

Review symposium

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Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen, eds.

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This wide-ranging and ambitious collection of 40 new essays explores various aspects of collective and individual memory and their mutual entanglement. The volume is divided into six parts, encompassing conceptual analysis of collective and cultural memory as well as empirical case studies to illustrate the politics of memory in deeply troubled societies. Designed to bring out the multi-disciplinary character of the field of memory studies, the aim of editors Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen is to generate “original and innovative ideas in relation to commemoration, oblivion, reconciliation, and many other issues” (p. xix). Any scholar or student interested in the theory or practice of memory is bound to find something of value in this rich collection. The only other book I am aware of that deals with a similarly wide range of issues is *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning (2010).

There are many fine essays included in the *Handbook*, but it is impossible in the limited space I have to do justice to all or even most of them. I will therefore focus my discussion on two issues of central importance to the field of memory studies that have emerged for me in reading this book: one is about memory itself, and the other is about the discipline or group of disciplines that takes memory as its subject matter. The first is conceptually central to many of the essays included here, namely, the conception (or conceptions) of collective memory that they articulate or tacitly rely on. The second is the current state of the field and how it can become more inclusive.

The nature of collective memory

Is there such a thing as collective memory, and if so, how is it to be explained? The *locus classicus* of the notion is the work of Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs is mentioned in a number of places in this anthology, but what is not remarked on, and what has important implications for how to construe the subject matter of the field of memory studies, is a certain vacillation in what he means by the term.

On one hand, Halbwachs stresses that even what appear to be purely personal memories can only function within a collective context. The groups to which individuals belong, he argues, provide them with the materials for memory and make it possible for individuals to remember in a coherent and persistent fashion. These materials, called the “social frameworks” of memory, embody norms, traditions, and patterns of social relations that condition and inform personal memories. (An excellent illustration of the role of social frameworks in the construction of personal memories is provided in Chapter 33. Describing the stories that survivors of the 2005 London bombing tell of their experiences, Brown, Allen, and Reavy conclude, “Over time,

personal memories become collectively shaped as they accommodate and respond to both the memories of others and to broader narrative frameworks” (p. 439.) Memory, in this construal, belongs to individuals, although the content and form of these memories are influenced by the groups to which they belong and the people with whom they interact. While much of Halbwachs’s discussion of collective memory is actually about individual memory socially conditioned, he also wants to attribute memories to groups themselves. For example, in *On Collective Memory*, he distinguishes between social frameworks and genuinely collective memory as follows: “One may say that the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories” (Halbwachs, 1992: p. 40). Collective memory in this sense presents a philosophical problem for the field of social memory studies in that it raises questions, including how groups themselves, as distinguished from the collection of individuals who belong to them, can and do remember.

Some writers on the subject of collective memory have denied the legitimacy of the notion altogether, maintaining that it is an unhelpful and often misleading metaphor. In my view, however, which is shared by the authors in this collection, there is nothing spurious about this notion, although it requires considerable unpacking. (The title of Chapter 5, “Against Memory,” might suggest an exception, but in fact Jeffrey Goldfarb is only following Nietzsche here in arguing that “the social work needed to forget is sometimes as important as the work needed to remember” (p. 62).) First, unpacking is needed because collective memories are properties of collectives and there are collectives of different sorts, including nations, communities, families, marriages, and organizations. (Organizations have a decisional structure that more loosely or fluidly structured collectives lack. See Thomas Eberle’s excellent discussion of organizational memories in Chapter 9.) Second, collective memory needs unpacking because it refers to both shared memories that are formed through and live in processes of communication and interaction—what Jan and Aleida Assmann call “communicative memory”—and those that are embodied in what Pierre Nora calls *lieux de memoire*, in the media, institutions, and practices by which groups construct and represent a shared past—what they call “cultural memory.” Collective memory is thus indeterminate in two ways: the type of collective at issue is not specified nor is it specified if the memory refers to events that occurred within the lifespan of living generations or to events that are outside living memory.

Such indeterminacy demands clarification of the notion of collective memory, but it is not sufficient reason to reject it completely. To be sure, none of these collectives has memories as individuals do: collectives do not have minds of their own, separate and independent of the minds of the individuals who comprise them. Nevertheless, a plausible case can be made that there is a difference between collective and individual memories, a difference that partly consists in the fact that the former comprises memories that individuals have *as* members of a group with which they identify. This does not, however, completely answer the question I raised above, namely, what is it that in all these instances of collective memory explains their *collective* character? That is, what makes them the memories of the group *itself* to which they belong? The *Handbook* takes a few steps toward answering this difficult but conceptually central question, but much more work remains to be done.

According to Barry Schwartz, whose essay (Chapter 1) is one of two that provides the most sustained analysis of the concept of collective memory (Chapter 6 by Ann Rigney is the other), it

refers to the *distribution* throughout society of what individuals know, believe, and feel about the past, how they judge the past morally, how closely they identify with it, and how much they are inspired by it as a model for their conduct and identity. (p. 10)

How should we understand what he means by this? We can start by noting that there are two senses in which memories can belong to a group. First, we might attribute memories to a whole

group because each and every member of the group has the same memories. Collective memory, so conceived, is simply the sum of all the individual memories. Second, memories might be ascribable to a group but not to every, or even most, of its individual members. We might say that the memory of the collective is more than the sum of the memories of the individuals who comprise it. Which sense does Schwartz intend? It seems the second, because “distributed” is not an accurate description of the character of collective memory in the first sense and because he goes on to assert that collective memory is “an *emergent* entity, a *social fact* connecting separate and often distant communities” (p. 11). Collective memory is an emergent entity, I take it, precisely because it is not equivalent to individual memories simply summed together. The idea of an emergent property may be a fruitful way to analyze collective memory, but this will depend on whether and how the notion of emergence is explained. Unfortunately, the essay does not elaborate, nor do any of the other essays in this volume address this important theoretical question with the analytic rigor it requires. Rigney, whose essay is theoretically one of the more interesting in the volume, defines collective memory as “shared recollections of the past that rely on media and are linked reflexively to collective identity” (p. 67). But nagging questions remain. How are recollections shared? Are shared memories the same as the memories of a group, and if not, do we need something in addition to shared memories to account for collective memory?

