

an event but ultimately to rethink what we understand as ‘the past’. What possibilities are now available to *both* actors and analysts, if the past is no longer perceived as over, terminal and finite? What capacities do actors have to change the past – to change events that are presumed to have happened already? Can they alter the course of the future? The book demonstrates how events emerge and transform, how they inform dynamics of power and impact identities and how they remain unfinished. What Wagner-Pacifici does not do is actually answer the question, ‘*what is an event?*’ That task is left for the reader.

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Author biography

Alissa Boguslaw is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the New School for Social Research in New York. Her research addresses the indeterminable and irrational facets of social construction: questions of how meanings change, contexts shift and how to interpret the fleeting feelings of actors, particularly in the context of Kosovo.

Lucy Bond, Stef Craps, and Pieter Vermeulen (eds)

Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies. New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2017, 302 pp. \$140, ISBN 978-1-78533-300-2.

Reviewed by: Tanja Bosch, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*

Memory Unbound is a compilation of specially commissioned essays that explore various aspects of the transcultural and transnational circulation of memories. The volume sets out to make a contribution to a broad understanding of the dynamics of memory in theory and practice, focusing on what the editors describe as ‘the four most salient dimensions of the mobility of memory: its transcultural, transgenerational, transmedial, and transdisciplinary drift’ (p. 2). These four dimensions have previously only been studied in isolation, but this compilation presents an integrated account, combining contributions of emerging voices with more established researchers in the field. The editors argue that memory studies needs new methods to track this relatively new and emergent field.

While the field of memory studies may be relatively new, it has undergone many changes since its inception. Memory studies is a multidisciplinary field which combines intellectual strands from

anthropology, education, literature, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology, among others. It is a multidisciplinary field that began with a focus on individual memory, then later expanded its focus to include dimensions of social memory and the politics of public remembering, especially those channelled through mass communications. Scholars working in the field of memory studies have published across a range of disciplines.

The volume is divided into four sections, each containing three chapters and prefaced by an introduction by the editors. Part I, Transcultural Memory, explores the ‘transmission, circulation, mediation and reception of memory between and beyond ethnic, cultural, or national groups’ (p. 3). The chapters in this first section explore commemorative practices and their role in creating imagined communities. Max Silverman discusses the film *Je Veux Voir* (2008) and the novel *L’Empreinte de l’ange* (1998), selecting these two works as representations of encounters ‘with the other that disperses memory across time, space, the individual, and the collective’ (p. 30). Silverman argues that the transcultural encounters in these works are constitutive of the creative act of memory, and that they foreground ‘the ethics and aesthetics of staging as crucial aspects of transcultural memory processes’ (p. 30). In Chapter 2, Rosanne Kennedy uses the documentary film *The Act of Killing* as a case study to analyse the discourses and networks that enable the memory of a ‘forgotten genocide’ (p. 47), the mass killings of suspected communists in Indonesia in 1965–1966. In Chapter 3, Aleida Assmann explores transnational memory and the construction of history through mass media. Assmann argues that looking beyond the borders of nations is not an entirely new approach, but that the focus on transnational memory is more specific, and that the term ‘is deployed not only as a descriptive tool but also as a prescriptive term that carries a set of normative implications’ (p. 66). Transnational memory does not negate the past but stimulates new perspectives on the cultural contexts in which memories are selected, constructed and selected, and thus carries potential for memory studies.

Part II, Transgenerational Memory, focuses on the dynamics around the intergenerational transmission of memory, for example, the relationships between descendants of survivors and the traumatic past which they have not directly experienced. In Chapter 4, ‘The Unclaimed Legacy of the Romanian Holocaust’, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer explore the poems of Sonja Jaslowitz, written in German, Romanian, and French in the ghettos and camps of Transnistria, and how such artistic works invite us to think about how ‘historical narratives inflected by artistic accounts can become modes of repair’ (p. 100). Chapter 5, ‘Fictions of Generational Memory’ by Astrid Erll, analyses Caryl Phillips’s *In the Falling Snow* as an example of how contemporary literature, and in this case Black British writing, contains reflection on issues of generation and memory. In Chapter 6, the book shifts towards social media, with Joyce van de Bildt exploring the uses of Facebook for examining collective memory, focusing specifically on Facebook pages dedicated to the late Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. This chapter raises interesting questions about the power of social media for collective memory, and Facebook as a platform for communicative memory and as a storage site for cultural memory. It also discusses the opportunities and limitations of tracking trends of nostalgia and other types of memory on social media.

Part III, Transmedial Memory, highlights the idea that individual and shared memories are always mediated. This section of the book begins in Chapter 7 with José van Dijck continuing the reflection on Facebook, exploring the platform as a means for shaping personal and social memory and analysing

how users struggle with platforms to control their personal online manifestation – a process that is played out at the level of the interface. Users deploy social network services for several purposes, and over the years, they have adapted their strategies in online presentation as platforms changed their functionalities. (p. 151)

This chapter raises several key questions about human agency in digital environments, about the performativity of memory and about the relationship between memory and personal identity, which are also discussed at various other points in the volume. The mass media plays a key role in the constitution of memory, and these chapters provide a valuable contribution to the emerging literature in this area, particularly with their focus on social media sites and their potential role as virtual sites of memory.

