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Memory in Culture

Astrid Erll

Translated by Sara B. Young

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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

eyewitnesses: Only through interviews or the publication of letters do their experiences become an element of cultural memory ('externalization'). Conversely, the individual only gains access to socially shared knowledge and images of the past through communication and media reception ('internalization').

In light of this inherent mediality of memory, it is no surprise that cultural memory research is often simultaneously media research. However, just like memory, media do not simply reflect reality, but instead offer constructions of the past. Media are not simply neutral carriers of information about the past. What they appear to encode – versions of past events and persons, cultural values and norms, concepts of collective identity – they are in fact first creating. In addition, specific modes of remembering are closely linked to available media technologies. For example, the detailed histories of nineteenth-century historiographers had no counterpart outside the medium of the book. The elaborate national histories of authors such as Jules Michelet or Leopold von Ranke are not to be found in the oral tradition, nor in historical paintings or rituals. History in this form simply did not exist in other media or indeed at all in a reality outside the media. Solely the medium of the book exhibited the capacity to present an enormous multitude of memory-relevant information in a temporal-causal order – and thus to construct national history in the detailed form that the scholarly historiographical method developed in the nineteenth century required.

This power of media to create realities has been emphasized in media theory from its very beginnings. Sybille Krämer (1998, 14f.) offers a remarkably clear summary of the cultural significance of media:

Media do not simply convey messages, but instead develop a force which shapes the modalities of our thinking, perceiving, remembering, and communicating. ... 'Mediality' expresses the idea that our relationship to the world (and with this all of our activities and experiences) is shaped by (and the world is made accessible through) the possibilities for distinction which media open up, and the limitations which they thereby impose.

Whatever we know about the world, we know through media and in dependence on media. The images of the past which circulate in memory culture are thus not extrinsic to media. They are media constructs. This does not make them counterfeit or unreal; mediality represents instead the very condition for the emergence of cultural memory.

The implications of such a constructionist insight into the ineluctable mediality of our reality have been formulated within different media theories. The communications theorist James W. Carey emphasizes that 'Technology, the hardest of material artifacts, is thoroughly cultural from the outset: an expression and creation of the very outlooks and aspirations we pretend it merely demonstrates' (Carey 1992, 9). The sociologist Niklas Luhmann writes in his *The Reality of Mass Media* (2000b, 6): 'The theory of operational constructionism does not lead to a "loss of world", it does not deny that reality exists. However, it assumes that the world is not an object but rather a horizon, in the phenomenological sense. It is, in other words, inaccessible.' And the philosopher Martin Seel (1998, 255) explains: 'It does not ... follow from the internal connection of mediality and reality that reality is for all intents and purposes a media construction. It simply follows that it is media constructions through which reality is given or accessible. Reality is not given as media construction, but instead is given solely by virtue of media construction.'

In his now classic study *Understanding Media* (1964), Marshall McLuhan introduced the famous phrase 'the medium is the message' into the discourse of media theory, emphasizing that 'the personal and social consequences of any medium ... result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by extension of ourselves' (ibid., 8). Each medium transforms social reality; this is, for McLuhan, its message. Media of memory, too, which can be understood as 'extensions' of our organic memories, bring about consequences in that they shape cultural remembrance in accordance to their specific means and measures. In this sense, 'the medium is the memory.'

When we consider the medial construction of reality, we are dealing with two aspects, which Sybille Krämer, referring to the media theories put forward by Luhmann and McLuhan, condenses in the notion of the 'medium as trace and apparatus':

The medium is to the message what the unintended trace is to the intentionally used sign. ... The meaning-making role of media must thus be thought of as the trace of something absent; this sheds light on why the role of media usually remains hidden. The medium is not simply the message; rather the trace of the medium is retained in the message. (Krämer 1998, 81)

Media technology as apparatus ... educes artificial worlds, it opens up experiences, and makes possible processes which without the

apparatuses would not be simply attenuated, but which would not exist at all. Not improved performance but rather world-creation is the productive meaning of media technologies. (ibid., 85)

