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Discourses of collective remembering: contestation, politics, a□ect

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the key issues and themes that the articles in the Special Issue aim to apply and develop in greater detail. First, we argue that the field of collective remembering can be conceived as a site of active contestation, rather than simply a means of communicating a historic past or our deontic position in relation to these pasts. Approaching collective remembering as a Lieu de Dispute allows us, in turn, to foreground three consequential dimensions of remembrance, which the articles in the issue examine in di□erent ways: that collective remembering is an interpersonal, political and a□ective practice. This introduction discusses these three dimensions to collective remembering in greater detail, before outlining the remaining contents of the Special Issue.

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Introduction: contestation, resistance & collective remembering

In 2009, Critical Discourse Studies published a special issue, entitled 'Discourse, History and Memory', guest edited by John E. Richardson and Ruth Wodak (2009). That special issue presented some significant examples of how specific pasts impinge on the present and the future, through how they are variously invoked, recollected, de- and recontextualised in contemporary discourse. Particular accounts of the past may be promoted in the public sphere, which can create hegemonic narratives of (typically national) identity and so serve to unify citizens, often by backgrounding or ignoring their more specific experiences and understandings (Confino, 2006). Such an account is echoed by Susan Sontag (2003, p. 61), who has argued that 'collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating' (emphasis added). That is, groups define themselves, over time, 'by agreeing upon what they hold to be important, to which story they accord eminence, which anxieties and values they share' (Assmann, 2010, p. 38). In turn, our individual memories are shaped through interactions with other people, institutions and media and so reflect, and often reinforce, dominant discourses of society. National commemoration, thus, stresses the singular and cohesive past at the expense of the multiple, fragmented and cross-sectional

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pasts, to the extent that personal memories 'can come to appear irrelevant or even subversive to national projects of commemoration' (Merridale, 1999, p. 61). However, in the introduction to their special issue, Wodak and Richardson argued the specific, often contrair, pasts of various individuals and groups 'can never be entirely silenced; specific aspects, forgotten details, new information and new insights due to re/discovered information and historical sources trigger new debates' (2009, p. 231).

In the years since the publication of the 2009 special issue, the import of these observations, regarding the contestation of commemoration, has only increased. Recent studies have been published examining the repression (and resurfacing) of collective pasts in a variety of settings, including: the ways that war memorials were used to placate the seditious working classes following the bloody First World War (Abousnnouga & Machin, 2013); the pressure brought by Ukrainian-Canadian lobby groups to ignore or whitewash Ukrainian antisemitic atrocities during World War II in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (Ball & Rudling, 2014); a racialised debate in response to a monument erected to an enslaved Black woman, which exposed the myth of Bermuda's benign slavery (Swan, 2012); the manipulation of public history in post-Communist Europe (Bernhard & Kubik, 2014); and the disruptive and a□ective dimensions to the transnational counter-monumental installations known as Stolpersteine (Krzyżanowska, 2016; Rheindorf, 2019; Wodak, 2018). In response, Laws are often enacted to counteract or frustrate these discursive challenges, enforcing a particular narrative at the expense of others, whether this might mean the French state's use of law to maintain a particular narrative of French colonialism (Löytömäki, 2013), the di□erent political functions of memory laws in Western and Eastern Europe, Ukraine and Russia (Koposov, 2017) or erasing the history of the Palestinian minority in order to amplify the memory the Jewish majority in Israel (Gutman & Tirosh, 2021).

Of course, contestations about history and heritage have long existed, and tend to centre upon national bearing during traumatic periods or conducting disagreeable practices, particularly when the 'remembered' actions of national luminaries are 'strikingly at odds with their depictions by historians' (Lebow, 2006, p. 21). But there is a growing approach within the literature to treat collective remembering 'more as a site of active contestation and negotiation than as a means for accurately representing the past' (Wertsch, 2002, p. 35). There is a link between (collective) identity and (collective) memory, wherein 'collective remembering inevitably involves some identity project – remembering in the service of constructing what kind of people we are' (Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 320; see also Lebow, 2006). Given that we live in societies that have always been fragmented according to social class, sex/gender, race, religion and regional groups (sometimes in antagonistic ways) we should expect collective remembering – as reflections of sometimes fractious group identities – to also be characterized by contestation.

