Astrid Erll, Susanne Knittel, and Jenny Wüstenberg

Introduction: Doing Memory Studies with Ann Rigney

What does it mean to 'do' memory studies 'with Ann Rigney'?[1] The answer to this question has several dimensions: First of all, it entails a number of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological choices. It means research with an understanding of memory as the outcome of cultural representations and their circulation, and thus a particular focus on the role of literature, media, and the arts, on their historical dimensions and political implications, in producing and transmitting memory. It also means paying close attention to the dynamics of memory and the interplay between remembering and forgetting, convergence and contestation, to questions of mediation and remediation, and to possibilities of mobilization of and through memory.

Key to Rigney's approach to memory research is the notion of the agency of the aesthetic, the ability of culture to shape experience and memory. Crucially, Rigney conceives of cultural memory not as made in one go, but as the outcome of multiple and ongoing acts of remembrance in different forms and media. Memory is remediated time and again across multiple platforms, traveling between words, images, and performances, and from the news media to the arts. Rigney's work shows how memory filters experience through cultural forms and media technologies; that events have a slow-release impact in the form of the stories that are told and retold about them; that words and images are agents capable of mobilizing people.

Developing approaches to memory over a period of more than thirty years, Rigney has given the field of memory studies a number of key concepts that have

1 Memory studies is a well-established field of inquiry. Over the past three decades, it has developed and taken shape through a multi-voiced polylogue. Approaches from sociology, anthropology, history, literary studies, media studies, psychology, political and cultural studies – to name only some of the major disciplines – have come together to address the field's key question about the presence of the past. For fundamental studies on collective and cultural memory, see the works by Maurice Halbwachs (1994 [1925], 1941, 1997 [1950]), Pierre Nora (1984–1992), and Aleida and Jan Assmann (J. Assmann 2011 [1999]; A. Assmann 2011 [1999]). *The Collective Memory Reader* (Olick et al. 2010) provides an intellectual history of the field of memory studies. For ongoing research, see the journals *Memory Studies* (SAGE, since 2009), *Memory, Mind & Media* (Cambridge UP, since 2022), and the *Memory Studies Review* (Brill, since 2024); for research with a particular focus on the medial and cultural dynamics of memory, see the volumes of the *Media and Cultural Memory* series (De Gruyter, since 2004).

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become 'household terms,' forming its discourse and identity. The "dynamics of memory," the "mediation and remediation of memory," and "the memory-activism nexus" are examples of such felicitous coinages that will be elaborated and carried to new shores in the individual chapters of this book.

Methodologically, doing memory studies with Ann Rigney implies a close reading of particular memory materials – from novels to street signs, and from revolutionary calendars to documentary films – and the bringing-together of such materials as new archives of memory. Importantly, Rigney's work showcases the importance of an ecological approach that does not only study discrete or isolated objects of remembrance but also considers and analyzes the networks within which they operate and become meaningful (or lose their meaning), always with an eye to the interdependencies and interactions of the material and the symbolic. Tracing the dynamics of memory across national and cultural contexts, across time, and, importantly, across media and discourses, crucially also entails comparative and longitudinal perspectives. Finally, it means an openness to and embracing of the interdisciplinarity of memory and memory studies.

There is another, more practical dimension to 'doing' memory studies 'with Ann Rigney.' It refers to a particular style of conducting research and building a research community. Rigney is not only conceptually highly generative, inspiring new and established researchers and providing them with useful tools to address their own questions. She also plays an active role in ensuring the transgenerational life of memory studies as a scholarly field. As a 'founding mother' of the Memory Studies Association, she has been instrumental in building a professional organization that is innovative, global, inclusive, and well-governed. Throughout her career, she has worked closely together with PhD candidates and Postdocs, in research groups, in editing projects, and in many other forms of academic mentorship. Rigney's engaged mentorship is 'formative' in the best sense of the word: It shapes researchers' thinking and writing style in a way that brings out the best in their academic personalities and projects. Curiosity about and respect for approaches from other regions and disciplines is part of her academic style, and this openness and her constructive ways of 'bringing-together' have formed memory studies into an enormously hospitable academic community.

This book is a *liber amicorum* as well as an invitation. It honors Rigney's achievements in chapters written by her students, colleagues, and friends. At the same time, this book is meant as a building block for the future of memory studies. It is conceived as a new encyclopedia of memory research that takes stock of the field's most important concepts and current developments and sets the research agenda for the coming years. It invites researchers to this field in a series of short accessible chapters that present key concepts of memory studies and show how these can be applied and developed further.

