Memories, Memory, and Memorial

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Researching Remembering and the Methodology of Memory Studies

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Abstract

Memory studies is an interdisciplinary, and increasingly multidisciplinary, field of study that examines memory as a tool for remembering the past and how the past and present converge as part of the larger processes of cultural negotiation, identity formation, and narrative construction. Memory studies is not only interested in the processes of remembering, but also why certain events or people are remembered or forgotten and for what purpose. Memory studies is dually concerned with the present – as a reflection and consequence of the past – and the happenings of the past. Memory studies comprises multiple expressions of memory, including, but not limited to, autobiographical memory, multidirectional memory, collective memory, traumatic memory, remembrance, commemoration, and memorialization. Memory studies encourages and allows for research across disciplines and across methods to develop a more rounded

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understanding of how people, societies, cultures, and nations remember, misremember, and re-remember the past.

Keywords
Memory · Collective memory · Memorialization · Commemoration · Memory boom

Introduction

This section outlines the evolution of the field of memory studies from its sociological origins in the early twentieth century. It provides some context to the terms collective memory, cultural memory, historical memory, memorialization, commemoration, and traumatic memories, among others. This section also includes a discussion of the various methods utilized in memory studies research. It closes with recommendations for future research.

Memory studies is an interdisciplinary, and increasingly multidisciplinary, field that combines intellectual strands from anthropology, education, literature, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology to examine memory as a tool of analysis (Roediger and Wertsch 2008). In the early 1950s, scholars, beyond that of the field of history, increasingly questioned how people conceptualize the past. Those interested in how and why individuals and groups remember the past have turned to the nascent field of memory studies. Memory studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines memory as a tool for remembering the past and how the past and present converge as part of larger processes of cultural negotiation, identity formation, and narrative construction. Scholarly interest in memory resurfaced in the late 1970s; and largely beginning in the late-twentieth century, scholars have employed this method of study to think about the past and how individuals, societies, and nations remember that past (Erll 2011).

Memory studies has become a prominent feature of scholarly discourse in recent decades as Western societies, in particular, have been experiencing a sort of "memory boom" (Olick et al. 2011). Since the late 1970s, scholars have sought to explain the rise of scholarly and public interest in the past, memory, and commemoration. Memory studies is not only interested in the processes of remembering and forgetting, but also why and for what purpose some past happenings are remembered instead of others (Ricoeur 2004). Memory studies is concerned both with the present – as a reflection and consequence of the past – and the happenings of the past. Memory, then, exists at the intersection of the present and the past.

With the advent of cultural studies, particularly cultural history, and growing interests in narrative construction, scholars from a variety of disciplines have increasingly turned their attention to memory as a construction as well. To understand memory and memorialization, scholars emphasize the need to explore the influence of culture and society and how narratives affect memory construction and distribution.

Another explanation for the "memory boom" of the 1970s is the growing attempts of Western nation states to underscore their legitimacy in a postwar world. The deterioration of grand visions of the nation state as a leader of progress and civilization, brought on by World War II, decolonization, and Cold War conflict, led many Westerners to analyze their collective pasts (Winter 2001). The past served as a repository for inspiration for repressed identities and unfulfilled claims. These emerging collective memories and identities, however, also brought questions of trauma, regret, and abuse to the fore, and "states are allegedly now judged on how well they atone for their past misdeeds." This new kind of self-conscious memory and memorialization thus simultaneously helps to explain the so-called memory boom and contributes to it (Olick et al. 2011).

In considering narratives as an expression of memory, scholars have unearthed a complex association between memory and other disciplines. Along with sociology, scholars have illustrated the link between memory and history and the ways in which memory becomes history over generations. However, memory studies is not restricted to the humanities, as it also requires the sciences. For example, psychologists have detailed how memories are encoded, stored, and retrieved in the human brain, how they influence decisions and sense of self, and also how they are vulnerable to distortions and forgetting. Additionally, Library Science, Information Science, and Museum Studies, along with Digital Humanities, address how memories are archived, preserved, retrieved, and used in the present.

