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Memory Studies 2013 6: 370

DOI: 10.1177/1750698013482868

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6(3) 370–383

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DOI: 10.1177/1750698013482868

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Abstract

This essay surveys the fields of oral history and memory studies in Australia since the publication of the landmark volume *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia* in 1994. It argues that the practice of oral history has been central to memory studies in Australia, and explores key texts relating to the memory and commemoration of war, colonialism, Indigenous histories, trauma and witnessing in Australian society.

Keywords

Australian history, commemoration, memory, oral history, trauma and memory, witnessing

But oral history – which represented a moment of democratisation in the writing of history – in fact acted like the Trojan horse in historiography through which the soldiers of Memoryland eventually came.

Chakrabarty (2001: 10)

In 1994, we brought together a collection of essays examining the inter-relationship of memory and history in Australia, which ran to two editions with Oxford University Press. It was the first attempt to survey what was then a new field of inquiry, anchored by the application and meaning of oral sources in the writing of history. However, our interests, and those of the contributing authors to the volume, were more sweeping. We were concerned that much oral history practice remained uncritically celebratory and we saw memory studies and its capacity to unsettle and illuminate aspects of the past as a way to explore ‘what it means to remember’ (Frisch, 1990: 189).

The publication of the English language editions of Pierre Nora’s (1992–1998) work on the French nation, *Realms of Memory*, had alerted us to its concept of *lieux de memoire* and the spatial

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dimensions of memory work. We were also influenced by wider trends in the democratization of historical research, including feminist scholarship. Oral sources provided a hitherto untapped archive of those omitted from the existing historical record: women, Indigenous peoples, the working class and migrants. The 1988 Bicentennial of British colonization in Australia had triggered public discussion about the political legacies of the past, prompting our interest in the representations of history through institutional and commemorative events.

The scholars we invited to showcase their research in *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia* shared our historiographical concerns, and many were involved in oral history. Their essays examined how multiple Australian histories were individually and collectively remembered, with analyses that took into account such determinants as gender or the role of popular culture, and empirical studies of the social practices and sites of remembrance, from war cemeteries to museum exhibitions (Darian-Smith and Hamilton, 1994/1997). Widely regarded as a landmark text, the book made a critical interjection into the theoretical and methodological debates about the relationships between history, memory and nation occurring in the 1990s. We revisit the volume as a starting point in reviewing the subsequent development of memory work in Australia.

Two decades after its publication, many of the original concerns in *History and Memory* remain relevant – although Australian memory research has certainly expanded and diversified. Indeed, in Australia as elsewhere, there has been an overwhelming salience and growth of all forms of memory work. Public interest in history and memory now far exceeds academic memory studies, whereby memory is an object of study by professional historians. Representations of the past saturate large areas of entertainment, popular culture and commercial exchange. There has been, for instance, a significant increase in the cultural production and demand for historical novels, history writing in various modes, historical films and television programmes, historic sites, museums and memorials; indeed, each of these are themselves growing areas of academic focus (Ashton and Hamilton, 2010; De Groot, 2009). At the same time, forms of remembering and commemoration have become the central contemporary mode through which various constituencies understand history, including the national past. Eric Hobsbawm recognized this phenomenon, claiming that the ‘twentieth century is in the grip of memory’ (Hobsbawm, 1993).

In some countries, the fields of oral history and cultural memory studies were to diverge during the 1990s. The infrastructure for oral history as a ‘movement’ developed on both national and international levels and was linked to public history and community practice, while much memory scholarship remained firmly in the academy. However, the disconnection between oral history practice and the analysis of memory (Hamilton and Shopes, 2008) is not especially evident in Australia. Many oral historians located in universities have been simultaneously involved in community projects. In a post-colonial society like Australia, it is perhaps more difficult to differentiate between the use of oral history as an element of social advocacy or as the basis for scholarly memory work and theorization.

