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Introduction

Theo Reeves-Evison and Mark Justin Rainey

When the French authorities commissioned a monument in Algiers in 1922, it is doubtful they would have anticipated that fifty years later it would stand in the same spot encased in concrete. The *Monument to the Dead of the First World War* was created by Paul Landowski and carried overt symbols of friendship and alliance between France and Algeria. In the period immediately following independence such friendship seemed undesirable, if not impossible, and the mayor of Algiers asked the modernist painter M'hamed Issiakhem to 'do something' about the monument. Issiakhem's solution was neither to destroy Landowski's work, nor simply replace it, but to preserve it within the interior of his own sculpture and give the end product a new title: *Monument to the Martyrs*. In 2012 a crack appeared in the surface of Issiakhem's sculpture and its contents threatened to emerge once again. The decision as to whether to remove the concrete casing altogether or smooth over the cracks prompted a public discussion that centred on the past and its representation in a postcolonial context.

The curious history of this monument highlights a number of features of the concept of repair that this special issue seeks to develop. As Freud pointed out in one of his *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, monuments are more than simply blocks of stone, or emblems of power – they also serve as 'mnemic symbols'.[1] These mnemic symbols are often erected in response to crises, catastrophes and otherwise traumatic events that hitherto lacked symbolic inscription, and in this light, Landowski's monument could already be considered a form of repair. Fifty years later this repair was seen to mask the true nature of colonial relations between the two countries and became a source of embarrassment for the nascent Algerian state. Issiakhem's response could therefore be seen as a second act of repair that took as its object the first repair by Landowski.

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[1] Sigmund Freud, 'Five Lectures on Psycho-analysis', in James Strachey, ed, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol 11, The Hogarth Press, London, 1957, pp 9–56, p 16. For Freud, through symbolisation, monuments allow for a group of people to both distance themselves from the trauma that affected them, and maintain a proximity to the events that generated it. In its dual role as a barrier to trauma and a proxy that allows for some form of contact with the past, the monument remains a static form of repair that in its typical guise has little to do with the kinds of repairs discussed in this special issue.

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It could also be seen as a gesture that left future generations the option to remove his sculpture, erase the original, or arrive at a hybrid mixture between the two – a proposition the artist Amina Menia has recently put forward – which would constitute a third repair in the remarkable history of the monument.[2] This is a history that teaches us a number of preliminary lessons about repair; that it constitutes a practice that is both material and symbolic, that it has the ability to absorb, reflect and redirect history's lines of force, and that, even when chiselled from stone or cast from concrete, the results of repair are on-going, rather than one-off solutions to breakages or crises.

The Temporality of Repair

In everyday usage the term 'repair' can mean to 'fix', 'mend', 'renovate' and 'restore'. Additionally, it can mean to 'have recourse to', or 'to return', as in the phrase 'repairing to'. Stretching across this web of synonyms lies a multitude of differences however, and only in attending to them does the specificity of repair come into focus.

In their most immediate senses, words such as 'restore' and 'renovate' suggest an attempt to recapture a previous state or condition. The kinds of interventions they describe are founded on ideals of what things *should* be like – ideals that are located in the past, but a past that is more often than not a phantasmatic projection from the present. Whether it concerns the past condition in the life of an object, a person, or a social group, in each case an ideal is held forth as a reified image that an intervention – the restoration or renovation itself – attempts to actualise in the present. If successful, it may not be apparent that an intervention has taken place at all, for renovation and restoration generally attempt to cover their tracks, subtracting themselves from an object as if the intervention had never occurred in the first place.[3] The etymological root of renovation is *novus* meaning 'new', and renovation implies a process of 'making new again'.

By contrast, one of repair's etymological links is to the Latin *parāre*, the idea of making ready, of preparing and producing. Like renovation and restoration, an act of repair also holds the future in its sights, but this future is not treated as the receptacle for an ideal situated in the past. Rather, it is a future held open to contingency, and the object of the repair is given the time to shape and be shaped by the ongoing consequences of the intervention. In this respect, repair invokes the potential for modification, transformation and creative addition that can render something operative in new ways.

Another relative of repair is replacement. While repair may bring forth a new, hybrid object, if it strays too far from the original one enters the domain of the replacement. A replacement substitutes that which can no longer be repaired (or that which nobody wishes to repair) and often entails the partial or total destruction of the old object. The motto for replacement is 'out with the old, in with the new', and it is perfectly at home in a consumer culture that idolises the new while simultaneously rejecting objects and experiences that bring about more fundamental transformation. In parts of Europe and North America the difference between repair and replacement has been thrown into sharp relief with the emergence of ‘repair cafés’ – spaces in which volunteers repair consumer items for free, or in exchange for other skills and services. While this movement serves as a vital corrective to some of the more wasteful habits that consumer capitalism encourages us to cultivate, they can also be seen as the formalisation of practices that occur by necessity in many parts of the world already, as discussed in Nandita Badami’s contribution to this special issue (summarised below).

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[2] A work by the artist Amina Menia, *Enclosed* (2012), uses this history of the monument as its point of departure. For this work Menia conducted visual research into the history of the monument and its makers, and produced sketches of possible designs based on a range of suggestions that incorporate elements from both monuments alongside new design elements. We are grateful to Amina for bringing the monument and its history to our attention.

