

Review Essays

Memory Beyond Transitions: The Role of Memory in Long-Term Social Reconstruction

Memorializing the Past: Everyday Life in South Africa after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Heidi P. Grunebaum. Transaction Publishers, March 2011, 185pp. ISBN: 9781412814737 – hardcover (\$49.95).

Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain, eds. Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Samuel Amago. University of Notre Dame Press, April 2010, 408pp. ISBN: 9780268032685 – paperback (\$40).

Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989–2006, Steve J. Stern. Duke University Press, June 2010, 584pp. ISBN: 9780822347293 – paperback (\$27.95).

Questions of memory in relation to mass atrocities have gained increased salience since the Holocaust as the world attempts to come to terms with the horrors of human suffering and collective trauma. Changes on the world stage since World War II coupled with a rise in identity politics since the end of the Cold War have shifted the course of history and memory from one of victors and elites to one of morality and justice, with the needs of victims at its core.¹ Several scholars in the fields of history and memory have commented on the ‘democratization’ of memory, the ‘surfeit’ of memory and the ‘internationalization’ of history and the past, arguing that the past has been removed from the hands of experts and become an integral part of identity politics, with different groups calling attention to specific pasts.² One of the key issues for societies emerging from repression and violence is how best to deal with the legacies of the past in a manner that delivers justice for victims and ensures accountability of perpetrators whilst still working towards rebuilding social relations. In particular, how do we mediate individual and collective healing and reconciliation with the broader social and political necessities of a transition, and what is the role of memory in these processes?

The three books reviewed here examine the role of memory in coming to terms with a past of atrocity and human rights violations. Together, they highlight

¹ See, Elazar Barkan, ‘Amending Historical Injustices in International Morality,’ in *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*, ed. Elazar Barkan (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000).

² See, for example, Charles S. Maier, ‘Overcoming the Past? Narrative and Negotiation, Remembering and Reparation: Issues at the Interface of History and Law,’ in *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices*, ed. John Torpey (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); John Torpey, ‘Introduction: Politics and the Past,’ in *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices*, ed. John Torpey (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); *ibid.*

the centrality of memory to transitional justice, a field that has until recently been dominated by legal and political discussions. Whilst each of the books is country specific, they together demonstrate the significance of political negotiations and settlements made during transitional periods and how these impact on ways in which the past is collectively remembered, as well as ways in which citizens experience and attempt to come to terms with the past amidst ongoing contestation in the present. In South Africa, the mediated political settlement gave birth to Nelson Mandela's 'rainbow nation,' which resulted in a memory-making process based on a narrative of inclusion, social and political tolerance and acceptance that did not seriously challenge the economic and social status quo.³ In Spain, a 1977 amnesty law set the stage for selective amnesia and a collective pact of silence about the past. The memory-making process of the Spanish transition used the Spanish Civil War to historicize more recent violations under Francisco Franco's regime, providing neutral memories of the past with a clear beginning but leaving the majority of victims still yearning for justice. In Chile, Augusto Pinochet's continued political presence as the head of the military, a 1978 amnesty law and the fact that the majority of beneficiaries of the dictatorship were the middle class and elite resulted in a schizophrenic transition where justice and memory making became a constant struggle against oblivion and silence. In all three contexts, the legacies of the past are reflected in the lived reality of the present, particularly in the ongoing struggles for social justice.

Memory and the Everyday in South Africa

Heidi Grunebaum's book, *Memorializing the Past: Everyday Life in South Africa after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, explores the role of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in actively constructing the past, how that process of memory making has affected ordinary South Africans' understanding of the past and the ways in which the past reemerges and is experienced in the day-to-day realities of the 'new' South Africa. Grunebaum adopts a 'negativist' theoretical framework for her project, choosing not to use standard social science methodologies such as interviews, testimony or ethnographic research. Instead, as the author herself describes, the work is a 'meditation' on violence, transition, time, space and the politics of memory and how these have transmuted through periods of colonialism, postcolonialism and apartheid. Grunebaum uses the negativist methodology as a comment on the imbalance of power between North- and South-based academic knowledge production, evoking some of the ethical and theoretical critiques often directed at western epistemological practices.⁴

³ Patrick Bond, *The Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

⁴ The 1970's saw an increase in literature from scholars of the global South, critiquing western knowledge production. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) was significant in drawing attention to questions of North-South knowledge production and has since

