

## **Transnational Memory**

# **Media and Cultural Memory/ Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung**

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## **Volume 19**

# Transnational Memory



Circulation, Articulation, Scales

Edited by  
Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney

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Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney



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## Introduction

### Beyond methodological nationalism

By now there is a vast literature demonstrating how collective memory is crucial for identity formation and how, particularly in the modern period, the self-reflexive cultivation of the past has played into the formation of imagined communities (Anderson 1991; Assmann 1995). A large proportion of this scholarship has been governed, however, like so much social science and humanities research, by a methodological nationalism that posits the nation as “the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; see also Beck 2000). In the case of memory studies, this has meant assuming that the nation-state is the natural container, curator, and telos of collective memory. This book offers an alternative approach.

The primacy of the national frame is not in itself surprising, of course, given the co-emergence of nationalism and historicism in the nineteenth century, and the subsequent importance of heritage, canonicity, narratives of liberation, and commemorative rituals to the very working and legitimization of the modern nation-state (Gillis 1994), which in turn provided the blueprint for emerging research taxonomies. Memory institutions and the cultivation of the past have been cornerstones of ethnic nationalism in line with the principle that nations are “grand solidarities” based both on a commitment to a shared future and identification with a shared past (Renan 1882). The intensification of interest in memory and the emergence of memory studies in the last decades have most often been explained by a crisis of remembrance occasioned by the horrors of WWII, decolonization, and the growth of identity politics (see Olick et al. 2012). It should also be tied, however, to an increasing awareness of nationalism as a specifically historical formation based on a questionable congruence between cultural, political, and territorial borders that was articulated through the cultivation of the past. The imagined community constitutive of modern ‘nationalized’ France, for example, as Pierre Nora’s influential *Lieux de mémoire* (1984–1992) argued, was shaped around the shared knowledge of a limited number of highly invested and highly mediated memory sites that served as common points of reference across the national territory. A quarter of a century after its first publication, Nora’s project and the comparable work it inspired in other countries now appears in a double

light: on the one hand, as the production of a new canon as a way of bulwarking (ethnocentric and racialized) national traditions in face of postcolonial diversity (see Rothberg 2010; Stoler 2011); on the other hand, as a symptom of an emerging ‘post-national’ awareness of the contingency of nationalism. In retrospect, it can be seen that Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *Invention of Tradition* (1983) and Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983), appearing just a year earlier, were dancing to the same intellectual tune.

Thirty years on, the time is ripe to move memory studies itself beyond methodological nationalism. Globalized communication and time-space compression, post-coloniality, transnational capitalism, large-scale migration, and regional integration: all of these mean that national frames are no longer the self-evident ones they used to be in daily life and identity formation. As a result, the national has also ceased to be the inevitable or preeminent scale for the study of collective remembrance. By now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, it has become a matter of urgency for scholars in the field of memory studies to develop new theoretical frameworks, invent new methodological tools, and identify new sites and archival resources for studying collective remembrance beyond the nation-state. Building on emerging discussions, the present volume aims to contribute to this long-term goal.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, we nevertheless hope to have identified some of the key issues at stake in the further development of memory studies and provided a pathway to their further exploration. What new frames of collective remembrance have been emerging as alternatives to the nation? And how do new media technologies affect practices of remembrance both in local and in transnational arenas? What are the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that govern even seemingly all-inclusive transnational memory cultures in the digital age? Looking back, does the historical formation of national memories provide a blueprint for understanding the larger-scale processes of integration currently taking place across the world, including Europe? Do the memory cultures among migrant communities replicate those of nationalism, or work in a different way? How do memory narratives interact transnationally, specifically along the fault lines created by colonialism? Does the weakening of nationalized memory mark the beginnings of the end of historical identity (and ‘roots’) as the principal marker of citizenship and belonging?

## Why transnational?

It might be going too far to speak already of a transnational turn in memory studies, but there are stirrings in that direction. In that sense, the present volume can build on earlier discussions of some specific issues as well as on more general surveys. Most notable among the latter are several recent collections that thematize the idea of a global memory culture deeply connected to the propagation of human rights and respect for the memory of the Holocaust as a moral benchmark in a new world order. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider have spoken in this regard in Kantian terms of a “global memory imperative” based on the Holocaust; conceived as a “universal code” the memory of the Holocaust, they argue, now underpins a global concern for human rights that changes the nature of national sovereignty and indeed the very idea of an autonomous “bounded nation” (Levy and Sznaider 2006; 2010). In their *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (2010), Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad, while less centered than Levy and Sznaider on the Holocaust as benchmark, show a similar concern with identifying icons or narratives that have a global, universalist reach in an increasingly convergent world – the mnemonic equivalent of UNESCO World Heritage, as it were.

The present volume echoes these studies in proposing to focus on “nation-transcending idioms, spanning territorial and national borders” (Levy and Sznaider 2010, 6). However, where Levy and Sznaider and others have highlighted the ways in which “global concerns become part of local experiences” (Levy and Sznaider 2002, 87) and advance a human rights consensus that is potentially world-wide, the present volume will pay more attention to the multivocality that is brought into play in the interlocking social fields connecting the ‘local,’ the ‘national,’ and the ‘global’ that are as often sites of dissensus and differentiation, of productive if unequal encounters – what Anna Tsing has called “frictions” (Tsing 2005) – as they are of convergence and agreement.