[3] It was for this reason that John Ruskin dubbed the related practice of preservation 'a lie from start to finish'. Like restoration and renovation, in its mid-nineteenth-century manifestations, preservation involved manipulating historic objects without leaving traces of the processes that had been undertaken. Later on, preservationists such as James Marston Fitch set the precedent for architectural preservation that *does* reveal some of its processes. John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, London, 1849, p 180

Extricating repair from its synonyms allows us to return to Algiers with fresh eyes, for the difference between renovation/restoration, replacement and repair here trace forked paths in the life of the *Monument to the Martyrs*. Replacement would have entailed an act of iconoclasm towards Landowski’s memorial, a more or less ubiquitous outcome of the energy that revolutions discharge on public reminders of the conditions that lead to their emergence. Since this path was not taken, the predicament that arose from the fact that a crack had appeared invites us to attend to the tensions within the monument. Filling in the cracks in Issiakhem’s sculpture (the course of action eventually taken by the authorities) might have momentarily resolved these tensions, but it has once again put the original monument under erasure. This solution is a renovation, rather than a repair, insofar as it clings to an ideal of what the monument’s recent appearance should be. Another solution would have entailed the destruction of Issiakhem’s concrete addition, which one can assume was only ever intended as a temporary solution, and the full-scale renovation of the *Monument to the Dead of the First World War*. This would also have resolved the tensions between the two monuments, but it too would have harked back to an ideal object prior to Issiakhem’s symbolic and material addition. A third, genuinely reparative solution, and one proposed at the time by the artist Amina Menia, would have been to acknowledge the layered history of the monument by means of an addition, rather than direct attention towards one period of its history at the expense of others. It is fundamentally this aspect of repair as a creative addition that many of the articles in this special issue seek to emphasise.

More than simply semantic distinctions, the decisions that affect this monument show that the difference between repair and its synonyms represent distinct ethico-aesthetic attitudes, where a society’s ability to negotiate between a perceived obligation to the past and a projected vision of the future is also a decision as to whether to side with the purity and stasis of closure, or a messy plurality of open acts of becoming.

The Material Metaphor of Repair

In his 1967 *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Garfinkel exposes the diverse means by which speakers repair language in everyday conversation.[4] Through small-scale clarifications and refinements, partners in conversation patch up ambiguity through improvisational workings and reworkings of language that maintain smooth discursive functioning. Although drawn from an academic tradition not represented in this special issue, Garfinkel’s study is significant both insofar as it exposes the intersubjective nature of repair, and because it shifts emphasis from the material to the discursive.

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[4] Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1967

Indeed, in more recent work in the sociology of repair this shift to the discursive is seen as counterproductive insofar as it redirects attention away from the irreducible materiality of some repairs, for example those to workaday objects such as lighting fixtures and heating systems. Henke, for example, tries to lay equal emphasis on the repairs conducted on things and repairs conducted on and between people, showing that in the workplace they are 'connected parts of a larger repair required to re-establish … order'.[5]

A number of sociological studies have made valuable contributions to the burgeoning field of repair studies, often giving equal importance to repairs in/of discourse and the repairing of things; they do, however, leave room for a closer theorisation of the relationship between the two. Henke situates material and immaterial repairs as different elements within a larger network, but suggests that when applied to larger immaterial forms, such as 'social order', repair becomes a metaphor.[6] Given that a number of the articles in this special issue operate at this scale, applying the term repair to abstract nouns such as community or economy, or to specific post-conflict cultures, it is worth briefly pausing to reflect on the relationship between the material and the metaphorical.

Katherine Hayles provides us with a means to think through this relationship with her concept of 'material metaphors'.[7] As with any metaphor, there is a transfer of meaning implied in this concept. This is not, however, necessarily a transfer of meaning from one concept to another, following the typical understanding of metaphor. In Hayles's theorisation, it is possible for a concept, word or image to metaphorically relate to a material object or process. This argument appears in the context of a discussion of 'postprint' literature, in which digital technology is shown to materially condition the novel in new ways. Although this discussion is not ostensibly concerned with practices of repair, the concept of 'material metaphor' nevertheless has some utility in describing the mechanisms through which the term is here being deployed.

At its most basic level, metaphor is a concept that represents a transfer of sense from one referent to the next. To take a literary example, consider the famous Shakespearean phrase 'all the world's a stage', in which we are asked to transfer our understanding of the concept of 'stage' to that of the 'world'. More accurately, a metaphor conjoins the concepts of 'world' and 'stage' so that they become mutually imbricated, with one concept existing within the other. The concept of 'material metaphor' allows us to see that this process can also occur between a material artefact and a concept, image or any semiotic entity. Such is the mode through which the concept of repair could be said to operate. It allows the material to exist within the symbolic. Describing conversation as a repair is indeed a metaphorical use of the word, but it does not automatically follow that this somehow 'empties' the repair of the materials which condition it – for example, the movement of jaws or the vibrating of eardrums – or indeed prevents the conversation from having material effects. In this instance, instead of exposing the workings of repair *within* language, the focus is instead on specific arrangements of language as repair that have effects outside of language, if understood in a narrow sense.