Even if we are not entirely clear about the constitution of collective memory, we are likely to have a better idea of what it is *not*, namely, history. The relationship between collective memory and history is a conceptual issue that Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Aleida Assmann, and many others in memory studies, including some in this volume, address. Roughly speaking, history uses empirical evidence to explain aspects of the past in accordance with standards of scientific method. By contrast, collective memory is bound to normative judgments about the past and enters into the group’s self-understanding and identity. Collective memories have affective, motivational, and moral properties that history, unless taken up by collective memory and transformed by it, lacks. This basic distinction between collective memory and history is amply illustrated by the essays in this anthology. They show how the struggles over collective memory are not about accuracy the way an historian understands it, as much as they reveal deeper issues of meaning and identity that hinge on what and how the past is remembered. At the same time, as Schwartz notes, collective memory and history are not two independent modes of access to the past. To the contrary, they supplement and correct each other. On one hand, collective memory deepens and broadens historical understanding, making it less impersonal and abstract. On the other, history is “one of [memory’s] critical points of reference” (p. 19). Collective memory is vulnerable to historical criticism and revision to the extent that accuracy is one of the criteria by which the quality of memory is judged.

Collective memory is not only answerable to history and subject to historical critique. It can also be contested and amended by a process that David Inglis calls the “trans-nationalization of memory” (p. 149), which he describes at length in his important Chapter 13. This is an increasingly important phenomenon in the age of globalization that represents a challenge to the assumed link between collective memory and the nation. Traditionally, collective memories of events of national significance have been thought to *belong* to the nation. Their natural home, as well as their object, has been the nation. However, as Inglis argues, the intensified global movements of people, knowledge, and capital have “engendered particular social spaces for transnational actors to engage in practices of memory” (p. 149), practices that can challenge the nation’s ability to contain and police collective memory. What emerges is a new kind of collective memory, a hybrid of the national and the global, that is more complex and possibly more truthful than its pre-globalized predecessor.

A second-order question about the field of memory studies

I want to briefly turn now to the field of memory studies and to what this volume suggests about its current makeup. Here, I would like to follow Jeffrey Olick's discussion of the sites of memory studies (Chapter 4) but take it one step further. According to Olick, the disciplines that have contributed to memory studies are psychology, sociology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, cultural and literary studies, and history, and this volume provides examples from most of them illustrating where the field currently stands. What is missing from this list is philosophy, and as a philosopher myself, I regard this as a serious problem. A few philosophers are listed among the book's contributors, but they are vastly outnumbered by representatives of the other disciplines.

Let me mention just two areas where there can be fruitful collaboration between memory studies and philosophy. First, accounts of collectivity and group agency by philosophers such as Margaret Gilbert, Michael Bratman, Christopher Kutz, and Raimo Tuomelo could profitably be brought to bear on the question of the nature of collective memory. They could help answer questions such as the following: What constitutes the phenomenon of collectivity? What differentiates types of collectives from one another? What would a *social ontology of memory* look like? A second general area that is not explored in this collection is the *ethics* of collective memory, and moral philosophers can make a significant contribution to this. Here, questions that could benefit from philosophical examination include the following: What specific ethical or moral criteria are there for determining when there is too much or too little memory in the life of an individual or group? What are the moral underpinnings of a duty to remember? Carmen Leccardi's essay on memory and responsibility (Chapter 10) does explicitly raise ethical concerns, but her account of the deep connections between the two, while extremely suggestive, could be elaborated much further.

Arguably, it says more about the current state of the field of memory studies than about the shortcomings of this volume that these and other philosophical questions are not pursued. Indeed, it is curious and disappointing that the literature in memory studies has so far engaged little with philosophical work in social ontology and moral philosophy and that with relatively few exceptions philosophers have not been particularly concerned about the metaphysics and morality of memory. That being the case, I would like to end with a suggestion for future scholarly work: if memory studies is to be the true multi-disciplinary field that it aspires to be and that the editors of this anthology aim to forge, then philosophers have to become more involved in the study of the nature and evaluative significance of collective memory and its practices and processes.

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Reviewed by: William Hirst, *The New School for Social Research, USA*

The field of memory studies has grown dramatically in the last few decades. Since Jeff Olick (1999) wrote about "two cultures," we have seen the journal *Memory Studies* emerge as a central place for publishing relevant studies from many different perspectives. We have witnessed several compendiums on the topic, such as Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy's collection of landmark papers; Erll and Nunning's collection of essays from a range of disciplines, but with an emphasis on the humanities; and a similar volume edited by Kattago, with a more sociological focus. Moreover, there is now an effort to create a Memory Studies Association. The volume under review, *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, edited by Anna Lisa Tota and Trevor Hagen, continues this effort to bring memory studies into the fore, with a total of 40 short

essays written from the perspectives of philosophy, sociology, cultural studies, humanities, biology, psychology, ecology, and physics, to name just some of the disciplines represented in this volume. Indeed, the editors themselves embody this interdisciplinarity. Dr Tota is a professor in the Departments of Philosophy, Communications and Performing Arts. Dr Hagen is a research fellow in the Departments of Sociology, Philosophy, and Anthropology.