Although remembering is about the past, it takes place in the present, which establishes the meanings and significance of the past for those who may or may not have experienced it. By examining how memories are intentionally designed, created, silenced, updated, and even destroyed, scholars utilizing a memory studies approach attempt to ascertain how people understand the present through the past. Memory studies, as an interdisciplinary field, encourages work across disciplines and across methods to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how people, societies, cultures, and nations remember, misremember, and re-remember.

Memory Studies as a Field of Study

The question of teaching and utilizing memory studies as a methodology and field of study extends beyond those disciplines in which memory tends to be a discrete object of study, such as psychology, literature, sociology, and history. Memory studies is not limited to these disciplines and is often considered to be an interdisciplinary field of study without an institutional base. Because of its multidisciplinary nature and lack of disciplinary boundaries, memory studies can be challenging to learn, teach, and use as a research method. Key to understanding memory studies as a field of study and methodology are the different forms of memory and memories.

Different Forms of Memory and Memories

The human experience is deeply rooted in memory – it informs narratives, generates myths, justifies politics, and sustains cultures. Memory is selective and its meanings are subjective, and it forms as part of larger processes of cultural negotiation (Sturken 2008). Memory is, therefore, an active process and not just the description of a practice (Confino 2006). Memory not only provides autobiographical information in the form of individual memories, but also binds individuals to one another in the form of collective or cultural memory. Memory thus aids in the formation of individual, group, and national identities. Individuals and groups forge collective memories and disseminate them through stories (Bell 2003).

In the early twentieth century, sociologists began to inquire into the nature of semantic memory – general knowledge that individuals accumulate throughout their lives – within its social context, subject to social and cultural influences. The French philosopher Henri Bergson, in particular, prepared the way for memory studies as a field of study at the turn of the twentieth century by pointing out the difference between the memory of specific events and the memory of enduring ideas or attitudes, a distinction he correlated with that of the moment and duration (Bergson 1913).

Building on Bergson's research, other sociologists investigated memory in its various forms and argued that memory operates on the individual as well as the collective level (Bartlett 1932). The concept of "collective memory" differs from autobiographical and historical memory as it draws strength from a body of individuals who remember the event with similar enough detail to represent a collective recollection. Contemporary usage of the term "collective memory" is largely traceable to French sociologist Emile Durkheim, who wrote extensively in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* about commemorative rituals, and to his student Maurice Halbwachs (Olick and Robbins 1998).

Scholars interested in memory studies use the work of Halbwachs, in particular, as a primary theoretical reference point. In his landmark study *The Social Frameworks of Memory*, Halbwachs elaborated a more complete theory of collective memory and ushered in the modern academic study of memory. Halbwachs asserted that memory is not simply an individual phenomenon; it is also relational in terms of family and friends and societal and collective in terms of the social frameworks of groups (Halbwachs 1925). Halbwachs clarified that all memory is a social process, shaped by the various groups to which individuals belong, as it is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memory (Halbwachs 1925). Halbwachs thus argued that it is impossible for individuals to remember in any coherent and persistent fashion outside of their group contexts. Group membership provides the materials for memory and prompts the individual into recalling particular events and forgetting others.

Halbwachs later distinguished between "personal," or "autobiographical memory," and "historical memory." The former concerns the events of one's life that one remembers because they personally experienced those events. "Historical memory" refers to the resonation of events through time regardless of

the original generation's presence. Groups can even produce and recall memories of events that they never experienced directly (Halbwachs 1950). "Historical memory" of the American Civil War, for instance, is part of what it means to be an American and is part of the collective narrative of the United States, even though no one today has "autobiographical memory" of the event (Olick et al. 2011). Halbwachs also insisted on a distinction between history and collective memory – history aims for a universal, objective truth severed from the psychology of social groups while collective memory requires the support of a group. By Halbwachs' definition, collective memory does not exceed the boundaries of the group who experienced the event (Halbwachs 1950).

