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Editorial

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MEMORY STUDIES

Editorial

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We were delighted with the responses to our launch issue (January 2008), which included invited contributions setting out the agenda, challenges and prospects for the field of Memory Studies. We are committed to building on this momentum and to promoting a dynamic and dialogical forum for the field. To this end, in our final issue of this year (September), we will include a set of articles that respond to our Issue 1 contributions, and we will make space available in future issues for continuing discussion.

Our second issue includes articles that address collective memory, either implicitly or explicitly. These articles set out some of the epistemological and empirical challenges involved in its contemporary use.

In our lead essay, Ross Poole critically probes the functions, status, and necessity of a concept of 'collective memory' from the perspectives of individual memory and of history. He underlines the normative dimensions of the role of memory: obligations and responsibilities acquired in the past should shape our actions in the present. And it is through this moral agenda-setting that Poole sees a rationale for 'memory' as both individual and collective and he challenges those who are over-reliant on presenting collective memory as a process of the construction of the past. Rather, he argues that for competing versions of the past to be understood as memory, they must stand scrutiny that is independent of memorizing activity in the present. Thus, collective memory's claim to 'historical truth' is pivotal for Poole.

The idea of truth and truth-telling is central in a different way in Susan Schuppli's study of a particular cultural mechanism of memory: the materiality of the archive. She moves beyond analysis of the epistemological aspects of collective memory to outline the 'machinic' resonance of the 'gap' (and thus silence) in the tape recording of the conversation between President Nixon and his Chief of Staff shortly after the break-in to Democratic offices at the Watergate Hotel. Schuppli probes the temporal and spatial possibilities and limitations of 'a machine for making history and rehabilitating

memories' but which is also struck down with 'archival aphasia'. In some ways, these archival susceptibilities to 'forgetting' seem oddly human.

The temporal and spatial possibilities of collective memory are explored through the prism of commemorative cultures and practices in Brian Conway's study of the historical trajectory of 'memory work' over a major turning point in the history of modern Irish 'troubles': 'Bloody Sunday'. On this day in January 1972, British soldiers shot dead 13 Catholic civilians protesting over the policy of internment in Northern Ireland and this event is widely seen as a key spark and memory reference of the following quarter of a century cycle of violence. In this study, Conway's effective synthesis of conceptual development with primary data illuminates the connection between global processes and local manifestations of memory politics.

The politics of commemoration are also examined in the final two articles in this issue. The gendering of collective memory informs Janet Jacobs' exploration of memorial and museum culture in her visual ethnographic analysis of representations at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Jacobs argues that Holocaust remembering is filtered through representations that invite fantasy and the objectification of female victims. She identifies the submission of women, their captivity, and violation of the female body as central to atrocity narratives. In this way, Jacobs suggests that there is a risk in the meeting of calls for better and more accurate representations of violence against women, given the dominance of voyeuristic and objectifying portrayals and that these may also violate the memory of the dead.

Erika Doss probes the public commemoration of warfare in modern America, which she claims is engaged in 'memorial mania'. She considers the mediation of affect as shaping of a revived and amnesiac 'cultural nationalism' on the one hand and in its transformative and critical potential on the other.

Albeit in different ways, both Jacobs and Doss remind us of the centrality of the visual image and form as powerful anchors and shapers of collective memory narratives. *Memory Studies* welcomes articles and other contributions that explicitly explore the role of the visual in forging memory and in the making of claims about the past.

Since our launch, we have a number of exciting developments to report. Andrew Hoskins received funding to develop a new Centre for Memory Studies based at the University of Warwick, UK. This Centre will help develop and promote the work of the Journal.

Also, we are extremely pleased to announce the appointment of Professor William Hirst, from the New School for Social Research, USA, as our Book Review Editor. We welcome his broad view of and expertise in the field of memory studies. We invite books for review in these pages and we will be developing a full reviews section in forthcoming issues (full details and all submission information is included on our website mss.sagepub.com). We also welcome to our team editorial assistants: Andrew Mumford (Warwick) and Celia Harris and Charles Stone (Macquarie).

Finally, we are very grateful to the convivial people at Sage: Kerry Barner, Francisca Perez, and Réhannah Karim.