Doing Memory Studies with Ann Rigney is arranged in eight sections that are dedicated to eight major research areas of memory studies, all of which were either developed or significantly shaped by the work of Ann Rigney. The book begins with the fundamentals of memory studies in debates around history and narrative. It moves on to questions around the dynamics of memory and its mediatedness, to the life and afterlives of memory, national and transnational memory, the agency of the aesthetic, and, last but not least, to the memory-activism nexus.

Section 1: **"History, Narrative, Memory"** starts with a debate that is both foundational for and ongoing within contemporary memory studies. An important strand of the field's roots goes back to discussions emerging in the 1960s about the narrative properties of historical writing and historical consciousness. In his *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973, 2), Hayden White notoriously argued that an historical work is not a transparent window onto the past, but merely a "verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing* them." This new understanding of 'history' as a human construction within changing presents, which turns the past into stories, paved the way for the emergence of 'memory' in academic discourse. Making the past present through narrative clearly was not only the work of historians and historiography, but also of family conversations, rituals, literary works, or popular films. Yet, this recognition also raised uncomfortable questions about the relationship between fact and fiction.

In *The Rhetoric of Historical Representation*, Ann Rigney (2002 [1990], 16) offered a literary historian's view on this debate. Studying three historical narratives of the French Revolution, she asked: "How is the historian-narrator to go about representing this complex, collective event through the medium of a finite, linear narrative discourse? And what is even more problematic: how is he to render these different events as a coherent whole which has a particular significance?" Rigney thus paved the way for the study of history and historical writing from the vantage point of literary studies. To the 'rhetoric of historical representation' she would add further felicitous terms, such as "imperfect histories," i.e. the "chronic imperfection that distinguishes history from literature" (Rigney 2001, 2), or the "improper historian," refuting the misconception that "'history' *tout court* must be where the real historians are at" (Rigney 2007, 150).

Starting from the vantage point of today's interdisciplinary memory studies, the chapters in this section address the still heated debates around history, narrative, and memory. The section opens with Wulf Kansteiner, who revisits and updates the controversies from a theory of history perspective. He discusses narrative structure and emplotment, the difference between facts and interpretation, the

uses of comparison and the limits of representation, concluding with "five suggestions for good memory management." Daniele Salerno contributes a semiotician's understanding of history, memory, and "the stories we remember by." He revisits the writings of Vladmir Propp and Algirdas Julien Greimas as well as the famous debate between Hayden White and Reinhart Koselleck, and delineates the nexus of memory, narrativity, and narrative schemata. Sarah Gensburger thinks about what it means to engage with recent history as an "improper historian." She addresses the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 from the perspective of a sociologist, looking empirically at grassroots memorializations of what would almost immediately be turned into 'an historical event,' and highlighting the role that narratives played in the process.

Literary historian Joep Leerssen discusses in greater depth what much of Ann Rigney's early work on history and narrative revolves around: memories of the French nation. Starting from Ernest Renan's famous question "what is a nation?," Leerssen scrutinizes the palimpsestic memory policies of Louis-Philippe in 1830s France. He concludes that the "chronology of the nation is not when its Remembered Things took place, but at what moments in time their remembrance was culturally activated." Moving to nineteenth-century Ireland, historian Guy Beiner discusses a compendium of speeches by Irish protesters in order to show how certain acts of memory prepare the ground for future remembrance. Beiner calls this phenomenon "prememory," thus introducing another key term for the study of history, narrative, and memory. Aleida Assmann brings us back to the present and the "crisis of transnational solidarity." To approach the "divided narratives" underlying many current memory wars, she proposes a distinction between "story" and "script," and considers how toxic and destructive scripts can be overcome by more creative and productive scripts.

