

# **Media and Cultural Memory/ Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung**

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**Volume 15**

# **The Transcultural Turn**

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Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders

Edited by  
Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson

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For Rick, who told us it would all be fine.

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Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson

## Introduction

In the months following 9/11, most of the debris that filled Ground Zero was removed to the Fresh Kills landsite on Staten Island, where it was catalogued and sorted. Coated in the toxic dust that covered the site in the aftermath of the attacks, much of this rubble was unidentifiable – an incinerated mass of building materials, office equipment, commercial goods, and personal effects, bearing traces of more precious human remains.<sup>1</sup> Most of the larger debris has since been shipped abroad – sent to recycling sites in India and China to be “reclaimed” and transformed into new items. However, from the 1.8 million tons of matter cleared from Ground Zero (less than two-tenths of one per cent of the solid material at the World Trade Center site prior to the collapse of the Twin Towers, most of which was simply pulverised) around 1,500 of the more recognisable, symbolically-charged, artefacts have spent much of the last decade archived in Hangar 17 at Kennedy International Airport in New York City. These items have become objects of memory.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, when Ground Zero was still a burning pit, a small team of dedicated professionals began scouring the wreckage for items that might be salvaged for posterity. The immediacy of their actions testifies to the extent to which memory has become an instant and instinctive concern in the aftermath of contemporary atrocity. Stored in the secure environment of Hangar 17 since 2002, the diversity of the remnants recovered from Ground Zero is remarkable. At the peak of its usage, this 80,000 square-foot space contained items from fire engines to mangled steel, the radio antennae of the North Tower to cartoon figures and stuffed toys. For the past ten years, the Hangar has served as a “museum of unnatural history”, to quote the site’s official photographer, Fransesc Torres (2011, 11). Since 2008, the Hangar has been slowly emptying, as artefacts have been dispersed to serve as memorials to the devastation of 9/11. In disparate and often difficult ways, these objects reveal the complex processes by which memories are affected and inflected by the (physical and figurative) paths via which they travel.

Around two hundred of the items released from Hangar 17 have found a permanent home at the National September 11 Museum, located between the former Trade Center’s “footprints” at Ground Zero (which now comprise the centrepiece

<sup>1</sup> Concerns over the fact that the objects taken to Fresh Kills have resulted to a protracted – and often bitter – debate over the treatment of these artefacts between the families of certain victims and authorities overseeing the clearance effort.

of Michael Arad and Peter Walker's memorial, *Reflecting Absence*). These include the iconic "Last Column", the final piece of the Twin Towers removed from Ground Zero during the clearance effort. More than any other item, perhaps, this piece of steel symbolises the site's transformation from a place of atrocity to a space of memory. Even prior to its removal, the Column had become an unofficial memorial, covered with pictures of, and messages to, the victims who died in the Twin Towers, from rescue workers and family members. Thus, the Column might be seen as a transitional object: a commemorative text even before it left Ground Zero, it has since been returned to the site as the first exhibit in the Museum which is literally being built around it. However, alongside the numerous items that are being "rehomed" at the Trade Center site, nearly 2,000 others have travelled further afield – to towns and cities across the United States, and to nations as far afield as Afghanistan and New Zealand. Each of the fifty states of America now has at least one memorial made from recovered debris, and several other countries across the world have also claimed a piece of Twin Towers history.

The process of *reterritorialization* has not only involved the physical transportation of the objects, but a corresponding *remediation* of their meaning. Their changing significance can be attributed to several ancillary factors relating to their relocation in time and space. Over the past decade, the items have been subject to a number of procedures that have had a corresponding effect on their commemorative impact. Firstly, their initial selection for salvage depended on their recognisability as objects, the pathos they engendered (their ability to reflect a poignant image of atrocity), and their pre-existing significance as cultural artefacts.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, before being deployed to their new environments, representatives from the organisations claiming the artefacts were invited to come to Hangar 17 to select their material from the hundreds of objects in storage – a choice informed by a wide range of aesthetic and symbolic considerations. Thirdly, the steel will be shaped more literally in its transformation from remnant to memorial (from historical artefact to cultural object), as it is melted down, carved up, assimilated into another structure, or reconstituted in any number of ways. Finally, once installed at their eventual destinations, these objects do not exist in a vacuum, but in dialogue with their surroundings, charged with particular political and social agendas, and moulded by the constantly changing complexion of the present. To transport a piece of the World Trade Center, whether across

<sup>2</sup> Most of the objects archived at the Hangar are burnt, scarred, or twisted in some way – symbolizing the destruction and devastation engendered by the attacks. Objects such as fire engines or police cars were also readily connectable to the prevailing iconography of 9/11, and the widespread elevation of rescue workers as heroes who sacrificed their lives for the nation.

a country or over continents, is not simply to insert a piece of New York history in a new locale, it is to mediate that memory as it moves from one place to another.

In their final surroundings, the remnants of the World Trade Center are required to serve diverse purposes, and even to remember disparate events.<sup>3</sup> Many of the World Trade Center artefacts are intended to stand as symbols of international solidarity. Some of these memorials engender an inclusive vision of universal harmony, such as the International Peace Garden in Canada, which encourages its visitors to "Recall, Reflect, and Remember" 9/11 in the interests of securing future global peace. Others implicitly reflect a more hegemonic historical dynamic, as can be seen at the Caen Memorial for Peace in France, which places 9/11 in a commemorative nexus remembering events from the D-Day landings (the memorial is just fifteen miles from the Normandy beaches where these took place) to the fall of the Berlin Wall, invoking a particularly Western perspective on the recent past. More common are memorials that transcend national borders only to reinscribe new cultural boundaries, creating shared forums of remembrance between specific communities. For example, the German-American Firefighters and Friends responsible for transporting six-feet of Trade Center steel to Bavaria define their memorial as symbolic of the "international camaraderie" of firefighters (Kehrer 2011), and the same is true of New Zealand's "Tribute to Firefighters".

