

anything but neutral historical data; they are used for orientation in the current context, useful, and thus also valuable' (ibid.). In addition, Echterhoff calls attention to the central intersection between memory research in social psychology and cultural studies' interest in media and institutions of remembering: Collective-semantic bodies of knowledge become such only 'as the result of a series of social processes of construction and validation' (ibid., 78). Thus 'the collectivization of what are at first simply contents of the semantic memory are presumably tied to a number of cognitive, technical, social, and societal conditions' (ibid., 82).

3. Collective-procedural memory: In this last category, Manier and Hirst subsume traditions and rituals, which the individual often carries out and passes on without being aware of it. 'Rituals and traditions, or more generally, procedural memories, can serve as mnemonic tools that shape the collective identity of their practitioners, collectively reminding them of declarative memories' (Manier and Hirst 2008, 259).

To sum up, in recent decades almost no other topic has inspired such a stimulating and productive interdisciplinary dialogue, one which also blurs the boundaries between the humanities and the natural sciences. Of course, the fact that 'memory' figures as a shared object of study for disciplines with significantly different basic assumptions, research interests, and methods can have explosive results. And, of course, it is also true that researchers are far from establishing a 'super theory' of memory which would perfectly interweave the 'two cultures'. However, many scholars and scientists have at least cast off some of their reservations and shown themselves to be open to 'memory as a convergent field' (Welzer 2008, 295) and the interdisciplinary exchange that goes along with it, so that we can look forward to interesting new developments.

IV Memory and Culture: A Semiotic Model

In light of the broad multidisciplinary of memory studies and the great variety of concepts of memory it has yielded, should one even attempt a definition of 'cultural memory'? Nicholas Pethes and Jens Ruchatz find this goal neither realistic nor desirable. Thus, they did not even include entries for 'memory' or 'remembering' in their interdisciplinary encyclopedia (2001) of the same name. They certainly have a point. The 'supertheory' of memory that integrates all the existing approaches has yet to be conceived (on some far-reaching attempts, though, see chapter III.3.3). The goal of this chapter is to outline an heuristic model of cultural memory. This model is rooted in anthropological and semiotic approaches to culture, but at the same time it should leave room for as many points of contact with other approaches as possible.

We cannot conceive of memory without using metaphors; in fact, throughout history, the phenomenon of 'memory' has itself generated a great many metaphors. In a first step, therefore, the possibilities, limits, and dangers of the metaphorical reference to cultural memory will be carefully examined and two fundamentally different uses of Halbwachs's term 'collective memory' – *collective* and *collected* – will be explained. A second step then introduces categories of cultural semiotics and distinguishes among three dimensions of memory culture (material, social, and mental). Third, concepts of cognitive psychology are transferred to the level of culture, in order to locate acts of remembering within a framework of various systems of cultural memory. And fourth, the relationship of memory to the neighboring terms 'identity' and 'experience' is considered.

IV.1 Metaphors – productive, misleading and superfluous, or: How to conceive of memory on a collective level

One of the established criticisms levelled against theories of cultural memory contends that they are based on an improper transference of concepts of individual psychology to the collective level. Marc Bloch (1925), in his response to Halbwachs's theses, was the first to point out the problems that arise when terms such as 'memory', 'remembering' and 'forgetting' are simply furnished with the adjective 'collective' in order to transfer to sociocultural phenomena the insights gathered in studying individuals. It is certainly true that there exists no form of collective consciousness (outside of individual minds) to which one could ascribe acts of remembering and forgetting, an unconscious, or the suppression of memory.

Cultural memory, collective remembering, or social forgetting are metaphors – as has been emphasized repeatedly (be it as a reproach or as a justification for cultural studies' approaches to memory). They are linguistic cognitive models with heuristic value, as Harald Weinrich pointed out as early as 1976: 'We cannot conceive of an object such as memory without metaphors. Metaphors, particularly when they occur in the consistency of semantic fields, are valuable as (hypothetical) cognitive models' (294) (see also Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Memory, remembering and forgetting have been paraphrased with metaphors since Plato and Aristotle – from wax tablet, seal, and aviary to storehouse and theatre all the way to photography and the computer. Thus, as Douwe Draaisma (2000, 3) points out, 'ever-changing images are projected onto our theories of memory, a succession of metaphors and metamorphoses, a true *omnia in omnibus*'. The classical metaphors of memory have always referred to the individual level. This means that when we draw on the concept of memory, we are using a term which is already associated with a range of metaphors. Metaphorizing this term even further – that is, taking the previous tenor (or: target domain) 'individual memory' and making it a vehicle (or: source domain) for an understanding of social phenomena such as processes of canonization or public commemorations – can be very suggestive, but also harbors the danger of producing endlessly meandering catachreses, chains of mixed metaphors.

To be exact, in speaking of 'cultural memory' we are only sometimes dealing with metaphors proper, but always with tropes, that is, with expressions that have a figurative meaning. Yet not every concept of cultural memory exhibits the same degree of tropology. Basically, there

are two different uses of tropes in cultural memory studies which should be distinguished: 'cultural memory' as metaphor and as metonymy.

