Memory, Identity, and the Rhetoric of Quilts

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Abstract
Quilts have been documented as artifacts of past experiences and social circumstances, but the rhetorical aspects have been largely unexplored. In this study, I establish quilting as a form of knowledge about memory, one of the canons of rhetoric. This task requires a rhetorical framework of memory to accomplish its end.

In order to create a rhetorical framework for the study of memory, I examine preservative and generative memory as represented in women's quilts. Previous quilt studies have not addressed these two facets of memory, and previous memory studies have paid little or no attention to quilts. Additionally, this study will link memory to identity. The dominant term discovered through Kenneth Burke's pentadic analysis for identity will also be linked to memory study. Thus, this study links the concepts of memory and identity together and establishes quilts as an artifact for rhetorical study. In particular, this study demonstrates how the distinctive nature of memory generates new memories, preserves captured memories, and provides a powerful conceptual tool for the study of identity through quilts.

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Scholars warn that photography interrupts authentic, natural memory and overwrites it with artificial narratives fabricated second-hand. This article closely analyzes four photographers from the past half-century to support an argument that, contrary to recent anxieties, photography does not destroy personal memory but instead enables moments of self-encounter that allow for constructive identity-creation. “The Advent of Myself as Other” deconstructs a view of technology in opposition to the natural. Technologization of the aesthetic—it certainly sounds bad, it resonates with decay and the downfall of the soul. But what if, even as the soulful falls victim to the technical, the technical becomes ensouled?” Thomas Mann – “The World is Beautiful” (1928). Introduction

Memory is the fourth of the traditional five parts or canons of rhetoric—that which considers methods and devices to aid and improve the memory. Oral Memory and the Art of Memory: Orality and Literacy "Some distinctions between oral memory and the art of memory (the fourth canon in classical rhetoric) should be articulated in future studies on memory. Whereas oral memory is a conception for cultural oral traditions and, specifically, for oral epic traditions, the art of memory is a reconceived view of memory that was articulated by rhetoricians and was clearly influenced by the increased acceptance and use of literacy in Greek culture. Thus, Frances Yates’s seminal work, The Art of
Memory, begins with a rhetorical, not a poet