This site of contestation – what we term Lieu de Dispute – is not an even playing field, of course, with certain social groups, organizations and institutions, particularly institutions of the state, possessing more power than others. Equally, we do not suggest that smaller or less powerful groups necessarily have more balanced understandings of the past. As Winter and Sivan (1999) have shown, small groups also adapt their collective remembering in order to highlight 'elements close to its own traumatized members' (p. 33). However, the problematic appropriation of collective remembrance by powerful, and/or state-sponsored, groups has hampered memory work in some countries. Wolentarska-Ochman (2006), for example, shows that interference from groups holding political

or cultural power, including the mass media, political parties and intellectual elites, was detrimental to local remembering of the massacre of Polish Jews in Jedwabne. On July 10th 1941, around 1,600 Jews (though this number remains ardently contested) were rounded up by their fellow Polish citizens and burnt alive in a barn. 'Although almost absent from Poland's o□cial historical record, the massacre remained very much alive in local oral tradition and among Jewish survivors from the region' (p. 156), however this changed during a national – that is, mediated – debate regarding the massacre that followed the publication of Jan Gross' book Neighbours. Following publication, some residents of the town became embarrassed and defensive that key places and individuals were readily identifiable in the book; the liberal sections of the mass media emphasised what they termed the 'deniers' in Jedwabne, including publicizing a tiny and short-lived organization called the Committee for the 'Defense of the Good Name of Jedwabne'; this reporting, in turn, drew far-right media into the fray to defend Jedwabne's pride through spreading disinformation. The 'debate' acted as a lightning rod for various antisemites, attracted to the town to distribute antisemitic literature. During the course of the dispute one prominent antisemite attempted to buy a plot of land next to the site where Jews had been murdered, by o□ering three times the amount that regional authorities were willing to pay, in order to disrupt the sixtieth-anniversary commemorations (p. 162). Instead of commemorating the dead, 'the Jedwabne massacre was used as a rallying point for parties and alliances […] and exploited for point scoring over ideological opponents' (p. 170).

This all had a significant impact on memory work in Jedwabne itself. As part of the sixtieth-anniversary commemorations, the town had planned to change the inscription on the memorial stone from one that simply blamed the Gestapo and Nazi police to a more accurate reflection of who was responsible. However, the dispute threw that into turmoil. The inscription favoured by descendants and relatives of the murdered Jews was 'The Jewish citizens of Jedwabne and surrounding villages were murdered and burned alive by their Polish neighbours', however, in the end, the chosen words for the new plaque did not name any perpetrators at all.[1] In response, almost all the 2,000 residents of Jedwabne, along with representatives of the Catholic Church and members of the Jewish communities, refused to attend the unveiling ceremony, unhappy that their local understandings of the massacre had been expunged in order to assuage an ideological conflict fought on the national stage by politicians and the mass media. Nevertheless, local remembrance of the Jewish victims of the massacre endures, in parallel to (and despite) the memorial stone (Wolentarska-Ochman, 2006).

The contestation of the past, and what this means for collective remembering in the present, are themes running through this special issue. Our foregrounding of contestation allows us to explore the interpersonal, political and a□ective bases of collective remembering, which are examined further, in di□ering ways and to di□erent degrees, in the included articles. Taking each in turn, we maintain that remembering is always a process, one that becomes collective with the help of a variety of meaning-making resources – be they a monument, a building, a speech or an op-ed article in a mainstream daily (see Geppert & Müller, 2015 for an examination of Lieux de Mémoire across the imperial world; see Moody, 2020 for an analysis of the memorializing cityscape of Liverpool). Second, collective remembering is always political; it is never about remembrance for the sake of remembrance (Araujo, 2012; McDowell & Brani□, 2014; Sorek, 2015). Rather, collective

remembering lies at the heart of intersectional social identities, spanning entanglements of race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality and social class, and is the terrain on which complex social issues are fought. In short, collective remembering ensures that the political past is brought into the political present (Heer et al., 2008; Ore, 2019) and potentially shape the political future. Third, we maintain that collective remembering is saturated with a□ective elements – from grief to anger, from shame to pride (Crouch, 2015; Smith et al. 2018; Tolia-Kelly et al. 2017; Whigham, 2022). While some scholars have recently argued that 'memorials and memorialisation activities […] often provide a confused mix of genuine emotive involvement, political propaganda, and media interests' (Sørensen et al., 2020, p. 1), we believe that there is nothing confused about them; nor is it always analytically possible or desirable to single out genuine from dubious emotional attachments. Rather the point we want to make is that a□ect is at the very heart of the politics of remembering, a set of sticky feelings, as Ahmed (2004) would say, that glue together some constituencies at the same time as it excludes or even repels others.