Of course, the extent of broadly defined ‘memory scholarship’ and its ubiquitous circulation across academic disciplines, continents and cultures make the task of exploring its historiography in one particular country somewhat problematic. In its initial stage, memory work in Australia was almost exclusively framed by overtly national concerns. The notion of ‘collective memory’ was utilized through representational methodologies as a concept for negotiating how a coherent national past was remembered, forgotten or contested. By the early 2000s, however, the limitations of the ‘national’ in the analysis of individual or group remembrance were becoming clearly apparent. This was especially so in studies that explored the dynamics of memory transmission across generations or the complex processes through which memories are negotiated at a localized level in response to international events.

At the same time, political anxieties about the contemporary legacies of history, most notably in relation to the colonial treatment of Indigenous peoples, have been a visible presence in Australian media and in policy debate since the 1980s. These ‘history wars’ intensified in the 1990s, when the conservative government of Prime Minister John Howard (1996–2007) rejected histories that recognized past violence and racism in Australia, thus injecting a new urgency into much memory scholarship. Historians now had a role to play as public intellectuals, including contributing to tussles about the content of Australia’s first national history curriculum (Ashton and Hamilton, 2007: 51–62; Macintyre and Clark, 2004).

From the 1990s, in Australia and elsewhere, there was also a more complex academic examination of the meanings attributed to the oral record of the past (Perks and Thomson, 1998/2006). By the early 2000s, oral historians were critically aware that they do not simply seek to discover and interpret sources that incorporate personal memory, but actively intervene to bring such sources into existence (Abrams, 2010: 23). The interview process and its creation of the historical record collapsed the traditional distinction between the present and the past in historical scholarship and facilitated more widely conceived memory work (Hamilton, 2003). Some studies drew upon revised approaches to imperial and Indigenous histories informed by post-colonial critique or upon culturally rich histories of remembrance, as in Jay Winter’s (1995) book on memory and the Great War in Europe.

Once assumed to be oppositional, memory and history have now come to be understood as inextricably entangled in terms of scholarly definitions and in the circulation of historical knowledge. In this article, we survey how the field has evolved over two decades. Two early influential texts, written by contributors to our volume – Alistair Thomson’s (1994) *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* and Chris Healy’s (1997) *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory* – exemplify different approaches to memory work as well as the importance of studies of war and colonialism.

War memories

Alistair Thomson’s focus in *Anzac Memories* was the oral histories of First World War veterans. Thomson was influenced by European scholars such as Luisa Passerini (1987) and Alessandro Portelli (1991) for whom oral history was a practice that connected with contemporary ideas about how memory operates as a social or cultural phenomenon. Thomson combined these insights with the work of the British psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, giving his analysis of individual memories psychological depth. His history had considerable impact on oral historians, as well as on strengthening the interdisciplinary approaches to history and memory.

Since Thomson’s pioneering study, war memory has become a major industry in Australia and elsewhere. However, the Australian war experience, with almost no combatant sites on national soil and major wars fought overseas, is distinctive. Despite this absence of battle sites or burial grounds – or precisely as a result of it – the momentous impact of the First World War, and its proportionally high casualty rate, has cast a long shadow over twentieth-century Australia. Family, community and government commemorations in the 1920s and 1930s took the form of thousands of monuments, the formalization of Anzac Day ceremonies and the establishment of the Australian War Memorial, which opened in 1941 as the country’s first national museum. The ‘tradition’ of public remembrance continued after 1945, although later memorials were more pragmatically associated with community infrastructure such as shire halls, sports grounds and swimming pools (see Ashton et al., 2012).