Yet memory is not always so easy to contain. Whilst Daniel Libeskind's *Memoria e Luce* in Padua is designed as a gesture of solidarity between Italy and the US, it also generates associative connections to Libeskind's other constructions (for instance, the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Imperial War Museum North, in Manchester, England, and of course the masterplan for Ground Zero) with complex transhistorical resonances. Such relations are drawn more explicitly at the Babi Yar Park in Denver, where the steel will stand alongside a memorial to the Nazi massacre at Babi Yar in the Ukraine, in which 100,000 people (mostly Jewish) were murdered between 1941 and 1943.<sup>4</sup> Here, the material recovered from the Trade Center will form part of a new Memorial to the Victims of World Terrorism. The Denver Park has revealed a complex conjunction of local, national, and international concerns since the time of its conception. The original rationale for the location of the Park revolved around two key claims: firstly, the presence of a substantial expatriate Ukrainian community in Denver; secondly, the alleged similarity of the landscapes of Colorado and the Babi Yar ravine. However, at the time of its construction, the Park was deeply

<sup>3</sup> The only requisites of the Port Authority, the agency to whom applications for artefacts were made, was that the beneficiary must use the object for a memorial purpose and arrange transportation themselves.

<sup>4</sup> See Rapson's chapter in the collection for a more detailed analysis of this site and its genesis.

marked by the geopolitics of the Cold War, catalysed not only by the desire for a local tribute to victims of Nazi atrocity, but also as a protest against ongoing Soviet violence – complicating its symbolic significance. The location of the World Trade Center steel at the Park only adds to this memorial melee: creating empathic links between one local community (Denver) and another (New York); drawing implicit connections between the suffering of distinct national groups in its commemoration of Ukrainian and American atrocity; and claiming to generate a sense of international solidarity. As Ellen Premack, one of the stewards of the Park explains, the material recovered from the Trade Center will help visitors “feel the sacred space. [...] Sacred in the sense that it will associate different people’s stories and times in history. It will be very American and global in its sense of sacredness” (O’Connor 2011).

Premack’s potentially problematic conflation of the “American” and the “global” draws attention to the persistent fluidity between the particular and the universal that has characterised the reterritorialization of the Trade Center steel. Expected to simultaneously stand as a tribute to a specific historical atrocity and a symbol of broader “human values”, many of these memorials blur the specificity of memory as they at once inscribe and transcend temporal and spatial boundaries. Such dynamics work in different ways in both intra- and inter-national forums. In Tucson, Arizona, one particularly unusual memorial, comprising Trade Center steel moulded into the shape of an angel, marks a tribute to nine-year-old Christina-Taylor Green, who was killed in the shootings of January 2011. This statue is not intended to commemorate 9/11 itself, but premised upon the fact that Green was born on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, drawing implicit connections between two tragedies of immensely differing causes, scales, and effects. Entitled “Freedom’s Steadfast Angel of Love”, the statue was designed by Lei Hennessey-Owen, who aims to place similar angel-shaped memorials across the United States to commemorate various acts of heroism and bravery. Owen has previously made statues for Ground Zero, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, producing other angels in honour of Jessica Lynch, the prisoner-of-war rescued in Iraq in 2003, a Pittsburgh mayor who died in office in 2006, and the 2004 re-election of President George W. Bush (Ruelas 2011). Whilst none of the other statues remain where Owens originally placed them, having been taken into storage or moved to new locations (the original World Trade Center Angel was moved to Hangar 17, after being deemed inappropriate to remain at Ground Zero), the memorial to Green stands as a permanent tribute to the “Tucson angel”.

By connecting the personal tragedy of Green to the national narrative of 9/11, Owens appears to be implicitly elevating the significance of this private loss through its intersection with a seismic public event. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this memorial is the apparent lack of reflexivity to the political dimen-

sions of such an endeavour. As many critics have noted, commemorative discourses surrounding September 11th remain entangled with complex hierarchies of life that have been made particularly explicit in the post-9/11 era.<sup>5</sup> References to 9/11 have a tendency to encode a sense of American exceptionalism that has been uncomfortably linked to a lack of regard for other peoples and cultures. Despite its recurrent use as a symbol for international peace, the Trade Center steel has not escaped entanglement with such distasteful sentiments. In the aftermath of 9/11, then Governor of New York, George E. Pataki, petitioned the Secretary of the Navy, Gordon England, to name their fifth amphibious transport dock ship the USS New York in tribute to the victims of 9/11. In a letter to England, Pataki insisted that the new vessel should “bring the fight to our nation’s enemies well into the future”, playing “an important role in the War on Terror” in memory of those who died on in the attacks (USSNY 2011). The USS New York incorporates 7.5 tonnes of Trade Center steel into its bow stem. As Commander Quentin King, Navy representative for its construction, remarks:

The significance of where the WTC steel is located on the 684-foot-long ship symbolizes the strength and resiliency of the citizens of New York as it sails forward around the world. [...] It sends a message of America becoming stronger as a result, coming together as a country and ready to move forward as we make our way through the world (USSNY 2011).

Alongside the memorial currently installed at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan (a centre for US troops), the USS New York represents an explicit militarization of the memory of 9/11. According to England, the ship “will project American power to the far corners of the Earth and support the cause of freedom well into the 21st century” (USSNY). The USS New York thus demonstrates the complex imbrication of local, national, and international discourses relating to 9/11, and the immense political, emotional, and cultural capital invested in the World Trade Center steel.

This brief survey of just a few of the memorials constructed from the nearly 1,200 remnants dispersed by the Port Authority reveals the diversity of the agendas that inform commemoration. Together, these objects demonstrate the mutability of memory as it is transplanted across time and space. Whether travelling *within* national borders or *across* continental divides (or, indeed, both), these artefacts demonstrate the different ways in which memories may be mobilised to create new communities *between* and *beyond* the cultural boundaries that have traditionally separated different national, ethnic, religious, or social groups. However, as we have seen, memorials can also be used to *reinscribe* such divisions as they travel (physically and figuratively) across the world – drawing attention to the

<sup>5</sup> See Butler (2004) and Bond (2012).

manner in which commemorative practices continue to be imbricated with (and indeed implicated in maintaining) power differentials between individuals and collectives. To examine the dispersal of the World Trade Center steel, then, is to reflect upon the diverse ways in which processes of remembrance may simultaneously resist, reinforce, and reconfigure the relations between personal, local, national, and global discourses, revealing the centrifugal properties of memory and underscoring its often uncontainable qualities. This process raises several questions about the difficulties intrinsic to postulating any international culture of memory: can commemorative practices really help to facilitate a continuum that transcends (political, ethnic, religious, linguistic) borders, or does the very notion of border-crossing merely serve to reinscribe the differences that it aims to overcome? What becomes of culture in a putatively “post-national” age: can we still talk about distinct cultural groupings in the era of globalization, and how do we move past such ideas without collapsing any notion of identity into an indistinct homogeneity? In drawing attention to the ethical potential of acts of solidarity consolidated by the construction of empathic communities of remembrance, do we risk obscuring the very real power differentials that continue to define contemporary life?