What to call this new mnemonic arena? Terms like “global memory” or “cosmopolitan memory” and “world conscience” (Beck et al. 2009) carry the risk of homogenization and of implying misleadingly that the movement of memory is uniform, unidirectional, and teleological. The term “transcultural memory” (Crownshaw 2011) resonates with many of our concerns here and is also fruitfully deployed on occasion in some of the essays which follow (see in particular Rothberg’s discussion of the relative value of the terms ‘transnational’ and ‘transcultural’). The ‘transcultural’ also marks a desire to move beyond traditional configurations of the field of research along the lines of discrete, nationally-defined ‘container cultures.’ As Astrid Erll puts it in a valuable survey article, transcultur-

ality offers a “research perspective” that is “directed towards mnemonic processes unfolding *across* and *beyond* cultures” (Erl 2011, 9). It allows one to highlight the way cultures can transcend national borders per se (as in the case, for example, of ‘Anglo-American’ culture). Even more crucially, it highlights the way narratives, images, and models of remembrance “travel” and circulate widely with the help of media. In this way, the concept of transcultural memory helps us to a better understanding of how certain ways of looking and recalling can actually become shared by groups at different locations across the world. While “the existence and variable permeability of borders” (Erl 2011, 14) is acknowledged, transculturality has been applied above all to the study of mobility and flows rather than the social and political factors, as well as cultural ones, that may impede them.

It is precisely on the issue of borders that transculturality seems to lose some of its analytical purchase; an approach “across and beyond cultures” invokes the idea of cultures as bounded containers at the same time as it suggests that it is the very nature of cultural production to work across such boundaries. This volume will attempt precisely to tease out more fully, theoretically as well as empirically, the nature and role of borders in cultural remembrance. This means that, while it takes on board the principle that memory ‘travels’ and that it does so increasingly in our age of globalized communication, it recognizes the dialectical role played by national borders (which are not just imagined, but also legally defined) in memory practices and in memory studies.

In light of these considerations, among others, we concluded that the term ‘transnational,’ although not without its own shortcomings (see Vertovec 2009, 17), seemed best suited to approach the multi-layered, multi-sited, and multi-directional dynamic that we are hoping to capture. ‘Transnationalism’ recognizes the significance of national frameworks alongside the potential of cultural production both to reinforce and to transcend them. Crucially, it opens new possibilities for examining the interplay and tensions between culture and institutions, and hence for developing a new dialogue between those approaching the field from the Humanities and those approaching it from the Social Sciences. Since nation-states in principle have hard and fast, legal boundaries, the combination of ‘transnational’ and ‘memory’ opens up an analytic space to consider the interplay between social formations and cultural practices, or between state-operated institutions of memory and the flow of mediated narratives within and across state borders. It makes it possible to move to the centre of analysis the material presence of borders in the ‘flows’ of globalized memories; these may be non-hierarchical and deeply democratic in appearance, but may well themselves be the sites of hegemonic and governmental processes in ways that both reproduce and alter those of older national memory forms. In this way, ‘transnationalism’ proves better suited than more homogenizing cognates to highlight the frictions

at play at the interfaces between different social formations and cultural imaginaries, and the varieties of currents and cross-currents at work in the exchange and appropriations of travelling narratives and mnemonic forms in a world that is not seamless. Finally, it helps open up the crucial question of how practices of remembrance themselves participate in the making of hard and fast borders: for example, how does the current flurry of institutional activities geared toward the production of a new European memory relate to the hardening of Fortress Europe?

In essence, then, a transnational approach directs attention to all kinds of “sustained, cross-borders relationships spanning nation-states” (Vertovec 2009, 1) and to those phenomena not neatly captured within the borders of the latter. At an even more fundamental methodological level, transnationalism problematizes “container thinking” as such (Beck 2000; Amelina et al. 2012; cf. Gupta and Ferguson 1997) and forces us to question our ingrained understanding of appropriate spatial units of analysis. As Sanjeev Khagram and Peggy Levitt (2008, 5) have put it:

In contrast to traditional perspectives, which see transnational phenomena and dynamics as a subset of those occurring somewhere between the national and the global, [Transnational Studies] includes another, in some cases, more productive option. What are assumed to be bounded and bordered social units are understood as transnationally constituted, embedded and influenced social arenas that interact with one another. From this perspective, the world consists of multiple sets of dynamically overlapping and interacting transnational social fields that create and shape seemingly bordered and bounded structures, actors and processes. . . . By transnational, we propose an optics or gaze that begins with a world without borders, empirically examines the boundaries and borders that emerge at particular historical moments, and explores their relationship to unbounded arenas and processes.

As this passage suggests, the critique of container thinking leads into an even more fundamental critique: of the idea of scale and of the unspoken hierarchies of scale implicit in our research practices. Transnationalism allows us to grasp the *multi-scalarity* of socio-cultural processes and the fundamental “mutual construction of the local, national and global” in the contemporary world (Glick Schiller 2012, 23); as well as the proximity of the intimate and the global (Pratt and Rosner 2012). Palestinian cultural heritage preservation organizations offer a case in point (see De Cesari, this volume); they produce a form of institutionalized and materialized memory, Palestinian heritage, which can be considered simultaneously locally rooted and markedly globalized thanks to the appropriation of a globally circulating language of heritage to repurpose the local vernacular past in the service of national liberation (see also De Cesari 2010).

Crucially, rethinking scale also means rethinking the spatial imaginaries and imagined topographies of verticality (Ferguson 2004) that have shaped research

practices in memory studies. Consider, for example, the common scholarly representation of ‘local’ or ‘grassroots’ memories as opposed to ‘national’ and ‘global’ memories. The former, no matter how far they reach out towards the world, are always imagined as being small-scale in scope and extremely localized, akin to a point on a map, and, most importantly, as situated below the broader configurations of national or global memory that are thought of as containing and subsuming them. Moreover, we tend to imagine ‘the global’ in terms of a homogeneous and steadily expanding spread across the globe (usually from a Western location) at the expense of the older mosaic pattern of national memories – and this imaginary, in fact both spatial and temporal, has also been at the core of recent theorizing of memory in relation to globalization. The transnational optics adopted in this volume allows memory to be visualized differently: not as a horizontal spread or as points or regions on a map but as a dynamic operating at multiple, interlocking scales and involving conduits, intersections, circuits, and articulations. With its rethinking of scales and how they operate, transnationalism has fundamental methodological implications that go beyond the new attention it brings to bear, for example, on diasporic communities (Creet and Kitzmann 2011; Hirsch and Miller 2011; Glynn and Kleist 2012; Quayson and Daswani 2013).