Section 2: "The Dynamics of Memory" revolves around the central insight that cultural memory is not static but is constantly in flux, shaped by myriad social, political, geographic, environmental, and technological contexts. Criticizing the long-dominant "lieux de mémoire" approach in memory studies, Ann Rigney argued that "collective memory is constantly 'in the works' and, like a swimmer, has to keep moving even just to stay afloat" (2008a, 345). Rather than understanding memory as a fixed repository of the past, then, it is conceptualized as an active process involving continual negotiation, (re)mediation, and interpretation. Rigney has supplied us with a whole host of generative concepts that help us systematically analyze these dynamics. To name just a few examples, she has written about the "stickiness of stories" – the notion that certain cultural narratives have a lasting impact on collective memory and historical consciousness, sometimes transcending their original contexts (Rigney 2008b, 2016). She has explained the

"differential memorability" of events or figures, where some are more likely to be remembered over the long-term than others (Rigney 2016). And she has referred to the uneven distribution of attention and resources devoted to various narratives about the past through the linked notions of "plenitude and scarcity in the production of cultural memory" (Rigney 2005).

In this section, authors in the fields of history, sociology, comparative literature, political science, anthropology, cultural studies, and psychology build on Ann Rigney's understanding of memory as a dynamic process and contribute perspectives from their own research. Jeffrey Olick opens with a consideration of "the Dynamic Turn," arguing that the "move from products to processes" has been central not only to our conceptualization of memory, but in contemporary cultural studies more widely. It challenges us to confront the tensions between "permanence and change." In her chapter, Marianne Hirsch revisits her concept of "postmemory" in the light of Rigney's call to move beyond traumatic histories. Hirsch thus considers how "hopes and dreams that were destroyed [. . .] can be made present again in the liquid time of dynamic memory." Ido de Haan uses the case of the sensational publication of a new book about Anne Frank to illustrate the political economy of memory as a key dynamic in which the Holocaust has acquired "gold standard" status in political struggles as well as in studies of memory. Jenny Wüstenberg engages with the notion that "memory secretes meaning over time [. . .] through a process of sedimentation," and proposes a "memory-geology nexus" that can help overcome a division between culture and nature in memory studies, as well as develop a sense of "timefulness." William Hirst picks up on Rigney's concern with how collective memory forms and circulates through lived experience, extending her culturalist approach with a focus on "flashbulb memories" – recollections of the circumstances around emotionally charged public episodes, such as September 11. He argues that flashbulb memories have a significant impact on differential memorability and collective identity indices of events. Sophie van den Elzen discusses the "eccentric agency" of female writers and artists who worked to remember chattel slavery over two centuries. She thereby shows how peripheral mnemonic dynamics contributed to the "vortex" from outside the center, developing their own, autonomous, gravitational pull. Antonius C.G.M. Robben takes us to the ESMA in Argentina to underscore the dynamic nature of seemingly static traumatic "sites of memory," which are in fact re-narrated and re-signified as competing groups seek to fix their meaning in time and place. Finally, Susannah Radstone engages in an experiment in memory work – a productive merger of analysis and self-reflection – that revolves around memories of food and spaces for sharing it. She thereby heeds Rigney's recent call to surface joy and hope in narratives that connect past, present, and future.

Section 3: "Mediation and Remediation" brings together major directions of media memory studies. Ann Rigney was one of the first memory scholars to emphasize that media not only stores, but also circulates cultural memory (Rigney 2005). The section's title refers to a collection of essays edited by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (*Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, 2009), which brought together (new) media theory with questions of memory, emphasizing how acts of 'mediating again' – across time, space, and available media technologies – create and stabilize cultural memory.

When the field of media memory studies emerged, it was considerably shaped by Alison Landsberg's study *Prosthetic Memory* (2004), and it is indeed Landsberg who opens this section with a discussion of 'prosthetic memory,' raising the question how cinema and mass culture can lead to the "mobility or transportability of memory." The challenges that the digital era poses to the study of mediated memory are at the heart of the subsequent chapters. José van Dijck offers a tongue-in-cheek reconstruction of the "platformization of a [i.e. Ann Rigney's] scholarly legacy." More seriously, though, van Dijck's example points to a key process of memory in the digital age: its inevitable dependence on, emergence from, and shaping through digital platforms. In the following chapter, Rik Smit critically theorizes "the platformization of memory" and argues that platforms are today's "dominant infrastructures for and actors in the keeping, selection, production, and circulation of human experience and knowledge carried in media forms."