The politics of collective remembering

In the literature on collective remembering, there is a great deal of disagreement about how to label public acts of recollection. While 'collective memory' is perhaps the most established expression, it has been criticized as being too ambiguous (see e. g. Weingrod, 1997), obfuscates the relationships between individuals and social groups (Kansteiner, 2002) and engenders a misunderstanding that it is anything more than a metaphoric concept (Gavriely-Nuri, 2014). Other concepts have been put forward as alternatives; these include: 'collective remembrance', 'communicative memory', 'cultural memory', 'national memory', 'public memory', 'social memory', and 'vernacular memory' (see Dickinson et al., 2010; Gedi & Elam, 1996; Lebow et al., 2016; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008 for overviews of such discussions). While each of these notions highlight specific aspects (e. g. the communicative, the public, the social), they all su□er from the same shortcoming: they are too static and do not adequately capture the dynamics underlying the processes through which a 'memory that may have been initiated by individuals' is 'mediated through networks of communication, institutions of the state, and the social groupings of civic society' (Rothberg, 2009, p. 15). Therefore, in this special issue we prefer using collective remembering (see Wertsch, 2002) as an umbrella term through which to conceptualize the discursive production and circulation of acts of remembrance involving a variety of institutions, platforms and constituencies. Individual contributors, though, might wish to employ other terms that are in line with their respective disciplinary traditions.

Terminological choices aside, our interest in collective remembering as critical discourse analysts is motivated by a desire to answer the following questions: How is collective remembering produced semiotically? And where? How is it negotiated and contested? In other words, what is at stake in collective remembering? And for whom? Further, what are the relationships between collective remembering and (individual) forgetting (Zelizer, 1998)? In his transnational discussion of Holocaust monuments and museums, Young (1994) suggests that memorialization is often as much about letting us now move on as it is about remembering. Memorial days, or ceremonies, ritualistically compartmentalize a moment to perform commemoration and, in so doing, allow us the

psychological (and perhaps moral?) space to feel little compunction in paying it any mind throughout the remainder of the year – Stone (2000) criticized the UK Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) in precisely these terms.

The specific choices of what and how to collectively remember also, necessarily, exclude alternatives, which can act to background or even silence contrary interpretations of the past. Middleton and Edwards (1990, p. 9) remind us that rhetorical organization of remembering entails collective forgetting, as reflected in the choices of 'who is to blame, or to be excused, acknowledged, praised, honoured, thanked, trusted and so on' – and who is not – which occur in institutionalized, mass mediated and everyday commemorative practices. Sticking with the British HMD for the moment, Yuval-Davis and Silverman (2002, p. 115) argue that the particular emphasis on Auschwitz, indexed through the choice to commemorate HMD on 27 January (the date the Camp was liberated by the Red Army), acts to position the Shoah as solely the actions of others, and in so doing 'completely removes Britain from any direct contact with the event'. If the date of HMD had been 30 June, for example – the date that the Channel Islands were occupied, initiating a period of institutionalized anti-semitism, 'aryanisation' of Jewish property, murder and concentration/forced labour camps within the British Isles (Carr, 2016; Cruickshank, 1975; Fraser, 2000) – then the hybrid relationship of British citizens to the Shoah, as victims, liberators, bystanders and perpetrators, could have been more rigorously brought to the fore. As Macdonald (2005, p. 58) argues, 'If it were really the case that Holocaust Memorial Day were to provide the opportunity to look at the nation's own past – as is one of the stated aims of the day', then it should always include a discussion of the ways that antisemitism has formed a constituent part of the history of Britain (Kushner, 1994, 2004; Schama, 2000).

In terms of objects of analysis, monuments and other memorializing practices about wars and conflicts have received particular attention within discursive approaches to collective remembering. In their analysis of o□cial war memorials in Britain, Abousnnouga and Machin (2013) draw upon multimodal critical discourse analysis in order to o□er a granular analysis of the semiotic choices of iconography, represented participants, objects, shape, form, angularity, height, and materials. Most crucially, these choices are never ideologically innocuous but play a key role in normalizing and legitimizing wars in the context of the UK. As Aboussnouga and Machin cogently argue, through specific semiotic choices in monuments, 'war becomes something that we are encouraged to think about in terms of the public service of the soldier and not in terms of maiming, starvation, terror, pain, fragmented families and misused power' (2013, p. 2).