Indeed, by 2000, the Second World War had undergone a 're-enchantment' within contemporary mass culture internationally (Keren and Herwig, 2009). In 1995, the federal government's 'Australia Remembers 1945' programme funded a year of nationwide commemorations (Reed, 2004). Ken Inglis (2008) – who has termed war memorials as 'sacred places' in a secular Australia – has documented the extraordinary surge of new memorials erected since the 1990s. During the era of the Howard government, some 13 memorials to Australia's military efforts were constructed overseas, while those on the symbolic axis of Anzac Parade in Canberra grew from 2 in 1983 to 11 by 2010 (Beaumont, 2012). There is no sign that this recent resurgence of military histories, huge crowds at Anzac Day and public commemorations of war is abating in Australia (Scates, 2006). With the centenary of the First World War looming, the Anzac Centenary Programme will allocate more than AUD\$83 million for educational and 'community awareness' materials, museum exhibitions and other activities that explore Australian experiences, both military and civilian, across all wars.

The growing prominence of Second World War remembrance has coincided with Australia's strengthening of its political and economic links within the Asia-Pacific region. Increasing visits by younger Australians to places that gained national significance during the Pacific War, including the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea, can be seen as both a homage to the past and a present-day interaction with Australia's near neighbours. Public remembrance of Australian prisoners of war (POWs) captured by the Japanese has become more prominent. Joan Beaumont (2005) has argued that POW experience, originally perceived as shameful and 'unmanly', has been incorporated into a heroic national memory. Other studies have examined how POW experiences have been transmitted across generations and through the media (Hamilton, 2010), and also the fate of Australia's 'forgotten' civilian internees in the region (Twomey, 2008).

There has also been a recent interest in the war trauma experienced by individuals and communities, as attention has been directed to the place of emotion in history. These include Tanja Luckins' (2004) powerful history of mourning and remembrance during and after the First World War (also see Larsson, 2009). Other work has explored loss and memory through oral histories, including studies of the political activism of war widows (Damousi, 1999, 2001). Australian research has also expanded and complemented British and American studies of women's wartime service, and how this has been celebrated or obscured in national war memory. Kate Darian-Smith's (1990/2009, 1996) analysis of women's narratives of romance during the Second World War has, for instance, contributed to wider understandings of the subjectivity of gendered memory within distinctive social and cultural conditions.

The extensive focus in international memory studies on the Jewish Holocaust and the European legacies of the Second World War has led Richard Crownshaw et al. (2012) to argue that 'Holocaust memory becomes the paradigm by which other traumas are remembered, both framing and eclipsing local histories' (p. 225). This can be seen, at least in part, in the study of war remembrance in Australia. Initial scholarship aimed to fend off forgetfulness, especially as the generations who lived through the First and Second World Wars were dying out. This impetus has arguably been replaced by an 'over-determined' obsession with remembering as a response to trauma and violence (Winter, 2006: 19). This has meant that particular aspects of a therapeutic discourse have pervaded public life, in a contemporary culture that is increasingly confessional. This form of war memory has been primarily represented through reference to individual narratives of how it felt to be there. In what is now the 'era of the witness', the testimony of survivors has become central to the meanings of war and other traumatic experiences, including the legacies of British colonialism (Wieviorka, 2006: 19).

Memory and colonialism

Since the 1990s, and in parallel with Australian studies of war remembrance, there has been growth in Australian scholarship tracing the legacies of the colonial regime, including frontier violence. Chris Healy's *From the Ruins of Colonialism* was among the first texts to analyse the political project of post-colonialism, arguing for the reconstitution of national history as social memory based on Indigenous narratives. Healy had been involved with the Birmingham 'popular memory' group, which had explored the dynamics of memory through the discipline of cultural studies. His theorization of colonialism was influential for subsequent studies of memory in anthropology and cultural studies as well as in history. At the same time, there was an increase in the publication and popularity of Indigenous autobiographies (Van Toorn, 2001).

Oral testimonies have, of course, been particularly important in documenting Indigenous histories. The 1980s and 1990s saw studies that recognized the oral culture of Indigenous peoples (Benterrak et al., 1984). Historian Ann McGrath's (1987) history of Aboriginal cattlemen in the Northern Territory was complemented by anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose's ethnographic 'hidden histories' of Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Victoria River region, and both drew upon oral recollections (Rose, 1991, 1992/2000).