Through this theoretical framework alone, Grunebaum raises important questions about knowledge production, the agency of survivors in transitional contexts and identities that are perpetuated by academic scholarship, as well as the implicit power relations between the researched and researcher – an issue that has of late gained import in the field of transitional justice. Scholars have argued that discourses emerging from the global North tend to be represented as universal truths that not only impact on knowledge production but also reify identities that then inform actions in a particular way.⁵ As the transitional justice field expands to become what some have termed an ‘industry’ in and of itself, questions concerning victims’ voices and relations with their interlocutors are also becoming increasingly salient.⁶ In South Africa, for example, given the celebrated transitional process, survivors have found themselves being the key subjects of research on the TRC. Increasingly fatigued with what they consider exploitation, South African survivor groups in the past decade have begun to question the ownership of scholarship, arguing for survivor agency in testimony and research.⁷ Grunebaum’s theoretical framework, therefore, whilst doing little to enhance the analysis of the politics of memory, truth and social justice in South Africa, does locate the author as a social activist as well as firmly establishes her political stance on questions of knowledge, power and production.

Grunebaum’s book is divided into four chapters that weave together themes of time, trauma, testimony, space and place. Chapter 1 examines the concepts and discourses generated by the TRC and how these have been reproduced in the public sphere over time to shape the idea of a ‘new’ nation. Grunebaum argues that whilst the TRC was marketed as a moral and psychological project that aimed to bring individual and collective healing to the nation, in reality it was a political project that was geared towards the building of the ‘new.’ Not only did the TRC shape social processes of remembering and forgetting to justify the political compromises made on behalf of the majority of South Africans but its very discourse also brought into being legitimate and nonlegitimate forms of collective meaning, shaping responses to historical and social suffering and trauma. Chapter 2 focuses on the commodification of pain and the role of the TRC in organizing testimony to frame concepts of the ‘old’ and ‘new.’ Grunebaum argues that the potential of testimony to serve as a tool for political and social transformation was diluted through processes of appropriation that not only dehumanized the testifier but also detached the testimony from the lived realities of apartheid.

become a key reference for addressing some of the ideological biases, stereotypes and assumptions made in western scholarship in relation to the global South.

⁵ Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North–South Relations* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Maria Eriksson Baaz, *The Paternalism of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

⁶ See, Tshepo Madlingozi, ‘On Transitional Justice Entrepreneurs and the Production of Victims,’ *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 2(2) (2010): 208–228.

⁷ See, for example, Ereshnee Naidu, *Empowerment through Living Memory: A Community-Centred Model for Memorialization* (Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2004); *ibid.*

Testimony served as an archive of memory that could eventually be relegated to the repository of the past.

Chapter 3 is an examination of memorialization in post-apartheid South Africa and the role of state-sanctioned memorialization in producing historical meaning, containing the apartheid past and promoting the ideology of a 'new' nation. Adding to some of the existing work in the field, Grunebaum juxtaposes examples of state-sponsored memorial practices with civil society memorial practices, arguing that the privatization of public memory does little to reflect the social, political and economic realities of the past, let alone their legacies in the present. In the book's final chapter, Grunebaum makes a full circle to her initial exploration of time and space in the postcolony through the example of the Prestwich Place slave burial ground in Cape Town. She makes a convincing argument for the recognition of the continuities of oppression in slavery, colonialism and apartheid. In a critique of the heritage industry in South Africa, Grunebaum posits that museums and heritage projects more broadly have worked to sanitize and depoliticize the past, dislocating histories of oppression, such as slavery, from daily social and political realities. Yet, as she notes, it is in the everyday that histories of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and neoliberalism are experienced through socio-economic marginalization. Grunebaum argues for a memory that focuses on the everyday, one that works towards imagining a future of justice and democracy. The book concludes with the argument that the past is still an integral part of life in present-day South Africa and that it is only on focusing on daily human realities that the past is experienced. Overall, Grunebaum calls for a politics of memory that is socially conscious and historically truthful – a memory that would serve as an inspiration for social and political change in the everyday.

