

Book Review

Memory Studies

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Alison Crosby and Heather Evans (eds) *Memorializing Violence: Transnational Feminist Reflections*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2025, xiii + 278 pp., \$49.95 Paperback. ISBN: 9781978843257.

Reviewed by: Hendrikje Grunow , Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany

Memorializing Violence: Transnational Feminist Reflections, edited by Alison Crosby and Heather Evans, is a thought-provoking and highly relevant anthology that encourages readers to explore the complex relationships between memory, violence, and loss in diverse global settings, all through the perspective of transnational feminism. Positioned within a lineage of feminist memory studies, *Memorializing Violence* builds on earlier works, such as the collections *Women Mobilizing Memory* (Altınay et al., 2019), and *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories* (Altınay and Pető, 2016). This volume extends the critical conversations initiated by these texts, further interrogating the “communally generated and oriented memorializing practices and rituals through which collective memories and grief are ‘made material, to be spoken, to be witnessed’” (Crosby and Evans, citing Ford-Smith and Stephen, 2025: 3). By weaving transnational feminist perspectives into the analysis, *Memorializing Violence* offers a continuation and expansion of the scholarly tradition of feminist memory studies that furthermore connects with activist memory studies (see Rigney, 2018), understanding memory as a site of both profound pain and persistent potential for transformation. This review aims to explore the volume’s significant contributions, highlighting how its diverse chapters collectively illuminate how intersections of race and gender, and, to a lesser degree, sexuality, are negotiated in different memorializing practices in the contexts of political, colonial, and state violence.

Transnational feminism offers a way of seeing the world which moves beyond the familiar boundaries of nation-states, seeking to understand the complex and sometimes contentious intersections of power, knowledge, and lived experiences that transcend borders. It is less about comparing women’s experiences “here” versus “there,” and more about understanding how global systems—like colonialism, imperialism, and neoliberal capitalism—simultaneously shape gendered, racialized, and sexualized lives everywhere. This approach insists on the specificity of local struggles while tracing their interconnections, revealing how what might seem disparate is, in fact, part of a larger, dynamic network of historical influences and affective resonances. Fundamentally, this transnational feminist approach challenges universalizing narratives, instead emphasizing how gendered experiences of violence and memory are shaped by intersecting oppressions such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation.

The volume opens with a preface by Alison Crosby, which outlines the book’s genesis, tracing its roots to and expanding upon Crosby and Malathi de Alwis’ earlier collaborative endeavor, “The Inhabitation of Loss: A Transnational Feminist Project on Memorialization.” While the editors’

introduction by Crosby and Evans sets a robust theoretical groundwork, it can, at times, lean toward an academic density that might challenge some readers. Nevertheless, it presents a fitting and comprehensive entry point, effectively framing the transnational feminist approach that underpins the entire collection. The volume is further enriched by a companion digital archive, accessible at <https://memorializingviolence.com/digital-archive> (by the time of this review still under construction), extending the project's reach beyond the printed page.

Memorializing Violence: Transnational Feminist Reflections undertakes the crucial task of charting how practices of remembrance and forgetting are never merely local, nor are they simply universal; rather, they are often inherently transnational. The book's remarkable coherence, a testament to the editors' thoughtful curation, allows each chapter to speak to, with, and through the others, creating a polyphonic yet deeply interconnected conversation about these practices of memorialization. It is in this collective attunement that one senses the contribution of Malathi de Alwis. Her chapter serves as a gravitational center, resonating with the diverse threads of inquiry, even as her absent presence lingers poignantly throughout the volume. Her theorizing on loss and memory being cited in the volume reminds us that scholarly engagement, at its most generative, is always also a form of sustained care and collective witnessing.

The first section, "The Colonial, Imperial Logics of Memorializing," opens with a thought-provoking examination of memory and power. Through an example from the Superior Court of Ontario, Carmela Murdocca investigates how legal systems, intended as tools for justice, can instead reinforce colonial ideologies. An approach of reparative jurisdiction therefore needs to take these legacies into account and offer differentiated verdicts. In parallel, Amber Dean explores the themes of "flows of loss and desire," a phrase that describes the complex movement of grief and memory through time and across borders influenced by imperial histories, through the example of different memorializations of Air India Flight 182. These chapters collectively illustrate how colonial and imperial power dynamics persistently influence memorialization, challenging readers to acknowledge the enduring impact of these historical currents on today's acts of remembering.

Part 2, "Inhabiting Loss, Exceeding the Frame," delves into how communities confront the impact of violence, creating avenues for remembrance that go beyond traditional stories. In her chapter, Karine Duhamel thoughtfully addresses the challenges of honoring Indigenous histories within settler-colonial environments, emphasizing the ongoing effort needed to prioritize the perspectives and realities of marginalized groups. Particularly effective is the collective chapter by Alison Crosby, Irma Alicia Velásquez Nimatuj, and María de los Ángeles Aguilar, which provides an insightful discussion of *testimonio* as a powerful remembrance practice "enacted within ongoing systems of colonial power and dispossession" (p. 85). By emphasizing the community-building potential of *testimonio*, their analysis highlights how these stories can disrupt official silences and assert alternative versions of history. Further enriching this section, Pilar Riaño-Alcalá's contribution illustrates how the "sound memory" of the *cantadoras* of the Colombian Atrato River serves as a medium of repair, highlighting community autonomy in the face of state-supported memorialization. Taken together, these contributions illustrate the creativity and strength communities employ to live with their losses, all while striving to transcend the restrictive boundaries of prevailing, often official, memory narratives.