Rose was interested in how the problems confronting Indigenous communities in the present were the result of historical circumstance. She is among several scholars who have made key contributions to memory studies through advocacy work with Indigenous peoples. The foremost is Peter Read (1999), who is the co-founder of the Link-Up organization, which reunites adult Indigenous people with their families, and who coined the term 'Stolen Generations' to acknowledge the policy of Indigenous child removal by white authorities from the colonial period to the 1970s. Heather Goodall's (1996, 2006) oral histories with Indigenous people broke new ground by presenting a history of Aboriginal activism and engagement with the land. Ann Curthoys' (2002) memoir of the anti-racist 'Freedom Rides' of the 1960s provides an important personal reflection.

Drawing on a broader memory framework, Maria Nugent's (2005) research has provided insight into the meanings of place for Aboriginal communities. Her study of Botany Bay argues its significance as 'the birthplace of a nation' has obscured an alternative, and even subversive, practice of Aboriginal history-making. Katrina Schlunke's (2005) idiosyncratic 'autobiography of a massacre' interrogates family and community memories to construct a history of settler violence at Bluff Rock. Healy (2008), building on his earlier interest in social memory, has since claimed that white Australians have continually 'forgotten Aborigines', cyclically erasing and then remembering an Indigenous presence. Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck (2012) have looked at the legacies of frontier violence in South Australia, claiming that 'The events of the past, and the questions of how they were recorded and remembered, are not separable ones but are inexorably linked, and those links maintained in memory' (p. 9; see also Foster et al., 2001).

In an important contribution to the scholarly debate, Bain Attwood (2001, 2008) has explored how the Stolen Generations narrative came to be strategically adopted as a 'collective' memory. He argues that the story of Aboriginal children being taken away from their families as a result of government practice has moved from highly specific localized knowledge among the Wiradjuri and the Yorta-Yorta groups to become an encompassing national 'meta-narrative' (Attwood, 2008: 206–212). Attwood's work reveals how the creation of memory about the Stolen Generations has been mutually constituted, and its mobilization by Indigenous people has become an important element in collective identity. Henry Reynolds (2000) and Anna Haebich (2000), among others, have added the weight of their historical research to the general understanding of the Stolen Generations as a counter-memory to an unproblematic national history.

In the public sphere, too, there has been an unprecedented interest in the remembrance of Australia's colonial history. The 1990s and early 2000s saw intense debate in Australia about Aboriginal health, incarceration rates and land rights. In 1992, the High Court delivered the Mabo Judgement, overturning the legal doctrine that Australia was terra nullius at the time of British settlement; in 1993, the Native Title Act was passed. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) undertook an Inquiry into the Stolen Generations, gathering evidence from more than 500 people; these memories underpinned HREOC's report, *Bringing Them Home* (1997). The National Library of Australia also undertook a major oral history project with the Stolen Generations. The testimonies in *Bringing Them Home* galvanized many within the white community and fuelled the popular reconciliation movement. Reconciliation involved collective and individual recognition and atonement for past wrongs, enacted through the signing of 'Sorry Books' by the non-Indigenous Australian public and the dedication of a national commemorative site in Canberra and other localized memorials.

The veracity of memories of the Stolen Generations, however, was to be challenged by conservative commentators. In the so-called history wars, questions of historical 'truth' were raised in relation to the dispossession of Indigenous people, and the responsibility of governments to acknowledge past wrongs through compensation and title to land (Celermajer and Moses, 2010; Macintyre and Clark, 2004). Controversy raged over conservative claims that academic historians had 'fabricated' numerical estimates of the number of Indigenous people killed by Europeans in the colonial period. The National Museum of Australia, opened in 2001, was subjected to a government review of its presentation of history, and directed to remove an exhibit based upon the transmission of oral memories of a massacre of Aboriginal people (Gore, 2010; Macintyre and Clark, 2004).