It will be clear by now that transnationalism is not used here in a teleological sense, as synonym for an ever-widening of the frameworks of memory within some homogeneously conceived space. There is no necessary or linear ‘progress’ from the familial, to local, to national to global memories, because not only do we encounter movements or developments in reverse, but also different, non-linear configurations and constellations. Indeed, the term transnational itself crucially serves here as a reminder of the fact that even in a so-called post-national age, ‘the national’ as a framework for identity and memory-making is still a powerful one, indeed one that may be reinforced in response to calls for new types of confederation and integration. As a number of our chapters illustrate, the transnational dynamics of memory production operate in conjunction with the continuous presence and agency of the national, with which it thus remains deeply entangled (witness the harnessing of national rights to human rights; see Kennedy, De Cesari). Just as post-coloniality constitutes a break with colonialism that cannot transcend its enduring legacy, so too does post-nationality – or better, transnationality (Glick Schiller 2012) – continue to respond to national meanings and values. In some cases indeed, the globalization of memory practices has paradoxically helped reinforce the nation as the social framework par excellence for identity and solidarity, suggesting that the latest phase of globalization and transnational capitalism has not led to the disappearance of the national, but rather its transformation and reconfiguration (see Gupta and Ferguson 2002; Ferguson 2006). Arguably, the unstable, tense, and discontinuous social fields of diaspora may be the most im-

portant site of national memory today (see also Khalili 2005; De Cesari 2012a). A complex feedback from the transnational to the ethnic-national, with nationalism fostered in interaction with transnational discourses, is brought out here in several chapters: most notably in Gal Kirn's analysis of post-Yugoslav memory, Christina Schwenkel's account of the deep entanglement of the national and the transnational in the celebratory internationalist-socialist remembrance of anti-colonial nationalism, and Chiara De Cesari's analysis of the work of Palestinian heritage organizations and their relations to UNESCO.

In line with a commitment to exploring such non-linear trajectories and complex temporalities, this volume does not assume that transnationalism is a recent phenomenon particular to the latest phase of globalization. As Benedict Anderson already argued, nationalism has always been transnationally constituted, because it is the very possibility of its "being transplanted" (1991, 4) into always new contexts and travelling across multiple borders that allowed for its worldwide success (as explored, for example, in the comparative study of "viral nationalisms" in Europe by Leerssen 2006; 2011). Transnationalism in memory studies helps in casting retrospective light on transnational cross-currents which were operative at the height of nationalism but which were subsequently written out of national narratives. These cross-currents included the transnational character of nationalism itself: while each nation proclaimed itself unique, the fact that they did so along remarkably similar lines has tended to be forgotten (Edwards, this volume; also Leerssen and Rigney 2014). Crucially, transnational cross-currents were also at the heart of colonialism, slavery, and other forms of exploitation by globalized capital involving the violent asymmetrical entanglement of racialized communities; this shadow side of national progress has been largely occluded from memory (Ebron, this volume; see also Stoler 2011). Along a positive vein, mention can also be made of various transnational cross-currents involving utopian projects based on the promise of transcending all borders: aimed at establishing international socialism, as Kirn and Schwenkel show in their respective essays, or at a universal visual archive that also fostered national imaginaries, as shown by Edwards in hers. The memory of such transnational interactions and cross-currents became retrospectively nationalized once placed under the purview and control of national institutions, which thereby also foreclosed the production of alternative narratives as Legêne and Eickhoff show in their analysis of the cataloguing of colonial photographs. With the help of a transnational lens, however, it is now possible to see retrospectively some of the paths not taken in the formation of dominant national narratives, and so re-open archives and reactivate the potential of certain icons and narratives to become recuperated as new sites of future memory.

## Transnational dynamics

This collection of essays shows the inter- and transdisciplinarity at the heart of contemporary memory studies. The two editors come from socio-cultural anthropology and comparative literature respectively, and our contributors have been drawn in almost equal measure from the humanities and the social sciences. Combining expertise in this way will hopefully bring us closer to an outstanding desideratum: the integrated study of memory production as a cultural process embedded in social formations that it helps in turn to shape. In the case of the present topic, this has meant integrating a concern with institutions, actors, and struggles for power in concrete material circumstances with a concern for mediation, cultural forms, and the media-supported mobility of narratives across time and space. Integrating these two perspectives seemed all the more urgent given what appears to be a growing divergence between traditional state-controlled institutions of memory and ‘unregulated’ grassroots exchanges using digital media, and the emergence of new actors in the struggle to define collective memory.

Underlying our approach is a dynamic model of cultural memory that sees it in processual terms (as the outcome of ongoing cultural practices and unequal encounters) as well as generative ones (as an activity that is productive of stories and new social relations rather than merely preservative of legacies). As a number of recent studies have argued, and as is borne out by the essays here, cultural remembrance involves the continual production, remediation, and sharing of stories about a past that changes in relation to the new possibilities for interpreting it within shifting social frames operating at different scales and across different territories (see Erll and Rigney 2009). Mediated acts of remembrance help to create new narratives and displace or marginalize others and, by opening up fresh perspectives on the past, continuously change the grounds on which common futures are imagined (Gutman et al. 2010). The stabilizing, hegemonic role of memory narratives (Assmann 1995) and canonical “sites of memory” (Nora 1997) has deservedly received a lot of critical attention in the last half of the past century since they have such a formative influence. However, any focus on canonization needs to be offset by due concern for the parallel process whereby new acts of remembrance, spurred on by emerging groups in search of recognition, help generate new identities and contest old ones as part of a dynamic system. Seen in this way, cultural memory is always “on the move” (Rigney 2012), working as a “gyroscope that mediates trajectories from past to future through gravitational points in the present” (Olick 2010, 213). With this in mind, the present volume seeks to analyze the movement of narratives alongside the workings of power that underpin it. It will pay particular attention to those pressure points where this process

becomes foreclosed, when some images and stories become territorialized, stabilized, or otherwise caught up in national or ethnic practices and meanings.