Such is the dynamic exposed by Susan Best's article in this issue, which builds on the Kleinian material metaphor of reparation and its subsequent use in the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. For Klein, reparation represents a capacity to tolerate ambivalence rather than the return of an object to pristine condition. The object relation in question in Kleinian psychoanalytic theory is that between the infant and the mother's breast. As the theory goes, in the first months of its life, the infant oscillates between feelings of love and feelings of hate and greed for the mother, adopting what Klein terms a 'paranoid-schizoid' relation that is never fully overcome. Whether we can treat the breast here as a material metaphor is open to debate, but in the hands of Sedgwick and Best the concept of reparation it gives rise to becomes a fruitful way of understanding our relation to material objects. Best develops the psychoanalytical concept into an aesthetic category by turning to the Aboriginal Australian artist Judy Watson. Watson's series, *the holes in the land*, which is featured in Best's article, draws on Aboriginal objects stored in the British Museum. The series connects together the crafting of everyday Aboriginal objects, such as paddles and bags, with colonial practices of seizing and collecting objects for display or storage in Western museums. Yet for Best, Watson's attention to the aesthetic value of her work means that it retains an ambivalence that prevents it from being read as straightforward 'political art', insofar as the latter places ideological issues and the exposure of past and present wrongdoings over and above aesthetic concerns. As Best argues, Watson combines 'the softening and ameliorating powers of aesthetics with the registration of sharper and more difficult political points'. 'Reparative art' is built on this ambivalence between anger and love, loss and beauty and, in this respect, is not a redemptive or restorative practice, but rather one that honours the complexity of feeling that follows from the destructive events of colonialism, both psychical and social.

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[5] Christopher R Henke, 'The Mechanics of Workplace Order: Toward a Sociology of Repair', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 43, 2000, pp 55–81, p 61

[6] Towards the end of his essay, Henke asks 'What are the limits of "repair" *as a metaphor* for maintaining social order?' Henke, p 76 (authors' emphasis)

[7] N Katherine Hayles, *Writing Machines*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002, p 21

Infrastructures of Care; Care of Infrastructures

As well as opening the door to reflections on the relationships between matter and metaphor, existing literature drawn primarily from the fields of sociology and science and technology studies (STS) invites us to consider the effects of repair on networks of objects and actors. This does not simply expand the range of entities, from the material to the immaterial, that could be said to undergo repairs. It also expands the range upon which each individual repair could be said to operate. If the entities that undergo repairs are seen as existing in relational webs of entanglement, rather than as discrete objects, then a repair to one entity in this web may simultaneously enact a repair to several connected entities. In an article on the role of repair and maintenance in the modern city, Graham and Thrift formulate the problem in much the same way, arguing that as soon as we start to see repair as an illustration of 'the power of things to form a common material substrate… it becomes increasingly difficult to define what the "thing" is that is being maintained and repaired. Is it the thing itself, or the negotiated order that surrounds it, or some "larger" entity?'[8]

Even the most humble of repairs to a seemingly discrete object such as a photocopier takes place within a complex web of relations. Often it is only when things break down – when relationships collapse, technical objects malfunction, or historical traumas resurface – that the full infrastructure of which they are a part becomes visible. This infrastructure is sometimes literally hidden out of sight, 'sunk into other structures', as Susan Leigh Star puts it, as is the case with the material infrastructure that keeps petrol tanks full or toilets flushing.[9] Regular repairs to such infrastructures ensure that they remain in the background of our experiences, a background in which, all too often, the work of repair itself remains hidden.[10]

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[8] Stephen Graham and Nigel Thrift, 'Out of Order: Understanding Repair and Maintenance', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol 24, no 3, 2007, pp 1–25, p 4

Recognising that a repair might have effects that extend beyond the limits of the discrete object, person or relationship that is its direct focus does not, however, imply that the repair automatically has the same range itself. To return to our initial example, a physical repair to a monument might also serve as a partial repair to a social body of which it is a constituent part, or it might do the exact opposite. In some cases, one can imagine a discrete repair having an effect that actively damages other entities with which it is entangled – as is sometimes the case with software upgrades that patch deficiencies in specific programmes or operating systems while simultaneously rendering hardware temporarily or permanently unusable.

While repairs are not automatically distributed across the entire network of relations to which the direct object of repair belongs, there are certain actions that help the repair to spread. We could call these 'force multipliers' of repair – cultivated attitudes and practices that extend the range upon which an individual repair can be said to operate. Here practices of care become particularly significant. Discussions of care, primarily those rooted in a feminist tradition, become invaluable if we wish to think through the ethics of repair from a non-normative standpoint that emphasises interdependencies and cascading effects. In Fisher and Tronto's widely cited definition of care as 'everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our "world" so that we can live in it as well as possible', the word 'repair' already makes an appearance.[11] Fisher and Tronto's generic definition is useful for thinking through all manner of repairs, but for our purposes it needs to be expanded in two crucial respects.

Firstly, as Puig de la Bellacasa has pointed out, while Fisher and Tronto's definition is not limited to care *for* humans, the anthropocentric character of the 'we' it contains needs to be disrupted if care is not simply to be taken as a practice done exclusively *by* humans. The human is neither the radiating centre of the life-sustaining web, nor the end beneficiary of practices of care that ensure its maintenance. Instead, for Puig de la Bellacasa, care needs to be framed as 'everything that is done (rather than everything that "we" do) to maintain, continue, and repair "the world" so that all (rather than "we") can live in it as well as possible'.[12] Building on this insight, perhaps it is possible to cast repair in a similar light. Practices of repair do not operate solely on the basis of a bilateral relationship between an individual repairing subject and a discrete repaired object. They are distributed among networks of human and non-human actors. Their end beneficiaries may in some cases be limited to humans, or even limited to one individual, but more commonly the effects of a repair will be disseminated across a multiplicity of entities and agencies. In the context of environmental degradation, where humans are engaged in far fewer acts of repair than non-humans, the distributed and non-anthropocentric nature of repair becomes immediately apparent.

