Displacement, Memory, and Cultural Consciousness

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The Faculty Seminar in the Humanities for 1998-99 will explore the production, disruption, and refabrication of "culture" through various projects of memory--e.g., aesthetic, historiographical, political, philosophical, medical. Our discussions will engage such broad questions as:

• How do individuals and communities (re)fashion themselves in the face of bereavement, dislocation, repression, and social transformation?
• How do memory and narratives of identity generate or obstruct each other?
• By what interactions of experience, ideology, and representation are structures of collectivity produced?
• How do differing accounts of "culture" affect consideration of social and discursive identities?

More specific topics for consideration might include: violence and cultural memory; diasporic figurations; "border-crossings," migrations, and translation; the rise of contrasting genres of remembrance and preservation since the Enlightenment (autobiography/memoir; travel narratives; the encyclopedia; psychoanalysis; philology; folklore/ethnography; documentary photography/film; the museum); functions of "the past" in constructions of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nation; competing discourses of historical consciousness in various modes of historiography, hermeneutics, and aesthetics, including the politics and poetics of 'counter' histories.