O□cial, state-sanctioned monuments, however, do not remain uncontested but are often challenged by counter-monuments, which, as Krzyżanowska (2016) argues, allow for the multiple meanings and have multiple functions of commemorating complex and di□cult past events, such as the Shoah (see also Krzyzanowska, 2017). In the context of Bosnia–Herzegovina, where an o□cial monument commemorating the victims of the 1992–1995 conflict has not been, and may never be, raised, Kosatica (2020) analyses sequences of embodied acts performed in specific places constitute a living memorial that reperforms and commemorates dehumanizing practices during the war. As Kosatica puts it,

> Parents still do not have a monument for their children that were killed, but if they wish to draw attention to the violence, those who are responsible and who keep denying it, then

> embodied performative reactions to 'empty' spaces might actually be the best possible way of accomplishing this. (2020, p. 16)

Wars and their traumas are not the only topics featuring in critical discourse analytical work on the politics of remembering (see Achugar et al., 2013). Nor are monuments – both as material artefacts and as embodied practices – the only semiotic aggregates under scrutiny. A burgeoning body of scholarship has critically investigated the complex and often problematic practices of commemoration and other forms of collective remembering. These shared, public processes inevitably foreground particular aspects of the past while simultaneously backgrounding, e□acing and (metaphorically) 'forgetting' others in museums (Kushner, 2003; Munroe, 2017; Noy, 2015), tourist guides and guided tours (Landy, 2017), public commemorations (Knudsen & Ifversen, 2017; Macdonald, 2005; Richardson, 2018, 2021), and truth and reconciliation commissions (Norval, 2001, 2009; Verdoolaege, 2008).

Given that war, hostility and trauma frequently involve conflicts between national and ethnic communities, it is interesting to note the role that multilingualism (or lack thereof) plays in upholding and reproducing specific regimes of remembering and forgetting (see Ashworth et al., 2007; Blackwood & Macalister, 2020). For example, Fabricio and Borba (2020) o□er an incisive analysis of 'Little Africa', an area of Rio de Janeiro along the Valongo Wharf where over a million African slaves arrived, from the turn of the nineteenth century (see also Michel, 2016; Saillant & Simonard, 2012). Through a careful analysis of a guided tour and a variety of semiotic artefacts, Fabricio and Borba mount a convincing argument about the conflicting practices of remembering and forgetting of slavery in Little Africa (also see Melo, 2019 on the textual trajectories of slavery adverts in Brazil, from the 19th to the 21st Centuries). On the one hand, o□cial signage is framed by a Eurocentric perspective that privileges colonial languages, erases slaves' multilingual practices and ultimately downscales slavery and its implications, promoting instead a problematic view of Brazil as a colour-blind nation 'which did not develop into racial discrimination or prejudice' (Fabricio & Borba, 2020, p. 208). On the other hand, gra□ti by local residents challenge this rhetoric 'by retelling history through the voice of those whose ancestors lived, worked and ides in Little Africa' (Fabricio & Borba, 2020, p. 206). Albeit quantitively modest and lacking o□cial endorsements, these grassroots memorializing practices are reminders that 'where there is power there is resistance' (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Resistance to chauvinistic or parochial public memory work may not always take centre stage but it does occur in the no less important side alleys of everyday life. The example from 'Little Africa' also highlights the intersectional nature of the conflicting practices of collective remembering/forgetting: white, colonial, bilingual (Portuguese/English), European versus black, de/post-colonial, multilingual, African. It is to such intersectionality that we will now turn.