- **Metonymy:** When 'cultural remembering' is conceived of as an individual act, when the focus is on the shaping force that sociocultural surroundings exert on organic memory – that is, when we speak of 'memory as a phenomenon of culture' (see J. Assmann 2006, 170) –, then we are dealing with a literal use of the term 'memory' and with a metonymic use of the attribute 'cultural' (which stands for sociocultural contexts and their influence on individual memory).
- **Metaphor:** In contrast, it is a metaphorization of the term 'memory' when we speak of the 'memory of culture', 'a society remembering' or the 'memory of literature'. These are linguistic images for the organized archiving of documents, for the establishment of official commemoration days, or for the artistic process of intertextuality – in short for 'culture as a phenomenon of memory' (ibid.). The term 'memory' itself becomes a metaphor.

Thus there are two fundamentally different ways of conceiving of the relationship between culture and memory, both of which can be found already in Halbwachs's work on *mémoire collective*. However, there they are not discussed separately nor clearly distinguished from each other. It is the American sociologist Jeffrey Olick (1999a) who has pointed with the necessary clarity to the difference between what he calls a 'collected' and a 'collective' memory. He speaks of the 'two cultures' of memory research: 'two radically different concepts of culture are involved here, one that sees culture as a subjective category of meanings contained in people's minds versus one that sees culture as patterns of publicly available symbols objectified in society' (ibid., 336). Drawing on Olick, we can therefore distinguish between

- 'collected memory' as the socially and culturally formed individual memory. We remember with the aid of culturally specific schemata; we act according to collectively shared values and norms; we assimilate second-hand experiences into our personal wealth of experience. Halbwachs would call these instances *cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. Olick uses the metaphor of 'collecting': The individual mind appropriates various elements of the sociocultural environment. Cultural studies research on *collected* memory is often engaged in a dialogue with social psychology and can even profit from the insights of the neurosciences; and

- 'collective memory' (in the narrower sense), which refers to the symbols, media, social institutions, and practices which are used to construct, maintain, and represent versions of a shared past. History, sociology, literary and media studies (including the influential approaches by Nora and the Assmanns) have traditionally addressed this second level of *mémoire collective*.

The two forms of collective memory can thus be separated analytically; however, they exert their influence only through their continual interaction, through the interplay of the individual and collective levels. There is no pre-cultural individual memory. But neither is there a 'Collective Memory' that is totally detached from individuals and embodied solely in media and institutions. Just as the social environment and cultural schemata shape the individual memory, the 'memory' of a sociocultural formation must be actualized and realized in, or appropriated through, organic minds. Otherwise commemorative rituals, archival material, and media representing the past will be useless and ineffective – dead material, failing to have any impact in memory culture.

Olick's distinction between *collected* and *collective* memory corresponds to Elena Esposito's (2002, 17) systems-theory approach and her differentiation between memory on the cognitive level and memory on the social level: 'Only by maintaining the differentiation between the two forms of memory can one focus an analysis on their mutual influence.' It is only through the interaction of cognitive and social memory that memory culture emerges.

Throughout this book I will call the two aspects of cultural memory that should be analytically distinguished 'cultural memory on the individual level' on the one hand and 'cultural memory on the collective level' on the other. Figure IV.1 sums up the key characteristics of and differences between those two levels.

Another frequent objection to the concept of cultural memory has been that it is a superfluous trope. These critics argue, first, that individual memory is still individual memory, even when its cultural aspects are emphasized, and, second, that cultural memory on the level of the collective is a bad metaphor, because it lumps together heterogeneous phenomena which could just as easily be replaced by the familiar terms 'tradition', 'myth' or 'historical consciousness'. In this vein, Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam (1996, 47) have asked 'Collective Memory – What Is It?' and arrived at the answer that "'collective memory" is but a misleading name for the old familiar "myth" ... Indeed, collective memory is but a myth'.

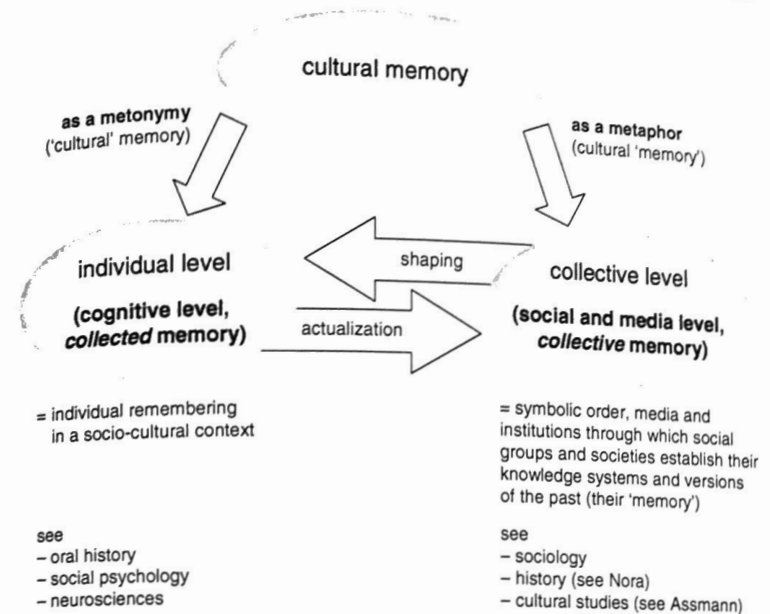


Figure IV.1 Two uses of the term 'cultural memory'