By 2008, the political mood had changed. As leader of a new Labor government, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (2007–2010) delivered a national apology in the Australian parliament to the members of the Stolen Generations, an event regarded as an historic turning point in Australian historical consciousness. Rudd's (2008) speech drew powerfully upon the memories of Indigenous individuals, and remembered the shameful past that Howard has denied and forgotten. In 2009, Rudd made a second national apology, this time to the Forgotten Australians (a term referring to children who had been institutionalized) and Former Child Migrants. Again, his speech was fashioned around the notion that personal memories demanded an ethical response. Both apologies were, as Kelly Jean Butler (2013) has argued, acts of 'collective witnessing' and signalled a 'new national community forged through the truth of Indigenous peoples' testimony' (p. 3). The apologies demonstrate the role of government intervention in the national negotiation of remembrance, and the uses of memory to meet political objectives. As Jane Haggis (2005) has more expansively argued, 'institutionalising memory in Australia is now a highly politicised process involving a complex array of stakeholders, such as governments, museum professionals, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities' (p. 5).

Justice and trauma

One major shift in Australian memory scholarship has been an emerging preoccupation with trauma and testimony. Since the 1990s, three major government reports have drawn upon memory: the national inquiries into the Stolen Generations (1997); the 7000 child migrants sent to Australia from Britain (Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee, 2001) and the children placed in state institutions (Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee, 2004). Each inquiry relied upon first-person testimonies to assess the impact of government practices on the past and present lives of those children, and in all cases, oral history was core, rather than supplementary,

to the historical record. Each inquiry also raised questions about the ways that personal histories are embedded within collective and national remembrance. For instance, the memorials and artworks dedicated around Australia to commemorate the suffering of children in institutional care, among them the Stolen Generations, have drawn upon individual memories – sometimes in a very literal sense – in their artistic realization of a representative commemorative form (Darian-Smith, 2013).

There continues to be considerable unease in many societies about the rhetorical effects of national apologies to groups wronged by the actions of the state, and where initiatives that support public remembrance of those wrongs, including official ‘truth and reconciliation’ programmes, are positioned as part of a healing process. How might the public remembrance of past injury lead to material and psychological ‘gains’ for those who have suffered, and what do these politics of remembrance mean for communities and nations more generally? These concerns are especially pressing in Australia when they relate to the past experiences of Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous claims for land and other compensation have informed the scholarly debates in Australia about whether British colonial invasion and dispossession of native peoples can be termed ‘genocide’. Dirk Moses (2004) has examined genocide as a useful concept for the Australian experience, arguing against Holocaust scholars who claim its European uniqueness. Neil Levi has published an extensive discussion of the issues involving a comparison between the fate of Australian Indigenous peoples and the consequences of the Jewish Holocaust (2007). Indeed, since the 1980s, the framing of claims for social justice as ‘identity politics’ by various Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and causes has sometimes led to an unproductive competition between claims for recognition in the public space of remembrance. This needs to be seen in the context of the focus in international memory studies on Holocaust trauma and the subsequent memorialization of those events. Certainly, the vast literature on Shoah Remembrance has been sympathetically received in Australia, a country with the second highest proportion, after Israel, of Holocaust survivors among its Jewish population.

A related question concerns the possibility of multiple national memories in Australia, most notably for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people but also between different ethnic groups in a multicultural society. Ghassan Hage, writing just a few years after Healy’s hopeful *From the Ruins of Colonialism*, was more pessimistic: he characterized Australia as ‘an unfinished Western colonial project as well as a land in a permanent state of decolonisation’. Under this schema, Hage (2001) argues that reconciliation or ‘a national memory or a non-contradictory plurality of memory is impossible’ because Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are placed in opposition, divided by difference in race, experience and agency in the colonial past (p. 141).