This collection aims to move some way towards addressing these difficult issues. We begin with a brief genealogy of the related concepts of “culture” and “memory” as they have been theorized in recent scholarship, before turning our attention to the contested notion of *transcultural memory*.

## 1 Cultural studies and the transcultural turn

Frequently defined and redefined, the concept of “culture”, and the corresponding notion of what is “cultural”, is slippery. In their extensive study of 1952, A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Cluckhohn demonstrated the disciplinary diversity of approaches to this term. The generality of their summative conclusion testifies to the expansive nature the concept:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action (Kroeber and Cluckhohn 1952, 181).

By this reading, culture can be seen as both a process (constantly evolving through diverse forms of artistic, theological, social, and political practice) and an entity belonging to a distinct set (or sets) of people. As Kroeber and Cluckhohn assert, its essential core is not only historically derived but also *selected*, and cultural systems are conditioning elements of action as well as simply what is produced *through* action. In this sense, they should be regarded as deeply imbricated with a range of power relationships and hegemonic structures. Indeed, as articulated in the work of Matthew Arnold (1925), the very concept of culture constitutes an elitist ideal. Postulating the cultured being as one who has immersed themselves in “the best which has been thought and said” (Arnold, in Baldwin, Faulkner and Hecht 2006, 6), Arnold perceived the attainment of culture as a path towards perfection, through which an individual may rise above the class to which he or she belongs.

Whilst Arnold constructed a rather objectified and exclusive model of culture, as something one either has or has not, in 1948, T.S. Eliot took issue with this definition. Eliot argued that culture should be seen as the relation of an individual to a larger social background, contending that “the culture of an individual cannot be isolated from that of the group and that the culture of the group cannot be abstracted from that of the whole society” (Eliot 1948, 24). Whilst Eliot maintains that the best of cultural production belongs to – and is produced by – an elite intelligentsia, his model of culture is somewhat more heterogeneous than Arnold’s homogenized vision. Eliot argued for a society made of hierarchically graded levels of local or regional culture. According to Eliot, “A people should be neither too united nor too divided, if its culture should flourish”, for social diversity creates cultural unity. For Eliot, the dominant, centralised culture gives rise to other satellite cultures, which complement, rather than challenge, the whole – as “a true satellite culture is one which, for geographical and other reasons, has a permanent relation to a stronger one” (1948, 54).

Eliot’s model diversifies and develops the older notion of *container culture*, which can be traced to the eighteenth-century German scholar, Johann Gottfried Herder. Conceptualising cultures as discrete entities with impermeable boundaries, generally defined by the borders of the nation-state, Herder argued that “each nation has its centre of happiness within itself, just as every sphere has its centre of gravity” (1969[1774], 186). Concepts of *Volkscharakter* (national character) and *Volksseele* (national soul) are central to this ideology, as is the preservation of cultural traditions, folklore and song, religion and literature (Werner Ustorf 2004, 119). Perceiving cultural artefacts as by their very nature nationally defined, Herder’s ideas are very much grounded in the ideals of the Enlightenment. However, as Homi Bhabha has since argued, whilst “the advent of Western modernity, located as it generally is in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, was the moment

when certain master narratives of the state, the citizen, cultural value [...] came to define the 'Enlightenment' of Western society", at the same time "the West was producing another history of itself through its colonial possessions and relations" (Bhabha, in Rutherford 1990, 218).

In "Culture's In Between", Bhabha mobilises Eliot's comments on movement between settler colonial societies to describe third world migration patterns. Yet, whilst Eliot might postulate colonial society as a satellite culture of the imperial centre, Bhabha identifies "part" or "partial" cultures created by the colonial experience, pointing to "the contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures – at once the possibility of culture's connectedness and the border between them". This, then, is what constitutes "culture's in between" – "part" cultures, which may be "bafflingly alike and different", and which may result in both "culture sympathy and culture-clash" (1996, 54). Bhabha argues, after Bakhtin, for the existence of a cultural doubleness which, neither binary nor dualistic, is instead a "collision [...] pregnant with the potential for new world visions" (Bakhtin, in Bhabha 1996, 58). Pointing to the "hybridizing potential" of dialogic engagement within the colonial relationship, Bhabha seeks to:

open up of a space of negotiation where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal. Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. It makes possible the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency that refuses the binary representation of social antagonism. Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the inside: the part in the whole (1996, 58).

Bhabha's work on hybridity decentralises the nation-state as a cultural container, offering a heterogeneous model of culture that allows for fluid relations both *within* and *between* nations that exceed ordinary structures of power and identity. In dialogic form, hybridizing discourses and strategies may ideally allow both minority and majority cultural groups to narrativize visions of community; to become part of a whole rather than a part elided, over-written or normalized by that whole. Such conceptions, and the postcolonial discourses to which they belong, have played an important role laying the groundwork for the broader critical movement that we may loosely describe as the *transcultural turn*.

## 2 The transcultural turn

Throughout literary, cultural, historical, geographical and philosophical discourse, the late twentieth-century transcultural turn is manifest in a rejection of the formerly pervasive model of container culture in favour of a more fluid and transient paradigm of relations between societies. As academics have sought to formulate a fitting vocabulary for the global age over the past twenty years, transcultural perspectives have increasingly come to inform much work across the humanities and social sciences. In cultural geography, for example, practitioners have widely come to reject the bordered, "fixed" understanding of cultures that had formerly been prevalent in the work of seminal practitioners,<sup>6</sup> occasioning a resultant shift in the way both place and human behaviour are conceived and interpreted within the discipline. Whilst the idea of the nation arguably no longer provides a stable framework for analysis, it is not jettisoned but contextualised between the local and the global.<sup>7</sup> An increasing awareness of global issues is recognized as having considerable impact on local concerns, as demonstrated in ecocritical approaches to space, place and identity.<sup>8</sup> However, much criticism also emphasises the necessity of maintaining contextual specificity, for "[w]hile there are issues requiring a global perspective, and there are phenomena truly global in scope, the local and the particular can never be forgotten or ignored" (Murphy 2010, 1).

