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Afterword
Locating Transnational Memory

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This special issue demonstrates the strengths of a located approach to transnational memory. The issue focuses intensively on Argentina and Spain, but also makes forays into Brazil, France, Germany, Mexico, and Sri Lanka, among other locations. By 'located' I do not mean simply 'local' – indeed, negotiating the question of the local and its relation to the global is high on the agenda of this special issue. A located approach to transnational memory might take inspiration from the feminist poet and essayist Adrienne Rich's concept of a 'politics of location'.[1] A politics of location does indeed pay rigorous attention to the local – starting from the intimate terrain of the body – but it situates such attention in relation to other scales: from the regional to the national to the global. While Rich's essay 'Notes toward a Politics of Location' does not address the question of memory directly, her famous assertion that 'a place on the map is also a place in history' resonates with the stakes of the essays collected here – essays that deal, as does Rich's 'Notes', with the contradictory and intersecting legacies of state-sponsored violence (Ref. 1, p. 212).

Taken as a whole, *Transnational Memory in the Hispanic World* helps us think through the mnemonic politics of location in a globalizing age. Together, the essays reveal how transnational memories emerge in the contact between different scales and idioms. Several of the contributions explore traumatic experiences of torture, disappearance, and war as they impact the bodies of individual subjects: from the ESMA survivors in Liliana Ruth Feierstein's essay on the collective testimony *Ese infierno* to the globally disappeared figures evoked by Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost*, discussed here by Gabriele Schwab. All of the essays take the national scale seriously, but the volume also draws attention to the border-crossing flows of people, images, ideas, and memorial forms. Thus, these essays are concerned with such quintessentially transnational issues as the search for new passports (Nadia Lie), the circulation of memorial forms across continents and contexts (Estela Schindel), and the two-way memory transfers between Latin America and Spain via the shared symbol of the *desaparecido* (Aleida Assmann; Silvana Mandolessi and Mariana Eva Perez). Some of the essays also probe the more abstract scales of the civilizational, the universal, and the global: Maarten van Delden argues that the presence of the

Holocaust in Mexican literature testifies to the authors' assertion that they are part of a shared 'Western' history; Dagmar Vandebosch sees Antonio Muñoz Molina's novel *Sepharad* as caught between a transnational perspective and a 'desire to narrate universal experiences of victimization', and Adriana Bergero understands Guillermo Del Toro's films about the Spanish Civil War and Francoist dictatorship as part of a reaction to globalizing discourses of human rights and trauma.

Of course, investigating transnational memory does not only entail moving from the local toward the global or 'jumping scales', in the phrase of the geographer Neil Smith.[2] Such an investigation must also take into account, as Assmann asserts, the blockages – ideological or material – that prevent circulation and movement. By giving readers a strong sense of a multi-scalar world – with all of the tensions and contradictions that come with the contact of different locations – the essays collected here implicitly respond to Susannah Radstone's concern that transnational and transcultural approaches to memory may reproduce too perfectly the neoliberal utopia of a borderless world. For Radstone, 'there remains something more than a little paradoxical, as well as instrumental […] about the attempt to produce a fully "globalizable" version of memory studies, for memory research, like memory itself (notwithstanding possibilities for transmission and translation) is always located – it is […] specific to its site of production and practice.'[3] Because this volume grounds its approach in 'the Hispanic world' – but also admits that that world is not hermetically sealed off from other linguistic and cultural worlds – it avoids the temptation of moving too quickly to the 'fully "globalizable" version of memory studies' that concerns Radstone.

Radstone's foregrounding of locatedness as a response to the transnational and transcultural turn in memory studies should be distinguished from a return to some notion of the purely local. Location can never be reduced to a point in space. Indeed, as Sharon Macdonald writes in a study of a seemingly very local case – the memorial legacies and material remnants of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg – the 'situations and frames' of remembrance:

> are simultaneously local and beyond local. That is, they involve specific local conditions and actors but these never act in a vacuum, even when they are actively producing 'locality'. Instead, [...] local actions are frequently negotiated through comparisons with other places, through concepts and ideas produced elsewhere and that may even have global circulation, and through the sense of being judged by others. They are also negotiated in relation to legislation, political structures and economic considerations which are rarely exclusively local.[4]

Although focused predominantly on a very particular case of the instantiation and articulation of memory, Macdonald's study of the negotiation of 'difficult heritage' in Nuremberg reveals how the transnational turn can be important even for work at other, smaller scales – an insight that is echoed in many of the essays collected here. In addition, Radstone's desire to 'brin[g] memory's "travels" back home' must be accomplished with care, since, as a feminist scholar such as Radstone knows well, 'home' is a contested terrain that can easily come to serve patriarchal, nationalist, and racist ideologies (Ref. 3, p. 120). In returning to the locations of memory, we should lose track neither of how nation-states seek to retain hegemony by producing purified

memories of home, homeland, and *Heimat* nor of the ways that transnational and transcultural processes can 'unhome' the homogeneous conceptions of local and national community that ground both nationalist ideologies and some conceptions of memory. The essays in this special issue all deal forthrightly with questions of political conflict and trauma, and none of them falls victim to a nostalgic vision of the local or the national.