Memorializing the Past, while better suited to an academic audience given its density in parts, highlights that truth commissions are but one step in the direction of coming to terms with the past and that policy, practice and commitment to social justice are required to lay the past to rest in all good conscience. Grunebaum notes in her initial chapters that the contribution of the book to the field is its analysis of the discourse produced by the TRC and the Commission's role in shaping and producing time, historical facts and social change. It is important to note, however, that this analysis is not new to the field. In a 2002 edited volume, Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson also critiqued the TRC and its role in actively and selectively remaking the past. They, too, argued that in working towards a nation-building project, the TRC masked some of the deep-rooted patterns of social conflict in the everyday.⁸ Similarly, Madeleine Fullard, in a 2004 study on race, violence and the TRC, also focused on the discourses produced by the Commission and its role in framing a narrative of

⁸ Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson, 'The Power of Truth: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Context,' in *Commissioning the Past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, ed. Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2002).

reconciliation that did not take into account the lived experiences of race and racism in apartheid South Africa.⁹

The success of Grunebaum's book, and its unique contribution to the field, is that it draws the nexus between memory, local and political economy and how these impact on social production. As the majority of South Africans become increasingly disillusioned by the democratic government's unfulfilled promises, unaddressed issues of race politics reemerge to threaten the myth of the 'rainbow nation'¹⁰ and violent protests against the lack of basic service delivery mark the country's sociopolitical landscape, *Memorializing the Past* is a timely read. By drawing on the linkages between the role of the TRC in framing discourses around time, reconciliation and healing and the increased social, economic and political marginalization of the majority of South Africans post-apartheid, the work demonstrates that memory is more than just another of the 'soft' issues in the transitional justice field. Rather, it is central to questions of social justice and the rands and cents reality of postconflict reconciliation for ordinary South Africans.

Contestations over Memory and Accountability in Spain

Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain is a multidisciplinary edited volume inspired by an October 2005 symposium held at the University of Notre Dame. It brings together works from the fields of history, cultural studies, literary criticism, journalism and anthropology. Focusing on the discovery of Spanish Civil War-era mass graves and exhumations that first took place in 2000, the contributors examine the cultural, political and historical impact of Francoist repression and Spanish society's attempts to come to terms with a past tainted by distortions, silences and denial. In their introduction, editors Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Samuel Amago note the importance of memory in Spain, relating it to broader questions around the selectivity of memory, silence versus remembrance and the role of memory in relation to issues of peace and justice.

Many Spaniards feel ambivalent about the abuses and accountability of Franco's 40-year dictatorship, and hundreds of victims have been scapegoated

⁹ Madeleine Fullard, *Dis-placing Race: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Interpretations of Violence* (Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2004).

¹⁰ The increasingly divisive race discourse perpetuated by African National Congress (ANC) Youth League leadership, which has resulted in court charges of hate speech and ANC disciplinary action against the league's leadership, has served as a catalyst for the reemergence of racially divisive discourse. See, Alan Cowell, 'A.N.C. Official Convicted of Hate Speech,' *New York Times*, 12 September 2011. In addition, the mixed reactions to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's September 2011 call for a once-off wealth tax to be imposed on white South Africans again brought to the fore the underlying racial divisions that pose a threat to peace in South Africa. 'The Great White-Tax Debate – "Rich Should Pay Wealth Tax" – Tutu,' *City Press*, 14 August 2011.

in the name of peace.¹¹ The Spanish landscape still bears physical testimony to the repression and horror of the regime through unmarked mass graves (the central focus of the book) and official memorials, such as the Valley of the Fallen. Spaniards have not had the closure that comes with a national public apology, as have German citizens, for example.¹² Given the contestations over memory in Spain and the varying impact of the pact of silence on different parts of society, how can Spaniards come to terms with the past?

Unearthing Franco's Legacy, which seeks to answer this question, is divided into four parts that analyse different aspects of Spain's approach to its past. Part 1 is a historical analysis of the dictatorship, its impact on the defeated and its role in shaping historical consciousness. Michael Richards' chapter, 'Grand Narratives, Collective Memory, and Social History: Public Uses of the Past in Postwar Spain,' is especially germane to debates in the transitional justice field in that it explores the relationship between history and memory. Similar to Grunebaum's call for a memory-making process that takes into account the continuities of oppression in the daily lives of South Africans, Richards' chapter argues for a historical approach to collective memory that draws on the continuities amongst Franco's dictatorship, the present structures of political power and how these impact on social practices and life in the everyday. Richards, too, calls for an ethics of history that takes into account the human factor and works towards positive social action rather than a history that serves as a tool for the political elite.