The role of artificial intelligence in present memory culture is addressed by Anna Poletti. Focusing on AI in the remembrance of Andy Warhol, Poletti emphasizes the "desire to have a non-human intelligent collaborator" as well as the significant amount of human labor that goes into the datafication, training, and computation of AI. Gerardine Meaney introduces "cultural analytics" as a tool for memory research. She argues that when facing an age of digital platforms and AI, the "theoretical models developed by cultural memory studies, with their emphasis on process, change and collectivity, are potentially among the most useful at our disposal." Laura Basu rounds off this section by reminding us that news media unfold agency not only in processes of cultural remembering, but also of forgetting. She argues that the news coverage of the global financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath created a "media amnesia," in which the banking crisis was forgotten and transformed into a public debt crisis.

Section 4: "Life and Afterlives of Memory" provides diverse examples of how to 'do' literary, cultural, and media history within a memory studies framework. 'Life' and 'afterlives' are key terms for longitudinal approaches to cultural memory. In Ann Rigney's *The Afterlives of Walter Scott* (2012a), 'afterlives' emerge as a long-term perspective on the remembering and forgetting of an author and their

works. Studying literary afterlives means delving deeply not only into textual, but also medial, social, and material histories. Together with Kiene Brillenburg Wurth, Ann Rigney defined comparative literature as a field that focuses on *The Life of Texts* (2019), thus endowing it with a pronounced emphasis on questions of cultural memory.

The section opens with a chapter by Astrid Erll who discusses "five lessons" from her research on the *longue durée* afterlives of the Odyssey. These are: the possibility of cultural loss, the significance of transcultural memory, the agency of transtemporal translation, the entanglement of analogue and digital memory media, and the benefits of 'reading backwards.' Rosanne Kennedy takes the concept of 'afterlives' from literature to the memory practice of apology. She discusses the activist afterlives of Australia's National Apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008, which demonstrate that only "the substantive implementation of Indigenous self-determination, rather than the forgetting imagined by 'turning the page on the past,' is what must come after the apology." Tashina Blom's chapter continues the discussion of activist afterlives, turning to the cultural memory of protest slogans. Using 'No Pasarán' as example, Blom shows that adaptability, ambiguity, and aesthetic appeal are "the three key ingredients that determine whether a protest slogan" will "stick around and become a carrier of cultural memory."

Kiene Brillenburg Wurth turns our attention to an understudied question: that of music as part of cultural memory. Her discussion of the lives and afterlives of two popular songs (*The Windmills of Your Mind* and *Les moulins de mon cœur*) shows that "distributed creativity" is key to understanding (not only) musical memory across time. Mads Rosendahl Thomsen reflects on questions of memory, being, and eternity through the lens of posthumanist fiction and philosophy, showcasing the "fascination with extraordinary memory" in films such as *Blade Runner* (1982) or novels such as Alan Glynn's *The Dark Fields* (2001). Claire Connolly discusses afterlives engendered by a particular textual form: the footnote. Using the example of Charles Robert Maturin's Gothic classic *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), she asks the compelling question "how a footnote remembers". Connolly argues that Irish writers of the Romantic period used footnotes to "mediate memory for a divided society, bringing print culture into proximity with a palpable and varied community of knowledge". The section closes with Marek Tamm's mnemohistorical approach to the afterlives of the St. George's Night Uprising (1343) in Estonian cultural memory. Tamm underlines the important insight that "mnemohistory allows scholars to move beyond the (although still important) question of 'what really happened' to questions of how particular ways of construing the past enable later communities to constitute and sustain themselves."

Section 5: "National and Transnational Memory" brings together contributions that revolve around the ways in which memory circulates and is articulated within and across national borders. The chapters in this section draw on the concept of "transnational memory," which advocates for us to move "beyond methodological nationalism," that is, for us not to regard the nation-state as the primary "container" for remembrance practices. In their path-breaking volume on *Transnational Memory*, Chiara de Cesari and Ann Rigney argue that "a critical rethinking of scale and of the unspoken hierarchies of scale implicit in our research practices is one of the core challenges of a transnational approach" (de Cesari and Rigney 2014, 18). Nevertheless, the national framework remains a crucial arena for memory work, and Rigney's work on everything from memory icons, reconciliation, apologies, monuments, citizenship, activism, audiovisual memory, and hope (Rigney 2008a, 2012b, 2018b, 2018c, 2022) has demonstrated how memories are articulated and circulated to construct and reimagine the nation, as well as transnational communities and solidarities.