A transnational memory studies oriented by a politics of location and aware of its own locatedness in an uneven world can move between the too-abstract poles of the local and the global and instead uncover the rich terrain in between. This is the realm of what anthropologist James Clifford calls '"big-enough", more-than-local narratives: histories that travel and translate, but without cumulating in a coherent destiny'.[5] In order to grasp this 'more-than-local' space and think through the locatedness of mnemonic practices in a world of intersecting scales and transnational flows, I have proposed a multidirectional approach to cultural memory.[6] The multidirectional approach seeks to contribute to memory studies at three levels: descriptive, normative, and analytic. At the first level, the hypothesis of memory's multidirectionality is meant to capture the non-zero-sum dynamics of remembrance in a culturally heterogeneous, multipolar world. That is, I suggest that all acts of memory that enter public space necessarily enter simultaneously into dialogue with practices and traditions of memory that seem at first distant from them; this dialogue is above all *productive*, even if it is also at times filled with tension and even violence. The production of memory is multidirectional to the extent that it overflows the boundaries of given identities, including nations, memory groups, and other communities. The theory of multidirectional memory does not 'presume[e] an initial separation between [such] communities prior to the initiation of the dialogue', as Maarten van Delden asserts. Rather, groups emerge in the very articulation of memory; they come into being in a dialogic space, in the contact (and sometimes conflict) between different narratives, images, and affective modes. At least in certain contexts, this multidirectional dynamic can take on normative dimensions: the dialogic productivity of remembrance can lead to new visions of solidarity and new possibilities of coexistence amidst (and despite) the multiple, intersecting – and even competing – traumas of modern life. Finally, the multidirectional approach offers a particular analytical perspective. Even in situations where intersecting histories may not be in the foreground and solidarities are hard to find, a multidirectional methodological lens helps keep investigation open. It does so by alerting critics to the processual and relational dimensions of remembrance, to the fact that remembrance always performs and evokes more than appears on the surface.

Within the theory of multidirectional memory, acts of remembrance can thus be understood as processes of articulation in the two senses of that word given to it by Stuart Hall: they are acts of enunciation and they are acts of connection.[7] In Clifford's words, '[a]rticulation denotes real and consequential connections, but relations that are partial and not inevitable or ultimately determined' (Ref. 5, p. 303), *Transnational Memory in the Hispanic World* abounds with examples of these kinds of multidirectional articulations: most powerfully, the real and consequential

connections articulated between the legacies of the Spanish Civil War, Franco, and the Argentine junta via the symbol of the disappeared and the activism of judge Baltasar Garzón. Because articulation also involves enunciation, the fields of rhetoric and aesthetics are central to these kinds of connections. Philippe Mesnard traces some of the rhetorical means through which such connections are forged. He emphasizes especially the work of analogy, allegory, and metaphor in the construction of a transnational mnemonic imaginary, and he tracks the shifting meanings of victimhood that enable (and disable) certain kinds of multidirectional links. Mandolessi and Perez offer a similar analysis of the Spanish–Argentine transfer. However, they not only trace the public debate that has made the figure of the *desaparecido* so powerful transnationally; they also show how social discourse cannot fully explain the meanings of disappearance in a literary work such as Isaac Rosa's novel *El vano ayer*. We see an analogous set of open-ended, multidirectional meanings created by the theatre of Juan Mayorga and Antonio Álamo, as described in Mabel Brizuela's essay. As Clifford also insists, there is always a level of contingency (and thus freedom) in each articulation, however constrained.

The forms of dialogue, connection, and translation that take place in multidirectional encounters do not take place on an even playing field – a point that I probably did not make explicit enough in *Multidirectional Memory*. The question of memory and power is one of the most pressing for theorists of social and cultural remembrance, and one that the field has not yet adequately addressed. Here again, the theory of articulation may be helpful. As Clifford writes, 'the concept of articulation presumes powerful, but contingent, social, cultural, and economic links, alliances, and negotiations' (Ref. 5). This combination of constraint and contingency provides a useful framework for thinking about how memory articulates with power. It goes without saying that powerful forces – and especially the state – will attempt to create historical memory in its own image and to cast it in stone. But state-sanctioned memory and enforced forgetting can only ever tell half the story. Posed against the state are the forms of counter-memory that emerge from what Bergero calls the 'otherlands' of remembrance.[8] To be sure, counter-memory often starts locally and requires what Schindel describes as 'a slow construction made out of little gestures and local practices' – an apt reminder of how scale contours acts of memory. Yet, while tensions will always remain between different scales and locations of remembrance, the essays here demonstrate how cross-border multidirectional links – in the form of analogies, allegories, transnational agents, and transferable symbols – can help unsettle scalar hierarchies and challenge the hegemony of state-sponsored remembering and forgetting. The dynamic of multidirectional memory comes with no guarantees, but it does help constitute a terrain for practising a politics of location that articulates local concerns with national and transnational scales. To reprise Rich's words: 'a place on the map is also a place in history'.

References and Notes

1. A. Rich (1986) Notes toward a politics of location. *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (New York: Norton), pp. 210–231.

2. See N. Smith (1992) Contours of a spatialized politics: homeless vehicles and the produce of geographical scale. *Social Text*, **33**, pp. 54–81.
3. S. Radstone (2011) What place is this? Transcultural memory and the locations of memory studies. *Parallax*, **17**(4), pp. 109–123; 113–114.
4. S. Macdonald (2009) *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (New York: Routledge), p. 4.
5. J. Clifford (2013) *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), p. 41.
6. M. Rothberg (2009) *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
7. See S. Hall (1986) On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, **10**(2), pp. 45–60. In her keynote lecture at the *Diasporic Memories, Comparative Methodologies* conference at the University of Illinois (1 November 2013), Ann Rigney also used the concept of 'articulation' in a similar sense. Her lecture was entitled 'Diaspora Poetics and the Articulations of Memory.'
8. Lie's useful distinction between 'centripetal' forms of multidirectional memory that confirm the nation's identity and 'centrifugal' forms that unsettle it is also relevant here.

About the Author

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