Indeed, it is the case that 'cultural memory' is a broad umbrella term, under which a number of cultural, social, cognitive and biological phenomena can be subsumed: tradition, archive, canon, monuments, commemorative rituals, communication within the family circle, life experience and neuronal networks. Critics point out that concepts of collective or cultural memory thus blur the fine gradations between all these phenomena (see *ibid.*, 30). What these criticisms overlook, however, is their integrative power. It is exactly the umbrella quality of the term 'cultural memory' which helps us see the (sometimes functional, sometimes analogical, sometimes metaphorical) relationships between phenomena which were formerly conceived of as distinct, and thus draw connections between tradition and canon, monuments and historical consciousness, family communication and neuronal circuits. Therefore, the concept of cultural memory opens up a space for interdisciplinary perspectives in a way none of these other (albeit more specific) concepts can.

Nonetheless, the criticism does make clear that cultural memory studies must draw an important distinction, namely that between productive and misleading metaphors. As a productive metaphor, 'cultural

memory' is a sensitizing concept (Olick 1999a), a concept which draws our attention to previously unrecognized structural similarities and functional relations. On the other hand, the term 'memory' should at least be put in quotation marks when it serves as a metaphorical expression for the role of media and institutions in the collective construction of the past. Otherwise, we would indeed seem to 'enter a new age in which archives remember and statues forget', as the historian Kerwin Lee Klein complains (2000, 136). He is seconded by the psychologist Wolfgang Schönplug (2002, 224), who emphasizes: 'External relics and systems have no memory and are not memory'. And also Wulf Kansteiner (2002, 189) finds such statements 'at best metaphorical and at worst misleading'. In the cases mentioned by Klein, the term 'memory' is used not only as a metaphor, but also as an abbreviation. Applying it in this manner means skipping over several stages of complex cultural processes. Statues and literature are not 'memory', but rather *media* of cultural memory, which encode information and can prompt remembering or forgetting (see chapter V); archives and universities are likewise not themselves memory, but rather can serve as *institutions* of cultural memory, which gather, preserve, administer, and impart culturally relevant information about the past.

The memory metaphor becomes completely misleading, however, when it is used to apply the entire conceptual logic of individual psychology to culture. Although certain characteristics of individual memory (such as the nexus between memory, narration, and identity) seem to function analogously on the level of culture, it must be stated very clearly that in principle, 'from the functioning of the brain and consciousness *nothing* can be deduced regarding the functioning of society' (Esposito 2002, 18; my emphasis). In this regard psychoanalytical concepts in particular are as suggestive as they are potentially misleading. One can, it is true, observe processes on the level of society which correspond to individual repression, displacement, or screen memories: for example, censorship, selective and biased historiography, or the creation of fictive myths. But when it comes to the effects of such processes (as postulated by Freud and other psychoanalysts) the matter looks altogether different: Denial and repression might well make an individual organism sick, but not necessarily a society. 'Nations *can* repress with psychological impunity: their collective memories can be changed without a "return of the repressed"' (Kansteiner 2002, 186). Even Dominick LaCapra (1998, 23), one of the pre-eminent figures of psychoanalytically inspired cultural memory studies, is concerned that 'there is a great temptation to trope away from specificity'. In particular,

the poststructuralist-psychoanalytical metaphor of cultural trauma has more often elicited misunderstandings in the field than yielded insights into processes of cultural memory. The notion of cultural trauma is, as Wulf Kansteiner (2004) sums up in his critical survey of trauma research in philosophy, psychology and cultural studies, a 'category mistake', derived from a misleading metaphorization of concepts which describe mechanisms of individual memory.

To sum up, the 'cultural' memory of the individual and the cultural 'memory' of social groups and societies are two possible ways to describe (and study) 'memory in culture'. Neither of the areas thus constituted can be viewed exclusively, since *collected* and *collective* memory, the cognitive and the social (and media) level, can only be understood through their interaction with each other. In both cases, the term 'memory' has a tropological dimension, and both are legitimate. However, when employing metaphors and metonymies it is important to be aware of the direction and degree of the transfer of meaning, the productivity of the trope for the specific research question, and also the chance that the logic of the figurative term could lead us astray.