Working from Krämer's notion of the medium as trace and apparatus, we can distinguish two distinct aspects of the role media play in processes of cultural remembrance: (1) Media are not neutral carriers or containers of memory. In all media-supported acts of remembering a 'trace' of the specific memory medium that was used will be retained. On both the individual and the collective levels, we are therefore dealing not only with a fundamental media-dependence of remembering, but also with the fact that 'the medium is the memory' in that it shapes our acts of remembering in ways of which we are often not even aware. (2) As 'apparatuses', media of memory such as monuments, books, paintings or the Internet go far beyond the task of expanding the individual human memory through the externalization of information: They create media worlds of cultural memory according to their specific capacities and limitations – worlds that a memory community would not know without them.

V.2 The history of memory as the history of media

Because of the complex intertwinings of media and cultural memory – media first create memory culture; the trace of the medium is retained in the memory – histories of memory are often written as histories of its changing media. In this chapter, we will introduce three exponents of memory studies who have illuminated the historical depth of the relationship between medium and memory: the historian Jacques Le Goff; the interdisciplinary working group 'Archaeology of Literary Communication', led by Aleida and Jan Assmann; and Elena Esposito, who studies memory from the perspective of social systems theory.

In *History and Memory* (1992; orig.: *Storia e memoria* 1977ff.), Jacques Le Goff distinguishes five phases in the history of memory. He takes his cue from the writings of André Leroi-Gourham, who claimed that: 'The history of collective memory can be divided into five periods: oral transmission, written transmission with tables or indices, simple file cards, mechanical writing, and electronic sequencing' (Leroi-Gourham, quoted in Le Goff, 54). Building on this, Le Goff then analyses:

1. the 'ethnic memory' in societies without writing, the so-called primitive societies;

2. the 'rise of memory, from orality to writing, from prehistory to antiquity;'
3. medieval memory 'in equilibrium' between orality and writing;
4. the 'progress of written and figured memory from the Renaissance to the present;'
5. the 'contemporary revolutions in memory'. (Le Goff 1992, 51–99)

The contents of memory in cultures without writing, which are dependent upon orality as a medium, are, according to Le Goff, first ideologically charged myths of origin which are evoked in rituals and endow collective identity, second genealogies of ruling families, and third technical and practical knowledge. Memory specialists (priests, shamans, court historians) are trained for the work of remembering. What they produce at occasions for remembrance as the contents of a community's memory, however, is not an exact, verbatim replica of earlier acts of remembering. Often, they recall only the deep structures of the memory tales, their narrative patterns. According to Le Goff (who refers to the studies of Jack Goody), oral societies thus exhibit a greater freedom in remembering than do literate societies. Their memory is more creative and dynamic than it is reproductive.

With the development of writing – and thus the medium of literacy – in the ancient world, two different forms of memory emerged, both of which were closely tied to the exigencies of urban societies: first commemoration based on inscriptions (for example, on monuments or gravestones), and second the document, which brought with it the ability to store information. In the Christian Middle Ages, oral and literate memory were in an equilibrium, and were indeed closely interwoven. The transmission of knowledge was still tightly linked with oral practices and techniques, and handwritten texts tended to be memorized.

It was the printing press that revolutionized memory in Europe – a process which started in the Renaissance. The distribution of printed books resulted in the slow but steady decline of the mnemotechnics inherited from ancient rhetorics. The 'discovery of history' around 1800 led to the creation of archives, museums and libraries. The plethora of media retained in these storehouses of memory required that institutions be created which trained specialists to preserve and study their inventory.

At the end of the nineteenth century, photography emerged as a further central medium of memory, one that suggested authenticity and – as it provided a portrait gallery in the family album – also

'democratized' memory. With the invention of the computer and the advent of 'electronic memory', the current 'revolution of memory' is finally reached. The electronic media have also had, as is pointed out by Le Goff, an important 'metaphorical' impact on memory culture, as organic and social remembering is now thought of in terms of computer analogies. (For a comprehensive history of memory written along the lines of media evolution and the different metaphors of memory that new media engendered, see Draaisma 2000.)