Within sociology the concept of collective memory is linked to issues of identity, as members of a group possess a distinct collective memory. It is important to remember, however, that groups, just like their memories, can be, and often are, diverse and changing. Individual memories and collective memory, nor the resulting memorialization, are static. The process of remembering and forgetting is a highly selective, adaptive process of reconstructing the past. Furthermore, identity, personal memory, and collective memory change over time according to the sociopolitical issues of the period. One scholar conceptualized that collective memories are often "cohort memories," in which members of a given cohort affected by an event write the event's history and thus influence the memories of succeeding generations (Pennebaker et al. 1997). These "cohort memories" often times reflect the memories of the dominant sociopolitical group of that particular time. Their memories can, and often, appear in textbooks or mainstream media. However, this dominance does not mean total memory, which is neither possible nor practical, because other groups' memories are often forgotten or overshadowed.

Dominant groups, particularly as part of a nation, promote their dominant memories by urging citizens to remember their own and to forget others in order to create national collective memory (Nyugen 2016). The resulting dominant memories subsequently overshadow alternative memories until change occurs in the society, as part of social, political, or economic movements. For instance, social movements and the activists a part of them construct their own narratives, discourse, framing, and performances in their separate collective memories. These new narratives not only conflict with the dominant narrative, but also the layering narratives within the movement. Put simply, collective memories are complex, multidimensional structures, which are created and also create diverse narratives and identities (Doerr 2014). The resulting identities and narratives form based on personal memories but also through interactions with other memories.

Memory and the formation of identity is not a homogenous process, in which one memory creates one identity and another memory forms another identity. Instead the heterogeneity of memory means various memories operate and interact over time, which then shapes how individuals and groups come to see themselves and their experiences as well as their understanding of worldwide issues. Hence, it is now an accepted notion in memory studies that collective memory, as well as the subsequent public and cultural memories, is "constructed" (Kammen 1991).

Multidirectional memory also means that memories are not the property of homogenous, primary groups as is suggested by proponents of competitive memory, who maintain that one memory must dominate the public narrative. Multidirectional memory, then, makes the relationship between memory and identity a nonlinear one, in which groups and individuals can access and engage with multiple memories. In creating meaning through multiple memories, groups are not forced to forget the memories of other groups. Multidirectional memory allows for discussion across and between groups, both about the past and present. Individual memory and collective memory can exist without one being more important than the other. Multidirectional memory suggests that different memories can operate in the same space without one losing its significance because of the presence of the other (Rothberg 2009).

Collective memory is also linked with "cultural memory," as the latter forms through the construction, adaptation, and circulation of certain codes, words, sounds, and images. These are often initially a product of those who directly experienced an event; then through the circulation of the original groups' recollections, they evolve into a consensus-driven, collective version of events. So even after the members of the original group passed away, the cultural memory remained. Cultural memory as a term implies not only that memories are often produced and reproduced through cultural forms, but it also implies an interaction between personal memories and cultural memories (Erll and Rigney 2006). Some scholars situate cultural memory within several fields of study: cultural studies, media studies, communication, and visual culture (Sturken 2008). Others prefer the term social memory (Fentress and Wickham 1992). If disseminated well enough through official and vernacular cultural expressions, cultural memory or social memory may emerge as "public memory."

Collective memory also ensures continuity in a community. It is the way in which members of a group preserve their collective knowledge and pass it from one generation to the next. This enables future generations to construct their own personal and social identities – creating the present by building on the past. Having social or collective memories ensures that members of a community share a sense of unity and connection. Collective memory sustains a community's identity and makes continuity of its social life and cultural cohesion possible. Collective memories thus are not meant to be entirely accurate. They are designed to unify, comfort, and sometimes explain the inexplicable. For instance, following periods of intense turmoil and loss, such as World War I, collective memory often serves as a vehicle for collective healing and reconciliation. Even when collective memory is qualified in this way, some scholars remain skeptical of the notion and question what exactly memory is and what it has been in the past (Winter 2001).

Along with concerns over definitions for the different forms of memory, scholars have expressed the need to define the relationship between memory and history. Proponents of memory studies are adamant that collective memory, and the resulting public memory, is not history even though it is sometimes made from similar material. Collective memory is a collective phenomenon, but unlike history it only manifests in the actions and statements of individuals of a group (Kansteiner 2002).