IV.2 Material, social and mental dimensions of memory culture

As announced in the introduction, this book is based on a broad understanding of cultural memory. This means that unlike in Halbwachs's or Nora's work, 'memory' is not narrowly defined as group memory or national memory and contrasted to history. Nor does the term carry any specific positive or negative connotations (neither as the refuge of an 'original' version of the past nor as its biased distortion). The umbrella term 'cultural memory' unites all possible expressions of the relationship of culture and memory – from *ars memoriae* to digital archives, from neuronal networks to intertextuality, from family talk to the public unveiling of a monument. Cultural memory can thus broadly be defined as the sum total of all the processes (biological, medial, social) which are involved in the interplay of past and present within sociocultural contexts. It finds its specific manifestation in memory culture.

Because of the significance of cultural sign systems in all forms of remembering, the model developed here draws on research done in the field of cultural semiotics. In a similar vein, James Wertsch (2002, 26) has proposed placing 'semiotics front and centre' in theories of collective remembering and focusing on memory's 'semiotic mediation' (ibid., 52). From a semiotic viewpoint, culture is the result of the

diachronic dimension of semioses (that is, of sign processes). The condition for the development and viability of culture in this understanding is the lasting effect of codes and of 'texts' (that is, cultural artefacts). To conceive of this fundamentally temporal aspect of culture, semioticians like Jurij Lotman and Boris Uspenskyij integrated the idea of memory into their theory early on: 'We understand culture as the *nonhereditary memory of the community*' (1978, 213; emphasis in the original; see also Lotman 1990 on the relation between 'cultural memory, history, and semiotics').

A theory of culture which integrates anthropological and semiotic perspectives has been developed by Roland Posner. He conceives of culture as a system of signs which has three dimensions:

Anthropology distinguishes between social, material, and mental culture, and semiotics systematically connects these three areas in the way it defines a social culture as a structured set of users of signs (individuals, institutions, society); the material culture as a set of texts (civilization); and mental culture as a set of codes. (Posner and Schmauks 2004, 364; see also Posner 2004)

The three dimensions of culture postulated by cultural semiotics are dynamically interrelated, since users of 'signs' (social dimension) are dependent on 'codes' (mental dimension) if they want to understand 'texts' (material dimension). In a specific cultural formation, codes manifest themselves in social interaction as well as in media and other artefacts; and at the same time, it is here that culture is continually created anew.

As in the case of culture at large, it is useful to distinguish among different dimensions (material, mental and social) when considering memory culture. Positing such a three-dimensionality of memory culture is especially helpful in light of the disparity of the field of memory studies, where representatives of individual disciplines tend to focus on one of these three dimensions and render it in terms of absolutes. Thus it is no surprise that social scientists – ever since Maurice Halbwachs – have developed concepts which foreground the social dimension of memory culture (Olick 2008). Scholars in the fields of art and literature, from Aby Warburg to Mieke Bal et al. (1999) and Renate Lachmann (1997), on the other hand, point to the importance of the material dimension (paintings, literary texts) for acts of cultural recall. The mental dimension of memory culture, lastly, is underscored by scholars interested in the history of mentality (see Confino 2008) as well as – albeit not

in a semiotic but in a biological understanding – by psychologists and neuroscientists. All of these branches have provided important impulses for cultural memory studies. Nonetheless, a one-sided focus on a 'social memory', a 'material memory' or a 'mental memory' threatens to hide from view the complexity of cultural processes. It is only through the constant, processual, and dynamic interaction of all three dimensions that cultural memory is produced (see Figure IV.2):

- The material dimension of memory culture is constituted by mnemonic artefacts, media, and technologies of memory, ranging from symbols and landscapes to architecture and books to film and photography.
- To the social dimension of memory culture belong mnemonic practices and the carriers of memory: commemorative rituals; forms of production, storage, and recall of cultural knowledge; and the persons and social institutions involved in these processes.
- The mental dimension of memory culture, finally, includes all the shared schemata, concepts, and codes which enable and shape collective remembering through symbolic mediation, as well as all the

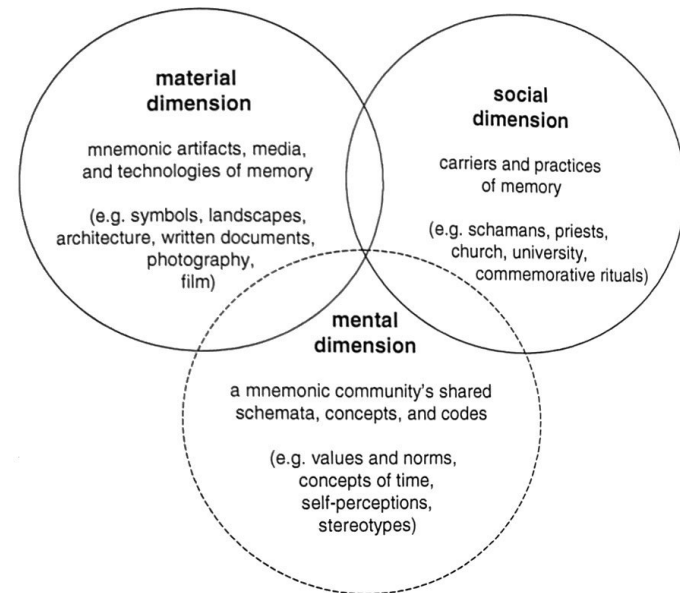


Figure IV.2 Three dimensions of memory culture

effects that the activity of remembering has on the mental dispositions predominant in a community – such as ideas about time and history, values and norms, self-perceptions and the perception of others.