In historical discourses – by their very nature concerned with looking back – the idea of the nation state remains central to mapping cycles of progress and destruction. Yet comparative frameworks, "the classical way of transcending the narrow boundaries of national history" (Haupt and Kocka 2009, vii) are nevertheless (controversially) becoming broader in scope.<sup>9</sup> As Michael Rothberg and Stef Craps have pointed out in their recent discussion of transcultural approaches to the Holocaust, some of the most influential work on

<sup>6</sup> P. Jackson (1989) and Don Mitchell (1998), for example, both reject the notion of "the effectivity and salience of human culture vis-a-vis their inhabitation and transformation of physical environments" inherent to nineteenth century German Romanticism (see John Wylie's (2007, 22) summary of this shift).

<sup>7</sup> Implicit, for example, in Don Mitchell's argument that to understand how nationalism itself is made, it is necessary to "set our sights on scales both larger and smaller than the nation state" (2000, 273).

<sup>8</sup> Notable as early as Ti Fu Tuan's *Topophilia: a Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (1974).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, criticism of Timothy Snyder's (2010) study of Europe under Stalin and Hitler, and the related discussion of 'double genocide' in academia and in the media (Efraim Zuroff, 2010; Jonathan Freedland, 2010; Bastov 2011).



the genocide has drawn attention to the fact that the histories of “the Holocaust, slavery, and colonial domination are in fact interconnected, and by refusing to think them together (except in a competitive manner) we deprive ourselves of an opportunity to gain greater insight into each of these different strands of history and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the dark underside of modernity” (Craps and Rothberg 2011, 518).<sup>10</sup> Such studies reject the antiquated notion that belonging to a particular nation necessarily transcends other forms of cultural identity, or that national agendas alone are central co-ordinates in historical progress and conflict.<sup>11</sup>

In the study of human rights, scholars are concerned with ways in which transnational empathy may be achieved and mobilized (Fuyuki Kurasawa 2007, Ronald Commers, Wim Vandekerckhove, An Verlinden, 2008). As Judith Butler has argued persuasively (2004 and 2009), it is increasingly apparent that we must pay more attention to, and become more active in opposing, the hegemonic structures that render some lives grievable and others barely human. Resisting collapse into such fallacious ways of thinking, Butler (via a reading of Emmanuel Levinas) argues that we should seek to envision an empathic mode of solidarity premised upon recognition of the precariousness of all life, moving beyond essentialising categorisations of nationality or ethnicity. Butler’s work is emblematic of recent attempts in political philosophy to imagine a mode of justice able to transcend the normative dynamics of hegemonic global relations. As Nancy Fraser contends, a growing critical consensus suggests that the time has come for a move beyond the conventional Westphalian mapping of political space, which envisions the world as divided into discrete political communities, “geographically bounded units, demarcated by sharply drawn borders and arrayed side by side” (Fraser 2008, 4). Noting the increasing influence of “intermestic” political actors (such as NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, and other “trans-territorial, non-state actors” (2008, 5)), Fraser advocates “transnationalizing the public sphere” (2008, 76–99), in ways that facilitate “transnational solidarity, democratic frame-setting, and emancipatory projects of social transformation” (2008, 10).

Informed by her engagement with Habermasian discursive ethics, Fraser’s analysis resonates productively with Jürgen Habermas’s own work on the need for a reclamation of cosmopolitanism in the post-9/11 world (2003 and 2006). Habermas argues for a transnational politics that moves beyond the model of the nation-state, contending that the state remains too coercive an actor, and too reified an institution, to be a productive participant in an exemplary global

society. Instead, Habermas calls for a constitutional order premised upon an ongoing dialogical examination of the laws and statutes to which the international community is held accountable, insisting that democracy should be recognised as a process of continual exegesis in which relations between political powers can be integrated into “a cosmopolitan order that ensures an equal and reciprocal hearing for the voices of all those affected” (Habermas 2006, 36).<sup>12</sup> Habermas outlines a contemporary “cosmopolitics” (Robbins and Cheah 1998) that complements other attempts to reformulate the notion of cosmopolitanism for the global age.<sup>13</sup> In his invaluable analysis of “cosmopolitical realism”, Ulrich Beck identifies an “*epistemological turn*” (Beck 2004, 131) in the social sciences as a result of which “a whole set of concepts associated with the ‘national perspective’ become disenchanting: that is deontologized, historicized and stripped of their inner necessity” (2004, 132). In contrast to the homogenizing model of *globalization*, which has long been seen as erasing distinct (national, cultural, and social) identities through the increasing internationalization of commerce, Beck’s understanding of cosmopolitanization suggests that “the distinctions and boundaries between internal and external, national and international, local and global, ourselves and others [have grown] more confused or hybridized” (2004, 132) as a result of the diffuse cultural, economic, ecological and political developments that have characterized late modernity.

This (re)turn to cosmopolitanism challenges the rubric of globalization by seeking to find a place for the local inside the global, the particular inside the universal. Whilst each of these studies draws from disparate philosophical antecedents, and emphasises divergent characteristics of cosmopolitanism (always a contested term, as Kwame Anthony Appiah argues), what these perspectives tend to have in common is: on the one hand, attention to “the idea that we have obligations to others that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kin, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship”; on the other, the understanding that “we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance” (Appiah 2006, xiii). However, conceding that the dialectic of separation and togetherness that characterises these interests will not always be harmonious, Appiah warns that

<sup>12</sup> Habermas aims to move beyond a Western-dominated hegemony in which “universal” principles are reflective of particular historical, cultural, economic, and political biases, arguing that “non-Western cultures must appropriate the universalistic content of human rights with their own resources and in their own interpretation, one that establishes a convincing connection to local experiences and interests” (Habermas 2006, 35).

<sup>13</sup> See also Robbins and Cheah (1998), Benhabib (2004) and Appiah (2006).

<sup>10</sup> Rothberg and Craps are particularly referring to the work of Hannah Arendt (1951), Aimé Césaire (1972), Paul Gilroy (2000), and A. Dirk Moses (2002).

<sup>11</sup> See for example Georgiy Kasianov, Philipp Ther (2009).

there is “a sense in which cosmopolitanism is the name not of the solution but of the challenge” (2006, xiii). In so doing, he begins to point the way towards the “critical cosmopolitanism” outlined by Rebecca Walkowitz. Drawing upon the legacies of Immanuel Kant and Max Horkheimer, Walkowitz asserts that critical cosmopolitanism is intended to designate “a type of international engagement that can be distinguished from ‘planetary humanism’ by two principle characteristics: an aversion to heroic tones of appropriation and progress, and a suspicion of epistemological privilege, views from above or from the center that assume a consistent distinction between who is seeing and what is seen” (Walkowitz 2006, 2).