Intersectionality and multidirectionality

Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw famously defined intersectionality as a concept that grasps 'the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated' (1989, p. 140), a form of subordination that 'is greater than the sum of racism and sexism' (1989, p. 140). More specifically, an intersectional perspective seeks to 'reveal how power

works in di□use and di□erentiated ways through the creation and deployment of overlapping identity categories' (Cho et al., 2013, p. 797). Analytically, then, intersectionality can be operationalized by 'asking the other question', as Matsuda (1991) suggests. Such an exercise can be summarized as follows:

> When I see something that looks racist, I ask 'Where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something that looks sexist, I ask 'Where is the heterosexism in this?' When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, 'Where are the class interests in this?' (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1189)

By approaching social phenomena in such a way, it is possible to unravel the interconnectedness and mutual constitution of di□erent processes of discrimination in which, say, hatred against non-normative sexualities is imbricated with racism and sexism (see also Levon & Beline Mendes, 2016). Originally employed to capture the experience of multiple marginalization (e.g. black/working class/queer/disabled), intersectionality has also been applied to understanding the mutual constitution of privileged identities (white/middle class/heterosexual). Such usage is not completely unproblematic (Salem, 2018; Tomlinson, 2013). Hames-Garcia (2011) and others (see e. g. Cashman, 2018) suggest reserving intersectionality for entanglements of marginalization while multiplicity should be used when discussing mutual constitution of identities which do not necessarily involve oppression. But there is no agreement on the matter. Nash (2008) proposes instead that '[i]n conceiving of privilege and oppression as complex, multi-valent, and simultaneous, intersectionality could o□er a more robust conception of both identity and oppression' (2008, p. 12).

Whichever stance one might wish to take, we believe that intersectionality plays a fundamental role in the politics of remembering. To take the 'Rhodes Must Fall' protests, which started on 9 March 2015 at the University of Cape Town, Mpendukana and Stroud (2019) o□er an incisive analysis of the meanings and political valence of a shack built by student protesters. In a context like South Africa, which is still grappling with tremendous racial inequalities in terms of land ownership (see Burnett, 2022), tin shacks are associated with poor Black people's taking possession of open land. Although not explicitly drawing on the notion of intersectionality, Mpendukana and Stroud convincingly illustrate how, within the otherwise white and middle-class UCT campus, the shack is a powerful counterpoint to the colonial legacy materially enshrined in the statue of Rhodes and the neoclassical architectural style of the university buildings. More specifically, the shack is a semiotic aggregate that works politically by performing a specific racial and classed puncture; it is 'a tangible articulation of 'black pain' – a notion that refers to a myriad socio-economic and a□ective issues following on the colonial dispossession of land' (Mpendukana & Stroud, 2019, p. 189).

What happens though when di□erent histories of injustices are remembered and memorialized in the same context? As Rothberg (2010) points out, there is a tendency among scholars and activists alike to treat collective remembering as a competition ruled by a 'zero-sum logic' according to which di□erent memories vie for space and attention in the public sphere, and the winner ultimately displaces the losers. In the United States, for example, such rivalry has led to tensions between commemorations of the victims of the Shoah, on the one hand, and the acknowledgement of the injustices of colonialism and slavery, on the other. According to Rothberg, the competitive approach to remembering is ultimately deeply flawed and politically counter-productive. He proposes

instead what he calls multidirectional memory which, in line with our terminological choice in this introduction, could be renamed as multidirectional remembering, in which 'memories feed o of each other in a productive dynamic'; they are 'non-zero-sum and based rather on borrowing, cross-referencing, and other kinds of echoes and ricochets' (2010, np). Recognizing the multidirectional character of collective remembering is not tantamount to proposing an unproblematic memory miscellany. Quite the contrary, an appreciation of the parallels and interconnections between di erent traumatic pasts requires teasing out the asymmetrical power di erentials that underlie them at the same time as it forces us to acknowledge our positionality and complex implications in these pasts.

In order to map the complexity of multidirectional memories, Rothberg proposes locating them at the intersection of two continua: an axis of comparison that spans from equation to di erentiation and an axis of a ect that spans from solidarity to competition. While acknowledging the limits of such a schematic representation, Rothberg argues that this mapping exercise can be useful starting point for the development of 'a radically democratic politics of memory', one that 'include(s) a di erentiated empirical history, moral solidarity with victims of diverse injustices, and an ethics of comparison that coordinates the asymmetrical claims of those victims' (Rothberg, 2019, p. 124).

Inspired by the promise that multidirectional remembering 'o er(s) a greater political potential than those, frequent in the Israeli/Palestinian case, that subsume di erent histories under a logic of equation or set victims against each other in an antagonistic logic of competition' (Rothberg, 2019, p. 124), Milani (2020) has analysed the multimedia installation The Road map for Elimination, created by Palestinian artist Rana Bishara at the Palestinian Museum at Birzeit University, near Ramallah on the West Bank in 2019 (Figure 1).