Whenever one approaches a “Handbook,” one inevitably asks what should be covered in order to reasonably represent the field. For established disciplines such as Genetics and Victorian Literature, the list of topics and the major figures in the field are fairly well established. For the field of memory studies, it is not so clear how to proceed. Indeed, it is not even very clear what constitutes the field of memory studies. Its origins are often traced back to Maurice Halbwachs, but it currently seems to be overly inclusive. In an attempt to make some sense of the rapidly expanding territory, scholars have been busy offering various distinctions: between collective and collected memory, vernacular and formal memory, communicative and cultural memory, and then there is multidirectional memory, prosthetic memory, social memory, and postmemory. With such a rapidly burgeoning lexicon, writing a handbook that aims to clarify these distinctions would appear to be a daunting task.

The present effort, however, does not attempt to put boundaries on what constitutes memory studies or even offer a definition of it. Rather, it explicitly approaches the field with open arms to anyone who sees what they are doing as involving memory. Thus, we have chapters that cover what are the now tried and true topics of memory studies—commemorations, memorials, and other cultural artifacts meant to capture in some direct or indirect way the past, especially the traumatic past. But we also have chapters on “memory in ecology,” “cell memory,” and “memory of water.” To make sense of this wide range of topics, the editors divide the book into six sections: (1) theories and perspectives; (2) cultural artifacts, symbols, and social practices; (3) public, transnational, and transitional memories; (4) technologies of memory; (5) terror, violence, and disasters; and (6) body and ecosystems. These sections follow what one might expect from most collections of essays on memory, with the exception of the last one, which will be addressed later.

The question for me is whether a neophyte into the field of memory studies would glean from this handbook a sense of what the field is about. I will not comment on individual essays. Some were extraordinarily good. There is no question that I learned a lot as I read through the book. But the question is not whether new information is provided, as any good journal should offer that, but whether the *Handbook* captures the field or lends coherence to it.

Alas, I must confess to disappointment. Let us begin with the section of “Theories and perspectives.” Here, more than anywhere else I would expect to be afforded a better understanding of some central questions as to what the field is about. For example, What is meant by “memory”? How does “memory studies” differ from, for instance, the psychology of memory or the sociology of memory, or is it just a convenient tent for scholars in these individual fields under which they assemble and compare notes? I was therefore surprised that, of the six chapters in this section, two seem to want to critique the notion of memory (Goldfarb) or collective memory (Schwartz), one sought to reconfigure the study of memory into a study of events (Wagner-Pacifici), and one was a reflection on where things stand with Nora’s *Les Lieux de Memoire* after 30 years (Hutton). Each of these efforts is worth reading, but are they the kind of thing one expects in a handbook? The chapters seem more about critique than making a positive statement. I was no more certain why someone aligns themselves with the field of memory studies after reading the material than before. Indeed, if I received any impression, it was that the field was in an identity crisis. Perhaps that is what happens when a discipline hits its adolescence, as the field of memory studies has.

The other sections offer more clarity, but there are absences that I wanted filled. For instance, in the section on “Technologies of memory,” there are discussions of music, cinema, photographs,

and memorials, but no detailed discussion of digital media, such as the Internet and Facebook. There is a large literature on this topic, but it did not figure much in this collection. Perhaps the most rewarding section was on "Terror, violence, and disasters," in part, I suspect, because each essay tended to focus on a particular case, with the details of the case telling the story more than theory itself driving the essay.

As stated above, I want to address the final section on "Body and ecosystems," which was the most baffling to me. A fine essay by Medved and Brockmeier on memory in neurologically impaired individuals, which allows for a deeper understanding of the role of memory in our individual and collective lives, clearly spoke to how psychology might have a place in memory studies. But the section quickly plunged deeply into body memory, memories in cells, and so on. It was unclear how to connect these latter essays with the concerns of the essays about, for instance, making absence present in the 9/11 Memorial, or memories for the 2005 bombing in London or the Madrid bombing of 2004.

As a psychologist, I often find that when the interdisciplinary nature of memory studies is touted, the relevant fields are listed, but the inclusion of psychology in this list seems more a gesture than a reality. To the extent that psychology does play a role in most essays found in journals and edited volumes relevant to the field of memory studies, discussion is usually confined to psychoanalytic approaches. But there is a growing literature in the field of experimental psychology on collective memory that could fit nicely into any book on memory studies and bridge the various perspectives. Jeff Olick (1999) suggested that the study of collective memory needed to be differentiated from the study of collected memory, but he did not argue that the two should remain isolated from each other. Indeed, he thought the two could complement each other. Moreover, he saw psychology as making a major contribution to the study of collected memory.