Walkowitz’s work forms part of a growing canon of literary criticism that has sought to critique relations between individuals, cultures, and nations as they are played out in fiction. Over the past two decades, this work has tended to focus upon the relationship between literature and globalization<sup>14</sup> and the task of reconstituting more equitable global power dynamics in a post-colonial world.<sup>15</sup> Such discussions have wrestled with the difficult matter of defining the place of the nation-state and its citizens in a rapidly changing international context. Mirroring concerns in political philosophy,<sup>16</sup> attention has turned increasingly towards a consideration of the place (and indeed, imaginative space) of stateless individuals – the refugee, the dispossessed – deprived of political, social, or legal belonging: a form of “creaturely life” (Santner 2006) afforded protection by neither national nor international bodies.<sup>17</sup>

Commensurate with the perceived transcendence of geographical boundaries has been an exploration of the opening of the self, not only to the world around it but also to the others that inhabit it. In studies of social behaviour, communication and experience, we see a correspondingly increased interest in people’s experiences away from their ‘own’ environments, whether their movements are forced or elected.<sup>18</sup> Formerly relegated and dismissed as complicit with imperialism and

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Suman Gupta’s (2009) *Literature and Globalization*, which traces the hermeneutic fluidity of “globalization” (and its attendant ideological biases), alongside the changing ways the complex processes of globalization have found reflection in literature, and affected the institutional practices of literary studies.

<sup>15</sup> See Davis et al (2005), *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Society in a ‘Post’-Colonial World*

<sup>16</sup> See Agamben (1998 and 2005); Butler (2004); Stonebridge (2011).

<sup>17</sup> This work considers exile in diverse geographic, historical and literary contexts, from the sixth-century BC, to contemporary Israel, seventeenth-century England, to post-Holocaust Eastern Europe. For broader studies, see David Bevan (1990) *Literature and Exile*, and Hong Zeng (2010) *The Semiotics of Exile in Literature*

<sup>18</sup> In geography see work on the ‘global’ nature of spaces such as modern cities (Doreen Massey 2007); the notion that “the essence of tourism is the way in which the local interacts with the

colonization (Clark 1999, 1–28) and haunted by Cartesian dualism (Blanton 2002, 16), the potential of travel, tourism and the associated practice of travel writing to facilitate a better understanding of the other is increasingly apparent in contemporary scholarship.<sup>19</sup> The many ways in which we can now communicate with others from distant geographical locations, and the ever-developing technology which allows us to encounter these others and their cultural products (which soon become naturalised and part of our familiar cultural schema), also places transcultural concerns directly in the arena of media studies. James Curran and David Morley argue that, for too long, media studies has been “locked” in national frameworks in resistance to global homogeneity, but note that emerging studies show “reassuring evidence of multidirectional flows of global communication” and “the power and resilience of local audiences and the rich resources they draw upon in making diverse sense of globally distributed media products” (Curran and Morley 2006, 4).

Whilst such a brief outline is unable to do justice to the complexity of the critical movements we have detailed, as even this short survey has shown, the search for new modes of interrogating contemporary cultural experience (of theorising cosmopolitanism, globalization, diaspora, exile, etc) has both an interdisciplinary and a global reach. Although each of these terms has specific characteristics and nuances that it is important not to lose sight of, all of them may be loosely defined as intersecting with the notion of transculturalism. A relatively broad (and somewhat under-conceptualised) idea, Wolfgang Welsch describes transculturality as “the most adequate concept of culture today – for both political and normative reasons” (Welsch 1999, 194). Rejecting any notion of culture as territorially bound, Welsch contends (in terms reminiscent of both Eliot and Bhabha) that “[c]ultures today are in general characterized by *hybridization*. For every culture, all other cultures have tendentially come to be inner-content or satellites” (1999, 198). Transculturality thus differs from either *interculturality* (which “seeks ways in which [different] cultures could nevertheless get on with, understand and recognize one another” (1999, 195)) or *multiculturalism* (which “takes up the problems which dif-

global” (Williams and Shaw 1998, 59); in literature itself, Patrick Murphy identifies a strain of literature that casts aside the nation-state, “as authors turn to transnational, bioregional, localist, new agrarian and futurist sites and locations for the settings, contexts, and political placement of the ethical conflicts they narrate” (2012, 33).

<sup>19</sup> As Susan Sontag (2007, 228) suggests: “To be a traveller [...] is to be constantly reminded of the simultaneity of what is going on in the world, your world and the very different world you have visited [...] It’s a question [...] of the limits of the human imagination.” The cultural historian Rudy Koshar echoes this perspective on tourism in general as “a cultural practice that requires and, to varying extents, instantiates, a hermeneutics [...] based on the interpretation of a multiplicity of texts and markers, all oriented to producing knowledge of Self and Other” (2000, 103).

ferent cultures have living together *within one society*" (1999, 196)), by refusing to subscribe to any separatist notion of cultures as discrete and impermeable entities. Resisting the idea that either values or lifestyles can be contained within any form of border (be it national, economic, ethnic or religious), Welsch argues "for a multimeshed and inclusive, not separatist and exclusive understanding of culture [...] whose pragmatic features exist not in delimitation, but in the ability to link and undergo transition" (1999, 200). He thus neatly outlines a realignment of experience "away from the concentration on the polarity of the own and the foreign to an attentiveness for what might be common and connective" (1999, 200).

Unlike Beck's normative *cosmopolitanization* (outlined above), Welsch's transculturality should be understood as a diffuse process arising from both institutionalized policies and organic, non-centralized, social changes. For Beck, cosmopolitanization:

involves the formation of multiple loyalties, the spread of various transnational lifestyles, the rise of non-state political actors (from Amnesty International to the World Trade Organization), and the development of global protest movements against (neo-liberal) globalism and for a *different* (cosmopolitan) globalization involving the worldwide recognition of human rights, workers' rights, global protection of the environment, an end to poverty, and so on. (Beck 2004, 36).