Anthropologist Chiara de Cesari fittingly opens the section by reconsidering transnational memory in the light of scholarly and "real-world" developments a decade on. She argues that while transnationality continues to offer a fruitful pathway to studying memories beyond national boundaries, it has been crucially expanded by critical attention to decoloniality, digitality, and memory activism. Nicole Immler, who specializes in cultural studies, examines how memory matters to justice, focusing in particular on how the legacy of Dutch slavery has been negotiated in intergenerational and thus transformative terms. Sociologist Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi applies the lens of transnationality to mnemonic practices that emerged in response to Covid-19. She traces the circulation of white flags, yellow hearts, and postal stamps as commemorative mechanisms, but contends that this pandemic – like previous ones – may not stand much of a chance of becoming a mainstay of our collective memory. Stijn Vervaet, an interdisciplinary East European Studies specialist, analyzes Croatian visual and performance artist Sanja Ivekovic's engagement with female Yugoslav partisans. His study of the articulation of feminism and internationalism through traditions of antifascism showcases how local, national, and transnational scales can be entangled in complex ways. Margaret Kelleher, who focuses on Anglo-Irish literature, contributes an essay on Yeats' Nobel Prize as an evolving mnemonic event and practice. She utilizes the double meaning of "articulation" in order to understand how the Nobel both "brought to expression" Irish national identity and "connected" it transnationally. The diffusion from the Baltic to Hong Kong of the social movement practice of creating a human chain is the focus of Eneken Laanes' contribution. Laanes, a scholar of comparative literature, discusses how the memory of struggle against authoritarian rule and occupation in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was re-

deployed and transformed when it was used thirty years later, on the other side of the world, in a case of "minor transnationalism".

Section 6: "The Matter of Memory" explores the intersection of cultural memory and materiality. Cultural memory is deeply intertwined with material objects, places, and traces, as well as technologies and bodies. Objects are endowed with meaning and affect through memory practices, but they also possess an inherent "liveness" and agency, and they influence cultural memory in often unanticipated ways. Objects, remains, or traces can acquire testimonial force and 'speak' as evidence of violence and trauma. While the entanglement of memory and things has always been part of the literature on memory, recent work in memory studies has begun to pay more attention to the complex ways in which things participate in and shape acts of remembrance, to reconsider the distinction between subject and object of memory, and to conceptualize materiality in relational and ecological terms.

The material dimension of memory plays a central role in Ann Rigney's work, and she has contributed significantly to developing a materialist memory studies. Crucially, Rigney argues for an ecological approach that "shifts attention away from discrete artifacts towards the continuous interactions between humans and non-humans, between mediations and materialities, within particular social and physical environments" (Rigney 2017, 475–476). Bringing together perspectives from literary and cultural studies, history, religious studies, and anthropology, this section takes Rigney's materialist and ecological approach, especially her 2015 article "Things and the Archive: Scott's Materialist Legacy," as a point of departure.

In the opening chapter of this section, Liedeke Plate sketches a framework for a new materialist memory studies from a literary and cultural studies perspective. She argues that conceptualizing things as co-agents of memory calls for a radical rethinking of some of the methodological premises underpinning memory studies. Following on from this, Maria Zirra's chapter sketches such a new materialist approach in her discussion of art reviews in South African literary periodicals from the 1960s. Taking inspiration from Karen Barad's feminist new materialist concept of diffractive reading, Zirra explores what happens in the encounter between the researcher and the magazine as a "resistant" object of/in memory. The following chapters then turn to the question of how to approach difficult material heritage in various post-conflict and post-colonial contexts. Barbara Törnquist-Plewa explores how post-war generations in Western Poland grapple with the things – furniture and other household items, as well as postcards or schoolbooks – left behind by the former German owners of their houses. This "unwanted heritage," Törnquist-Plewa argues, not only generates affective responses and produces new memories, but also connects people across generations and cultures, setting in motion transcultural memory work between Poles living in these areas and German expellees and their families.

Birgit Meyer reflects on how "provocative objects," as she calls them, catalyze meaningful change in the construction of collective memory, specifically the belated memory of Germany's colonial past. She focuses on a collection of sacred items belonging to the West-African Ewe people that are on display at the Überseemuseum in Bremen, and which form a crucial node in unpacking the role of missionaries in German colonialism. In his chapter on the Valley of Cuelgamuros (formerly known as the Valley of the Fallen) in Spain, Francisco Ferrándiz proposes the concept of "necrotoxicity" to describe how certain funerary designs – specifically the underground necropolis at the site that houses the remains of more than 30,000 bodies – can become a poisonous and divisive memorial legacy. Ferrándiz reflects on the difficulties of "de-commemorating" such toxic material heritage, specifically in a context where the site is still partially controlled by neo-Francoist associations and right-wing religious and political groups.

