decades-long war was inevitable? Could not a concerted intelligence, law-enforcement, and diplomatic campaign, embracing all sovereign countries, have effectively shut down "al Qaeda" within a reasonable period of time – say, within the period it took to fight World War II between Pearl Harbor and the Japanese surrender? (*9/11 CitizensWatch*, 22.2.2006).

24. How did we *get here*? How did we get into the economic downturn, the Iraq war, the war on terror, spying and the loss of liberties, and the other problems? (*George Washington's Blog*, 7.5.2006).

A second linguistic strategy is the use of deontic constructions to emphasize the moral urgency to come to terms with the truth,

25. 9/11 Inquiry Must Be Re-Opened (*The-Latest.com*, 15.5.2006).

26. Some myths will have to be broken, and many realities must be unearthed (*American Thinker*, 11.8.2008).

27. What happened on 9/11 happened to all Americans. People should not lose that fact (*American Thinker*, 11.9.2010).

In terms of textual organization, while those blog posts written immediately after the event tend to be impressionistic and fragmentary owing to their attempt to convey a sense of immediate proximity and their inclusion of multiple eye-witness accounts, post-9/11 blog posts are longer, better articulated and address a number of political issues temporally subsequent to the catastrophe, but felt as related to it, from Afghanistan and Iraq to US national security issues and foreign policy in the aftermath of the catastrophe.



## CONCLUSION

The analysis here conducted on 9/11 related blog posts, forum messages and online news including user feedback, i.e. on a selection of polyphonic texts that have emerged with Web 2.0, has aimed to exemplify how memory narratives are constructed, facilitated and circulated on the Internet in the case of a traumatic event mediated at a global level. Besides, as blogging as a widespread collective habit was still burgeoning when 9/11 took place, the tragedy may also be taken as inaugurating new memory practices and aggregating emerging discourse communities linked by their direct participation in the public sphere debate.

The discursive universe that has developed since the 'Big Bang' of 9/11 and is still expanding is too wide to be mapped in its entirety in this analysis, but within the selected database this research has managed to identify a few recurring linguistic and discursive strategies that link trauma to the framing of memory narratives. Though traumatic loss would seem to lead to the failure of words and espouse a rhetoric of the unrepresentable, in actual fact collective memory as a social practice registers the opposite phenomenon, i.e. the outburst of a galaxy of fragmentary comments in which the trauma of the 9/11 attacks is primarily represented as a disturbing vision, globally mediated by the visual discourse of TV networks and then the Internet. Against the linear development of historiography this vision becomes inscribed into the psyche, as a shocking and definitive 'Time Zero' moment, marking a 'before' and an 'after' for memory and history. Defying the repression of painful mnemonic traces, the language of blogs, no matter how incoherent, stands as a veritable instance of a talking cure through which trauma can find access to the symbolic system and the risk of oblivion is overcome by the ethical imperative to remember.

Despite its immediacy and participatory character, the storytelling of memorialization practices remains ambiguous. Facilitated by the Internet environment and the more informal nature of blogs, the multiple versions of the past, subjective, emotional and vulnerable as they are (Soncini n.d.), become less reliable. In this analysis, an evident example of the somewhat disconcerting fictionalizing of facts is offered by conspiracy theory blogs and their incessant questioning of the official truth, a process in which the legitimate investigation of dubious events tends to forget the demands for some degree of objectivity, which is necessary to historiographic research. Finally, if such traumatic events as 9/11 and all the tragedies that took place in its aftermath owing to the war on terror indicate that remembering remains a moral imperative and a healing process, the excess of recollections and interpretations made possible by the digital environment simultaneously shows the richness but also the instability of memory in its coming to terms with history. By suggesting other ways of seeing and saying, memory narratives may enrich historical accounts, but not replace them.



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