Taking a different perspective, Jan Assmann (1995) argued that the field of collective memory should be divided into separate studies of communicative memory and cultural memory. He suggested, and I think he was right, that Halbwachs was mainly focused on communicative memory, that is, the way social interactions and social frames shape memory into a shared, "collective" memory. Assmann contended that Halbwachs was less interested in the cultural artifacts into which these memories are "crystallized," what Assmann referred to as cultural memory. He also saw communicative memories as more closely aligned with the way memories are transmitted in everyday life. What he did not say explicitly, but what appears to be the case, is that psychologists may have a lot to say about such "everyday memory transmission." Indeed, in the past decade or so, psychologists have begun to energetically study how people jointly remember, how they implant memories, how these memories are transmitted and distorted across small and large communities, and how ingroup and outgroup membership affects such transmission and distortion, to name just a few of the issues animating the psychology of collective memory.

In underscoring the importance of considering collected and communicative memory, then, I am pointing to a reason why psychologists should play a prominent role in any discussion of collective memory and in the field of memory studies. They might even have something to say about the topic of cultural memory, in that the cultural artifacts on which cultural memories are based are themselves transmitted through acts of communication. The psychology that bears on communicative transmission of memories within a social network holds whether one is discussing face-to-face communication, communication through the Internet, or communication arising from cultural artifacts, such as memorials and commemorations. The absence of the relevant psychology in this volume does a disservice to the potential interdisciplinary symbiosis memory studies is meant to promulgate.

There is a great deal to learn as one moves through this volume, and many of the essays would well serve both the advanced student and mature scholar well. The efforts of Tota and Hagen may

not constitute a handbook, but they have produced a significant contribution to the field of memory studies.

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Reviewed by: Katharine Hodgkin, *University of East London, UK*

Memory studies is a curiously difficult field to define. Multi- and interdisciplinary, with different intellectual lineages and theoretical parameters, it is also shaped by a range of diverse national contexts. The richness of the concept, in its contexts and resonances both inside and outside the academy, makes it rewarding to work with, but also hard to pin down. Over the last decade or so, a steady flow of handbooks and readers has attempted to map out and capture this range; their increasing size suggests that things are not getting any simpler.

This latest offer opens by highlighting this diversity. As the editors note, “this creative variety of perspectives has implied, to some extent, a theoretical isolationism, most often underpinned by disciplinary conventions” (p. 1). In response, the aim of the collection is to open up both geographical and disciplinary borders and to emphasize global reach and interdisciplinarity. Drawing on a wide range of scholarship, both in disciplinary and in national terms, the intention is to identify common themes and preoccupations and to set disparate approaches in dialogue.

This is not a new ambition, in many ways—most editors of such collections declare similar intentions—but it is a particularly extensive attempt. The book includes the work of over 50 scholars working in 17 different countries. The material is organized not around disciplinary approaches (like Erll and Nunning’s (2010) *Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, for example) but around themes (like Radstone and Schwarz, 2010, or Kattago, 2015). Its six sections aim to map the field in new ways and to highlight key areas of growth for the future as well as identifying the central preoccupations of memory studies today. This approach is intended to underscore the sense of exchange and cross-fertilization that characterizes the field, focusing on how cultural artifacts, public memories, or memory technologies are of interest to scholars in many different areas.

The opening section of the book, “Theories and perspectives,” focuses directly on the question of what we are talking about when we talk about memory and to what extent it is the same thing. For me, this is the most successful section, with several prominent memory scholars offering lucid and illuminating reflections on the state of the field and some of its key concepts: collective and cultural memory, sites of memory, multidirectional memory in relation to memory studies, and its geographical and disciplinary locations are discussed with clarity and insight.

The three central sections of the book, “Cultural artifacts, symbols and social practices,” “Public, transnational and transitional memories,” and “Technologies of memory,” are in a sense intended as a challenge to more familiar ways of dividing up the field. Topics which in other collections might be gathered under general headings (memorials and commemoration, for example, or memory and subjectivity) are distributed into structures which aim to highlight other thematic commonalities: collective memories, public memories, and the mediations of memory. These, it must be said, can be hard to disentangle. The overlap between the different topics is considerable, and it is not always easy to see why a particular essay has been put in one section rather than another. The editors’ introduction, describing the collection’s “cartography,” identifies Section II as concerned with “the social practices that shape the process of collective remembering”; Section

III with public memory and the tensions between “public and private, individual and collective”; and Section IV with “cultural symbols” and how “artifacts ... shape the content of memory” (pp. 4–5). The movement of terms across these sections (symbols, artifacts, public, and collective) seems indicative of a lack of precision in determining the relation between them, although it must be said that this is probably as much to do with the nature of the material (all these topics are indeed closely related) as with the editorial choices.

Section V, on “Terror, violence and disasters,” explores memory in the wake of catastrophic events in a range of locations (Southeast Asia, Japan, China, Chile, Italy and New York, Madrid and London following their respective terrorist attacks in the early years of the century). This highlights an interesting shift in memory studies more broadly: the Holocaust, until quite recently seen as the defining topic of memory studies, is notably decentered. (Compare, for example, Crownshaw et al.’s (2010) collection *The Future of Memory*, published only 6 years earlier, where at least half of the essays were on trauma and/or the Holocaust.) The Holocaust does indeed appear, but in relation to other topics: globalization, international transmission, and digital archives. Traumatic memory is dispersed across a range of disasters (and indeed across the various sections of the book), opening the way for a reassessment of the concept in the light of cultural difference.

