

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

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Monika Palmberger and Jelena Tošić (eds)

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

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

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

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

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

as well as trigger more empathic approaches towards the latter's accounts of experiences of violence, as their comprehensive recollection plays a key role in granting them the right to asylum (see Fassin, 2011; Fassin and Rechtman, 2009).

Three themes come to the fore in this book. First, similar to other works by Monika Palmberger (2010, 2013, 2017), a specific attention is paid to the question of generations, namely, how different generations within the same social group remember past events in diverse and nuanced ways. Memories are somehow inherited by younger relatives, who tend to have mixed memories, where both their elders' and their own meanings are embedded within the same representations. The contributors argue that this does not necessarily mean that memory gets weaker with the passing of time and as first-hand witnesses pass away; it may also reshuffle and acquire alternative and unpredictable meanings. Besides, second generations find themselves caught in a dramatic and paradoxical experience: on one hand, they are considered unable to fully remember, as they were too young or not even born when the elders experienced the trauma; on the other hand, they are required to mourn something that was not lived through but that contributes to defining the identity of the community.

Another significant theme is the function of objects as elements that foster remembering. Natalia Alonso Rey (Chapter 5, 'Memory in Motion: Photographs in Suitcases') has studied the use of photographs by four Uruguayan women moving to Spain for work, thoroughly reporting on the meanings these images carry for the migrant women, the wide range of emotions they can evoke, from relief to nostalgia. Along the same line, Annika Lems (Chapter 6, 'Mobile Temporalities: Place, Ruination and the Dialectics of Time') has investigated the memory process that a Somali refugee manages to activate by simply looking at pictures he had recently taken, and thereby recollecting places as they were before the war, when he used to study in Mogadishu.

Finally, the political use of memory within transnational communities is also documented in the volume. Regardless of the fact that the Bangladeshi immigrants in Portugal interviewed by José Mapril (Chapter 10, 'A Past that Hurts: Memory, Politics and Transnationalism between Bangladesh and Portugal') do not plan to go back any time soon, they resort to memory of civil war and post-conflict political struggle in order to claim for themselves the role of the most legitimate representatives of the migrant community abroad. Another political weaponization of memory is investigated by Sanda Üllen (Chapter 4, 'Ambivalent Sites of Memories: The Meaning of Family Homes for Transnational Families'), who devotes her research to a family of Bosnian refugees to Sweden. The mother, although she obtained Swedish citizenship and has lived in Sweden for decades, does not wish to abandon or sell the house they left in Bosnia during the war. The mere act of owning the building and spending the summer months there delivers a powerful political message to the former occupiers and, more broadly, to the political actors that once forced them to flee: 'we are still here'.

All contributions are insightful and thought-provoking. Nevertheless, some criticism may be raised. The concept of 'movement' is understood in a rather broad and all-encompassing way, thus presenting memories of anything that involved moving: from the Bangladeshi migration to Portugal to the Kurdish diaspora in Germany; from Polish Jews that left Poland in the 1950s to Bosnian refugees eventually setting in Denmark during the war in former Yugoslavia. It is debatable whether such a hazy definition of 'movement' can translate into a full-blown heuristic tool. Some contributions, for instance, focus on the action of movement itself, presenting two different situations before and after the journey, whereas others describe people relocating somewhere else, but the action is analysed only insofar as it produces displacement as an outcome, not as an action that contributes to shaping memory and as such is worth investigating.

Moreover, in one case – namely, the legendary account of nomadic proto-Hungarians allegedly coming from Central Asia – not even a family or a (demonstrated) communitarian connection can

be traced between the objects of the ethnographic research and the actors that actually moved. Consequently, the distinction between the lived memories of former refugees and the made-up memories of ancient peoples reaching Hungary from today's Kazakhstan gets blurred. If 'movement' is not a well-knit concept, it may be asked, then which memory does not involve movement at all, given that the high majority of our recollections revolve around events that happened outside the home environment, or around historical events that occurred in the past to the national, religious or political community we now pledge allegiance to. Does not a classical *lieu de mémoire* (Nora, 1989), such as a war memorial erected on a former battlefield, imply that two different armies convened there to fight, so that soldiers were ordered to leave their houses? Interestingly, one of the authors in his contribution to the volume warns that 'nostalgically remembering something of one's childhood and youth and participating in a social movement that attempts to revive and relive certain aspects of a distant past are clearly not the same' (Kurti, Chapter 6, pp. 220–221). This claim can be used to question the overall consistency of the book, which remains nevertheless an insightful tool for a better understanding of the ways memories imply and make sense of moving. To fruitfully move forward in the much-needed study of the relation between movement and memory, the former might, however, entail a more precise conceptualization.

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Author biography

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Bradford Vivian

Commonplace Witnessing: Rhetorical Invention, Historical Remembrance and Public Culture. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, 248 pp. \$74.00, ISBN 9780190611088.

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Bradford Vivian's *Commonplace Witnessing* is a work of ambitious scope and incisive scholarship that analyses 'how, and with what socio-political consequences, idioms of witnessing have infused the public discourse of ordinary citizens, politicians and civic institutions in recent decades' (p. 2). As Vivian shows, witnessing is a more adaptable, malleable, and widespread practice on the public