As a (however imagined) 'whole' cultural memory is elusive. Researchers can only study discrete acts, or performances, of memory. These may derive from either the material or the social dimension of memory culture (say, in the shape of a religious tract or a burial ceremony); and they may give rise to hypotheses about its (unobservable) mental dimension.

All acts of cultural remembering (commemorative 'minutes of silence', conversations with family members about a recent vacation, the production and circulation of a historical study of the Middle Ages) show a specific mediality. It is only through media in the broadest sense that contents of cultural memory become accessible for the members of a mnemonic community. Media not only connect the three dimensions of memory culture; they are also the interface between the *collected* and *collective*, the cognitive and the social/media level of memory (see also chapter V.1).

The coding of knowledge about the past occurs not only with the help of specific media, but also always within the framework of a symbolic form, or a symbol system. According to the cultural philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1944), symbolic forms are independent forms of understanding the world. Religion, history, the natural sciences, law, and art are some of the symbolic forms available to memory culture. Whether a piece of information to be remembered is encoded in the symbolic forms of academic history or Christian religion, of Islamic law or western literature is a crucial question, since the choice of symbol system also changes the quality of that which is remembered.

Media and symbol systems are two of the coordinates which play a significant role in determining in which 'mnemonic mode' the past is being remembered (see II.4.1). Our memories (individual and collective) of past events can vary to a considerable extent. This holds true not only for *what* is remembered (facts, data), but also for *how* it is remembered – that is, for the quality and meaning the past assumes. As a result, there are different modes of remembering identical past events. A war, for example, can be remembered as a mythic event ('the war as apocalypse'), as part of political history (the First World War as 'the great seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century'), as an ethically charged traumatic experience or event ('the horror of the trenches', 'the lost

generation'), as a part of family history ('the war my great-uncle served in'), as a focus of bitter contestation ('the war which was waged by the old generation, by the fascists, by men'), or as a piece of good entertainment ('the war I saw at the movies'). Mythical, politicized, traumatic, familial, generational, genealogical, contested, aestheticizing, and entertaining memory are all different modes of referring to the past.

In the following chapters, particular attention will be paid to these coordinates of cultural memory – media, symbolic forms, and modes. Chapter V deals with the relationship of media and memory. Chapter VI is dedicated to an analysis of literature as a symbolic form of cultural memory, and Chapter VI.2.4 addresses the modes of literary memory from a narratological point of view. But first, some of the major systems of cultural memory will be explained.

IV.3 Autobiographical, semantic and procedural systems of cultural memory

Psychologists differentiate among several memory systems: Explicit systems (semantic, episodic, and autobiographical memory) are distinguished from implicit systems (procedural memory and priming). Social psychologists have productively adapted this classification to explain 'collected memory' (see chapter III.3). Drawing on the work by Hirst and Manier (and slightly changing their terminology to fit the distinction between *collected* and *collective* memory), I use the terms 'collected-episodic', 'collected-semantic' and 'collected-procedural' memory to describe the sociocultural aspects of individual remembering. To these psychological categories for describing *collected* memory this book adds an (admittedly metaphorical) cultural-studies systematization of *collective* memory. Various procedures by which groups and societies refer to temporal processes are understood here as an expression of different collective systems of memory. Such a metaphorical transfer of memory systems distinguished with a view to individual remembering to the level of the social and medial cannot be rendered in absolute terms and must be taken with a grain of salt; but it may nonetheless prove useful, as this allows for the multitude of heterogeneous acts of collective remembering to be more clearly differentiated.

I use the term 'collective-autobiographical memory' to refer to the collective remembering of a shared past. Psychological studies of the individual autobiographical memory emphasize its dynamic, creative and narrative nature, as well as its identity-creating functions. On the social and media level, too, 'autobiographical' versions of the past

are highly constructive and fulfil the function of self-description ('our past, our identity'). Through collective-autobiographical acts of memory, group identities are created, the experience of time is culturally shaped, and shared systems of values and norms are established. Collective-autobiographical remembering is often described with terms such as 'remembrance' or 'commemoration'. The Assmanns' 'Cultural Memory' with its normative and formative myths, and the 'communicative memory' with its shared fabrication of narratives about the recent past are typical examples of this memory system. Nora's *lieux de mémoire*, on the other hand, are located below the level of autobiographical narrativization; they represent a kind of 'collective-episodic memory' which is not transformed into coherent stories (or 'master narratives'), but is instead condensed into a multitude of particular 'sites of memory'.