Part 2 of the book examines the role of documentaries and testimony in historical recovery in Spain. The three chapters in this section focus on questions of historical representation and the function of testimony and documentation in historical production and meaning making. Jo Labanyi's chapter, 'Testimonies of Repression: Methodological and Political Issues,' highlights the role of testimony as a legal mechanism to hold perpetrators accountable, as well as its potential as a barometer to gauge levels of social integration and attitudes towards the past. Again similar to Grunebaum, Labanyi argues for the recognition that testimony is a personal and political act that can promote social and political transformation and provide a form of historical truth. Part 3 of the book examines the consequences of the pact of silence and oblivion on present-day Spain. Joan Ramon Resina's chapter, 'The Weight of Memory and the Lightness of Oblivion: The Dead of the Spanish Civil War,' analyses struggles against institutionalized forgetting, the role of the dead in disrupting institutionalized memory and the role of monuments in facilitating processes of remembering the dead. The chapter is especially important in that Ramon Resina explores how transitional strategies

¹¹ See, Jonathan Freedland, 'Spain and the Lingering Legacy of Franco,' *Guardian*, 28 March 2011.

¹² Apology has over the years become an important political act of recognition. Apology, like other forms of symbolic reparations, can serve as an acknowledgement of past atrocities and a mechanism for reintegrating the group back into the citizenry, as well as provide the basis for a re-interpretation of history that includes the wrongs experienced by a specific group. See, Melissa Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Mark Gibney, Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Jean-Marc Coicaud and Niklaus Steiner, eds., *The Age of Apology: Facing Up to the Past* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

such as amnesty laws facilitate institutionalized amnesia. Further, the Spanish transitional narrative has aimed to historicize and provide a linear narrative of the civil war, assigning collective blame to all Spanish citizens. Exhumations of mass graves have ruptured this narrative, however, and raised questions of accountability, responsibility, social denial and justice at the centre of the public agenda. Part 4 of the book provides an anthropological perspective on the exhumations. In his introductory essay, Tony Robben highlights the universality of the Spanish Civil War, drawing parallels to the Chilean experience of the Pinochet dictatorship. He argues that mass graves are in fact invisible monuments to the dead and that, even in their absence, the dead continue to be present in Spaniards' collective memory.

Unearthing Franco's Legacy is a significant contribution to the field of transitional justice. Not only does it highlight how a country attempts to come to terms with a past in the face of oblivion and silence but it also brings to the fore questions related to peace agreements, how they affect individual victims and how they relate to broader issues of international law and crimes against humanity. The work also draws attention to the plight of Spanish victims, a group that until recently received little public attention as compared to victims of other conflicts.¹³ The work is also timely in light of a 2011 lawsuit filed by human rights groups on behalf of Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzón in the European Court of Human Rights. The case has brought to the fore the extent to which Spain's unwillingness to address its past still plagues the current political landscape.¹⁴

Through the lens of exhumations, the volume serves as an advocacy tool for recognition of Franco's crimes against humanity. The editors and several authors claim that the book's examination of how a nation's past impacts on social, political and cultural life in the present has universal appeal. As has been highlighted above, parallels can be drawn between the challenges Spain faces in coming to terms with its past and those of other contexts, but the language of universality should be used with caution. As various scholars in the field of transitional justice note, coming to terms with the past cannot be done with a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, it is a highly contextual process that is dependent on a variety of domestic and international factors.

¹³ See, Paloma Aguilar, 'The Timing and the Scope of Reparation, Truth and Justice Measures: A Comparison of the Spanish, Argentinean and Chilean Cases,' in *Building a Future on Peace and Justice: Studies on Transitional Justice, Peace and Development*, ed. Kai Ambos, Judith Large and Marieke Wierda (New York: Springer, 2009).

¹⁴ Garzón was suspended in May 2010, indicted for violating his jurisdiction by beginning a politically sensitive investigation in 2008 into the deaths and disappearances of approximately 200,000 civilians under Franco's dictatorship. When victims brought their cases of disappearances and gross human rights violations to court, the judge ruled that the amnesty law passed two years after Franco's death was invalid under international law and that investigations were therefore appropriate.