From such figurative toxicity we move to literal toxicity in the form of the material legacy of racial capitalism and environmental racism along the River Road between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA, which is the focus of Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson's chapter. This area, often referred to as "Cancer Alley," has a layered history of violence stretching from the plantation past to the petrochemical present, a violence which is erased or glossed over in the contemporary heritage discourse. Bond and Rapson show how art can counter this erasure by remembering both human and more-than-human victims of (slow) violence, and thus construct a critical-ecological-mnemo-history of the area. The section concludes with Rick Crownshaw's reflection on the advantages and pitfalls of adopting redistributive models of human and non-human agency and recalibrations of scale in environmental memory studies. Taking Claire Vaye Watkins' novel *Gold Fame Citrus* (2015) as a case study, he explores the role and agency of aesthetic artifacts in making environmental devastation, and human responsibility for it, memorable while remaining attentive to the ecological interconnections between text and world.

Section 7: "The Agency of the Aesthetic" revolves around the role of aesthetics, and aesthetic *form* in particular, in generating memorability. Key to cultural memory research is the idea that cultural forms have *agency* and actively shape and structure experience. As Rigney shows in her 2021 essay "Remaking Memory and the Agency of the Aesthetic," aesthetic forms have the ability to make the past memorable and relevant. This agency of the aesthetic comprises repertoires, and cultural modes (e.g. memoir, drama, documentary), as well as narrative genres (e.g. melodrama, romance), and involves the use of media technologies (e.g. print, photography, social media). There are various ways in which artworks generate memorability. One is by "representing less familiar events through the lens of more familiar ones" (Rigney 2021b, 13), a hallmark of multidirectionality as the-

orized by Michael Rothberg (2009). However, Rigney argues, art also serves to defamiliarize and unsettle established notions of the past, which helps us remember repressed or forgotten aspects of the past.

The authors in this section approach the question of memory and the agency of the aesthetic from the perspective of literary, medieval, and Celtic, as well as performance studies, covering a range of aesthetic forms from film to lyric poetry, novels, visual art, and theater. The section opens with Michael Rothberg's discussion of the role of multidirectionality in generating memorability and reconstructing broken or repressed mnemonic linkages. Rothberg takes as his case study Pınar Öğrenci's 2022 essay film *Aşît* [The Avalanche], which deals with suppressed histories of violence against Armenian and Kurdish minorities in Turkey. Rothberg shows how, at a formal level, the film creates multidirectional constellations that help surface and make memorable suppressed histories of violence, while at the same time remaining conscious of the limits of mnemonic repair.

Susanne Knittel's chapter focuses on the multigenerational family novel as one of the paradigmatic literary genres of cultural memory. Drawing on critical insights from perpetrator studies and ecocriticism, she argues that such novels can negotiate questions of complicity and implication in multiple histories of violence against humans and non-humans at different scales. Continuing with the theme of generations, Stef Craps explores the problem of "environmental generational amnesia," i.e. the idea that each generation takes their own experience of the state of the environment as a norm, "forgetting" that this environment is degraded compared to the experience of previous generations. Literature and the arts, Craps argues, can play a crucial role in recovering and remembering lost or about to be forgotten environmental knowledge and fostering a deeper, emotional connection to nature beyond intellectual understanding.

Jesseka Batteau's chapter focuses on Dutch trans author Lucas Rijneveld's award-winning novel *The Discomfort of Evening* (2020), which presents the stark reality of Protestant life in the Netherlands from the perspective of a ten-year-old girl. Through its unique poetic language, intertextual and paratextual references, and focus on loss and vulnerability, Rijneveld's novel, Batteau argues, has the potential to unsettle the dominant masculine cultural narrative of secular liberation and thus make visible unseen lives and identities.