With the term 'collective-semantic memory' I denote processes of the social organization and storage of knowledge. This form of memory does *not* address the experience of time. Research on the collective-semantic memory typically looks at the symbolic representation of cultural knowledge, organizing principles, media and technologies of storage. The Assmanns' 'stored memory' and the 'cultural archive' as well as wisdom and common sense are part of the collective-semantic memory. On the social and media level, both autobiographical and semantic memories are the result of ongoing processes of negotiation.

Naturally, just as is the case with individual memory, we have also to assume an overlap and permeation of semantic and autobiographical memory on the level of the social. Collective systems of knowledge, for example, are culture-specific phenomena; they have emerged from historical experience and can be relevant to cultural identity (especially when the community is confronted with alternative systems of knowledge). Conversely, the creation of collective-autobiographical memories always takes place against the backdrop of existing cultural semantics. And, finally, memories of a common past can become identity-neutral knowledge when the events in question are no longer conceived of as an identity-related 'usable past'. This differentiation between semantic and autobiographical systems of collective memory can help answer the difficult question regarding the status of history in memory culture. In the model proposed here, the symbolic form 'history' (with historiography as its main medium) exhibits strongly 'autobiographical' aspects when it is clearly related to the group or society in which it originated, when it transmits concepts of identity, values and norms, and has affective elements. In contrast, we are dealing with historiography operating according to the collective-semantic

system – and thus belonging more to the area of 'knowing' rather than 'remembering' – when it transmits identity-neutral knowledge (for example, about foreign cultures or about one's own group, but in the latter case in a way that does not suggest an identificatory reading). One must consider, though, that 'autobiographical and identity-creating' or 'semantic-scholarly' functions of media of cultural memory are never based exclusively on intrinsic characteristics, but are first and foremost created by their users (the members of a mnemonic community) and can thus vary in different contexts.

The term 'collective-procedural memory' is meant to accommodate phenomena such as the uncontrolled recurrence of bodies of knowledge and forms of expression. This includes, for example, the effect of Aby Warburg's 'pathos formulas'. 'Collective-procedural memory' would also describe an awareness of the past which – for example in Harald Welzer's (2001) understanding of 'social memory' – is expressed in non-intended acts of memory. The existence of cultural stereotypes and value hierarchies is likewise less an effect of the conscious efforts of a society to pass on certain versions of the past and bodies of knowledge, and more a result of a continuation *en passant*. Collective-procedural memory is thus the implicit, non-intentional side of the explicit forms of collective memory (semantic and autobiographical); it refers to ways of dealing with the past which are not conscious or capable of becoming conscious on the social level. As collective phenomena, however, acts of procedural memory are always tied to symbolic forms of expression, in media or patterns of social behaviour (Figure IV.3).

There is no collective memory without individual actualization. This is also the case in distinguishing systems of memory. What statements can thus be made about the representation of the aforementioned collective memory systems in the organic memory?

- Collective-autobiographical information ('our past') is represented in the individual memory as strongly affective contents of the semantic memory. However, the events of a more recent past that the rememberer has witnessed him- or herself (the 'communicative memory') can also be represented as episodic memories ('how I experienced the fall of the Berlin Wall'; 'how my family and I heard about the attacks on September 11, 2001').
- Collective-semantic information, on the other hand, encompasses the relatively neutrally experienced contents of the semantic memory (for example, historical facts about the Roman Empire as they are taught in school).

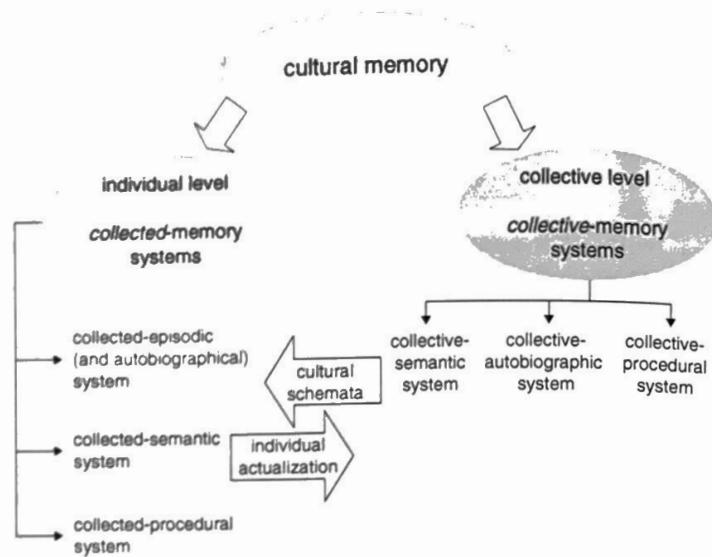


Figure IV.3 Systems and modes of cultural memory

- Collective-procedural phenomena, finally, can potentially be conscious knowledge in some individuals (for example, those who reflect critically on national stereotypes or everyday rituals of their society). But collective-procedural memory emerges and exists on the basis of its contents generally belonging to the non-conscious repertoire of individuals' knowledge and abilities. It rests in our culture-specific schemata and scripts.