He concedes that such changes may also take place on an involuntary basis, seeing "normative" cosmopolitanism, structured and overseen by institutional bodies (the UN, the World Bank, the International Criminal Court, for example), shadowed by "passive" processes "which shape reality as a side effect of world trade or global dangers (climate disaster, terrorism, financial crisis)", to ensure that "[w]ithout my knowing or explicitly willing it, my existence, my body, my 'own life' become part of another world, of foreign cultures, regions and histories, and global interdependence risks" (2004, 132–134). He also argues that "forced" cosmopolitanism may take place "beneath the surfaces" of the "persisting facades of national spaces and sovereignties", undermining traditional models of hermetic identity from within even while "the main signifiers on display continue to proclaim national mentalities, identities and forms of consciousness" (2004, 134). However, whereas, for Beck, "the cosmopolitanization of reality" is something that occurs separately from, and even in resistance to, political and economic movements, for Welsch, the process of transculturality covers a remit of both conscious and unconscious social changes (to use Beck's terms) from the grassroots to the institutionalised, the local to the global.

Sharing the view that each of these developments occurs in dialogue (whether in solidarity or in tension) with the others, making it implausible to accurately

separate out the hegemonic from the counter-hegemonic, the cultural from the political, or the "normative" from the "passive", we choose to adopt the more fluid and encompassing notion of transculturality as a conceptual framework for this book. The designation "transcultural" may be applied to both the social, economic and political changes occurring in the "real-world" and the epistemological frameworks through which they are analysed in the academy – conceptualising both cultural practice and critical theory. Bearing this in mind, we turn now to growing field of transcultural memory and its associated theoretical approaches.

### 3 Memory studies and the transcultural turn

As has been widely documented,<sup>20</sup> the past 30 years have seen an increasing preoccupation with the concept of memory, as a cultural "memory boom" (Huysen 1995 and 2003) closely followed the emergence of the discipline of "memory studies" in the (predominantly western) academy. The rise of memory studies as a body of academic interest can be loosely traced back to a series of events that coalesced around the fall of Soviet Communism.<sup>21</sup> These include the infamous historians' debate over the Holocaust in Germany and a related national commitment to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms with the past; increasing concerns about the "amnesiac" dimensions of both globalizing capitalism and cultural postmodernism; the heightened importance of identity politics in the late 1980s and 1990s; confrontations with the legacies of colonialism, fascism, and Apartheid; and an apparent decline in national affiliations and ideologies as a grounding for identity. As Susannah Radstone contends, these very disparate influences cumulatively suggest that "what is at stake in studies of memory is the elaboration of the relationship between lived experience and the broader field of history [...] including within its purview questions of broad social forces and power relations that exceed those of relations between individuals" (Radstone 2005, 139).

Radstone's comments indicate that studies of memory negotiate the terms of the relationship between the individual and the collective. However, James Young points to the dangers of homogenising cultures of remembrance by assuming that it is possible for individuals to assume each other's memories. He argues that

<sup>20</sup> See Olick and Robbins (1998); Erll and Nünning (2010); Olick, Vinitzsky and Levy (2011); and Erll (2011) for a more detailed genealogy of memory studies and the related cultural memory boom.

<sup>21</sup> See Olick and Robbins (1998); Klein (2000); Kansteiner (2002); Erll and Nünning (2008); Crownshaw (2010); Erll (2011).

“even though groups share socially constructed assumptions and values that organize memory into roughly similar patterns, individuals cannot share another’s memory any more than they can share another’s cortex. They share instead the forms of memory, even the meanings in memory generated by those forms, but an individual’s memory remains hers alone” (Young 1993, xi). Whilst Young allows that social groups share – and construct – common sentiments about the past, he refuses to define memory as other than the property of the individual, mediated by and subject to, the customs, beliefs, and traditions of the collective.

As Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney argue, memories do not simply inhere in cultures, but “can only become collective as part of a continuous process whereby memories are shared with the help of symbolic artefacts that mediate between individuals and, in the process, create communality across both space and time” (Erll and Rigney 2009, 1). It is not only specific places (such as Auschwitz, Gettysburg, or Ground Zero) that may constitute what Pierre Nora describes as *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), but the constantly evolving constellation of (tangible and intangible) media relating to a specific event. Erll and Rigney contend that cultural memory is comprised of “‘media’ of all sorts – spoken language, letters, books, photos, films” – each of which provides “frameworks for shaping both experience and memory [...] in two, interconnected ways: as instruments for sense-making, they mediate between the individual and the world; as agents of networking, they mediate between individuals and groups” (2009, 1). One of the central issues facing theorists of memory, then, has been to define relationships between *cultures of memory*, the *individuals and institutions* that precipitate their production, and the *cultural artefacts* that constitute them.<sup>22</sup>

An understanding of such dynamics is crucial to identifying the diverse ways in which memories circulate in the global age. As Andreas Huyssen has argued, at the beginning of the twenty-first-century:

The form in which we think of the past is increasingly memory without borders rather than national history within borders. Modernity has brought with it a very real compression of time and space. But in the register of imaginaries, it has also expanded our horizons of time and space beyond the local, the national and even the international. (Huyssen 2003, 4)

The global movement of memory poses a web of ethical, political, and social questions about the stakes involved in our identification with and representation of the past. Following the work of Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2006), Michael Rothberg (2009), Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (2009), and Richard Crownshaw (2011) among others, this movement sees attention shift from *lieux de mémoire*

(Nora 2001) – memory’s location in static objects and locations – towards a focus on the dynamics by which it is articulated.

Positioning the Holocaust as the foundation for an international culture of “cosmopolitan memory” that encourages the articulation of other histories of injustice, Levy and Sznaider argue that “national and ethnic memories are transformed in the age of globalization rather than erased. [...] They begin to develop in accordance with common rhythms and periodizations. But in each case, the common elements combine with pre-existing elements to form something new” (Levy and Sznaider 2006, 3). Rothberg’s work also draws on the Holocaust as a cornerstone of comparative memory, tracing the way in which memories of the Black Atlantic and (post-)colonial French Algeria have not only been articulated through the prism of the Holocaust over the past sixty years, but emerged alongside and with an influence upon early Holocaust memory. Rothberg issues a welcome challenge to both attempts to underscore the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the opposing over-emphasis upon the unprecedented nature of other atrocities, arguing that:

the conceptual framework through which commentators and ordinary citizens have addressed the relationship between memory, identity, and violence is flawed. Against the framework that understands collective memory as *competitive* memory – as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources – I suggest that we consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative (Rothberg 2009, 3).