However, a growing body of theoretical work in memory studies has addressed the increasingly transnational or post-national nature of memory dynamics by drawing upon the concept of ‘cosmopolitan memory’ to encourage greater global equality (Levy and Sznajder, 2005). The American scholar Michael Rothberg’s (2009) recent work in *Multidirectional Memory* has assisted in rethinking the theoretical frame that fosters competitive memory between different groups. Rothberg suggests that we need to recognize a greater connectedness between events in the spotlight and those less so, especially between the Jewish Holocaust and colonialism. His theory, like Chakrabarty’s (2000) ideas in *Provincializing Europe*, is a response to the Eurocentric nature of memory studies and has strong resonances in Australia.

In her analysis of national and individual trauma, Maria Tumarkin’s (2005) influential *Traumascape: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy* focussed on how historical memory is embedded in place. Her work complemented that of cultural geographers who saw memory as central to the emotional resonance of the physical environment. This has included international exploration of the phenomenon of ‘dark tourism’, where sites of previous atrocities

such as jails or concentration camps become the focus of public visits. Port Arthur in Tasmania, for example, can be seen to consist of layers of memory across time: it is a major tourism destination for the convict past, but now has a memorial garden to the 35 people killed there in 1996 in the worst mass killing in Australia (Frow, 1999).

Australian scholarship on trauma has also been focussed on the testimonies and remembrance of individuals, including refugees and asylum seekers or is situated as part of a more sweeping project on social and transitional justice. Gillian Whitlock (2007) has theorized memoir and autobiography as dynamic processes of testimony and witnessing. Jill Bennett and Rosanne Kennedy's (2003) *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time* was among the first books to utilize Australian case studies to speak to an international audience on issues relating to trauma beyond the Holocaust, engaging with perspectives shaped by post-colonial theory. Since then, Kennedy (2002, 2008) has continued to analyse personal testimony in the context of law and justice.

The emergence of academic studies of memory in Australia and around the world has coincided with a greater complexity in understanding the past (Ashton and Hamilton, 2010), alongside new approaches from museum professionals to the use of oral histories. The opening or renovation of several major social history museums in Australia in the early 2000s, and technological developments in the interpretation of materials for actual and online history exhibitions have created opportunities for public history practitioners based in cultural institutions. Public historians are often on the 'front-line' in memory work. They are concerned with communication and audience strategies and are active agents in making memories public, as they mediate the past in roles as museum curators, or in national parks interpretation, or as film-makers, or as contributors to community projects. Oral history has become the most frequent methodology for public historians to employ in exhibitions because of the centrality of individual experience to public discourse about the past, and because audiences can connect and identify with the memories presented. In addition, the technological ease with which 'everyone' can be an oral historian, including through such formats as digital storytelling, has hastened and popularized the institutional collection and exhibition of memoirs about incidents and feelings that often have broader community or national implications.

The practice of oral history and memory studies in Australia has also been influenced by the efforts of international heritage organizations, such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), to preserve 'intangible heritage'. This is associated with the oral and performative aspects of remembrance and the conveyance of history through oral culture and folklore. In Australia, there has also been a particular practice, whereby professional historians and anthropologists have been employed by Indigenous communities to establish a historical and cultural connection to traditional lands as the basis for a Native Title claim. These demonstrations of long-term land ownership and occupation are heavily reliant upon oral testimony and the transmission of memory in Aboriginal communities. In these cases, such memory is held accountable by the Australian legal system and within the historical and genealogical forms of Indigenous oral tradition (Ashton and Hamilton, 2010; Williams, 2007).

Although most Australian research on memory and history has involved studies of local events, localities and communities, some Australian memory scholars have drawn on their expertise in other fields of history. Tessa Morris-Suzuki's (2005) book *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History* is based on case studies from her long involvement as a historian of Japan. Klaus Neumann's (2000) *Shifting Memories: the Nazi Past in the New Germany* was located within the prolific European and American studies of post-Second World War memory in Germany. It has been less usual for memory scholars based outside Australia to be concerned with Australian material. Recent exceptions are Laura Basu's (2012) doctoral dissertation, which uses the concept of the 'memory dispositif' to explore the collective memory of Ned Kelly.