This dynamic and generative approach to cultural memory acknowledges the complex temporalities whereby past, present, and future are re-calibrated. More importantly, it allows us to conceive of the relations between memory and social identity in other ways than as an unalienable inheritance that binds groups to a particular identity fixed in the past. Ever since Maurice Halbwachs' *Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925), it has been generally accepted that personal recollection is shaped by "social frameworks," since people adapt what they remember to the social contexts (in the first instance, according to Halbwachs, the family, religion, and profession) in which they conduct and imagine their lives. Although the national frame has until recently been politically the most important and academically the most theorized, it co-exists and has long co-existed with multiple others. The essays below explore a wide variety of these alternatives, from extended families (Feuchtwang, Küchler), to diasporic and mobile communities (Baronian, Kapralski), to globally-distributed publics (Erll, Kennedy), to entangled neighbors and immigrants (Rothberg), to would-be confederations (Rigney), and supranational and transnational organizations (De Cesari). Suffice it here to point out the more fundamental theoretical assumption: that social frames should not be conceived merely as 'containers' of memories, but rather as the historical outcome of acts of remembrance that help to (re)define groups – and their boundaries – and establish new modes of mutual implication (Ebron; see also Rothberg 2013).

At this point, the transnational lens on memory intersects in fruitful ways with recent discussions on the making of publics and counter-publics (Warner 2002) within the context of a transnational public sphere (Kennedy, this volume; see also Fraser 2007). If nationalizing cultures of memory (and much of the theorization that followed from it) took the borders of the mnemonic community as a given, the generative approach offered here indicates that communities and publics are created "prosthetically" (Landsberg 2004) through mediated acts of remembrance and, in line with this, shows how the borders between imagined communities become reconfigured through the agency of cultural remembrance itself. The dynamics of remembrance are thus intimately bound up with community-making since narratives about events belonging to 'our world' continuously reproduce, redraw or challenge the lines between 'them' and 'us.' And while cultural remembrance helps thus to create bonds, it is a two-edged sword whose power can also be deployed to discriminate against groups. As Michael Rothberg points out in this volume, Turkish migrants to Germany become caught in a double-bind, being simultaneously told that the Holocaust is not part of their history because they are not 'ethnically' German and then castigated for their alleged indifference to Holocaust remembrance (see also Rothberg and Yildiz 2011).

The idea of multidirectional memory, first developed by Michael Rothberg (2009), has proved very fruitful in opening up new perspectives on the ‘vectors’ (Wood 2009) and modalities by which stories and icons move across space, time, and social groups – or fail to do so. The concept of ‘multidirectionality’ has made visible the sedimented quality of memory discourses, and the fact that multiple dialogues and exchanges with existing narratives play a constitutive role in their making. Crucially, it reveals how the memory narratives central to the identity of one group can, in travelling, help model the narrative of another group in a manner that is mutually-supportive. In this process, Rothberg has shown, memory does not have to work according to the economy of a zero-sum game whereby one narrative gains public salience only at the cost of obliterating competitors.

As several contributions to the volume demonstrate, it is indeed the case that globally circulating memories and particularly the memory of the Holocaust – which has itself emerged as a paradigm and model for memory-making worldwide – have helped provide a language in which to articulate other narratives of suffering and loss (as well as a template for subjectivity and agency, see Ebron, this volume) in an increasingly transnational yet fragmented public sphere. However, there is also evidence to suggest that the relations between memorial traditions and the effects of memory encounters do not always amount to a zero-sum game or to a power-free interaction that is equally rewarding to both parties. Memory discourses are deeply entangled; yet such interconnections are often, if not always, asymmetrical ones, as the interactions between the memory of the Holocaust and the memory of the Palestinian Nakba illustrate, or the privileging of some genocides over others as part of a global canon. A Foucauldian understanding of power as fundamentally productive, as a power that works by empowering (while also regulating and subordinating), can help further illuminate the relationship between memorial traditions and effects of memory encounters in ways that go beyond the alternatives initially offered by Rothberg. In practice, as he himself has acknowledged in recent publications (Rothberg 2011), hierarchies of suffering are a frequent, even if avoidable, effect of memory encounters; comparison and mutual mirroring are often “agonistic” (Mouffe 2005) and even antagonistic, rather than non-competitive and equal. A more elaborate understanding of the complexity of such intersections and comparisons can help advance our understanding of memory politics beyond the simple paradigm of silencing and obliteration (see also Gilroy 2004) and bring it more in line with what Ann Stoler has called “aphasia” (Stoler 2011): an incapacity to engage with some dimensions of the past and their enduring and troubling presence. Stoler’s analysis bears in the first instance on France’s dealing with its colonial past, but it also speaks to broader European political dynamics, opening up a way to understand the aphasia relating to the thousands of deaths at sea of migrants and asylum seekers (of-

ten from former European colonies) as they attempt to cross Europe's borders in the Mediterranean. Their lives are becoming lost, invisible, in the interstices between national commemorative spaces and within everyday affective taxonomies that organize the distinction between "grievable" and "ungrievable" bodies (see Butler 2009) along racialized and national lines.

In order to flag this blind-spot or constitutive outside of transnational memory, we have included a visual contribution in our envoi in the form of a still from the video *Centro di permanenza temporanea* (literally: Temporary Stay Center, 2007) by Albanian-Italian artist Adrian Paci. In the video, a group of migrants crowd a gangway right in the middle of a runway, but it soon becomes clear that the planes leaving the airport are not for them, so they are left waiting, their faces scarred by the betrayal of their hopes for a better life. What awaits them is clarified by the video's title, which refers to the detention centers spread across Italy and other Mediterranean countries where irregular migrants are detained, often for months and in spite of not having committed any crime, until they are 'repatriated.' The survivors of the Mediterranean crossing end up stuck in a prison-like temporal, spatial, and legal limbo – a de-territorialized national frontier, and a key site in a broader accretion of borders that is itself deeply entwined with memory processes (Rigney, this volume; see also De Cesari 2012b).