Another innovation is particularly visible in the final section of the book, “Body and ecosystems.” While debates about memory and the body have been around for a long time, the relocation of these debates into an explicitly ecological and biological context allows the editors to bring the natural sciences more firmly into the picture. Essays by neurophysiologists and molecular biologists, among others, explore memory from a radically different perspective to the humanities/social science approach of most such collections (although the introduction of neurological approaches in particular is more familiar). The editors emphasize that “in order to maintain diversity,” the various contributors “speak ... with their own conventions and [disciplinary] language” (p. 2), asking readers to enter into new disciplinary territories with open minds, and the perspective of the natural sciences is drawn on at a number of points in the collection, though most obviously in this final section. Again this is a laudable aim, but the focus on scientific models has to some extent displaced other significant debates on the ways in which memory is embodied.

Such structural innovations and insights in general are suggestive and often productive. If one of the key ambitions of the book is interdisciplinarity, however, I would say it is unevenly successful. We all tend to see such collections from within our own terrain, of course; for me, coming from an arts and humanities background, the book is strongly weighted toward the classical social sciences. On a rough count, about half the 50-odd contributors are (or were) located in departments of sociology; psychology and politics account for another half dozen or so. “Hard” sciences account for another half dozen. History, literature, film studies, and photography appear in much smaller numbers. In this sense, the book’s aspiration to reflect the multiple disciplinary locations of memory studies is not really achieved; its exclusions are as noticeable as its innovative inclusions. This is a matter of structure as well as content, with some prominent themes in memory studies (and indeed in some of the essays) made relatively invisible by the generic section titles. Subjectivity has a strikingly low profile, for instance; debates over modernity and postmodernity in relation to memory are sparse; the idea of memory as political and contested, although visible in many of the individual essays, is absent in the structure.

In terms of global reach and internationalism, too, the picture is mixed. While contributors come from an impressive number of countries overall, more than half are located in either the United States or the United Kingdom. To some extent, this is inevitable in an English-language text, and there is a commendable range of other countries represented, with scholars from a number of European countries as well as Canada, Russia, Japan, Israel, Chile, and Turkey. It is also probably inevitable that there are gaps in terms of the geographical coverage. But with such a large and

ambitious collection, some of these gaps are hard to understand. The more or less complete absence of Africa, South Asia, Australasia, and much of the Middle East and South America (both in terms of subject and of contributing scholars) undermines the claim to global reach; if this was indeed the aim, then the editors needed to be more alert to these excluded voices in commissioning chapters.

There are many interesting and original essays in this collection, although the sheer scale makes it impossible to work through them in any detail. It is perhaps inevitable that in a collection of such a size the quality of the work is uneven, though. Some of the chapters seem to have been written by scholars with little familiarity with the field, who apply the concept of memory in a rather shallow and patchy way to their existing research interests elsewhere. It is noticeable, too, that three or four institutions seem to provide a disproportionate numbers of contributors, suggesting a collection that perhaps relies too much on existing networks.

Overall, then, there is much of interest in this handbook. There are some excellent essays. The remapping of the field generates some thought-provoking juxtapositions and disciplinary crossovers, even if at times it makes it hard to trace particular debates. The attempts to identify key themes are suggestive and worth reflecting on for scholars in many areas of memory studies. But perhaps the conclusion it suggests is that actually memory studies is now too expansive and diverse to be adequately captured in any single handbook, however large.

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Reviewed by: Daniel Levy, *Stony Brook University, USA*

Memory studies: what is it ... good for?

Reviewing this (hand)book turned out to be a daunting experience. There is the length. There is the depth. There is the breadth. There is the disciplinary diversity. Rather than attempting a comprehensive review, I will address a selection of themes that I can hopefully engage in a profitable way. This exercise is, of course, highly selective mainly because of the aforementioned thematic spread in the handbook and also due to my own limitations in traversing so many disciplines. In addition, I am about to take a rather unpopular stance against the inclusion of neuroscience and cognate fields in the humanistic study of memory, which I attribute to the fetish-like adulation of interdisciplinarity and the ever-present scientism.

During the past decade, there has been a persistent stream of introductory texts, compendia, encyclopedias, readers, and now this handbook explaining memory phenomena. What has been referred to as a “memory boom” or dismissed as a “memory fad” (Rosenfeld, 2009) has matured into a field of “memory studies” (Erl, 2011), which by now has its own history (Olick et al., 2011). This is true for its intellectual genealogy, its publication outlets (most notably this very journal providing a widely recognized and respected platform), and not least the kind of theoretical reflexivity that is the hallmark of an academic field. Yet despite, or perhaps precisely because of, these accomplishments, there is a defensive posture that frequently pops up when seeking to exonerate the continuing presence of memory studies. This stance is driven, among other things, by an

inferiority complex of sorts, which is primarily the product of the ongoing antagonism of memory and historiography. Related is a second condition, a kind of scientific fallacy. It is not uncommon for a new field that seeks to legitimize itself to display signs of scientism. Aside from the more mundane reasons explaining the emergence of a field of studies—for example, the publication–promotion nexus—there is another force lurking behind the success of the memory industrial complex, namely, the affinity between a persistent demand for or talk about interdisciplinarity in academia and the miscellaneous properties of memory that accommodate this imperative.

A brief look at the contested relationship between memory and history provides useful insights to understand this “defensive stance.” On the surface, it is simply a reaction against vocal critics who lament the outsized impact the memory boom of the last four decades has had. The charges against memory vary, but for the most part they come from historians. How ironic that some of the finest and most influential works on memory have been produced by historians, Pierre Nora first and foremost. Conversely, it is not a coincidence that the handbook basically features only one full-time historian, Patrick Hutton. He was among the first to address the productive tensions between historiography and memory and has long been among those advocating the transcendence of the memory–history divide. In many ways, the divide is constitutive for the origins of memory studies and its consolidation during the 1980s. Maurice Halbwachs was adamant about separating memory studies from history writing, and from psychology for that matter. Barry Schwartz echoes this view succinctly in this volume: “History’s goal is to rationalize the past; commemoration and its sites, to sanctify it. History makes the past an object of analysis; commemoration, an object of commitment” (p. 11).