Collective memory is the joint memories held by a community about the past and can refer to any period. In order to have a collective memory, an individual does not need to have experienced the event, but it must be of such importance that it is thought of in memory, rather than in historical terms. Collective memories, thus, are confined to the most recent past and valid only for people within that society. History, on the other hand, is the nonpsychological past that is defined and determined by systematic research and analysis. History begins where social and collective memories stop (Halbwachs 1950). History is the academic and objective study of the past. Simply put, writing reinforces history, whereas social occasions, such as rites and commemorative activities, reinforce collective memory.

Sites of Memory and Memorialization

One of the key concepts of memory studies is memorialization. Individuals and groups remember, and thus memorialize, their memories in various ways: stories, both oral and written, monuments, music, film, images, and museums, among many others. Cultural memory has emerged as a useful umbrella term to describe the complex ways in which societies remember the past. It has become apparent that the memories shared within and across generations are the product of acts of remembrance through narratives, media, and public representations. Individuals constantly narrate their lives by creating and telling stories about who and what they are. These stories can appear in many forms. These all work together to create and sustain what Pierre Nora terms "lieux de memoire" – sites of memory – environments that link the historical past to present social and cultural understandings of that past (Nora 1989). These sites can vary from funeral eulogies and memoirs to monuments, museums, archives, and historic places.

Individuals select and organize their personal memories to build a coherent sense of the self and establish and maintain their identities (Gergen and Gergen 1988). A method of memory organization and dissemination is storytelling. Personal stories are the means by which identities, both personal and collective, can be fashioned and developed (Wyre 1994). Stories may be shared orally or textually. Texts are in themselves sites of memories in which individuals in the present may remember, and visit, the past (Nora 1989). By sharing their stories, individuals do not simply insert their personal remembrances into history and cultural memory; they also produce new kinds of memories that sort and categorize their unique experiences within the present culture.

Personal memories and their external forms as narratives depend on social discourse. The importance of social discourse – the ways of thinking that are prominent in a society at a given time and the way people interpret events – should not be underestimated in memory studies research. There is a relationship between individual narrative and social discourse, with one influencing the other. Narratives depend on the social context, including the audience they are designed for, as well as individual motivations and desires. Memory itself is constructed partly through narratives and the social context. Some scholars of

memory studies argue that this discourse is what creates collective memory, rather than collective memory merely being the collective remembrance of a particular happening. In opposition to Halbwachs' definition of collective memory, David Thelen argues that people develop collective memory by discussing, debating, arguing, and coming to conclusions about what happened. That is, they debate over the meaning and come to a collective decision, creating a collective memory (Thelen 1998). Thelen's definition of collective memory is as an active process of remembering in comparison to Halbwachs' conceptualization as the more passive practice of collective recollection.

Commemoration

Scholars interested in memory studies no longer limit their examinations to how individuals or groups remember or forget, but have extended their studies to memorialization and commemoration. To commemorate is to "call to remembrance," to mark an event or a person or a group by a ceremony or an observance or a monument of some kind (Bodnar 1991). Commemorations might be ephemeral, such as parades, or permanent in the form of a monument or holiday. The key point is that they propagate collective, national, or historical memory in some conspicuous way. Remembrance in the form of commemorative rites and rituals and the political consequences of these rites shed light on the ways in which people as a group (or nation) understand their past and propagate a specific narrative about that past for present and future generations (West 2017). Over the last century, not only have nations come to embrace traditional forms of commemoration – such as battlefield monuments – but they also pioneered new practices, such as placing a monument to the fallen Space Shuttle *Columbia* crew on Mars.

As storehouses of knowledge and transmitters of history, museums also play a vital role in the dissemination of memory and commemoration. Museums select exhibits in an effort to tell a particular story. As a result, they prioritize some exhibits – some narratives – over others, often streamlining the narrative for audience consumption. Museums serve as places of negotiation and debate, in which individuals with different agendas and diverse personal and collective memories come together to discuss history and participate in commemoration. Museums then simultaneously exist as both "sites of memory" and creators of memory (Noy 2018).