Increasingly, some Australian historians, including a swell of doctoral students, have drawn on a memory framework to understand their empirical material. These engagements have varied in theoretical depth and innovation: some scholars use the term ‘memory’ and related qualifiers – public, personal, collective, individual, historical, cultural and social – without much conceptual discussion. The assumption here is that the illumination of issues relating to remembering in Australian society will be self-evident in a common-sense or recuperative way. In 2011, in a special issue of *Memory Studies* devoted to ‘Social Memory and Historical Justice’, editors Healy and Tumarkin (2011) expressed concern that graduate students engaged in memory research were often expected to subscribe ‘to particular modes of comportment in research scholarship’ and to ‘reverential re-engagement with a host of canonical figures’ (pp. 3–4). Of course, the presence of a theoretical canon is not exclusive to memory studies nor to scholarly work on memory undertaken in Australia – and its very existence can be seen as demonstrating the robustness of the field. Healy and Tumarkin, however, correctly identified the need for original approaches to memory, history and representation that are outward looking.

This internationalization of memory studies in Australia underpins the formation in 2010 of the International Memory and Justice Network, under the leadership of Klaus Neumann and Kate McGregor, an historian of militarization and remembrance in Indonesia (McGregor, 2007). The network aims to facilitate international dialogue on questions of memory and social justice. Other recent initiatives situating Australian memory and history in a comparative frame include a cross-disciplinary collection examining the ‘pressures of the past’ in Australia and Ireland (Holmes and Ward, 2011).

In addition, the examination by Australian scholars of the experiences of migration offers potential for more extensive investigation of the mobility and transnational forms of memory. These issues were first probed in the 1990s; our *Memory and History* volume included Glenda Sluga’s study of ‘migrant dreaming’ at the Bonegilla migrant hostel. Although the collection of oral histories has been crucial for the documentation of migrant and diasporic histories, little theoretical work in Australia has dealt with memory in these processes. Notable exceptions are Nathalie Nguyen’s (2005, 2009) sensitive rendering of the voyages of refugee Vietnamese women, based on interviews and analysed through a life-story approach, and Jim Hammerton and Alistair Thomson’s (2005) oral histories of post-war British migration to Australia. Thomson’s recent book (2011) has drawn upon the reminiscences of four British migrant women to explore the notion of collective biography.

Other scholars working in public history and heritage have recently returned to former migrant hostels to investigate these as ‘reactivated or failed’ sites of memory (Persian, 2012). Finally, in an insightful reflection, Ghassan Hage (2010) has explored the nostalgia around food and home for Lebanese migrants in Australia, arguing that the ‘specificity of migrant memory’ is its ‘attempt to construct the present is located in a space that marks a radical discontinuity with a remembered past’ (p. 427).

Conclusion

While this survey of academic and public interest in the intersections of memory and history in Australia since the mid-1990s is by no means exhaustive, our aim has been to provide a snapshot of key topics and approaches. There are other areas, too, where the collection of oral histories and the study of memory have gained scholarly interest: in the histories of gay and lesbian life, of professional groups such as journalists or in localized studies of community and place. Interest in memory and history remains strong among graduate students, and recent publications by younger

scholars (e.g. Butler, 2013) attest to their innovations. There are also signs of stronger cross-disciplinary alliances in memory scholarship, including a recent collection bringing scholars in cultural studies, media studies and social history together to examine the multiple relationships between memory and television in Australia (Darian-Smith and Turnbull, 2012).

Although the powerful role of institutional media and the technologies of memory such as literature, photography, film, television, newspapers, Internet and social media in shaping public remembrance has not been mentioned in this survey, these are clearly areas where there is much scope for further historically inflected investigation. And while, in the next few years, there is little sign that Australian scholars will turn away from examining the memories and memorialization of war or shy away from the place of memory in the post-colonial present, it is likely that they will be doing so within frameworks that are both increasingly internationalized and transnational.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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