Struggles over Memory in Chile

Steve Stern's book, *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989–2006*, is the third in a trilogy on Chileans' struggle to define collective memory and come to terms with Pinochet's dictatorship. Stern argues that the memory question was central to the making of Chilean culture and politics under the military regime, as well as during the democratization process that followed. For Stern, two dominant views impact on the memory question in Chile: the perceived dichotomy between remembering and forgetting where memory struggles are essentially a struggle against oblivion, and, to some extent reminiscent of the South African context, the notion that elite and middle-class economic beneficiaries of the military regime turned a blind eye to state violence. Stern argues that both these views are reductive and do not adequately account for the centrality of memory and its contestation in the cultural, political and social realms of life in Chile.¹⁵ He uses the concept of 'memory knots'¹⁶ to exemplify the role of memory in raising political and moral awareness in inspiring action towards social change and activism. Overall, the trilogy argues that memory is a dynamic, contentious process through which different actors compete for truth, legitimacy and meaning making. Stern uses the metaphor of a collectively built memory box as a foundation for society and examines how Chileans built and struggled over the memory box of Pinochet's Chile. In *Reckoning with Pinochet*, Stern maps the historical process of the 'memory impasse,' examining how Chilean society was caught between the majority's call for justice and the ability of Pinochet's politically powerful supporters to keep any truth and justice processes from gaining broad public consensus. The memory impasse was therefore a culture that oscillated between remembering and forgetting, with different groups struggling for collective memory making.

Stern uses archived documents, audiovisual material, oral history, focus groups and ethnographic observation to take us on a journey from President Patricio Aylwin's political project of *convivencia* (living together in peace after violent conflict), which began in the early 1990s, to President Michelle Bachelet's socio-economic reforms of 2006. Chapter 1 examines *convivencia*, the challenges of implementing a truth commission in the face of the 1978 amnesty law and the absence of broader institutional reform. Chapter 2 focuses on the report of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (Rettig Commission) and its presentation to the Chilean people. Chapter 3 examines government's implementation of recommendations made in the report and maps the contentious path towards justice. In an examination of memorialization initiatives and the physical

¹⁵ On the contestation over truth and memory involving one often underexamined actor in the Chilean transition, see, Onur Bakiner, 'From Denial to Reluctant Dialogue: The Chilean Military's Confrontation with Human Rights (1990–2006),' *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4(4) (2010): 47–66.

¹⁶ For Stern, the term 'memory knots' refers to human rights groups, events, commemorations and even physical remains that draw attention to memory, mobilizing the public to join memory workers to address issues from the past that are as yet unaddressed.

landscapes of memory in Chile, Stern highlights the contested and controversial character of symbolic reparations and memorialization more broadly.

Chapter 4 examines the period during the presidency of Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle. Stern shows how the change of president presented the state with a renewed opportunity to close down discussions about the past and mark the end of the transition. Through civil society's mobilization and public education, however, questions of memory, justice and human rights remained significant. Chapter 5 undertakes an examination of the cross-generational transfer of memory. Whilst 1998 onwards saw greater advances towards a culture of freedom, the irony was that new generations of youth no longer saw the need to mobilize to address some of the unresolved issues of the past. Despite the mobilization of some young people (many relatives of victims) to draw attention to issues of torture, overall the feeling amongst the majority of youth was a desire to move on. Whilst the cross-generational transfer of memory is especially significant to the transitional justice discourse – as advocates often claim that the broader goal of the field is to have an impact on future generations and ensure the nonrepetition of past atrocities – the literature on its role in transitional societies is limited. Some scholars note that memories of prolonged unresolved trauma can be passed on from generation to generation, fuelling negative perceptions and new cycles of conflict.¹⁷ Others argue, however, that whilst memory may be transferred within smaller groups, little evidence exists that this occurs between different generations in larger populations.¹⁸ These scholars also suggest that generational memory and meaning making are largely dependent on subjective experiences and how these then inform a reinterpretation or relationship to memory and history.¹⁹

In the final chapters of his book, Stern examines the work of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (Valech Commission), which was set up to document human rights abuses, specifically those related to torture perpetrated by General Pinochet's regime between 1973 and 1990. The Commission's final report highlighted that torture was indeed a reality experienced by up to 90 percent of those who testified before it and therefore a significant 'memory truth.'²⁰ Finally, in Chapter 7, Stern focuses on the reforms made

¹⁷ See, Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Collective Memory of Physical Violence: Its Contribution to the Culture of Violence,' in *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*, ed. Ed Cairns and Micheal D. Roe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁸ Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott, 'Generations and Collective Memories,' *American Sociological Review* 54 (1989): 359–381.