Transnational memories are commonly believed to ground and foster a new international morality based on human rights (Kennedy). Yet the use of memory as a marker of citizenship (Rothberg) or as an informal accession criterion to the EU in cases such as Turkey (Rigney) indicates that the moral politics of remembrance are ambiguous. Unraveling the tangle of memory and human rights today means acknowledging the double role of memory: on the one hand, it offers a conduit to recognition and empowerment on the part of the marginalized and dispossessed (as in the case of the Roma, see Kapralski); on the other hand, it functions as an instrument of discrimination and a measure of exclusion.

The essays below, in focusing on particular instances of border-making and border-crossing, thus uncover some of the power dynamics and power struggles that are at the heart of the contemporary production of memory. While charting the movement and proliferation of particular narratives, they also help to re-launch some 'residual' memories that were blocked or marginalized or had simply lost momentum: socialist narratives of transnational solidarity (Kirn, Schwenkel), or hopeful memories of multicultural co-existence (Erl).

## Circulation

Globalized communication has meant, among other things, an observable convergence in the modes and aesthetics of remembrance practiced around the globe and the discourses informing them. One can think here, for example, of the so-called politics of regret and the global travels of public apologies as a cultural template (Olick 2007), the discourse of victimhood and trauma (Fassin and Rechtman 2009), and the discourse of World Heritage, not to mention the widespread familiarity with the Holocaust as a memory site (see Levy and Sznaider 2006; Rothberg 2009). This convergence in the ‘languages of commemoration’ indicated that our study of transnational memory should begin with the issue of ‘circulation’ and the question of how stories and models for remembrance shape what is remembered and provide conditions for the exchanges between individuals and groups. The first set of essays in our volume address these questions from different disciplinary perspectives and with reference to different geographical areas. Building on recent insights into the mobility or ‘travelling’ of memory, the four essays brought together here examine both the mediated quality of memories and the situated work that these perform as they move across media and between social groups. A key concern is with the ways in which mediation is culturally and imaginatively productive, but also socially so, shaping not only narratives but also the collective identities of the people who appropriate them. What triggers the alternation between deterritorialization and re-territorialization (or “vernacularization,” see Merry 2006) of globally circulating memories? Are digital media fostering such a thing as a transnational public sphere or simply the increasing interconnection of (still) distinctly national ones? Are we heading conversely towards the growing fragmentation and dispersion of communities of debate?

These issues have taken on fresh urgency in light of the fact that new media technologies and the emergence of participatory cultures (Jenkins 2006) have clearly multiplied the possibilities for reproducing, adapting, accessing, and transmitting images and narratives on the part of non-state actors. Media are increasingly powerful agents in connecting individuals and shaping their relations to each other and to the world (Garde-Hansen et al. 2009; Hoskins 2011). While texts, film, and photography continue to be key to the production of cultural memory, these media function more and more in online ecologies and as part of what Erll here calls “plurimedial networks” that operate across the borders of states. The emergence of a participatory culture facilitated by internet and social media is clearly changing the conditions in which memories are produced and circulated, offering new possibilities for intervention that have a low threshold but potential impact. This does not mean, however, that the internet should be un-

thinkingly celebrated as “digital democracy” (Kuntsman and Stein 2011); indeed, there is a growing literature on digital memories showing that despite widespread ideas linking the internet with Habermassian notions of the public sphere and communicative reason, cyberspaces and online communities of ‘debate’ can well turn into platforms of hatred and hate speech (Kuntsman 2010). Moreover, it is not a fully de-nationalized space (Rutten and Zvereva 2012, 2). Grassroots and non-state actors play an increasingly vocal role in producing memory in opposition to state-sponsored narratives and institutions (Kennedy, this volume offers a case in point), but also as a substitute for the latter in the context of shifting patterns of globalized governance (see Gupta and Ferguson 2002; Ferguson 2004). But do recent developments in media culture mean the end of the centrality of the nation-state as primary producer of collective memory and of hegemonic narratives about the past? And if there is a shift, what constellations of actors, forces, and resources enable the creation of cultural memory in the absence of state institutions and apparatuses?

The widespread imaginary of the ‘flow’ as the figure of mobility under the most recent phase of globalization overlooks, as signaled earlier, the importance of frictions and blockages in what are discontinuous memory movements. As the essays below illustrate, memory narratives indeed move with the help of media technologies, but they do so within ultimately limited circuits and along multiple pathways that, while they are sometimes a conduit to something new, may also turn out to be dead ends. How does the very metaphor of the deterritorialized and unbounded hide memory’s baggage of epistemic exclusions? How are hegemonic memories being produced in the shift from the museum to the internet as a chief apparatus of memory? Stef Jansen and Staffan Löfving have emphasized that we should approach “the key concepts of sedentarist and placeless paradigms – including territorialization and deterritorialization, emplacement and displacement – as empirical issues to be investigated rather than as philosophical assessments about what characterizes our age” (2009, 5; see also Amelina et al. 2012, 7).

The opening chapter by Astrid Erll takes as its empirical focus the representations of District Six in Cape Town and, analyzing this particular case, builds theoretically on her earlier work by considering in more detail the factors that shape the palimpsestic layering and the mobility of stories. Analyzing the rich mediation of District Six – which includes poetry, a museum, performances and the science-fiction movie *District 9* – Erll shows how this location became transformed into a memory template that travelled across media and places. She highlights in particular the role of cinema in facilitating the global circulation of stories, and shows how narrativization working across plurimedial networks helped turn the history of District Six into a mobile and mobilizing figure of memory that speaks to groups elsewhere. Her analysis ends by pondering the reasons for the ‘stick-

iness' of District 6 as an internationally-recognized figure of memory. Its global resonance was enhanced, she argues, by comparisons between the apartheid system and the Nazi regime. Ultimately, she claims however, its resilience as an icon that was picked up and reproduced in many parts of the world should be linked to the ways in which District 6 came to function as a "shorthand for lost hybridity." In other words, its role as a site of memory was entwined with its role as a site of possibility – a platform for imagining the future and for reactivating a path not yet taken in history.