[9] Susan Leigh Star, 'The Ethnography of Infrastructure', *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol 43, no 3, 1999, pp 377–391, p 381

[10] The invisibility of repair is a recurring theme in some of the literature already cited, for example Henke, op cit; Thrift and Graham, op cit; but it also surfaces in work on repair and maintenance practices in the global south specifically, for example, Steven J Jackson, Alex Pompe and Gabriel Krieshok, 'Repair Worlds: Maintenance, Repair, and ICT for Development in Rural Namibia', *Proceedings of the ACM 2012 Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 2012, pp 107–116.

[11] Berenice Fisher and Joan C Tronto, 'Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring', in Emily K Abel and Margaret K Nelson, eds, *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1990, pp 35–62, p 40. The definition also features prominently in Joan C Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*, Routledge, New York, 1993

[12] María Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2017, p 3

The second modification to Fisher and Tronto's definition of care is less an extension of its parameters than a shift in emphasis. One of the principle merits of care ethics is its proponents' suspicion of ridged frameworks of moral obligation in favour of messy, often conflicted, relational practices that rarely provide clear instructions as to how care should be practised. To repurpose Donna Haraway's phrase, the imperative is to 'stay with the trouble'.[13] However, at least in *Moral Boundaries*, the degree to which this imperative is answered creatively is open to question. While Tronto does permit exceptions, among the human activities not typically viewed as constituting care she explicitly lists 'creative activity'.[14]

In line with our assertion that experimentation and creativity are, in many ways, what set repair apart from the more mimetic endeavours of renovation and restoration, it is worth repeating that repair here is understood as a set of practices that facilitate open-ended processes of change, rather than the maintenance of order that sustains nature-cultures as we currently know them. While repairs are only ever conducted on entities that already exist in the world, they nevertheless keep one eye fixed on the future. Here, Isabelle Stenger's notion of the 'care of the possible' is well placed to help us think through the creative ethics of repair, insofar as it invites us to engage in speculation as to what consequences – both positive and negative – a repair might have for this world and for future worlds.[15]

Armed with this reworked definition we are now in a position to qualify the assertion that care acts as a force multiplier for repair. This force is not relayed on circuits of care that have humans as their origin and end recipient, rather it cascades through the world in unpredictable ways, in multiple directions at the same time. Practices of care signify the mode with which a repair is implemented, and when a repair is 'careful' – which does not preclude it from being experimental – it sets in motion a chain of events that can have positive reparative effects on existing and future worlds.

In Maeve Brennan's contribution to this special issue we are introduced to a range of characters who live and work in eastern Lebanon. The article is part visual, part written meditation on the themes that animate it. The three main characters – a gatekeeper whose work is to protect roman temples in the area, an archaeological conservator who spends his days carefully piecing together fragments of pots, and a young mechanic always on the lookout for new car parts – each engage in practices of repair that display care towards their chosen objects. Moreover, and as Brennan points out, these characters all possess an expertise acquired more through physical proximity to objects than through a detached knowledge that captures them. If at first it might seem that the relationships of care and repair in the narrative are bilateral – between the conservator and his pots, the gatekeeper and his temple, the mechanic and his cars – the logic of their connection shows a web of interdependencies, a 'thick mesh of relational obligation',[16] that both extends to Brennan herself, who fosters close relationships of care with each of the subjects, and to a wider concern for the material and immaterial legacies of conflict in the region.

The desire to care for objects, in particular electronic devices, is all too often incompatible with the desire of those who profit from their manufacture and sale. In his contribution to this special issue, Scott Mitchell counters the dominant commercial strategies that exert control over product use with consumer practices of modification and repair. As these practices gain visibility and repeatability they establish alternative, collaborative and often highly inventive ways of using objects that challenge the orderings embedded in the commercial strategies of producers. Electronic objects, whether a hacked robotic toy or fan-modified computer game, become sites of struggle between manufacturers who want to maintain control over product use and consumers who remake and modify them to embody their own desires. As Mitchell details, copyright law means that this struggle is often weighted towards producers, some of whom have even threatened legal action against users who distribute repair manuals or share 'unofficial' ways to repair and modify devices, thereby limiting the creative possibilities of repair.

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[13] Donna J Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2016

[14] Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, op cit, p 104

[15] We are grateful to Simon Fleury for highlighting the relevance of Stengers's concept of the 'care of the possible'. See 'The Care of the Possible: Isabelle Stengers interviewed by Erik Bordeleau', *Scapegoat* 1, 2011, pp 12–27.

[16] Puig de la Bellacasa, op cit p 20

And yet, as Nandita Badami argues in her contribution, while recent narratives around the 'right to repair' have secured some legitimacy for practices of repair, this new-found legitimacy is not enjoyed universally. Badami exposes the perceived hierarchy that exists between advocates for the right to repair in the West and the practitioners of *jugaad* ('make-do', 'hack' or 'temporary solution') in India, a term that was quick to be mobilised by representatives of the 'formal' economy following the 2008 financial crash as both a solution and a problem to more systemic failures. As she contends, the latter do not have the privilege of articulating their freedom to repair in the language of rights, and as a consequence jugaad can be seen as a shared set of practices that exist before issues of legitimacy and legality come to bear on the relationship between people and objects.