In summary, one can say that groups and societies (with the help of symbolic forms, media, and institutions) refer to the past in different ways: They relate to past events in a constructive, evaluative and self-referential manner, in a way that is similar to individual *remembering* (collective-autobiographical system). They administer the past and its relics in a manner that seems in some ways to correspond to the individual *knowing that* (collective-semantic system). Finally, they are influenced by past events and traditional procedures, which remind one of the individual *knowing how* (collective-procedural system). The contents of these three social systems of memory are, in turn, represented in various ways within different cognitive systems of the individual's memory.

IV.4 Related concepts: Collective identity and cultural experience

In the course of the discussions about cultural memory, concepts of 'cultural experience' and 'collective identity' have also received a great deal of attention. The memory theories of Halbwachs, Nora and Assmann place collective identity front and centre. Jan Assmann understands 'concretion of identity' to be a central characteristic of the Cultural Memory. Therefore, he studies the 'connective structure' of societies which is constituted through shared remembering (J. Assmann 1992, 16 and 39). Yet ideas of collective identity have also received strong criticism, and rightfully so. One of the most polemical responses has been that by Lutz Niethammer (2000), directed towards the 'uncanny boom' of concepts of collective identity. Cooper and Brubaker (2000) suggest looking 'beyond identity' and discarding the term as an analytical category of social sciences altogether. And Jürgen Straub (2002, 69) expressly underlines: 'Every casual transposition of the concept of personal identity onto collectives must ... be rejected, every discourse about concrete "collective identities" must immediately be subjected to a "critique of ideology."' Straub distinguishes thus between a 'normative' and a 'reconstructive' type of reference to collective identity:

Whereas the first, with respect to the (putative) members of the collective, (merely) pretends or presents, directs or suggests, or even imposes, common features, a historical continuity and practical coherence 'binding' once and for all, the second type describes the subjects' praxis as well as the self-understanding and world-understanding in order to arrive at a description of the collective identity in terms of a reconstructive and interpretative science of society and culture. (Straub 2002, 69)

Jan Assmann (1992, 132) clearly deals with the reconstructive (or descriptive) type when he defines the concept of collective identity as follows: 'With the terms *collective* or *we-identity* we describe the image that a group constructs of itself, and with which members of the group identify themselves.' Collective identity develops in a dynamic with concepts of alterity. Identity 'is a *plurale tantum* and presupposes other identities. Without multitude [there is] no unity, without otherness no uniqueness' (ibid., 135f.). The 'we-consciousness' of sociocultural formations is in no small part fed by shared remembering. Following Halbwachs, who observed the emphasis that collective memory places

on similarities and continuities, Jan Assmann notes that 'concretion of identity' means that 'external differences are emphasized, and the internal ones in contrast played down' (ibid., 40).

Kwame A. Appiah (2005, 69) defines the structure of social identity in the following way: 'Where a classification of people as Ls is associated with a *social conception* of Ls, some people *identify* as Ls, and people are sometimes *treated* as Ls, we have a paradigm of a social identity that matters for ethical and political life.'

However, we should be careful not to overlook 'the recognition that identities are robustly plural' (Sen 2006, 19). Plurality here means not only that in every society a variety of sociocultural formations, memories and identities coexist, but also that each individual is a member of a variety of (mnemonic) collectives (Amartya Sen describes himself as 'an Asian, an Indian citizen, a Bengali with Bangladeshi ancestry, an American or British resident, ... a strong believer in secularism and democracy, a man, a feminist, a heterosexual, a defender of gay and lesbian rights'; ibid.). Through such multiple memberships, the individual becomes an intersection of (or, to use Halbwachs's term, a 'viewpoint on') various collective identities. On the level of the individual, collective identity thus denotes nothing other than the 'collective aspects of subjectivity that emerge from the individual's belonging to certain groups, which may define themselves through gender, culture, ethnicity or nation' (Friese 2002, 2).

In respect of the causes and manifestations of collective identity, one can distinguish different theories of identity by explanation types. For Jan Assmann, for example, collective identity is not just a matter of living in a shared symbolic world of meaning ('basic structure'), but also of becoming aware of this ('reflexive structure'): 'A collective identity is ... societal belonging that has become reflexive. Cultural identity is thus the reflexive participation in or the commitment to a culture' (J. Assmann 1992, 134). Benedict Anderson (1983) also emphasizes, through his concept of 'imagined communities', the conscious aspects of collective identity. Every member has a mental image of his or her community: 'In the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 1983, 6). Jürgen Straub, in contrast, argues that we 'need not assume that such agreement is merely and in every case "reflexive" in the sense of "conscious" or even "rationally accessible." It should rather be conceived as often tacit knowledge, latent and everyday, that consistently structures and guides the thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions of the collective's members' (Straub 2002, 72). This interpretation coincides with Anthony Easthope's (1999, 4) definition of national identity

as an 'unconscious structure' and of nation 'as a particular discursive formation' (ibid., 6). Such diverse accentuations in the research landscape result from the way different memory systems are involved in the making of collective identities. Collective identity is a phenomenon of both the explicit and the implicit systems of cultural memory: It can be consciously coded, but also at times unconsciously expressed, for example through discursive formations, mentalities, and patterns of thought and action. As a result, the existing, primarily descriptive theories of collective identity are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. (For a cognitive psychology perspective on collective identity, see Mack and Hirst 2008.)