Next, Ann Dooley reflects on the status and agency of lyric poetry in collective memory and memory studies. Her case study of the early Irish nature lyric highlights its resurgence in contemporary Irish culture both in elite literary forms and as a tool in popularizing social movements. Moving backwards in time from a contemporary Irish frame to a medieval one, she then argues for a historical reevaluation to reveal the conflicted group identities embedded within the lyric's origins. Staying within the Irish cultural sphere, Emilie Pine explores the relationship be-

tween theatre and memory, examining how theatrical performances embody both individual and cultural memory through actors' recollections and the inherent repetition of performances. Taking Deirdre Kinahan's play *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* (2023) as an example, she argues that theater actively creates new cultural memories by engaging audiences in the co-production of meaning and remembrance, thereby bridging the gap between personal and collective histories.

The section concludes with Andreas Huyssen's discussion of the legacy of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* (1977) in light of the challenges art faces in today's conditions of neoliberal commodification. Focusing on four concepts relating to the agency of the aesthetic – autonomy, art activism, transnational reciprocities, and the intersectionality of sedimented timelines – Huyssen argues for a renewed understanding of art's role in resisting neoliberalism, transcending national boundaries, engaging with historical trauma, and reshaping perceptions of time and memory in a global context.

Section 8: "The Memory-Activism Nexus" features chapters that bring social movement studies into sustained conversation with memory studies. The "memory-activism nexus" is Ann Rigney's term (Rigney 2018a, 2021a, see also Daphi and Zamponi 2019a). It helps distinguish three aspects of memory and activism: first, "memory activism" (how grassroots actors shape public memory); second, "memory of activism" (how societies remember contentious struggles of the past); and third, "memory in activism" (how social movements tap into past narratives and repertoires to identify and mobilize). In her typically tongue-in-cheek style, Rigney proposed the acronym "MaMaMia" as a shorthand for the memory-activism nexus. Under this umbrella a research program has thrived, in part due to projects and conferences instigated via the "Remembering Activism" (ReACT) ERC grant (2019–24). In the process, Rigney and her collaborators have called for memory studies to shift from a focus on trauma to one on hope and solidarity (Rigney 2018a, van den Elzen 2024), have helped us understand the dynamics of the "re-framing" and "re-signifying" decommissioned monuments (Rigney 2023), and have written about activists' use of archives (Salerno and Rigney 2024), images (Smits and Ros 2021, Rigney and Smits 2023), and sounds (Rigney 2022, Salerno and van de Warenburg 2023) in their memory work (see also Rigney 2020).

Social movement scholar Priska Daphi opens this section with an overview of the memory-activism nexus, arguing that while it has helped us better understand a diverse set of phenomena, more interdisciplinary dialogue between social movement and memory scholars is called for. Stefan Berger, a historian of labor movements, shows how Rigney's insights on the mnemonic grounding of solidarity can be practically employed, reporting on the efforts of German trade unions to harness memory politics strategically to citizens' awareness of the achieve-

ments of the labor movement and to improve levels of support for unions in the present.

Like van den Elzen, digital sociologist Samuel Merrill draws on the metaphor of a "vortex," but applies it to develop an understanding of how state and market forces influence civic activism through repressive actions both in analogue and digital arenas. Moving further into the digital realm, historian Thomas Smits examines the role of generative artificial intelligence in changing the visual memory of protest, thereby rethinking both the memory of and in activism.

Cultural and media scholar Amza Reading brings disability studies into the picture and asks how the memory-activism nexus would be illuminated through memories of autistic and disability activism. Maria Grever, a historian, returns to Rigney's research on protests around monuments by discussing the controversial case of a statue celebrating the Dutch colonial past. Building on Hannah Arendt's insights in *The Human Condition* (1988 [1958]), she proposes distinguishing between "monuments as work" and "monuments as action" in order to understand their varied position in mnemonic contention.

The final chapter, written by two members of the ReACT team, considers "activist afterlives." Duygu Erbil and Clara Vlessing use the French anarchist Louise Michel, as well as (on a more personal note) Ann Rigney herself, as examples of how a life full of activity becomes mediated and remediated via multiple channels as they form part of the canon of memory sites.

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The more than fifty entries that follow constitute an encyclopedia of current approaches to collective and cultural memory. In their sum, these short chapters are a testament to the vitality, multi-disciplinary traction, and generativity of a field of inquiry that Ann Rigney's work has shaped in myriad crucial ways over several decades. Memory studies continues to help us understand the intricate intersections between time, culture, and politics – and Ann Rigney will no doubt continue to be central to this process.