The academic literature on commemoration and its relationship to memory has expanded in the past 20 years. Scholars, from beyond memory studies' traditional base of sociology, history, and art history, have begun to investigate commemorative practices and sites. Geographers, landscape historians, ethnographers, archaeologists, and other academic practitioners, for example, have made recent efforts to map individual commemorative sites within larger contexts of remembrance – landscapes, social networks, tourism, and others. Commemoration, thus, entails more than building, naming, or shaping physical sites (Dickinson et. al. 2010). Commemoration, as a practice, also involves ritual acts and occupations of public space as well as other kinds of performance and consumption. All of these diverse

commemorative practices come together most powerfully around the remembrance of war.

It is no surprise that much of the literature on commemoration concerns war and its aftermath, particularly the American Civil War, World War I, World War II and the Holocaust, and the Vietnam War (Olick et al. 2011). The pairing of war and memory is commonplace particularly after the disasters of the twentieth century with tens of millions dead and even more wounded who seek recognition for their sacrifices (Winter 2006). There are several main concerns in regard to war and memory: first, how to remember the dead, who cannot speak for themselves; second, how to remember the living and what they did during times of war; and third, how to remember the nation and the people for whom the dead and living supposedly fought and died? The question of how to remember war is central to the identity of the war, its participants, and the nations involved. The horrific wars of the twentieth century, around which many memory studies focus – and, indeed, any war's identity – have a distinct identity, which cannot be extricated from the identity of war itself. Subsequently, wars and their participants possess memories and identities that stand apart from other forms of collective memory (Nyugen 2016).

Traumatic Memory

Just as war and memory are connected, memory and trauma are also closely interlinked. In its general definition, trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena. Perhaps the most striking feature of traumatic recollection is that it is not a singular memory. Beginning with the earliest work on trauma, scholars have unearthed a contradiction in traumatic memory recall: while the images of traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control (Caruth 1995). While individuals integrate normal life memories into their narratives, traumatic memories are not so easily integrated. Traumatic memories are dominated by sensory, perceptual, and emotional components, components, which are hardened to integrate into the conscious narrative, as they do not normally have verbal components. The horror of the historical experience is maintained in the testimony only as an elusive memory that feels as if it no longer resembles any reality. This means that traumatic memories have fewer interconnections and weaker organization, often not lending themselves to linear narratives.

Given the burgeoning literature on memory over the last three decades, scholars can now reassess the state of the field, especially in regard to trauma, and propose new directions in the study of memory and commemoration by examining both traumatic and non-traumatic memories (Caruth 1996). In particular, scholars from across disciplines can investigate the changing nature of commemoration and remembering, constructions of victimhood, and the role of perpetrators and collaborators in the construction of memory.

Research Methods

Memory studies spans many disciplines, and the methods and sources used are diverse. Methods in memory studies include studying primary historical and archival sources, oral histories, case studies, interviews, surveys, monuments, and architecture, among many others. As a consequence of the interdisciplinary nature of memory studies, there is no singular memory studies methodology. Increasingly, scholars have called for the systematization and improvement of the methodological foundations of the field (Roediger and Wertsch 2008).

One of the approaches recommended for widespread use across the field of memory studies is the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, which are both applicable to memory research. Quantitative research relies on data collected by measurement and then analyzed through numerical comparisons and statistical inferences. Quantitative researchers aim to establish general laws of behavior and phenomena across different settings and contexts. Research, often in the form of experiments, is used to test a theory and ultimately support or reject it. Experiments typically yield quantitative data. Yet, controlled observations and questionnaires can also produce quantitative information in the forms of closed questions or a rating scale. Experimental methods limit the possible ways in which a research participant can react to and express behavior. Findings are, therefore, likely to be limited to the context of the experiment and research questions. Researchers use statistics to summarize data and describe patterns, relationships, and connections. Quantitative research aims for objectivity.

Qualitative research, in contrast, relies on data collected through observation, interviews, and narratives. The latter is a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, subjective approach to its subject matter. Researchers aim to understand the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures as nearly as possible as its participants experience it. Qualitative interpretations are constructed based on a variety of techniques, such as content analysis, thematic analysis, or discourse analysis. Scholars interested in a qualitative approach to memory studies often use discourse analysis in an effort to highlight the processes of remembering – showing how people construct the past through speech and language as part of the social worlds they inhabit (Pickering and Keightley 2013). Language itself is a circuit through which memories circulate and become accessible to other individuals and groups. Sources suitable for discourse analysis and memory construction include rituals, parades, speeches, memorials, platitudes, memoirs, and countless other forms of stories. It is part of these narratives in their various forms that individuals, groups, or nations construct and disseminate their memories.

