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Tentative Title of Dissertation:
Re-Cognizing Memory and the Linear Illusion

Abstract:

As current events demonstrate, the question of how we remember, forget, and memorialize local, national, and global memory is a tense one. Traditional memory scholarship attempts to address this tension by assuming that memory operates on a simple, linear continuum: one which opposes remembering (good) and forgetting (bad). This project reveals how memory is more complex than this diagram supposes. It takes into consideration the problems with traditional conceptions of memory (for example, that remembering is inherently and always positive while forgetting is inherently and always negative) and argues that memory has a rhetorical capacity to operate as a complex set of forces in the world which are not reducible to questions of correctness or error. Catherine Malabou's *The New Wounded* and Bradford Vivian's *Public Forgetting* allow me to rethink memory as a plastic force: one which molds identities and forms bonds--while simultaneously breaking others. Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma* and Debra Hawhee's *Bodily Arts* allow me to question memory's bodily affects, forcing us to consider why traumatic memories are usually the ones we memorialize. Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* and Paul Ricoeur's *Memory, History, Forgetting* offer ways in which I re-think memory as a digital force: one which is composed with and through us. Memory is a set of forces that interacts with us. As a result of these interactions, it produces effects and consequences which are valuable but are often lost in the continuum.