According to Milani, we can see here what Foucault (1986) calls découpage du temps, the overlaying of time and space. In this specific case, the result is an assemblage of the Bünting Clover Leaf Map from 1581, a representation of a quasi-mythical past, portraying Jerusalem/Yerushalaim/AlQuds as umbilicus mundi – the navel of the world – co-existing with the present drying out of Palestinian life (the desiccated cacti) and the persistence of hope for a di erent future (the green cactus), a resilient utopianism. Interestingly, the inclusion of the Bünting map, which indexes the European gaze on Jerusalem, interpellated Milani a ectively and morally into the position of the 'implicated subject' (Rothberg, 2019) – a European viewer who shares complex responsibility for a European colonial and fascist past which shaped the relation of Israel/Palestine in the present, and ultimately frames the prospect of any future justice. As Iris Marion Young cogently states in Responsibility for Justice, 'one has the responsibility always now, in relation to current events and in relation to their future consequences' (2011, p. 92). This is a responsibility Milani (2020) felt acutely in the incredibly complex space Bishara created at Birzeit. It is precisely the role of feelings in relation to collective remembering that we are going to explore in more detail in the next section.

A ect

It is quite obvious that di erent emotions are palpable in the examples of collective remembering summarized in the previous sections. However, it is only recently that



Figure 1. The Road map for Elimination – Rana Bishara's exhibition at the Palestinian Museum.

critical discourse analysis (CDA) has seriously engaged with a□ect (see Milani & Richardson, 2021). Grounded in the Habermasian tradition of rational public debate, several strands of CDA have privileged teasing out the argumentative moves legitimizing a particular discourse. Even when an emotion such as fear is overtly thematized (see e.g. Cap, 2016; Wodak, 2020) a□ect is not fully theorized but, rather, is treated as a by-product of discourse rather than a central element of it. Other disciplinary traditions have also shared this shortcoming. For example, Wetherell, Smith and Campbell state:

> Intuitively, heritage is easily understandable as emotionally constituted linked as it is to the expression of a range of identities, sense of place and to wellbeing, while also often contributing to a range of social and cultural conflicts. However, the a□ective qualities of heritage have had little analytical traction within heritage and museum studies (2018, p. 7)

Similarly, the intricate links between reason and emotion have a growing significance for contemporary rhetoricians (Marcus, 2002). Building on (amongst other sources) Aristotle's formative writing, writers such as Garsten (2006), Finlayson and Martin (2014) and Martin (2014) acknowledge that rhetoric remains a central way in which people, as audiences, are moved into and out of a□ective states, in particular social contexts. Augoustinos et al. (2018) have referred to the rhetoric of a□ective practice as an 'emotion-reason rhetoric', where a□ect is 'understood as entangled with discourse and other psychological modalities in practice to produce accounts [… that] resonate with us because we both feel and understand their relevance' (p. 109).

Across a number of disciplines then, including CDA, rhetoric and heritage studies, we have recently witnessed a more sustained engagement with emotions. Mainly influenced by Ahmed's (2004) work on the cultural politics of emotions and Wetherell's (2008, 2012) notion of a□ective practices, some critical discourse analysts have been vocal about the political relevance of a□ective analysis. Among the proponents of an a□ective approach to critical discourse analysis is Glapka who argues that

> With politics, public debate and media becoming ever more emotional, it is particularly important that the value of discursive analyses of a□ect is not undermined. Their increasing socio-political relevance makes it all the more necessary that discourse analysts do not forsake a□ect as uncanny, visceral and inaccessible, and instead pursue its relationship with semiosis. (2019, p. 617)

We have stated elsewhere (Milani & Richardson, 2021) that we are not fully convinced by the argument that there has been an emotional escalation in politics and media. It might well be that the public sphere has always been emotional (see Young, 1985 for a critique of Habermas), but we have failed to capture such a□ective dimension because of the theoretical toolkits that have framed our analyses. Against this backdrop, we have gone as far as suggest that 'emotions are at the very heart of what we call political' (Milani & Richardson, 2021, p. 3).