Borrowing from English literature methodology, scholars can also analyze the characters within these narratives and how they reflect on the constructed memory. For instance, individuals can appear as “flat” or “round” characters, depending on their importance and place in the narrative. Flat characters are often reserved for the other, while round, three-dimensional characters represent the individuals’ own side – those who feel, remember, and thus deserve remembrance. Flat, positive characters are not uncommon, especially as part of wartime propaganda. These flat

characters appear as virtuous, smiling, brave individuals in an effort to mobilize the rest of the citizenry to defend the nation. For instance, flat characters, such as Uncle Sam in the United States or John Bull in Great Britain, propagate a distinct memory of war, which celebrates volunteerism and the courage of the nation's citizenry. By analyzing the speech, language, characters, and format used, scholars interested in memory studies can trace development and propagation of memories and identities.

Further interdisciplinary methods for memory studies include the analysis of "memoryscapes." Integrating oral history and cultural geography, memoryscapes – the practice of creating sound walks – use recorded sound and spoken memory to experience and study physical spaces. In this relatively new and rapidly evolving field, the individual brings together works from music, sound art, oral history, and cultural geography, among others, to explore how physical spaces can provide a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of memory (Pickering and Keightley 2013).

It is important to note, however, that not all memories are audible, legible, or visible, due to a number of factors including, but not limited to, illiteracy, lack of translation, diaspora, exile, destruction, and death. These weaker memories have a local distribution and may not be available to those outside the original group. This is common with the American Civil War, in which many soldiers were barely literate and often recorded their memories phonetically, or in imperial wars in which the memories of the colonized are overshadowed by the colonizers.

Scholars interested in memory studies must also be aware of the competition between memories and identities, especially between dominant memories and the memories of others. Individuals, groups, and nations often will remember their own, thus creating an imagined collective memory and identity distinct to their particular group. This collective memory is the dominant memory of the group and depending on the proliferation of the memory – distributed in textbooks and media – may become the dominant memory of that particular society. However, by focusing on one's own side, these groups effectively overshadow or erase the memory of others outside the dominant group. The ethics of remembering, then, is to erase the distinction between the dominant and the other. Working from both ends of the spectrum, from remembering one's own to remembering others, scholars interested in memory studies should analyze disparate memories side by side (Margalit 2002). By objectively analyzing the memories of seemingly dichotomic groups – men and women, young and old, soldiers and civilians, and majorities and minorities – as well as those who fall between binaries, scholars can understand the construction and dissemination of memory more fully (Nyugen 2016).

Along with examining differing and contesting memories, scholars using a memory studies approach can also choose to compare the verifiable lived historical events and largely fabricated versions of the same occurrence. This is not simply a matter of sifting through and separating individual or collective "memory" from the "true" history conflict. Instead, if one chooses to approach memory studies in this manner, one must acknowledge and examine the tension between the two and how this tension manifests in the memories, memorialization, and commemorations

of the event or the group. Sometimes in a group's collective memory, specific stories are repeated, while others are smoothed over or largely silenced. It is the scholars' responsibility to analyze all of these disparate memories if they are to understand the making of memory.

Limitations

Although initially a sociological concept, memory studies as an interdisciplinary field lacks an institutional base and often appears as a methodological tool in neighboring disciplines, such as heritage studies, folklore studies, ethnography, and history. Scholars debate whether this is a shortcoming or an advantage of memory studies (Leonhard 2007). Pointing to its interdisciplinary nature, some scholars argue that memory studies is too broad a field to have overarching or unifying theories (Roediger and Wertsch 2008). They demand that for memory studies to become a field of study in its own right, scholars from across disciplines must systematize and clearly state the field's methodological approaches.