'There is no Going Back': Between Memory and Representation

To understand repair as a set of practices that facilitate an open-ended process of change across a complex web of relations is not only relevant to material practices of repair, but also to concerns over the tensions between memory and representation, particularly as they relate to traumatic pasts and possible futures. In W G Sebald's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Emigrants*, the unnamed narrator receives a bundle of letters from the artist Max Ferber.[17] The ageing Ferber is still at work in his studio in a disused factory in Manchester when the narrator returns, after a long absence, to visit him. Ferber's technique of continually drawing figures with charcoal and then rubbing them out with a cloth has meant that layers of dust have accumulated, over the years, in mounds around the canvases in his studio. Like the narrator, Ferber is a German migrant to the city. Yet, while the narrator (based on Sebald himself) first arrived at the University of Manchester as a young researcher in the mid-1960s, Ferber's arrival to the city was much earlier and wrapped up in European anti-Semitism, the rise of the Nazi Party and the coming Holocaust. It is only late into their decades-long friendship that Ferber passes on the letters and tells of his experience fleeing

[17] W G Sebald, *The Emigrants*, Michael Hulse, trans, The Harvill Press, London, 1996

Munich for the UK as a teenager in 1939. The letters were written by Ferber's mother in the two years immediately before her death in 1941 and detail her life and childhood in a predominantly Jewish town in Bavaria, prior to the Holocaust. Like the gathering dust in the studio, the letters are an unsettling reminder of the past – a collection of memories that the narrator now has responsibility for. Although he is much younger than Ferber, these memories relate to a past that the narrator is already implicated in, as Tessa Morris-Suzuki might argue.[18] For Morris-Suzuki, 'implication' is something different from, and more far-reaching than, historical or legal responsibility. To be implicated is to have a profound connection to the past, not only as the beneficiary of the results of past actions, but also through being enmeshed in the structures, institutions and webs of ideas that are the products of history, formed in the greed and brutality of previous generations. While the narrator in *The Emigrants* comes from a later, postwar generation, he remains 'implicated' in Ferber's personal history and exile, and although he is compelled to retell the stories of Ferber and his family, he also recognises that it is impossible to ever 'do justice' to them.[19] It would be like redrawing each erased figure from the rubbings at the base of one of Ferber's canvases.

Sebald's novel gives expression to some of the tensions encountered in the interaction between memory and representation. In the act of writing out Ferber's memories there is neither a final, complete story that the narrator can work towards, nor is there a way of undoing the damage contained in those memories. As Zoë Vania Waxman argues, while a concept such as the Holocaust helps to organise memory and name historic atrocities, the magnitude and variety of experiences relating to the Holocaust make it resistant to any final narrativisation, whatever the mode of representation – museum, book, film or otherwise.[20] Alongside this, in the translation of memory into representation – or traumatic memory into narrative memory, to use Cathy Caruth's terminology – there is always the loss of the essential ineffability and incomprehensibility of what is remembered.[21] Individual memories and experiences can lose their particularity when they are incorporated into (or even excised from) more cohesive and organised narrations and representations, whether in the form of a novel or the wider collective memory of a social group, such as the 'shared' history of a nation state. For this reason, as Les Back writes, 'we must never stop telling stories and listening to stories'.[22] The task, which Sebald's narrator in *The Emigrants* takes up, is to pay memory and experience the courtesy of serious effort, to provide 'a guide to those things that are muted'.[23] Navigating these tensions is an act of repair, in the sense that we have been developing here. If, as we have argued, repair is closely attached to acts of care and the potential for modification and transformation, this not only necessitates an understanding of the different ways in which we are 'implicated' in the institutional, historical and relational structures that we inhabit, but also requires a recognition that any representation of this past must also coincide with a messy plurality of radically open and divergent experiences and memories.

In his landmark study on French national identity, Pierre Nora makes a distinction between 'memory' and 'history'.[24] Memory is a spontaneous and 'open dialectic of remembering and forgetting', rooted in concrete, but changing, gestures, spaces, images and objects, which operates, often unreflexively, across both the collective and the individual. History, on the other hand, as understood specifically in the context of national identity formation, is the conscious organisation of the past through the 'reconstruction' and 'representation' of what is no longer.[25] In certain respects Nora's distinction illuminates some of the differences between repair and its synonyms that we have discussed above, including renovation. While memory (or repair) remains in 'permanent evolution', maintaining a future open to contingency, history (or renovation) is locked into the pursuit of a new, cohesive and ideal formation based on a selective representation of the past. However, this loose mapping carries certain caveats as the polarisation of memory and history proposed by Nora is accompanied by the progressive domination of history over memory. When history begins to eclipse memory, as it does in Nora's account of national identity formation, what remains are 'sites of memory'. These are residual pockets of 'memorial consciousness' that operate on the border between the receding role of memory and the accelerating force of history and they can take material and non-material forms, including personal and national archives, national anniversaries, organised celebrations and the creation of monuments.[26] 'Sites of memory' exist, according to Nora's polemical assertion, because there are no longer any 'settings in which memory is a real part of everyday existence'.[27] They are sites, objects and events where the exhausted 'fund of memory' either becomes a petrified object of study or is moulded and consolidated into official heritage.[28] In this respect, visiting an archive would be a retreat into a repository of dormant memories that have lost their spontaneous and transformative force under the domination of history.

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[18] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History*, Verso, London, 2005, pp 24–27

[19] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, op cit, pp 230–231

[20] Zoë Vania Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, p 186

[21] Cathy Caruth, ed, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1995, p 154

[22] Les Back, *The Art of Listening*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p 163

[23] Ibid, p 153, p 166

[24] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Le Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations* 26, pp 7–24, p 8; Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, vol 1, Arthur Goldhammer, trans, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p 2

Taking issue with this binary and statist framing of memory, Michael Rothberg has instead proposed the alternative notion of 'knots of memory'.[29] 'Knots of memory' reasserts the transformative spontaneity of memory and recognises it to be an active and multi-directional force both within and beyond the imagined community of the nation state. Drawing on Paul Gilroy's meditation on the intersecting legacies of the Atlantic slave trade and the Holocaust in our understanding of 'diaspora' and the conflicted politics of the present, Rothberg argues that memory emerges and re-emerges in these encounters between diverse pasts and the agents and catalysts that accompany them.[30] Sebald's staging of an encounter between a German migrant and members of the Jewish diaspora in Manchester, UK, is an example of such 'knots of memory' that open 'yet to be created avenues'.[31] While Nora's work is useful in further articulating the tensions between memory and representation and their links to our understanding of repair, the role of memory, as Rothberg affirms and as contributions to this special issue indicate, is not so easily subdued and can reassert itself in transformative and critical ways.