¹⁹ This is illustrated by a South African study, which found that young people whose family experienced some kind of gross human rights violations and continued to experience socioeconomic marginalization do indeed feel that addressing and understanding the past is important. By contrast, young people who now enjoy the social and economic benefits of a democratic South Africa feel dislocated from the past, arguing that it has no relevance to their current realities. Ereshnee Naidu and Cyril Adonis, *History on Their Own Terms: The Relevance of the Past for a New Generation* (Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2007).

²⁰ It is interesting to note that following the lobbying efforts of various human rights groups, the Valech Commission was reopened under Bachelet. The Commission reviewed approximately 32,000 new submissions over an 18-month period in 2010–2011, of which approximately 10,000 were certified as legitimate cases of torture. The reopening of the Valech Commission

by President Bachelet, examining how through her leadership, socioeconomic issues were subsumed under the banner of memory and justice.

Reckoning with Pinochet is a remarkable work in both breadth and scope. The book's outline and methodology not only enhance the story of how Chileans struggled to come to terms with the memory of the past but, more important, they also place the question of memory at the centre of the transitional justice discourse, drawing significant linkages to issues of accountability, reparations, vetting and institutional transformation. The book itself is an accessible, informative read, thoughtfully presented with anecdotes and commentary that above all highlight the human element in struggles for memory and justice in postconflict environments. It is an important read for scholars and practitioners working in the fields of transitional justice and human rights as it gives a deep insight into the dynamic path from dictatorship to democracy and the role of 'memory knots' in keeping the memory question alive and negotiating the ebbs and flows between justice and memory.

Conclusion

Each of the books reviewed here contributes to deepening the dialogue on the intersections amongst memory, violence and transitional justice, highlighting the increasingly significant role of memory on an international stage in different contexts and its role as part of the 'core business' of transitional justice.²¹ A common theme explored by the books is the relationship between history and memory and the role of each in contributing to a critique of the past and broader goals of positive social transformation. The discussions in each reflect some of the debates in the field, particularly arguments that history and memory are not merely in a dichotomous relationship of objectivity and subjectivity but more related to issues of dynamism and the interplay amongst time, truth and historical consciousness.²² Further, all three books argue for the role of memory in historical analysis as a way to provide more nuanced and deeper insights into the subnarratives, conflicts and contestations and the human relations that shape history.

The most important contribution of the books, however, is the new direction in which they move the literature on memory and coming to terms with the past. Thus far, literature on memory in relation to transitional justice has mainly analysed the contestation of memory in these processes and its integral role in

shows that memory, as an ongoing process of contestation and negotiation, can be used as a mechanism for ongoing truth-seeking and justice efforts despite the passage of time.

²¹ See, Lucy Hovil and Moses Okello, 'Editorial Note,' *Civil Society, Social Movements and Transitional Justice*, special issue of *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 5(3) (2011): 333–344.

²² See, for example, Jeffrey K. Olick, ed., *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

dealing with the past.²³ Numerous truth commission reports have noted the significance of memory processes and the role of memory work in recognizing survivors as well as promoting reconciliation, fostering democratization and contributing to broader goals of building cultures of peace and human rights.

All three books reviewed here discuss the relationship between memory and social and economic processes. They demonstrate not only how national memory-making processes are affected by broader political decisions related to postconflict economic reconstruction but also the extent to which global democratic practices and related neoliberal policies shape transitional memory making. They also make the important argument that the work of memory and coming to terms with the past extends beyond truth commissions, trials and tribunals to long-term questions of social justice, as it is in the absence of social justice that memory becomes a potential faultline for violence and a threat to sustainable peace.

The books together highlight that memory is related to the subjective experience of individuals and groups, and that it is in experiencing the past through the present that individuals and groups not only make sense of the present but also begin to transform memory into action towards positive future change. Implicit in all three books is the argument that memory work needs to extend beyond the immediate political needs of the transition to long-term, sustainable peace based on economic equity to ensure that a future of 'never again' is a reality.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, all three works highlight the importance of research going beyond the confines of academia to contribute to broader international debates that ensure the integration of the voices of ordinary people into discourses on memory and transitional justice. Not only are the books socially conscious but the authors and editors themselves also place their voices and their politics amidst the competing voices that together struggle to come to terms with the past.

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²³ See, for example, Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, trans. Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anativia (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Alexandra Barahona De Brito, Carmen González Enríquez and Paloma Aguilar, *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).