Current research has also shown the terms 'memory' and 'experience' to be close neighbours. Nikolaus Buschmann and Horst Carl (2001, 9) observe that 'the concept of experience in current methodological discussions within the humanities is more and more taking on the status of a key cultural studies concept'. Both concepts, experience and memory, draw on each other and are often used synonymously. It is often difficult to ascertain where the history of experience stops and the history of memory begins. What is needed is a theoretical specification of the notoriously complex concept of experience, which includes aspects such as perception, memory, interpretation and tradition.

Recent work in the history of experience emphasizes its collective and temporal dimensions. Fundamental concepts for the study of cultural experience have been developed in the framework of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) sociology of knowledge as well as in Reinhart Koselleck's (2004) work on historical semantics. Koselleck distinguishes between a society's 'space of experience' and its 'horizon of expectation'. 'Experience is present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered' (ibid., 259); expectation, on the other hand, is 'the future made present' (ibid.). Without experience, there is no expectation; and without expectations we cannot make experiences. It is the tension between these two categories of thinking which produces what Koselleck calls 'historical time'.

Experience is now understood as a product of complex social processes of construction. One result of this constructionist understanding of experience is that the focus of research is no longer directed towards demarcating a border between individual and society or between 'authentic experience' and later 'intentional reinterpretation'. Instead, questions are asked about the interpretative contexts which pre-form experience

but which can also be modified by them; about the temporal structure of experience, that is, about processes of consolidation or the recombination of cultural semantics; about specifics of (mass-)mediations which allow for 'second-hand' experiences; and, finally, about the practical relevance of experience in guiding future action (see Buschmann and Carl 2001).

Research on cultural experience is closely tied up with memory studies where the possibilities and limits of 'bearing witness' in an age of war, genocide, and terror are addressed. Trauma and the 'crises of witnessing' (Laub and Felman, see chapter III.1.2), which the violent history of the twentieth century has brought to the fore, raise the question of how extreme experience can (or cannot) be narrated and framed. In this context, Ernst van Alphen has forcefully argued that experience is not direct and unmediated, but 'depends of factors that are fundamentally discursive':

Experience and memory are enabled, shaped and structured according to the parameters of available discourses ... Experiences are not only collectively shared because they are grounded on cultural discourses; this shared background also makes experience and memory 'sharable.' The discourse that made them possible is also the discourse in which we can convey them to other humans. Our experiences and memories are therefore not isolating us from others; they enable interrelatedness – culture. (van Alphen 1999, 36f.)

In the model proposed here, cultural memory provides the mental, material and social structures within which experience is embedded, constructed, interpreted and passed on. Memory is a kind of switchboard which organizes experience both prospectively and retrospectively: *Prospectively*, cultural memory is the source of schemata which already pre-form experience, that is, which decide what will even enter the individual's consciousness and how this information will be further processed. Memory as an apparatus of selection and schematization is thus the very condition for gaining experiences. But it is only *retrospectively*, through cultural remembering, that we create experience as an interpretation of events that guides future action (see also Middleton and Brown 2005).

V

Media and Memory

V.1 Media and the construction of memory

Cultural memory is unthinkable without media. It would be inconceivable without the role that media play on both levels – the individual and the collective. On the individual level, the sociocultural shaping of organic memories rests to a significant extent on mediation: memory talk between a mother and her child, oral communication within a family, the significance of photographs for media-based (re-)constructions of our childhoods, the influence of mass media and its schemata on way we code life experience. Even more so, memory on the collective level – that is, the construction and circulation of knowledge and versions of a common past in sociocultural contexts – is only possible with the aid of media: through orality and literacy as age-old media for the storing of foundational myths for later generations; through print, radio, television and the Internet for the diffusion of versions of a common past in wide circles of society; and, finally, through symbolically charged media such as monuments which serve as occasions for collective, often ritualized remembering.

Thus not only do media have a constitutive relevance for both levels of memory; they also represent an interface connecting the two areas. Since Halbwachs and Warburg, a basic assumption of cultural memory studies has been that memory is neither an entity abstracted from the individual nor a result of biological mechanisms such as heredity (see chapter II). It is for precisely the reason that we must understand media and mediation as a kind of switchboard at work between the individual and the collective dimension of remembering. Personal memories can only gain social relevance through media representation and distribution. This is particularly obvious in the case of