The third section, "Invoking Revolutionary Present Pasts," explores the crucial domain where memory acts not only as a mirror of the past but also as a powerful catalyst for future possibilities. The contributions shed light on the ways in which previous struggles and sacrifices are brought into dynamic relation with contemporary resistances. Shahrzad Mojab's chapter is particularly striking as she is interweaving her own lived experiences with the political memoirs of women revolutionaries in the Middle East. Mojab directly addresses the urgent question of "how to mourn the defeat of a revolution and how to survive under the mark of a lingering grief but also to think

of resistance, hope, and the future” (p. 106)—a question that strongly resonates in today’s global context. Simultaneously, Chowra Makaremi’s reflection on disappearance in the context of the Iranian revolution stands out for its illustration of how absence as a form of enduring violence affects not only a person but also the very memory of that person, leaving behind haunting traces and unanswered questions. Ayu Ratih’s chapter on the Dialita Choir in Indonesia further enriches this section by exploring how memories of resistance, even in the face of ongoing oppression, can build communities united in song.

Part 4, “Care in/as Collective Mourning,” is the most extensive section, offering four rich contributions that underscore the role of care in practices of remembrance and healing. The formal variation in the chapters here is particularly noteworthy, illustrating the diverse ways memory is embodied and communicated. Honor Ford-Smith and Juanita Stephen’s collaborative piece, for instance, offers a poignant exploration of how performance art can work as curated ceremonies of mourning, that, in the context of Ford-Smith’s *Song for the Beloved* and Stephen’s *Son*, offer space to remember joy and emphasize care for those who were lost. Connected to this, the subsequent contribution by Erica S. Lawson and Ola Osman centers politics of memorialization among the Mothers of the Movement as Black maternal memory activism. The authors demonstrate how the Mothers confront unequal power relations that persist even after death by remembering their children through diverse cultural practices. Equally impressive is Charlotte Henay’s contribution, a striking epigraph cum printed artwork cum autoethnographic exploration depicting the Caribbean diaspora in Canada. This evocative artistic choice engages the reader with the complex intersections of migration, labor, racialized, and gendered violence. Henay’s work eloquently reflects the emotional and social significance of memory, echoed in her assertion: “How we language grief and memory has the power to enclose our imaginations and futurities” (p. 203). This resonates with Alma Cordelia Rizzo Reyes’ chapter, which politicizes embroidery as a memory practice, highlighting its capacity for community-building and resistance. Through the tactile and communal act of stitching, Rizzo reveals how remembrance can become a shared, embodied, and deeply caring endeavor that, through its practice in public space, makes community possible even in the face of violence. These chapters collectively articulate a vision of memory that is about actively cultivating spaces of care, solidarity, and transformative possibility for the future.

Finally, the fifth section, “On Worliding,” brings the volume to a close. The conversation between Camille Turner, Mila Mendez, and Heather Evans offers insights into a creative, “afronautic” method for dreaming different futures. Their work centers Blackness, demonstrating how the act of “letting silence speak” can open up new possibilities for understanding historical trauma and imagining alternative realities. By harnessing imagination as a tool for building worlds (p. 209), this chapter not only ties together the diverse threads of memory and resistance explored throughout the volume, but also propels the reader forward, emphasizing the transformative potential of remembrance to shape emancipatory futurities. The concluding piece beautifully rounds out the collection, leaving a lasting impression of the dynamic and generative power of transnational feminist approaches to memory.

Overall, *Memorializing Violence: Transnational Feminist Reflections* offers an intriguing intervention into contemporary memory studies. Its transnational feminist lens, keenly attuned to the entangled legacies of violence and the imaginative possibilities of resistance, will resonate with scholars and practitioners interested in questions of memorialization practices connected to loss and violence in general, and those looking to find inspiration to work toward reparative futures. This volume is more than just a scholarly study; it is an invitation to reconsider how loss, violence, and memory actively shape our present, and inform pathways toward more equitable and sustainable futurities.

ORCID iD

Hendrikje Grunow  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8382-5731>

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Author biography

Hendrikje Grunow is the program coordinator of the German-Colombian Master of Arts Conflict, Memory, and Peace at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. She studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and Latin American studies in Berlin, Bogotá, Zurich, and Bern. For her PhD at the University of Konstanz, she examined the intersection of affect, memory, and privilege among Bogotá's upper-middle class. Her research interests include transgenerational memory, feminist theories, and ethnographic writing. Her current project investigates the affective dimensions of attachment among women in Latin American guerrilla organizations. She is a founding member and co-coordinator of the Latin America regional group of the Memory Studies Association.