

Prof. Dr. Stefan Horlacher

V The Concept of Memory in British Literature from the Middle Ages to the Present Wed (3) JAN 27

There is no identity without memory! But what is memory, and what is its function on an individual as well as collective and national level?

This lecture will focus on different notions of memory as presented in British literature from Geoffrey Chaucer (House of Fame) via Edmund Spenser (Fairie Queene), William Shakespeare (Henry V) and John Locke (Essay Concerning Human Understanding) to William Wordsworth (Memoria), E.M. Forster (Ansell) and Julian Barnes (England, England).

In addition to this vast spectrum of literary texts that give a survey of over 600 years of literary history, this lecture also functions as an introduction to the most important current concepts of memory, starting with Aristotle, Plato and Augustine, and leading all the way through to Jan and Aleida Assmann, Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Renate Lachmann and others. As a final step, we will discuss whether the very opposite of memory, the "art of forgetting", is not seriously underrated in our culture and thus should also be taken into account.

An extensive bibliography will be provided at the beginning of the term.