In the essay following, Rosanne Kennedy examines the deterritorialization and reterritorialization, and the complex trajectories of an apparently extremely localized but in fact deeply cosmopolitan memory: Palestinian testimonies of violence. The chapter takes as case study testimonies solicited during the UN's *Fact-Finding Mission in Gaza* (2009), which was led by South African judge Richard Goldstone, to determine whether violations of human rights had been committed during the Israeli war on Gaza in December 2008–January 2009. Kennedy shows how the original testimonies were reproduced, reframed, and remediated as they were circulated in print form and on the internet by human rights institutions and activist networks. Her concern is less with the role of plurimediation as such than with the transformations incurred by the testimonies as they were brought to the attention – via a print edition, but also live readings on the part of celebrities – into a mode of address to an international public, specifically an American one. Her concept of "moving testimonies" is used to indicate that these testimonies did not merely travel 'under their own steam' as it were, but were made to move by particular actors with the intention of mobilizing publics elsewhere in support of the Palestinian people (and ultimately, via the appeal to human rights, their own right to nation-statehood). Her analysis concludes with a critical reflection on the nature of the transnational public sphere currently in the making under a human rights regime and on its impact on nation-state sovereignty or rather lack thereof. The global memory imperative, and the idea that the global circulation of memories and moving testimonies of suffering can help stop the human rights violations that caused it, is seriously called into question.

Film takes central stage in the third essay by Marie-Aude Baronian, on the work of the Canadian-Armenian artist and filmmaker Atom Egoyan. Building on Jacques Derrida's notion of "archive fever," she shows how Egoyan assumes the role of archivist for a stateless diasporic community in his audiovisual oeuvre: how his images are both grounded in particular locales (as in his recurrent depiction of the iconic Mt Ararat) and de-territorialized as internationally circulating films. His obsessive desire to fill the void of history (the double injustice of the Armenian genocide and its subsequent denial) ensure that his films work 'archivally.' Without the ambition to provide authoritative narratives, they never-

theless mimic memory work and provide an imaginary storage place and a virtual point of reference for a community without full material access to its history and its homeland. Baronian's close study of Egoyan as a creative and self-reflexive curator of diasporic memory reveals the fundamental role of images, and particularly filmic imaginaries, in the transnational making of memories as well as the complexity of the process whereby forgetfulness and erasure are written into the visualizing process itself.

Where the first three chapters explore the circulation of memories through film, reports, and photography, the final chapter by Susanne Kuchler focuses on a different, often neglected, medium of remembrance: ordinary material culture, in particular, home-made domestic items. In a detailed analysis of quilt-making in the Cook Islands, Kuchler discusses the agency of quilts as quintessentially cultural objects and their semantic density in the lives of the islanders, particularly women, whether resident in the Cooks or in the diaspora. In this context, quilt-making and the act of sewing appear to be deeply entangled with community building, but in ways that challenge traditional notions both of community (modeled on kinship relations, including the nation, conceived as a community of fictive kindred) and of communicative memory (grounded in co-presence and story-telling). That quilts are media of memory is a key aspect of their cultural salience in the Cook Islands, though one which is bound up in fascinating ways with their future-oriented role in creating new pathways and relations rather than merely recalling old ones. Echoing Astrid Erll, Kuchler's analysis also suggests that memories travel faster across borders when they are capable of mobilizing imaginaries of the future and not just of the past.

## Articulation

With their focus on mediation, the essays in the first section show how acts of remembrance involve 'articulation' in the sense of 'giving expression' to events in the form of a narrative. Cultural memories are "articulated discourses" (see Hall in Grossberg 1986) made up of heterogeneous elements, borrowings, and appropriations from other languages and memorial traditions that are assembled together into narratives. But acts of remembrance, as the second section emphasizes, also involve 'articulation' in another sense: they help to link up ('articulate') individuals and groups through their common engagement with those narratives. It is this double meaning of the term that has given us the title of our second section.

The five essays collected here explore the various ways in which social relations are constituted and communities (re)formed through the exchange and ne-

gotiation of memories across imagined or actual borders. They offer further elaborations of the point made earlier that communities come into being by producing a coherent discourse of memory that serves both to bind the group and to demarcate it from outsiders, and that they do so often by analogy with other communities along multidirectional lines. They also provide examples of the ways in which narratives “become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects” (Hall in Grossberg 1986, 53): the emergence of a memory discourse is part of the constitution or coming into being of political subjects and, crucially, their inscription into (always shifting and unstable) power geographies. Circulating memories are thus both the medium and outcome of the entanglements between people and groups.

Publics and memory communities are constituted, as Kennedy shows in her study of the reception of the Goldstone report on Gaza, through the exchange of narratives in the form of borrowings, appropriations, cross-references, negotiations, and intersections. Asymmetrical as such exchanges are, they may in some situations become nevertheless an important resource in providing new avenues for subjectivity but also for citizenship and belonging. That the same memory discourse can simultaneously empower *and* marginalize some of the groups that claim it as their own is illustrated by the double bind described in Michael Rothberg’s essay, which examines the ways in which German Muslim citizens are made into improper subjects of memory and therefore placed outside the inner circle of citizenship increasingly marked by memorial criteria. His essay explores the way German Muslim women and immigrants actively participate in remembering the Holocaust, and use it as a platform for performances of citizenship. His analysis offers a new view of memory practices among migrant communities: where the usual emphasis is on the way migrants cultivate memory as a resource for long-distance nationalism and homeland politics, he emphasizes instead how public acts of remembrance can be used to engage dialogically with the host community. To this end, he introduces the notions of “thickening” and “unscripted new linkages” to describe the work of articulation effected by memory exchanges, encouraging us to think of memory as a resource for building relations rather than as an exclusive legacy.