This resistance to “zero-sum” approaches to the past also grounds Erll’s work on travelling memory, a term which provides a “metaphorical shorthand, an abbreviation for the fact that in the production of cultural memory, people, media, mnemonic forms, contents, and practices are in constant, unceasing motion” (Erll 2011b, 12). Travelling memory essentially describes “the incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory, their continual ‘travels’ and ongoing transformations through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders” (2011b, 11). Technological advancements have been pivotal in facilitating the travelling of memory, as demonstrated by Andrew Hoskins, Joanne Garde-Hansen, and Anna Reading (2009). Examining the impact of global media on memory practices, Hoskins identifies a “connective turn [...] shaping an ongoing re-calibration of time, space (and place) and memory by people and machines as they inhabit and connect with both dense and diffused social networks” (Hoskins 2011, 29). Alongside her important work on “global” memories (highlighting the impact of digital technologies in the global age) Reading’s recent work examines the cross-cultural notion of the “right to memory” – “the human right to have the otherness of the past acknowledged through the creation

22 See Young (1993); J. Assmann (2008); and Erll (2011).

of symbolic and cultural acts, utterances and expressions” (Reading 2011, 379) – analysing the extent to which international debates have shaped national and cultural discourses over this issue.

Without losing sight of their important individualities, it is possible to argue that each of these disparate methodologies posits remembrance as a fluid process in which commemorative tropes work to inform the representation of diverse events and traumas beyond national or cultural boundaries, bridging – but not negating – spatial, temporal and ideational differences. However, as Wulf Kansteiner contends, despite the recent tendency to see the displacement of national memories and identities by “a dialectical, conflicted interplay between global and local memories and identities” as a “very positive development” (Kansteiner 2006, 331), such ‘transnational’ memories have arguably yet to be truly embraced beyond the level of critical and political rhetoric. Attention must still necessarily be paid to the dynamics of what Terri Tomsy describes as the “trauma economy”. Noting trauma’s use “as transcultural capital and commodity” (Tomsy 2011, 53), Tomsy describes the trauma economy as “a circuit of movement and exchange where traumatic memories ‘travel’ and are valued and revalued along the way” (2011, 49), mediated by “economic, cultural, discursive and political structures that guide, enable and ultimately institutionalize the representation, travel and attention to certain traumas” (2011, 53). As Dirk Moses argues, we should be wary of comparative methodologies that encourage a competitive rhetorical framework by subscribing to a “phallic logic” that shouts “‘my trauma is bigger than yours’ in order to defend or attack the theodicy that the brutal extermination and disappearance of peoples is redeemed by human progress in the form of the Western dominated global system of nation-states” (Moses 2010, 6). Although Erll, following Welsch, argues that transculturalism should manifest a turn *towards* the other, Moses’s comments suggest that in some instances, this apparent outwardness can in fact mask a turn *against* the other (or at least, a resurgent solipsism attendant upon a turn *away* from the other). Conversely, Radstone (2011) worries that the turn towards transculturalism will take attention away from the local dynamics of memory. These issues raise the spectre of whether we are right to increasingly think about the past as “memory without borders” without rigorously questioning whether the most idealistic aspects of memory theory actually reflect the complexity of how commemoration works in practice. Thus, whilst celebrating the ethical and political potential of projects that aim towards a dialogic understanding of the past able to account for both local and global interests, this book also aims towards an interrogation of the relationship between commemorative theory and practice.

## 4 Transcultural memory: the aims of this collection

Each of the theories outlined above has contributed to the movement we describe as the transcultural turn in memory studies. The essays in this collection aim to conceptualise the diverse ways in which memorial practices negotiate relationships between local, national, and international communities in the age of globalization. Drawing upon the interdisciplinary movements outlined above, we suggest that cultures of memory are more porous and interrelated than previously acknowledged. Whilst distinct national and local renderings of the past remain visible, the concept of cultures as discrete and hermetic entities tends to arise from a rather reductive and nostalgic institutionalisation of national, ethnic, or religious identity, often informed by deeply ideological agendas. Although diverse individuals or groups may, at different times, identify with particular histories, the way in which events are represented and remembered is strongly influenced by the memorialisation of other pasts – as commemorative tropes and techniques are transferred between events often distanced in time and/or space. Thus, while it would be misleading to suggest that particular communities do not possess important specificities in their approach to, and articulation of, the past, it is important to recognize that memories exist in an essentially dialogic relation to each other. One might therefore argue that even the most seemingly nationalistic examples of memory are implicit reactions to (or rather, against) the global culture in which contemporary commemorative practice takes place.

Building upon Welsch’s definition of transculturality, we suggest that *transcultural memory* might best be regarded as describing two separate dynamics in contemporary commemorative practice: firstly, the travelling of memory *within* and *between* national, ethnic, and religious collectives; secondly, forums of remembrance that aim to move *beyond* the idea of political, ethnic, linguistic, or religious borders as containers for our understanding of the past. Covering a broad spectrum of memory sites, texts and media, this collection questions how the notion of “transculturality” informs both the practice of memory and the associated critical thinking that accompanies such activities. Viewed most optimistically, transcultural approaches to the theory and practice of memory demonstrate how shared co-ordinates (be they historical, cultural, political, or economic) may ease competitive claims to history, focusing on the commonality of ideas about remembrance that stretch across communities, reinforced by recurring themes or modes of expression. Yet, as Radstone and Tomsy have argued, the very notion of transculturalism can also be seen as a threat to distinct forms of identity, catalysing a reassertion of bounded notions of past histories and identities.

Thinking critically about such issues, our collection emerges from three, closely related, ambitions. Firstly, to advance and interrogate the concept of transcultural memory, considering the problems and potentials of visualising intertwined pasts and processes of remembrance. Secondly, to map the topography of transcultural memory in contemporary theory and practice, looking at a variety of case studies representing the articulation of diverse histories in different media and across a range of cultures. Thirdly, to emphasise the openness of transculturalism as it affects processes of memory today. As the following essays demonstrate, transcultural practices are not homogeneous in approach, agenda, or outcome. It is therefore both difficult and undesirable to propose a reified model of “transcultural memory”. This book does not dictate a single narrative, or indeed produce a standardised paradigm of transcultural memory. Instead, readers are encouraged to explore the benefits and complexities of remembering transculturally, to question whether it is ever truly possible to escape localised cultures of memory, and to consider the implications of conserving national visions of the past in an increasingly globalised age. Transculturalism is in its infancy as a both a theory and practice of memory, and it is not our intention to close down its potential manifestations. Rather, we propose this collection as a moment for reflection: a chance to appraise past and present projects in both positive and negative lights, and begin to imagine an ethical dimension for the future theory and practice of memory.

