

Forgetting to Re-member: Politics of Amnesia and the
Reconstruction of Memory in *Eternal Sunshine of the
Spotless Mind*, *Everything Is Illuminated* and *Memento*

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Abstract

This essay aims to discuss the ideological aspects of memory loss as a reconstruction of personal and collective memory with reference to several Hollywood movies, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Memento* and *Everything Is Illuminated*. The essay explores the construction of memory within a network of power relations and the profound influence that the reproduction of memory has on the embodiment of personal identities. The unreliability of human memory has been a major issue in philosophical debates and works of art from early Greek philosophy to cyberpunk novels. Memory studies draw on a wide range of academic fields varying from neuroscience to political science, with an emphasis on prosthetic memories, identity and body politics, displaced cultural identities, and consumer culture. Often intermingled with collective narratives, memory is an ideological artifact or rather a form of language that can be institutionally manipulated or manufactured. The mass production of personal and collective memories further deprives human beings of control over their personal histories and identity constructions. In this regard, this article elaborates the formation, reinforcement, and reconstruction of memory in contemporary culture with particular references to the inclusion of hegemony, cultural politics, and identity politics in selected movies.

Keywords: memory, ideology, amnesia, prosthetic memory, *Memento*, *Everything Is Illuminated*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

In Plato's *Phaedrus*, god Theuth shows his inventions, the numbers and the letters, to King Thamus and praises the capacity of his inventions to make Egyptians wiser and improve their memory. King Thamus bitterly responds that, on the contrary, the inventions will cause forgetfulness