Similarly, heritage studies have begun to o□er convincing analysis of the

> a□ective qualities of the practices of commemoration and remembrance […] to reveal not only their emotive nature, but also to identify the flexible, contextual and contingent nature of a□ect and the way it is often actively managed and negotiated in social relations and collective practices of remembering. (Wetherell et al., 2018, p. 10)

These analyses include, but are not limited to, love and devotion in search of lost soldiers in Russia (Dahlin, 2018), conflicting and ambiguous a□ective relations generated by a temporary installation about the Northern Ireland conflict (Shea, 2018), trauma and violence linked to commemorations of World War I in Australia (McKernan & McLeod, 2018), and empathy generated by historical representations of migration vis-à-vis current debates on immigration and refugees in the UK (Mason et al., 2018). Read together, these studies illustrate the contradictory nature of emotional responses to collective remembering. A□ective uncertainty, though, is not necessarily something negative since 'it was at the nexus of emotional ambiguity that new alliances and attachments were made' (Wetherell et al., 2018, p. 17).

While love, grief, shame, guilt, empathy, nostalgia and many other a□ective states have begun to be put under close scrutiny (see Alam, 2015; Gachago et al., 2018; Schult, 2017; Tolia-Kelly, 2017), there is an emotion that has been somewhat neglected in relation to collective remembering: anger. And even when it is mentioned it seems not to dare speak its name but is labelled as 'righteous indignation' (Wetherell et al., 2018, p. 5). Granted, anger seems to be something of a dirty feeling – a pathology even – if we are to believe the innumerable available courses in 'anger management'. A certain discomfort with this emotion might also be underlying the preference for an expression like 'righteous indignation', which sanitizes anger's murky waters, while covering them with an unpolluted moral surface. But, as the throwing of excrement at the Rhodes Must Fall protests have illustrated, as well as other destructive acts targeting the built environment, it is often in the dirty debris and the moral quandaries

ensuing from them that lies the complexity of the politics of remembering. Fully understanding what angers does politically – its dark spill-overs included – is what is required from scholars of collective remembering, not domesticating it with a veneer of respectability (see also Cooper, 2018).

Most importantly, bringing anger into the analytical repertoire is very much in line with the intersectional and multidirectional approach to collective remembering spelled out in the section above. Ahmed argues that any response to pain relies on the being able to speak about pain, and goes on to say that 'such speech acts are the condition for the formation of a "we", made up of di□erent stories of pain that cannot be reduced to a ground, identity or sameness' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 174). In other words, an a□ective community can only be constructed through the sharing of painful di□erences in the struggle against di□erent facets of hegemony, and the concomitant realization that 'the response to pain, as a call for action, also requires anger' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 174). In saying so, Ahmed draws upon by Audre Lorde who showed that 'anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating act of clarification […] Anger is loaded with information and energy' (Lorde, 1984, p. 127). And there is no doubt that a furious energy is what animated Black South African students in their protests against the statue of imperialist Ceci John Rhodes on the campus of the University of Cape Town, and permeated ensuing discussions about decolonising tertiary education. What is crucial then for academics and activists alike is 'learning to hear the anger of others, without blocking the anger through a defence of one own's position' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 178).

The special issue in outline

The special issue opens with an article in which James Martin draws upon Derrida's oeuvre, in order to outline the tensions between the impossibility of restoring the presence of something that has been lost, on the one hand, and the very process of remembering that loss, on the other. Such a tension, Martin argues, is at the very heart of epideictic rhetoric, and the eulogy in particular, and manifests itself through a variety of rhetorical choices. Such theoretical points are illustrated with the help of an analysis of two very di□erent eulogies, one by the Welsh novelist and playwright, Gwyn Thomas in the wake of the Aberfan disaster, and the other one delivered by Rev. Al Sharpton after George Floyd's death. Whilst not all collective remembering is about death, Martin shows us that loss is, nonetheless, a constitutive element of memory.

Public recollection of the past is investigated empirically by Brianne Hastie, Martha Agoustinos and Kellie Elovalis, who analyse media debates about retaining or changing the date of Australia's national day. With the help of a critical discourse analytical framework, the authors map the discursive strategies employed in Australian newspapers to remember the past. These include celebratory endorsements of colonization, disconnections of the past from the present, open acknowledgments of the destructive impact of colonization on Aboriginal people, and finally a discursive strategy of togetherness built on the idea of 'moving on' and the concomitant proposal of changing the date and renaming Australia's national day. On the basis of critical analysis of media discourse, the authors do not settle on a conclusive answer about whether to retain or change the date. A new date might represent 'a fresh start' but 'it may also disguise or dismiss the

harm wrought by colonisation, by positioning this in the past, separated from the nation's golden future' (Hastie et al. this issue).