Another critique of memory studies is the enduring separation between the public and the personal. Both personal memory and public memory are contested sources. As the preceding sections address, personal memories are just as involved in the public context as collective memories. Yet those interested in personal or autobiographical memories have not engaged fully with the public dimension of memory and how it is constituted in the public sphere. Furthermore, those interested in public representations of memory have failed to engage with oral history or autobiographical memory because of the former's preoccupation with collective trauma, national history and heritage, and grand-scale social practices, instead of the latter's emphasis on individual and small-group processes of remembering (Pickering and Keightley 2013).

Another recurring point of discussion in regard to memory studies is its Eurocentric focus. This reflects both the origins of the discipline as part of European responses to the First and Second World Wars and the dominant texts' reliance on Western philosophical and psychoanalytic traditions. This concern is not unfounded as the dominant texts and subjects of analysis revolve around European conflicts of the twentieth century. Although scholars interested in memory studies have recently expanded their research to include the memory of empire, colonialism, and decolonization, it remains problematic to teach postcolonial memory predominantly through the lens of theories developed in the scientific traditions of the former colonial powers. For instance, in studying the Vietnam War, only a handful of non-Western scholars have analyzed the conflict. In turn, much of the analyses focus on the French or American experience in Vietnam, rather than on the Vietnamese memory of the conflict (Nyugen 2016).

Another limitation of memory studies is the principal focus on the representation of specific events within particular chronological, geographical, and media settings without reflecting on the audiences of the representation in question (Kansteiner 2002). Wulf Kansteiner argues that collective memory studies has not sufficiently

conceptualized collective memories as distinctive from individual memory. He further notes that collective memory studies has not paid attention to the problem of reception (in terms of methods and sources) and thus cannot illuminate the sociological basis of historical representations. Moreover, although one can assume that the continued memory boom may reflect the public's interest in such topics, scholars have yet to investigate extensively in the public's perception or reception of memories. Most studies on memory focus on the representation or remembering of specific events without reflecting on the intended audience's reception.

Conclusion and Future Directions

While work on commemoration continues to multiply, and to examine how memory practices penetrate all facets of life – personal and public – more work remains to be done. With scholars from countless disciplines increasingly incorporating memory studies in their analyses, it is now time for more collaborative work across disciplines and subjects. Although scholars continue to debate whether the lack of an institutional base is a shortcoming or an advantage of memory studies, scholars have begun to applaud this versatility because it supports dialogue between disciplines and researchers (Leonhard 2007). Possible subjects for fruitful interdisciplinary collaboration are, but not limited to, postcolonial studies, joining international law, politics, diplomacy, and history; war trauma studies, joining psychology, sociology, and military history; and media studies, joining cultural analysis, literary or film studies, sociology, and history. The malleability of memory studies and its applications are not limited to just one field, and thus scholars can take advantage of this flexibility and encourage dialogue between disciplines.

Another subject that lends itself to memory studies and multidisciplinary approach is study of the "memory industry" and the "memory boom" itself. Scholars have examined the act of remembering but are only beginning to examine how memory functions in different landscapes, such as films, documentaries, novels, and other mediums. Memory, as part of the memory industry, has become a transnational phenomenon that warrants sustained critical attention from scholars working in the field of memory studies (Erll 2011).

The analysis of how memories, particularly cultural memories, become transnational and transcultural also deserves more scholarly attention. However, as mentioned, memories are constructed and as such often contentious. In turn, scholars must also acknowledge and study the frictions created through the local, national, and international construction and circulation of memories. For instance, how does national memory affect international relations?

The growing academic field of Digital Humanities also lends itself to memory studies methodologies. Digital Humanities is an academic field concerned with the application of computational tools and methods to traditional humanities, such as literature, history, and philosophy. Digital Humanities research involves collaborative, transdisciplinary practices, with particular focus on how to make

cultural representations and artifacts more accessible. This nascent field not only overlaps with memory studies, but it is also a by-product of memory itself. Blogs, personal websites, institutional sites, and other digital platforms are all means to evaluate the act of remembering or forgetting. They are also (digital) sites of memory.

Recent social and technological forces, including the rise of Digital Humanities, continue to shape the creation of new collective memories and scholars' understanding of those memories. How the past is produced, consumed, internalized, and acted upon will no doubt remain a rich and complex problem for scholars as they work further to extend and integrate memory studies into their own research.

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