Arguably, this clear-cut division never existed. It freezes both historiography and mnemography in categorical terms, succumbing to an epistemological fallacy, standing in the way of how both have changed in the course of time. I am deliberately misappropriating the term mnemography to designate the theories and methods memory scholars deploy. We can identify three positions. One relates to the abovementioned distinction between history and memory. This position is usually extolled by historians, but as we see above also by some memory scholars. See the usual references to, say, “fact versus interpretation,” “affection versus reason,” and other unsustainable dichotomies. A second, intermediate position acknowledges some commonalities and has yielded many interesting parallels. Whatever the merits or limitations of these two positions, they both need to be historicized. More specifically, as I will demonstrate, the link between the two is contingent on changing notions of temporality. This brings me to the third position, namely that contemporary historiography and mnemography have become indistinguishable. This is not a new argument. Hutton locates this conflation with postmodernism and the attendant constructivist turn. Nora, himself an ardent propagator of a memory–history divide and the progenitor of the popular concept of national *lieux des memoire*, inadvertently contributed to the dissolution of the divide since the early 1980s.

Mainstream historians simply ignore memory. And, truth told, memory scholars can and do ignore history or subject the latter to some kind of presentism. Some historians even castigate the memory boom, with its appeals to identity and emotions, as ultimately distorting historical truth. Timothy Snyder, a vocal critic, for instance, effectively equates memory scholarship with the properties of commemoration:

Commemoration requires no adequate explanation of the catastrophe, only an aesthetically realizable image of its victims. As cultures of memory supplant concern for history, the danger is that historians will find themselves drawn to explanations that are the simplest to convey.

This situation is exacerbated when we consider “the bad news [is] that ours is an age of memory rather history” (Snyder, 2013: p. 77).

The problem with this view is not only that it ignores the role historians have played in inventing nation-state myths, but that it draws on a caricature of memory studies. Snyder and many other mnemo-skeptics work with an a-historical view, asserting that “commemorative causality, the confusion between present resonance and past power, denies history its proper subject” (2013: p. 90). For Snyder,

the balance between present and past is always difficult to strike; finding it is the business of the historian. The task becomes impossible when the commemorative impulse of the present is confused with the past itself, such that what is easiest to represent becomes what it is easiest to argue. Then we have no serious explanations, only emotional reflexes. (2013: pp. 90–91)

The study of mnemonics is reduced to a pathological case of presentism, itself a topic attracting serious discussions among memory scholars, conveniently ignored by most historians.

Instead, a strong case can be made for the dissolution of the history–memory divide considering the ontological insecurity that is generated by skepticism toward the future and progress in particular. This has led, at least in the context of a secular vocabulary, to the diminishing return of progress as it has ceased to function as a cultural prophylaxis to uncertainty. As Chris Lorenz has argued, fundamental controversial parts of the past—that since 1990 have been labeled as

In the absence of this “cooling off” and considering the numerous intellectual attempts to avoid this linear fallacy, the separation between memory and history can no longer be sustained.

This convergence does not, however, necessarily translate to other disciplines. In their introduction, the editors complain about a “theoretical isolationism, most often underpinned by disciplinary conventions” (p. 1). For the most part, I agree with the statement especially when it comes to creating a shared language for the humanities and the lettered social sciences. However, this theoretical divide also, in large part, results from the incompatibility of certain disciplinary matrices. “Therefore, it is regularly the case that, for example, well-known phenomena in the field of neurophysiology are ignored by social scientists working on the same topic and vice versa” (Tota and Hagen, p. 1). This explains the addition of Part VI focusing on bodies and ecosystems. While I see a lot of fruitful exchange between the social sciences and the humanities, I cannot say the same for some of the disciplines represented in this last section of the *Handbook*. Medved and Brockmeier offer a succinct critique of the scientific imperialism characterizing these misbegotten attempts at interdisciplinarity:

In psychology, the move from the mental mind to the physical brain has been fueled by the advent of neuroimaging and the claim that it provides direct access to the complexities of brain functioning. In psychiatry, the increasing reliance on psychotropic medications is an additional factor. This dimension of meaning-making, crucial for the understanding of human experience and agency, has been completely lost in the neurobiological turn. [...] But only very little of this steadily expanding field of collective and cultural memory studies has made its way into the clinical and academic field of “memory disorders,” a field that has remained obdurately resistant to other possibilities of understanding remembering and forgetting. (p. 448)

The last four chapters (36–39) of the handbook provide ample evidence for this disconnect. They might very well represent the cutting edge of research in their fields, but they at best offer a tangential relation to memory and have no bearing on the preceding five parts. I suspect it will merely allow people like this reviewer to cultivate their prejudices about the limits of interdisciplinarity. To be sure, the feeling is mutual. That is, these chapters do not even bother to list references to the more canonical works that seek to bridge the social(science)–humanities gap. Despite the recurring lip-service to interdisciplinarity, Snow’s “two cultures” are alive and well. We can either lament this or recognize that this mutual indifference is actually borne out of different questions and interests. The volume comprises scholars who seek a conceptual surplus—mostly in the form of midrange and grounded theories; scholars who find avenues to apply mnemonic tools in their analysis; and scholars who tread lightly by appropriating memory terms. And then there are the neuro-scholars who engage memory in a largely metaphorical way, if at all. But enough said about that.