Public discourses of collective remembering are further explored in Ersula Ore's article, this time, though, focusing on the racial and gender politics underpinning the resurgence of lynching discourses in twenty-first century United States. In the tradition of cultural and rhetorical studies, Ore explores historical and contemporary archives tracing two strains of twenty-first century lynching discourse. On the one hand, she reveals a discourse which is built on racist misappropriations of lynching. By equating 'cancel culture' with lynching, this discourse problematically enables men like Trump and other white supremacists to frame themselves as victims of contemporary 'lynching' practices. On the other hand, there is a progressive discourse articulated by social justice organizations such as INCITE and the APPF. Through remembrance and memorialization, these organizations expose parts of the lynching archive that have been neglected until recently: they make visible Black female victims of lynching and thus contest 'the systemic erasure of institutionalized misgynoiristic violence' (Ore this issue).

How social justice organizations present alternative discourses of collective remembering is also explored by Scott Burnett, Nettly Ahmed, Tahn-dee Matthews, Junaid Oliephant, and Aylwyn M. Walsh in the context of Khoisan activism in South Africa. Empirically, the authors conduct detailed analysis of video ethnographic texts produced by activists in the birthplace of Sarah Baartman, the well-known Khoisan woman forcibly taken to Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century. What South African activists do are acts of linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2018) through which they 'rememory' a history of land dispossession. More specifically, the examples in the article illustrate di□erent strategies through which the activists co-construct memories of the past in order to claim their rights to dispossessed ancestral lands. These range from tracing histories of specific words, re-experiencing historical traumas, retelling histories of sites of memory, and viewing oneself in relation to one's ancestors.

Natalia Krzyżanowska continues in the exploration of struggles about collective remembering, this time in the context of the 'Living Memorial', an installation in Szabadság (Liberty) Square in central Budapest. With the help of a multimodal discourse-ethnographic approach, Krzyżanowska unveils the contrapuntal function of the Living Memorial as a bottom-up initiative that counters contemporary top-down, nationalist and revisionist trends which seek to erase Hungary's active involvement in the Shoah. Detailed multimodal analysis of the space of Living Memorial illustrates how specific semiotic choices (of texts, photos and other artefacts) link individual, lived experiences to wider socio-historical narratives. Vulnerable in the ephemeral character of its materiality, the Living Memorial has been the target of attacks and destruction. Yet thanks to the unwavering actions of a variety of individuals, it still stands, and thus 'remains a tangible expression of opposition to the Hungarian new policy of bringing oppressors – rather than victims – into the limelight of history' (Krzyżanowska this issue).

The special issue closes with another article that takes a multimodal approach to spatializing processes of collective remembering of the Shoah in the context of Il Memoriale dello Shoah, the memorial of the victims of the Shoah in Milan, which was inaugurated in 2013 and, in 2015, was turned into a night shelter for destitute migrants. Here Tommaso M. Milani and John E. Richardson draw upon a theoretically multi-pronged approach that brings into dialogue Wetherell's (2012) work on a□ective practices, Rothberg's (2009,

2010) reflections on multidirectional memory with Foucault's (1986) somewhat neglected notion of découpages du temps (lit. slices of time). With the help of such a theoretical apparatus the authors analyse both the space of the memorial and the media debates about the Memorial's decision to shelter refugees, showing how emotions are brought into being semiotically in a nonlinear way through overlapping spatialisations of time, which in turn raise important ethical questions about the duty to remember and the responsibility for justice in the present.

Read from cover to cover, this special issue not only showcases the discursive/rhetorical forms that collective remembering takes in a variety of contexts – Australia, Hungary, Italy, South Africa, the UK and the USA – but also illustrates its inherently political nature which manifests itself in a□ectively laden reclamations, appropriations and contestations about who and what should be remembered and for what purpose.

Note

1. The inscription on the new memorial stone reads: 'In memory of Jews from Jedwabne and its surroundings, men, women, and children, co-owners of this land, murdered, buried alive on this site on 10 July 1941. Jedwabne 10 July 2001'.

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