While the relation between renovation and repair has provided one point of focus in understanding the tension between memory and representation, it is the relation between repair and reconciliation that becomes a key concern in Siona O'Connell's contribution to this issue. Turning to South Africa's post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), O'Connell argues that the TRC operated through a particularly narrow definition of human rights abuse that overlooked forms of apartheid oppression including forced removals, displacement and

[25] Nora, 'Between Memory and History', pp 8–9

[26] Ibid, p 12

[27] Nora, *Realms of Memory*, op cit, p 1

[28] Ibid p 7; Nora, *Realms of Memory*, op cit, 'Between Memory and History', p 12

[29] Michael Rothberg, 'Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de mémoire to Noeuds de mémoire', *Yale French Studies* 118/119, 2010, pp 3–12

[30] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Verso, London, 1993, pp 205–212; Rothberg, 'Between Memory and Memory', op cit, p 8

[31] Ibid, p 12

racialised poverty. Under the TRC, reconciliation was a selective forgetting and prescribed form of national remembering where certain experiences of apartheid were excluded at the expense of others.

O'Connell places her critique of 'reconciliation' within a deeply personal study of those forcibly removed from District 6 in late 1960s apartheid-era Cape Town. Through the use of family photographs – the closely held personal and visual archives of her own family and other residents – O'Connell details the ordinary lives of a community disrupted by forced removal, bulldozers and the racist clearance of central Cape Town for the arrival of new, white residents. For O'Connell, the wounds of forced removal are not easily healed, nor are the lives of those removed from District 6 easily reconciled to the present. Yet the photographs and testimonies offer something much more than Nora's notion of contained 'sites of memory'. These 'photographs of the oppressed', in O'Connell's words, demand a journey into lives lived after historical catastrophe and a recognition that once muted memories can resurface and testify to the trauma of the past and its continued existence in the present. 'There's no going back', as one former resident of District 6 states. Yet the images also become the springboard for an act of repair, in all its sorrow and loss, that speaks of a past that cannot be returned to and wounds that cannot be fully healed, but that still demands the reclamation of the silenced and disavowed margins and voices in history in order to consider new and alternative futures for South Africa.

In her contribution, Vikki Bell turns to the tasks of listening and storytelling in relation to those interred at the Chacabuco detention centre in Chile. A former nitrate mine, in the mid-1970s Chacabuco was transformed into an isolated prison camp as Augusto Pinochet consolidated his grip on power following a military coup in 1973. While the site now hosts a dilapidated museum whose main focus is the nitrate mine, with little overt reference to the prison, Vikki Bell's own visit led to encounters with former prisoners who began to share their memories of the place with accompanying stories of persecution, torture, resilience and survival. This included meeting one former prisoner who regularly returns to the site to repair and repaint a mural he had created while detained. For Bell, these stories affirm the uniqueness of each witness, at the same time as they relate to a collective, traumatic past. These memories and stories do not so much offer recovery or reconciliation, as they serve to provoke listeners into thinking how multiple pasts and experiences leave their traces in the present. To be 'implicated' in these stories, through their retelling, is not only to be conscious of the past and the structures we now inhabit, but also – to expand on Morris-Suzuki's use of the term – to reorientate ourselves to the future.

The Body and Repair

In the closing paragraphs of *The Wounded Storyteller*, Arthur W Frank turns to the autobiography of Dennis Kaye, a former logger from British Colombia who was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).[32] Kaye describes sitting immobile in his wheelchair, overlooking the Pacific coast as a shoal of herring appear below. A frenzy erupts as sea birds and orca gather to feed on the fish. Amid this pandemonium

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[32] Arthur W Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1995, pp 183–185; Dennis Kaye, *Laugh, I'd Thought I'd Die: My Life with ALS*, Viking, Toronto, 1993, p 260

Kaye saw 'harmony and balance'.[33] 'The sea was alive. The air was alive. And, sappy as it sounds,' he writes, 'I felt more alive than I had in years.'[34] The carnage Kaye witnessed at sea reflected the carnage taking place in his own body and by making this connection, according to Frank, he remained fully alive to his circumstances and condition, even to his own destruction. Kaye would eventually become a leading spokesperson for people with ALS. In Frank's words, Kaye is a 'wounded storyteller' because in recalling the feeding frenzy, 'Kaye both tells a *story*, and he discovers his own *story*.'[35] The figure of the 'wounded storyteller' does not just tell stories about illness, but also tells stories through illness – that is, through a 'wounded body'.[36] Recent scholarship in the medical humanities has built on a long-standing suspicion of Cartesian mind-body dualism in order to foreground the body as essential for understanding human experience. The 'lived-body' plays a crucial role in constituting how the world appears to us and its movements and comportment in the world generate meaning at the most foundational, even pre-conscious, level.[37] Illness, disease and wounding can drastically alter the body, constituting a fundamental change – 'from the bottom up' in the words of Darian Meacham – in how a person inhabits and experiences the world.[38] The sick or recovering body sets in motion the need for new stories to be told as the old stories, with their accompanying routines, assumptions and ways of inhabiting the world, are disrupted.[39] In their experience of illness, wounded storytellers become figures who learn to remake their world in the face of its disintegration, instigating new orientations and ways of being-in-the-world that are summoned by this experience but are not limited by it.