## 5 Layout of the collection

The collection is organized by three mutually informative sections. Contributions address the key issues faced in the study of memory today, considering the possibilities and problems posed by cultures of memory that attempt, often simultaneously, to operate on local, national, continental and even global scales. Chapters draw upon disparate theoretical and disciplinary perspectives, studying commemorative practice through texts, sites, landscapes, political initiatives, museums, memorial traces and moments of silence.

### 5.1 Part One: Theorising transcultural memory

This section examines the diverse ways in which comparative approaches to the past might be conceptualised, articulated and mobilised, and addresses calls for a more nuanced understanding of the concept of transcultural memory. We open

the collection with a dialogue between A. Dirk Moses and Michael Rothberg, two of the critics at the forefront of the transcultural turn in memory studies. Moses and Rothberg discuss the ethics and politics of this evolution from their respective positions within historical and literary and cultural criticism, foregrounding key issues relating to its associated problems and possibilities. The next contribution, by Peter Carrier and Kobi Kabalek, interrogates German and English scholarship on memory culture, exposing crucial terminological and methodological tensions. This analysis foregrounds an examination of the precedents of transculturalism in history and the social sciences. Ultimately, the chapter argues for the integration of associated methodologies, in order to better enable cultural memory scholarship to operate effectively above and beyond the parameters of the nation state. Continuing the critique of terminological ambiguity, Lucy Bond’s contribution draws attention to the complex forms that transcultural readings of memory may assume, contending that a clearer understanding of the political ramifications of particular commemorative practices is necessary to resist the assumption that comparative forms of remembrance can be considered inherently ethical by dint of their conceptual currency. Exemplifying this discussion with an analysis of diverse case studies from the American memorial culture of 9/11, this chapter warns against analogical practices that may forge an over-identification between events, and argues for allegorical forms of memory able to trace tentative and non-deterministic connections across cultures and histories.

### 5.2 Part Two: Problematising transcultural memory

Secondly, we turn to address the **problems** that might arise from transcultural practices, considering the ways in which such processes of remembrance may be appropriated to shore up hegemonic memorial cultures, or reinforce certain ideological discourses, and examining the tensions that exist between local, national, and international approaches to commemorating the past. As Rothberg argues, memorialisation should not be a zero-sum process, but where memory is viewed as competitive, transcultural analyses allow us to see more clearly why certain possessive approaches to the past have developed, and furthermore to understand the forces and stakes behind these developments. Lars Breuer’s article draws upon linguistic studies of Holocaust memory in regional areas of Germany and Poland, demonstrating how the genocide is framed in distinctly divergent terminology across communities. This suggests that despite attempts to inaugurate a Europeanisation of memory, cultures of remembrance still tend towards distinctly *vernacular* forms. Building upon these ideas, Aline Sierp’s article focuses on the attempted creation of a universal version of the European

past drawn from EU initiatives that attempt to standardize a continental reading of Holocaust memory. In its most positive manifestations, such Europeanized forms of memory are intended to transcend national cultures of remembrance, theoretically easing the tensions resulting from historical schisms between different ethnic groups. However, if the continuing focus on the Holocaust above other atrocities shapes the structure of European memory, how does this define or limit European memory, both in its nascent continental form and in its relation to commemorative cultures elsewhere in the world? Integrating the analysis of government policy with examples of cultural production and discussion of educational curricula, Andy Pearce's contribution to this volume demonstrates how Britain's Holocaust consciousness constantly evolves in dialogue with European and American memory cultures, effecting a triangulation of memory in which transcultural and national processes co-exist. Jessica Rapson's chapter addresses the difficulties inherent in displacing memories from one context to another, questioning how dislocated pasts can travel across cultures to find resonances in places from which they are geographically and culturally distinct. In a discussion of the Holocaust mass grave site Babi Yar, Kiev, and the corresponding Babi Yar Park, Denver, Rapson examines the possibility that thinking transculturally should not lead to an erasure of distinct identities, but draw parallels between moments of the past and their representation in the present, revealing shared values as well as distinct ways of being from which we can learn.

### 5.3 Part Three: The possibilities of transcultural memory

We end our collection with a more optimistic analysis of the **possibilities** that transcultural forms of commemoration may have for moving towards ethical processes of memory. Authors propose new discourses and modes of practice that might help to open up cultures of memory, resisting reification or appropriation. Their essays explore the emergence of rich counter-narratives that potentially transcend memory's apparently predetermined borders, be they national, cultural, or emotional. Wendy Koenig's paper explores the use of absence as a transcultural memorial trope. Koenig considers the connection between sound and cultural tradition in displacing aural traditions of commemoration. In so doing, she draws attention to the importance of extra-linguistic communication, and of the memories that can emerge in the lacunae between words. Expanding this investigation of absence as a mode of transculturality, Terri Tomskey's discussion of the lost memory cultures of the former Yugoslavia sees the Yugoslavian diaspora now emerging (among many fragmented pasts) in Berlin, which seems to offer a haven for lost stories and haunted memories. Tomskey offers a Benjamin-

ian approach to history, evidencing an interest in fragmentary pasts, haunting and spectral materialism. This perspective is echoed in Franziska Meyer's paper, which also draws upon Berlin as a city of transcultural connections. Meyer's chapter illustrates the ways in which recontextualising 9/11 within the context of the violent history of modern Europe refutes the culture of exceptionalism that has grown up around the attacks and allows for the traces of other hidden pasts to emerge. Tomskey and Meyer suggest that in its most successful manifestations, transcultural remembrance is not about homogenisation, but the creation of constellations of memory that reveal momentary connections across time and space whose shared qualities may previously have elided us. The next two chapters, by Dirk Göttsche and Marguerite Corporaal, examine how a dialogical relationship between histories shapes diasporic memories within the realm of literary representation. Corporaal's discussion of memories of the great Irish famine (1845–50) in Irish and American fiction concentrates on the potentially transcultural nature of response to landscape, yet recognizes the way in which geographic dislocation may render distinct, and often contradictory, memories of suffering and loss. Göttsche's focus on the memory of colonialism in contemporary German fiction reveals a trajectory of postcolonial memory cutting across both national and cultural boundaries to intersect, in the German context particularly, with memory discourses surrounding National Socialism, the *Wende*, and Black German literature.

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## Part One: Theorising Transcultural Memory