In the essay following, Paulla Ebron brings to light the transnational dialogues and unexpected encounters that have shaped the emergence of the remembrance of slavery in the US public sphere. Analyzing a sample of cinematic, narrative and material sites of memory, her analysis traces the development throughout the twentieth century of what she calls “memory projects” of slavery, which helped shape a new public. She emphasizes the ways in which these memory projects emerged at the intersection of ‘grassroots’ and ‘official’ remembrance. She also traces the multidirectional interaction between Holocaust memory and

the memory of slavery from the early 1970s, in practices of remembrance and, crucially, in forms of subjectivity. Her central claim is that such interactions provided African-American activists with an “affective vocabulary” that helped to articulate the story of slavery and give public expression to its memory. The transnational spread of the Holocaust as memory site thus facilitated the multidirectional emergence into public visibility of the past and enduring legacy of slavery in the United States and, in the South, offered an extra transnational counterweight to the local emphasis on the secessionist legacy.

The availability of a transnational language for articulating suffering, trauma, and marginalization is also a central theme in the next essay by Slawomir Kapralski. Charting the history of Romani activism, Kapralski shows how the memory of Nazi persecution has been mobilized by marginalized, stateless actors to claim rights and access to citizenship. He demonstrates how recent Romani political activism has pursued ‘national’ identity and memory-making in the absence of state institutions and as part of an effort to fight discrimination and achieve equal status and rights in the countries where Roma live at best as second-class citizens. His analysis also illustrates the paradoxes and predicaments of a “transnational nationalism” whose strategy, in line with nineteenth-century models of nation-building, is centered on the mobilization of a collective memory, in this case, following post-Holocaust models, a collective memory of suffering and victimhood. Emphasizing the growing political role of the mobilization of memory in the framework of a politics of recognition (echoed by Rothberg), and hence its value as a conduit to inclusion and equality, Kapralski shows how Romani activists have attempted to produce a ‘national’ memory to claim their rights at the cost of adopting a victim role – with so far only partial success.

Christina Schwenkel’s essay vividly exemplifies the way transnational (and even nationalist) memories can be mobilized to create broader communities and solidarities. She discusses the transnational socialist remembrance of the Vietnam War through an analysis of GDR (East-German) and Cuban films of the war. These produce memories that are both nation-specific and nation-transcending. She emphasizes the role of visual culture and particularly of cinematic images in the constitution of what she calls a “postnational scopic regime of memory” which positions and interpellates the viewer in compelling ways. Arguing that there are particular figurations of humanity at the core of diverse scopic regimes of memory – discourses and imaginations of what constitutes the essence of the human – she compares notions of humanity within socialist discourse and socialist iconography with liberal humanitarian ones circulating as part of the human rights regime. With her analysis of the visual culture of memory formations and of the ways in which these expose not only particular ideas of community (national

vs. transnational) but also of the human, we have now come almost full circle in exploring the work of articulation and subjectification in remembrance.

The final essay in this section by Elizabeth Edwards adds an extra twist to this tale by showing, with reference to the photographic survey movement in late nineteenth-century Europe, how a utopian memory project directed towards ‘humanity’ could end up producing nationalized subjects in practice. Her analysis provides a reminder of the fact that the transnational, mediated circulation of memories and images is not new. More specifically, it presents the pan-European survey movement as an instance of an epochal “memorializing desire” that was nested within (and productive of) the landscape and vocabulary of nationalism at the same time as it aspired to become universal. Based on the large-scale mobilization of amateurs to capture the essence of ‘national’ experience with photos taken of everyday life, the ultimate aim of the survey movement was the creation of a utopian “memory bank” for a future conceived on a Europe-wide if not indeed world-wide, imperial scale. It combined organizations at local and national level, as well as a transnational network of connections and exchanges. Edwards argues that the movement was not only transnational in its organization, but also in the all-pervasiveness of a nationalizing mode of apprehension and sense of a common modernity that was brought to bear on the localized photographs. At the same time, she also shows that there was no easy fit, but rather a series of fractures and thresholds, between the local, the national, the European, and the global.

## Scales

As mentioned earlier, a critical rethinking of scale and of the unspoken hierarchies of scale implicit in our research practices is one of the core challenges of a transnational approach. The issue of scale is indeed present in all of the essays in our volume, as is cross-scale intersectionality. Where several essays bear, for example, on a nationalization paradoxically aided by transnational and supranational actors (De Cesari, Kennedy, Legêne and Eickhoff, in this volume), others contribute to the deconstruction of taken-for-granted hierarchies of affective power based on the distinction (see Margalit 2002) between thick, lived, and affective ‘local’ or national memories and artificial, empty, and thin transnational memories (Rothberg, Schwenkel). However, the essays collected in this final section offer more overt attempts to address the politics of scale and in particular of “scale-making” (Tsing 2000). How did and do apparatuses at different scales work to nationalize memory? Do recent developments mean the end of the primacy of the nation-state as the dominant framework for collective memory?

Focusing on UNESCO's World Heritage program, Chiara De Cesari's opening essay investigates the paradoxical ways in which transnational remembrance can help reproduce and reinforce national memories and nation-state institutions of memory. It also highlights the unsuspected entanglement of World Heritage and national sovereignty. By examining the translation of UNESCO's cultural heritage policies in the context of Palestine/Israel, she shows how this project of worldwide cultural heritage preservation entails a double predicament and fundamental contradictions. On the one hand, World Heritage reinforces nation-state apparatuses' reach and control over heritage sites and processes, often at the expense of the grassroots. On the other hand, recent World Heritage reforms in the direction of a less Eurocentric approach and a stronger multiculturalism not only risk affirming and solidifying cultural differences, but also the global asymmetries between them.