In general, the *Handbook* makes a valuable contribution to overcome another shortcoming of memory studies: namely, the national path-dependencies of memory cultures. For instance, Nora’s conservative regret about the shift from history to memory (identity) speaks to the deep roots of French republicanism. Jan Assmann’s conception of cultural memory can be interpreted as an attempt to safeguard (German) national traditions:

The implied idea is that the analytical framework that has emerged in different nations for the study of memories derives and is shaped by pasts in that particular nation. These memories are ultimately elaborated and inscribed in the national public discourse and drives the “methodological nationalism” present in much empirical work on memory. (Tota and Hagen, p. 1)

The problem is not that we continue to study national memories, but rather that we often neglect to examine them in relation to global trajectories. Firmly situating this shortcoming in the “third wave” of memory studies with its emphasis on the cosmopolitan or transnational is a welcome corrective.

By bringing together a wide disciplinary range of scholars from the humanities and the social sciences, the editors succeed to elevate the study of memory to another level of reflexivity. And unlike some edited publications, this one is not a case of “everything has been said just not by everyone.” The field of memory studies is heading for normalcy but hopefully not for complacency that frequently sets in with routinization. This *Handbook* then reminds us to keep historicizing our concepts.

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To date, political science has not played a prominent role in memory studies. However, that has begun to change—particularly in Europe. As Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen point out in their brief introduction to the *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, the field has

evolved differently in various national contexts. In Europe, and in Germany especially, research on memory politics and policy-making has made inroads into political science. It is visible in designated research sections in professional associations, active networks of scholars, and funding opportunities. In North America, by contrast, scholarship on remembrance politics remains relatively marginal, or at least not framed in terms of memory studies. At the annual meeting of the *American Political Science Association* and in mainstream journals, contributions on memory are scarce. Correspondingly, most characterizations of memory studies do not include political science in the line-up of key component disciplines. This is true for this *Handbook* as well: it contains only one contribution by a political scientist (Benjamin Nienass). This, however, does not undermine the possible utility of this volume for political scientists. Many of the authors here are explicitly concerned with the *politics* of memory. And more broadly for the political science community, the *Handbook* offers a timely opportunity to engage and guide scholars approaching the field for the first time.

Current events may well drive even greater interdisciplinary interest. Memory needs to be at the center of the debate over post-factual discourse, when we are struggling to understand what motivates leaders, how voters are persuaded, and how movements mobilize. Rational interests are demonstratively insufficient to explain the rage, distrust, and emotions driving populist movements and challenging established politics. Understanding historical legacies and emotional connections to memory are indispensable here. Political scientists have an important role in uncovering the instrumentalization of memory and the strategic conflation of history and remembrance. A return to an imagined past is a common feature of many contemporary populist movements. At the inaugural conference of the *Memory Studies Association* in Amsterdam in December 2016, Michael Rothberg called on memory scholars not only to study these phenomena, but to intervene actively in the “urgent matters of the day.” This appeal seems even more critical after the new US President signed an executive order—on Holocaust Remembrance Day—rejecting refugees and other migrants. The editors of the *Handbook* are entirely right to elevate a normative argument for memory studies as an important arena for political engagement because “scholarship represents a potential resource for constructing counter-memories based on pieces of evidence in order to provide visibility for neglected and ignored victims and survivors” (p. 3).

The stated goal of this ambitious, 40-chapter *Handbook* is to provide “a comprehensive distillation” of the pathways to the study of memory “from an interdisciplinary and international perspective” and in pursuit of a “multi-disciplinary conversation in an effort to spark ideas and reflections between islands” of memory research (p. 2). Given the clear and contemporary relevance of memory for politics, my purpose in this review is to assess whether this book successfully meets these goals in a way that provides political scientists with an overview of the state of the field and a sense of ongoing debates in memory studies. Does it introduce foundations and core concepts of the field? Could it persuade a skeptical political scientist that processes of remembrance deserve her attention?

A clear strength of this volume is the impressive collection of authors that were brought together—both in terms of the contributions that they have made to the study of memory and in terms of the diversity of their disciplinary backgrounds. Although sociologists are over-represented, the editors have assembled work from the humanities, social sciences, and hard sciences—in addition to chapters from well-known memory scholars such as Barry Schwartz, Jeffrey Olick, and Ann Rigney—in a way that no other book project has done. However, this eclecticism is also a weakness. There is little guidance from editors or authors to ease the challenge of discerning the core concerns and discussions in the field, let alone the cross-currents between different approaches. Newcomers to memory studies will find no clearly marked roadmap to the field in this volume.

However, there are many excellent contributions here. A set of chapters, especially in Part I on "Theories and perspectives," delivers a well-balanced mix of introduction to the foundations of memory studies with assessments of how these concerns continue to be negotiated. They also provide thought-provoking takes on the field as a whole. In this spirit, Barry Schwartz discusses the core concepts of history, collective memory, and commemoration, making the case that memory scholars should question the ways in which their work has stressed distortion and fallibility, rather than normal and positive functions of remembering. Patrick Hutton offers a very lucid introduction to the work and biographical development of Pierre Nora while also critically examining his impact on (French) mnemonic debates. Jeffrey Olick analyzes how the disciplinary and geographic location of memory scholarship shapes its focus and conceptual commitments, calling for more cross-national and interdisciplinary exchange. Ann Rigney situates the concept of "cultural memory" in the evolution of memory studies, emphasizing the dynamics of mediation and remediation. David Inglis takes stock of work on transnational memory processes, bringing together the globalization and memory literatures and providing a very useful overview in an increasingly complex subfield of memory studies. All of these are well suited to giving a relative novice to memory studies a way to access the emerging field of memory studies.