It can be said that the late British philosopher, Gillian Rose, is such a wounded storyteller. In *Love's Work*, Rose reflects on her experience with ovarian cancer and the ultimately unsuccessful treatment she underwent.[40] Rose describes her usual morning routines of cycling and swimming being suddenly disrupted by major surgery and the severe tiredness brought on by chemotherapy. She also reflects on periods of vitality between treatments and surgeries and how a close friend became uneasy around her and maintained a 'stifled affection' in response to her ordeal.[41] Yet, disruption occurs to routines that are not only social, but also deeply physical. As part of her cancer treatment Rose underwent a colostomy in which an artificial, surrogate anus was attached to her upper intestine. For Rose, this procedure was effectively an external re-siting of her excrement, bringing into the open a bodily routine that was otherwise internal and hidden. 'It hangs hot in a bag, flush with the abdomen, with the raised temperature of congealed life', she writes, adding that, 'this is to describe a new bodily function, not to redescribe the old'.[42] For Rose, the procedure necessitated a new relation to her body as well as a new way of describing and narrating this relation, which she eventually termed a 'colostomy ethnography'. Throughout these reflections Rose refers back to a major theme within her wider philosophy, the 'agon of living' – the constant bruising vulnerability of love and life – but this time refracted through the lens of sickness and the reworking of the physical routines of the body.[43] For the wounded storyteller, 'what is unmade stands to be remade'.[44] The boundaries between sickness and health, vitality and weakness and, ultimately, life and death blur and begin to weave together, each emerging and receding in turn.

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[33] Kaye, *Laugh, I'd Thought I'd Die*, op cit, p 260

[34] Ibid

[35] Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, op cit, p 184

[36] Ibid, p 2

[37] Darian Meacham, 'Introduction', in *Medicine and Society, New Perspectives in Continental Philosophy*, Darian Meacham, ed, Springer, Heidelberg, 2015, pp 1–11, p 4

[38] Meacham, 'Introduction', in *Medicine and Society*, op cit, p 4; Havi Carel, *Phenomenology of Illness*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016, p 4

[39] Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, op cit, p 2

[40] Gillian Rose, *Love's Work: A Reckoning with Life*, Schocken Books, New York, 1995, pp 70–99

[41] Ibid, p 84

[42] Ibid, p 88

[43] Ibid, p 71

[44] Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, op cit, p 172

In this special issue, Nadine Ehlers writes about the ‘precarity of repair’ in relation to the body. Her specific focus is on breast cancer and the promise of ‘wholeness’ and a ‘return to normal’ that is often attached to post-mastectomy breast reconstruction procedures. Moving away from certain feminist criticisms that view breast reconstruction as a form of gendered disciplining of the body, Ehlers suggests that while such procedures may be viewed as constraining and normalising, they may also produce unanticipated forms of renewal. In this respect, the ‘precarity of repair’ oscillates between control and closure and a future open to contingency and continued becoming. In the context of recovery, not only from serious illness, but also from major reconstructive surgical interventions, bodies are not merely ‘fixed’, but undergo continual, and often painful, revision and remaking. The promise of repair is rarely a finalised endeavour that leads to a return to wholeness, which is always and already a myth, but instead points towards an openness and a coming to terms with the fragility of the body and the potential for new ways of inhabiting the world.

Yet wounds and the narration of wounds are not limited to the context of illness and disease. As discussed in the previous section, they extend to experiences of communal trauma that connect the lives of people and social groups. In his provocative visual essay in this issue, the French-Algerian artist, Kader Attia, turns our attention to issues of colonialism and war, repaired objects and damaged bodies. In works such as *The Repair* (2012), *Untitled (Work on Memory 1)* (2017) and *Open Your Eyes* (2010), Attia juxtaposes images of French soldiers wounded in World War I with repaired or hybrid objects taken from colonial-era Africa and stored in Western museums. In doing so, he initiates contrasts and connections between the new, but rudimentary, techniques of surgical repair developed in the wake of World War I and repairs to everyday objects in continental Africa. Significantly, these hybrid objects, which range from Congolese fabric patched with French Vichy cloth to a sculpture from the Vili people with its eye repaired using a European button, were often consigned by museums to the vaults of their collections because they could not be easily categorised and were considered unsuitable for display. As Yasmin Gunaratnam writes, ‘in form and content, archives show us how power and morality have operated at different historical moments. And they always hold the traces – the “dust” – of their exclusions’.[45] For Attia, the placement of certain artefacts in storage relates to widely divergent understandings of the fundamental nature of repair itself. While the notion of repair in the Occident is oriented towards restoration and a pernicious ‘search for perfection’, in the non-Occidental world repair can give a different form to the broken object, ‘creating a new aesthetic vocabulary’. Here we once again encounter the ‘precarity of repair’, the oscillation between a desire for restoration and wholeness and acts of continued remaking, this time through objects wrapped up in colonial history placed in juxtaposition with damaged and wounded bodies.

Interstices

From the fissured concrete of a monument in Algiers to the ‘broken faces’ of soldiers who survived World War I, once mobilised, the concept of repair seems to be applicable to an unlimited range of objects and experiences. It ceases to be the occluded background of behaviours and technologies that ensure the smooth functioning of everyday life-worlds, and lurches into the foreground as an invaluable tool for posing questions in a range of disciplinary arenas.

