

Thematic Issue (Spring 2027)
Stories We Remember, Identities We Construct:
Memory, Narrative, and the Making of Meaning

Memory is never simply a record of the past. It is an ongoing process through which individuals and collectives interpret experiences, construct identities, negotiate belonging, and make sense of the present. Through stories, narratives, metaphors, and everyday communicative practices, the past is selectively remembered, reinterpreted, and given meaning (Assmann, 2011; Erll, 2011). What is remembered, how it is narrated, and whose experiences are acknowledged or silenced all shape the ways people understand themselves, their communities, and the social worlds they inhabit (Assmann & Conrad 2011; Erll 2025).

Narrative provides a crucial link between memory and identity. Literary works, autobiographical accounts, oral histories, and cultural representations offer ways of preserving and reimagining individual and collective experiences. They can sustain shared memories, challenge dominant historical accounts, and make visible the tensions between personal recollection and collective understandings of the past (Assmann & Conrad, 2011; Erll, 2025). Memory, in this sense, is not a static repository of events but a dynamic and socially situated process through which identities are continually reconstructed.

These processes are equally relevant to organizational and professional life. Storytelling has a long-standing tradition in management and organization studies, where organizational stories have been examined as means through which members interpret experiences, transmit values, sustain organizational cultures, and construct collective identities (Czarniawska, 1997; Gabriel, 2000). Stories about organizational founders, significant events, crises, achievements, and transformations can establish a sense of continuity, legitimize authority, and provide frameworks for understanding organizational change (Walsh & Ungson, 1991; Gabriel, 2000). At the same time, organizational narratives may be contested, selectively remembered, or challenged by alternative accounts that reveal tensions between official histories and lived experiences (Boje, 1991; Humphreys & Brown, 2002).

Language and communication are central to these processes. Through narrative choices, linguistic strategies, rhetorical devices, and communicative practices, memories are framed and identities are positioned in relation to particular social, cultural, and institutional contexts (De

Fina, 2003; Bamberg, 1997). Linguistic perspectives can illuminate how speakers and writers construct accounts of the past, negotiate personal and collective identities, and establish credibility, affiliation, or distance (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Hyland, 2005). They can also reveal how memory and identity are mediated through multilingual communication, professional discourse, digital platforms, and interactions across cultural boundaries (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Cooren et al., 2014).

Bringing these perspectives into dialogue opens new possibilities for understanding the relationship between memory, storytelling, identity, and social life. It invites questions about how narratives connect individual experience with collective histories; how stories circulate across literary, cultural, organizational, and digital settings; how identities are sustained or transformed through acts of remembering and forgetting; and how language shapes the meanings attributed to the past. It also encourages critical reflection on the politics and ethics of storytelling, including the authority to narrate collective experiences, the exclusion of alternative memories, and the implications of representing the past for present and future identities.

This thematic issue of *Discourses on Culture* invites contributions that explore the intersections of memory, narrative, storytelling, identity, and discourse across diverse cultural, literary, organizational, professional, and social contexts. We welcome studies examining how stories shape individual and collective identities, how memories are constructed and communicated, and how narratives contribute to the reproduction or transformation of cultural meanings and social relations. We particularly encourage interdisciplinary contributions that bring literary and cultural approaches into dialogue with research on organizational storytelling, management communication, and language in social and professional life.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Memory and identity construction:** individual, collective, cultural, and organizational identities as shaped through remembering and forgetting.
- 2. Storytelling in organizations:** organizational narratives, shared histories, corporate stories, and the construction of collective identity.
- 3. Organizational memory and cultural continuity:** how stories transmit values, sustain organizational cultures, and shape understandings of organizational change.

4. **Leadership narratives and the past:** how leaders invoke history, shared experiences, founding stories, and collective memories to construct authority and legitimacy.
5. **Literature, memory, and identity:** literary representations of personal and collective memory, belonging, displacement, and identity transformation.
6. **Narrative, autobiography, and life stories:** how individuals make sense of their experiences and construct coherent or contested identities through retrospective accounts.
7. **Collective memory, history, and cultural representation:** the mediation of memory through literature, media, public discourse, and cultural practices.
8. **Language, narrative, and identity positioning:** linguistic and rhetorical strategies through which speakers and writers construct identities and interpret past experiences.
9. **Intercultural and transnational memory:** the circulation and transformation of memories across cultural, linguistic, and national boundaries.
10. **Digital storytelling and mediated memory:** the role of social media, digital archives, and AI-mediated practices in preserving, circulating, and transforming memories.

We invite contributions from scholars working in literary studies, cultural studies, memory studies, management and organization studies, leadership, organizational communication, applied linguistics, discourse studies, sociolinguistics, narrative studies, and related fields. Both conceptual and empirical papers are welcome.

We particularly welcome contributions that move beyond disciplinary boundaries to explore how memory and storytelling operate across different settings, and how insights from one field can enrich theoretical and methodological approaches in another. Papers that challenge established assumptions, develop new conceptual perspectives, or illuminate underexplored relationships between memory, identity, language, and organizational life are especially encouraged.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit manuscripts via the *Discourses on Culture* Editorial System and follow the journal's author guidelines. All submissions will undergo double-blind peer review.

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