Then there are chapters that I appreciated due to their efforts to bring memory studies into fruitful conversation with other interdisciplinary fields. Kevin Loughran, Gary Fine, and Marcus Hunter do an especially good job of explaining how urban studies' attention to memory at various levels of analysis and action (city governments, developers, gentrifiers, and grassroots activists) can lead to new research directions. Diane Barthel-Bouchier discusses "cultural heritage"—a field of inquiry that is often viewed as a natural companion to memory—focusing on the agency behind the creation of heritage sites, including of cosmopolitan sites as part of a "global heritage community." Olga Shevchenko examines the various ways photography has been linked to remembrance, asking for instance "What can image politics reveal about memory politics and vice versa?" (p. 285). Together, these and other chapters provide a very good (though not exhaustive) introduction to what is currently being discussed in memory studies.

In addition, some contributions will be especially useful for political scientists. Ron Eyerman's regrettably short chapter is one of the few examples of linking social movements and memory studies. Eyerman argues that "social movements make strategic use of the past and they are important social forces in carrying the past into the future" (p. 83). Thomas Eberle's account of how to study organizational memory—with his attention to how memories are distributed through the division of labor and how the commemorative narratives of management may differ from those of lower-rung members of an organization—should be instructive for students of bureaucratic politics, among others. Vered Vinitsky-Seroussi outlines her concept of "banal commemorations" as a counterweight to previously dominant accounts of official remembrance, distinguishing between top-down and bottom-processes of everyday commemoration that powerfully shape approaches to the past. Several chapters in Part V will be of interest to those who study the politics of (counter) terror, representation of violence, and catastrophes. Particularly insightful is Philip Seaton's discussion of how war memories are linked to the commemoration of natural disasters in Japan.

Many of the remaining chapters are case studies, and while most are well-crafted, I found them to be too specialized for a handbook. Cumulatively, they are a rich resource and also offer interesting insights into the methodologies employed by memory scholars. This aspect might have been harnessed to address what I felt was a gap in this volume: the dearth of explicit discussion of methodology. The case studies demonstrate that memory studies has much to offer that is innovative, not only in terms of content but also in research approach. A case in point is Trevor Hagen's use of "relational pairs" to analyze the mnemonic narrative revolving around the oppositional band "Plastic People of the Universe" in the Czech Republic. Another is Pinar Güran-Aydin and Tia

DeNora's examination of narratives of "Turkishness" in music (production) in Berlin. As it stands, however, the editors do not provide enough guidance (which might have taken the form of a much more comprehensive introduction or explanatory pieces at the beginning of each section) to make these chapters more accessible by highlighting key themes or pointing out what insights they offer about the field.

The main way in which the reader is supported in her quest to make sense of memory studies is the volume's division into six parts. These are broad umbrella concepts and divide up the field logically. I had especially high hopes for Part IV "Technologies of memory," which encompasses issues that I believe are in dire need of development in memory studies and which I also expected to discuss innovative methodological practices. The technologies under scrutiny here include music, cinema, photography, "brick-and-mortar" memorials, and autobiographical accounts. Strangely missing is a contribution that tackles the challenges posed by digital media, above all the Internet, but also the use of mobile devices in memory production, reception, and archiving. While individual chapters touch on digitalization, a more comprehensive treatment would have been welcome in a handbook.

On one hand, Part VI on "Body and ecosystems" could be seen as an unprecedented contribution to memory studies in the sense that proponents of the field often point out its tremendous breadth—stretching from literary studies via the social sciences all the way to psychology, biology, medicine, and neuroscience. This volume is one of the few places where these diverse perspectives are actually put together between two book covers. However, after reviewing this final part, I am more skeptical than before about the practical possibility of actually talking across the boundaries between hard sciences and the rest of us. Neither the editors nor the authors suggest how these studies about memory in evolution, in cells, in water, in bodies—each in their own territory fascinating—can inform how we think about individual, social, and political processes of remembrance. Since the scientific languages employed here are very far from my own, I would have needed significant translation to make them fruitful for my own thinking.

Overall then, the *Handbook* is a valuable resource and an impressive collection of memory scholarship that will be useful to political scientists already engaged in or considering the field. However, it does not quite deliver the "multi-disciplinary conversation" it promises and is at times rather "difficult to manage" (p. 2)—something that the editors were hoping to avoid.

Rethinking the field of memory studies: A reply

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"Have no fear of perfection, you will never reach it"

Salvador Dali

Dali offers the only possible advice to editors of a project such as this one. Forty chapters, almost 50 authors coming from 17 countries and universities and 3 years in the making, the editors had no need to fear perfection. We are therefore grateful to the editors of the journal *Memory Studies* for hosting this review symposium which, in our view, has opened up many potential directions for the future of this interdisciplinary field.

In fact, we note at the outset that the reviewers of this *Handbook* hail from five disciplines—philosophy, psychology, cultural history, sociology, and political science. While what they have to say is not always complimentary, and while we might wish to, and shall, engage in further debate