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[45] Yasmin Gunaratnam, *Death and the Migrant: Bodies, Borders and Care*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013, p 34

It is the ubiquitous nature of repair that can be seen to inform Steven Jackson's notion of 'broken world thinking', which seeks to redirect some of the attention of new media and technology scholarship away from innovation and development and onto 'breakdown, dissolution, and change'.[46] As Jackson puts it, broken world thinking describes 'a fractal world, a centrifugal world, an always-almost-falling-apart world', but one that nevertheless serves as a layered background for processes of reconfiguration and reassembly.[47]

For Jackson, 'broken world thinking' is a means of disclosing an ontological state of the world. But it is also an epistemological vantage point that one might adopt in order to discern practices of repair more readily. In this second sense, 'broken world thinking' draws on the tradition of standpoint epistemology to help us recognise the way in which knowledge and perception are always already conditioned by the positions one occupies in the world. To this end, Jackson asks, 'Can the fixer know and see different things – indeed, different worlds – than the better-known figures of "designer" or "user"?'[48] Recognising how far another's knowledge and vision might extend beyond one's own is a step closer towards broadening the epistemic horizon of a world, to be sure, but this new horizon is also to some extent *produced* by a concerted effort to embed ourselves in the world differently. The 'world' of 'broken world thinking', then, represents more than the totality of organic and inorganic materials in a state of perpetual decay; it is simultaneously a world (or rather worlds) in the process of being produced by subtle shifts in orientation. This allows us to see that, more than simply epistemological, or ontological, the question of repair is also fundamentally ontogenetic, insofar as it concerns the means by which what only later comes to be regarded as objective knowledge facilitates the fabrication of the worlds we occupy.

It is in the link between the epistemological and the ontogenetic that the question of academic disciplines arises, for disciplines are nothing if not modes of knowing that disclose and simultaneously produce worlds. Established disciplinary arrangements – or what Knorr Cetina calls 'epistemic cultures' – are what allow certain practices to recede to the background while others gain prominence.[49] Until recently, in various disciplines repair seems to have fallen victim to invisibility, perhaps because as a concept it sits in an awkward 'in between' space that no one discipline can claim as its own.[50]

This serves to justify the unusually broad spectrum of disciplinary approaches covered within this special issue, but it also provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the spaces between them. In *Capitalist Sorcery*, Stengers deploys the concept of 'interstices' to consider the possibility 'of fabricating an intelligence of the heterogeneous as heterogeneous, where each term is the occasion for the other of experiencing his or her position a little differently'.[51] Significantly, for Stengers interstices are 'fabricated' rather than found. They constitute precarious, situated and temporary openings between majoritarian positions, or what she refers to as 'blocs'. And yet 'an interstice is defined neither against nor in relation to the bloc to which it nevertheless belongs'.[52] It calls forth practices that produce their own presence. This notion recalls one of the most strikingly beautiful examples of repair, ‘kintsugi’ (literally ‘golden join’) ceramics, which constitute a means of repairing broken pottery with a mixture of lacquer and powdered gold. The presence of the repair in this case shimmers with a presence that neither hides itself nor seeks to dominate. Here the join is not simply a gap between two fragments: it is elevated to the dignity of an aesthetic feature, sufficient to itself, while nevertheless inscribed in the appearance, history and future life of the pot to which it belongs.

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[46] Steven J Jackson, 'Rethinking Repair', in Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J Boczkowski, and Kirsten A Foot, eds, *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality and Society*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2014, pp 221–307, p 222

[47] Ibid

[48] Jackson, 'Rethinking Repair', op cit, p 229

[49] Karin Knorr Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1999

[50] This is perhaps why recent scholarship on repair has largely taken place in interdisciplinary fields such as Science and Technology Studies (see Jérôme Denis, Alessandro Mongili, David Pontille, eds, 2015, 'Maintenance & Repair in Science and Technology Studies', special issue, *Tecnoscienza* vol 6, no 2) and the intersection of philosophy, visual culture and political theory (see Lara Houston, Daniela K Rosner, Steven J Jackson, Jamie Allen, eds, 2017, 'R3pair Volume', special issue, *Continent*, vol 6, no 1, http://continentcontinent.cc/index.php/continent/issue/view/27, accessed 1 December 2017).

[51] Philippe Pignarre and Isabelle Stengers, *Capitalist Sorcery: Breaking the Spell*, Andrew Goffey, trans, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2011, pp 112–113

[52] Ibid, p 110

What we might call ‘repair studies’ describes a set of practices that seeks to operate in a similar manner, inscribing a golden join at the interstices between academic disciplines, building a precarious fabrication one layer at a time that enlarges our epistemic horizon. While practices of repair are themselves ubiquitous, repair studies has a presence that is neither generalisable nor exemplary. Each repair is different, and the abundance of individual, situated repairs elaborated within this special issue is intended to show the heterogeneity of repair practices. If any of them can be generalised, it is as points of departure from which other repairs might be explored, as passages to other in-between spaces, rather than as blocs to be measured against for fidelity or divergence.

Exploring such spaces is a matter of both ethics and aesthetics, as the title of the special issue implies. It entails keeping a lookout for practices of care and repair that often go unnoticed, of considering what is salvageable from a situation rather than succumbing to the temptation of a replacement, of holding heterogeneous fragments in relation without subsuming them under one majoritarian bloc, and of negotiating the tensions between the closure of wholeness and the openness of on-going acts of becoming.