In Chapter 8, 'Embodiments of Memory', Amanda Lagerkvist contends that 'memory technologies are enmeshed in our bodies, while our embodied selves and memory traces are embedded in the technologized everyday within our so-called culture of connectivity' (p. 173). In this meta-reflexive essay, Lagerkvist argues that the field of media memory studies needs to be embodied and that 'without an embodied sense of self [...] there is a risk that digital memory studies will end up ridding us both of agency and of the ability to pursue the profound conditions of our life-world' (p. 176). Chapter 9 is titled 'Metaphorical Memories of the Medieval Crusades after 9/11', and here Brian Johnsrud explores how in 'times of crisis, comparative historical thinking provides a way for individuals and groups to construct narratives capable of placing the past in a relational dialogue with the present and future' (p. 196). This essay explores the notion that the events of 9/11 and the War on Terror could be perceived as a new Crusade, and explores how metaphorical memories of the Crusades persisted after 2001, with an increase in metaphors linking the Crusades with modern conflict. Johnsrud analyses how academic condemnation of such comparisons has marginalized them. The chapter explores how 'the social and communicative functions of contemporary metaphors and metaphorical language have the capacity to breathe new life into seemingly "dead" histories' (p. 197).

Part IV of the volume, *Transdisciplinary Memory*, contains several chapters organized around this theme. Chapter 10, 'The Agency of Memory Objects', contains an essay by Frauke Wigand in which he explores the memory boom in South Africa since the fall of apartheid. The chapter focuses on a photographic exhibition of Soweto, examining the 'increasing mobility of memory objects at sites of memory', scrutinizing 'their mediation in yet new memories, as tourist souvenirs, through a transdisciplinary approach that introduces actor-network theory to the established methodologies of memory studies' (p. 222). This chapter explores how cultural memory is formed through people's appropriation of objects and sites and other memory texts, and shows how these new interpretations 'feed back into the life and materiality of memories and thereby change the remembrance of, for example, the antiapartheid liberation struggle or postcolonial Africa in transnational discourses' (p. 223).

Chapter 11, 'Cultural Memory Studies in the Epoch of the Anthropocene' by Richard Crownshaw, looks at the geological epoch marked by anthropogenic climate change and explores what role cultural memory studies could play in this epoch. It examines the cultural memories staged by the American novelist James Kunstler, whose trilogy of novels explores a post-oil world after war in the Middle East. In Chapter 12, the final chapter in this volume, Jessica Young points out that the development and analysis of a methodology to study material collected by digital media are still in the early stages, and explores tools which the interdisciplinary field of digital humanities can contribute to the study of personal stories collected in user-generated digital memory archives. Young uses the case study of personal responses collected by the September 11 Digital Archive and the method of Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modelling, a form of statistical analysis, to identify trends within the digital archive. She argues that

topic modeling allows memory scholars to examine how certain topics capture the imagination of responders at certain points in time and how they emerge and evolve to reflect the needs of a changing present, thus turning the mass of digital memorial data into a meaningful engagement with collective memory. (p. 259)

The volume provides a comprehensive examination of the field of memory studies, from a range of disciplines and approaches and using global case studies. The dynamic compilation of essays is attentive to shifts in the field towards interdisciplinarity and provides a nuanced account of the dynamics of memory across various contexts. Central to the volume is the notion that memory studies must adapt its methods to reflect the changing context of the global age and its accompanying social and political challenges. Moreover, the volume argues, this methodological work ‘must remain sensitive to the inequitable distribution of power and resources and the role that memorative discourses may play in ongoing struggles for justice, equality and varying forms of (political, cultural or juridical) representation’ (p. 21). This volume of essays is a significant contribution to the field as it provides a critical understanding of memory across media and disciplines, and will be of interest to a wide range of scholars working in the field of memory studies.

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Monika Palmberger and Jelena Tošić (eds)

Memories on the Move: Experiencing Mobility, Rethinking the Past. London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 293 pp. \$139.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-137-57549-4.

Reviewed by: Simone Benazzo, *Independent Researcher, Italy*

Memories on the Move, edited by Palmberger and Tošić, aims at questioning the ‘sedentarist bias’ (see Malkki, 1992) of memory studies. It focuses on the interrelation between memory and movement, on the effects that experiences of plight, exodus, and forced exile have within individuals’ biographies. The research object – the ‘transnational making of memory’ (p. 256) – is dynamic, and the book indeed adopts a transnational perspective. As the authors put it, ‘remembering – as well as forgetting, or amnesia – is actually a constitutive part of movement’ (p. 2). Palmberger and Tošić refrain from ‘conceptualizing memory or memories as being temporally located before and after mobility’, and choose to concentrate on ‘the mutual constitution of remembering and movement’ (p. 2).

Overall, the volume delivers two key messages. First, memory is multilayered; it can dwell in more than one place at the same time. As with refugees or migrants, no competition takes place between the nostalgic feeling for the abandoned motherland and the new sense of belonging to the country that has hosted them temporarily or that gradually accepted them as full-blown citizens. Second, this book questions the understanding of memory as homogeneous among different groups. Difference is implied in the process of remembering: members of the same family, national community, or refugee camp recollect the same events differently, since these events affected them in non-identical ways.

The choice of presenting only detailed ethnographic cases resonates suitably with the declared goal of challenging established assumptions about memory being linked to determined spaces. Micro-social qualitative analyses, considering a very limited number of individuals (four migrant women, a family, two refugees), enable the researcher to observe how values and ideas are concretely put in place and actualized, and how memory works in practice. As a result, this publication may interest not only anthropologists, political scientists and historians dealing with migration studies but also practitioners who interact with migrants and refugees in their everyday work. Hopefully, this volume may facilitate communication between policymakers and asylum seekers,