Working at the scale of the cognitive, the intimate, and the familial, the next essay by Stephan Feuchtwang offers a comparative study of the Indian Sora people alongside a Russian-Jewish family living in Berlin. Challenging Pierre Nora's reductive opposition between (contemporary) sites of memory and (past) *milieux* of memory, Feuchtwang shows how kinship, trans-generational connectedness, and alternative family archives provide enduring and crucial memory environments even in more recent times, and that they involve individual subjects in intense transpersonal relations that give them the sense of an extended temporality. Using the notion of "haunting memory," his analysis shows how such *milieux* are not only alive and well today, even as they adapt themselves to changing circumstances, but are also developing in complex interaction with the narratives produced by the apparatuses of the state.

The starting point of the next essay by Susan Legêne and Martijn Eickhoff is precisely at the level of the state and its role in shaping what is considered worthy of recollection or not. Their concern is with the role of archiving practices in the Netherlands in the national framing of histories of WWII and decolonization. With an empirical focus on colonial photographs in the Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD), they show how the transnational history of Empire and decolonization became post-hoc nationalized through the workings of the archive itself. The national scale determined what was deemed relevant or not, and how it was catalogued, leading to an artificial separation between the history of WWII and the history of decolonization that played an important role in the post-war effacement of the fundamental transnationality of European colonialism. Since a visual archive has a potential which exceeds the stories told about it, however, those committed to re-articulating Dutch history could use these photographs in the future in a new way: as a resource for writing

a new large-scale history of European colonialism that would have repercussions for both European memory and European citizenship.

If transnational histories are reduced to national ones, or displaced by them, thanks to the taxonomic and representational practices of national archives, it can also happen that transnational institutions inadvertently end up promoting ethno-nationalist memories. Gal Kirn discusses such a case with reference to the former Yugoslavia. He traces the transition from a transnational socialist towards an ethno-nationalist revisionist memory that took place in tandem with the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia into seven different nation-states. In particular, he details what this scale reduction meant in politico-aesthetic terms, using the example of the memorials to WWII located across the former Yugoslav territory. His focus is on the remarkable socialist modernist memorials which perform a future-oriented memory and mobilize transnational aspirations, but which since 1989 have been neglected. Comparing these WWII memorials to more recent ones, Kirn's essay thematizes the deep entanglement of the new, post-conflict discourses of national reconciliation, nationalist historical revisionism, the rehabilitation of fascism, and very regressive forms of remembrance politics. Most interestingly, the paper traces the collusion between these nationalistic memory discourses and the anti-totalitarian thesis which has also been recently adopted, if only indirectly, by the EU through its policies relating to commemorative days – thus emphasizing the deep paradox of an institution such as the EU, which aims to foster new, transnational frames of memory but ends up lending legitimacy to very different kinds of locally-embedded ethnocentric remembrance.

Further reflecting on recent EU memory policies, Ann Rigney closes the volume by critically examining the assumption that European institutions should aspire to construct a new collective memory along the old national lines but on a larger-scale. She shows how ideas about the future of Europe have been articulated from the late 1940s in tandem with the gradual emergence of a master narrative that sees the EU as the outcome of an ability to overcome its past violence – an idea that found expression in the awarding of the Nobel peace prize of 2012 as well as in the planning of a “European House of History” in Brussels. Rigney's essay challenges the homogenizing top-down efforts to produce a common master-narrative as exclusivist and, literally, backward looking. She argues instead for a more forward-looking way of thinking about cultural memory that would emphasize its capacity to renegotiate the borders of communities at local, regional and macro-regional levels, and generate new “unscripted” linkages (Rothberg, this volume) at these different scales rather than merely express and enshrine existing legacies in an exclusive way. In particular, she indicates the importance of the arts, and their capacity to imagine the past differently, as potentially a key player in this process. This transformative multi-scalar view of memory is more appro-

priate when conceiving of new forms of citizenship within a rapidly changing and diverse EU than the ethnic-nationalist models inherited from the nineteenth century.

## Envoi

The volume charts a rich production of memory taking place across and beyond national boundaries. While showing that globalization is not just new, the essays also bring into focus the massive acceleration of transnational interconnectedness and the growing “transnationalization of the political” (Balibar 2004) that is taking place today. The extent of these changes also makes it necessary to ask if the link between memory and identity is not also in the process of becoming a thing of the past as something specific to the nation-state as a particular cultural-political formation. To a certain extent this may be true. Yet the essays also reveal how the production of new narratives in the interstices between nation-states and in the transnational arena, is gradually giving rise to new modes of remembrance that are not just historicist but also forward-looking. They illustrate the potential in diverse practices of remembrance to move beyond ethno-nationalist discourses of victimhood and, with the help of artists among others (Baronian, Rigney, in this volume), provide spaces for “imagining things otherwise” (see Esche 2004) as well as resources for alternative figurations of agency and political aspirations. Non-nostalgic modes of remembrance can indeed provide avenues to democratic and emancipatory politics (see Gutman et al. 2010), hence helping put some of the future back into memory (called for by, e.g., Huyssen 2010). Several contributions to the volume thus point towards memories’ ability to speak to the future, to their quality of containing *in nuce* a hint of a different condition. As Astrid Erll here suggests, it may ultimately be their future-oriented, agentic quality that makes them travel across borders.

By inviting specialists with expertise pertaining to different geographical areas, we hope to keep open a perspective on geo-political diversity in memory cultures, and on the variety of transnational pathways that are being used alongside globalized icons and modes of remembrance. Exhaustiveness was not possible, and given our own location, there is a certain provincial bias towards European themes, which is reinforced by the Euro-centered character of much work in memory studies. However, in line with our theoretical approach, the ‘Europe’ discussed in several contributions is marked by blurred, shifting boundaries and ramifying worldwide connections but also, crucially, by the ways in which it is constituted by its alleged ‘others.’ We are hopeful that the particular combination of approaches

and topics will work together fruitfully to open up new lines of inquiry and conceptualization that can travel beyond their original contexts.

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