A more rigorous media theory perspective on the history of memory was provided by the German interdisciplinary working group 'Archaeology of Literary Communication', founded in the mid-1970s. The shared goal of its members (which included Aleida and Jan Assmann, Konrad Ehlich, Burkhard Gladigow, Christof Hardmeier, Dietrich Harth, Tonio Hölscher and Uvo Hölscher) was the historicization of media theories such as had been developed by the Toronto School (Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan) and (in the German-speaking world) by F.A. Kittler, as well as of the poststructuralist 'philosophies of writing' of Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida. The working group defined 'literature' as written transmission, and thus exhibited a very broad understanding of the term. In a critical dialogue with the research done in the fields of philology and cultural anthropology on the relationship of orality and literacy (Milman Parry, Eric A. Havelock, Walter Ong, Jack Goody and Jan Vansina), the group considered what various media could contribute in the framework of a 'temporal extension': in cases in which the sender and the receiver of a message are many years, perhaps centuries apart. This is what Konrad Ehlich, in the first publication of the working group, *Schrift und Gedächtnis* (1983; 'Writing and Memory'), called 'expanded communication':

The expansion of communication necessitates facilities for intermediate storage. The system of communication must develop a form of external storage, into which messages can be transferred, as well as forms of transfer (coding), storage and retrieval. This calls for institutional frameworks, specialists and normally also systems of notation external to the body, such as knotted strings, *tchuringas*, counting stones and finally writing. (Ehlich 1983, 203)

A central thesis of the Assmanns' theory is that orality and literacy are associated with two fundamentally different organizational forms of such expanded communication, which they called the Cultural Memory (see chapter II.4). In other words, the form of the Cultural Memory is

due in significant measure to the available media in a society. In oral societies, the functional memory and the stored memory necessarily concur, in the absence of external, material carriers of memory. Media and remembering subjects are not divorced from each other. Oral memory is characterized by what J.A. Barnes has called a 'structural amnesia': everything not immediately needed must be forgotten. In literate societies, on the other hand, a stored memory may develop, since through the outsourcing of information to media more and different things can be retained than are actualized at any given moment.

Elena Esposito's outline of the history of memory in *Soziales Vergessen* (2002, 'Social Forgetting') distinguishes itself from the examples above as it was not developed on the basis of hermeneutic-semiotic theories of culture, but is instead based on the premises of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory. According to Esposito, the memory of a society comes by its specific form as a result of dynamic interactions between: (1) the forms of differentiation of society (according to Luhmann these can be segmentary, stratified, or functional); and (2) the available technologies of communication. Esposito distinguishes between four phases of the history of memory:

1. *Prophetic memory*: ancient civilizations; main metaphor: memory as 'wax';
2. *Rhetorical memory*: ancient and medieval societies; main metaphor: memory as 'storage';
3. *The memory of culture*: modern era; main metaphor: memory as 'archive' or 'mirror';
4. *Procedural memory*: post-modern period; main metaphor: memory as 'network' (see Esposito 2002, 41-3).

Esposito argues that 'the memory of a society depends on the available technologies of communication ... of the individual society: these influence its forms, range, and interpretation' (*ibid.*, 10). Changes in media technologies therefore play a decisive role in the transitions from one form of social memory to another. New technologies of communication which engendered major memorial transformations are, according to Esposito, '(alphabetical and non-alphabetical) writing, the printing press ... and finally the computer' (*ibid.*, 38).

Despite all its internal heterogeneity, cultural memory studies can be grasped as a field that 'focuses on the central question of the media of storage, communication, dissemination, and interpretation. The history of memory is, in this perspective, the history of its media' (J. Assmann

in his afterword to Esposito 2002, 414). Different historiographies of media and cultural memory may present different kinds of periodization. However, the most significant ruptures in the history of mediated remembering appear to be the transitions from orality to writing, from writing to the printing press, and from the printing press to the digital age. Changes in media technology, society, politics and cultural memory are all very closely related. Yet this relationship must not be thought of as monocausal; it is not a one-way street. Media revolutions can change forms of collective remembering (as the invention of writing may have led to the development of a cultural stored memory), but specific challenges to memory culture can also lead to the emergence, acceptance and dissemination of new media technologies. For example, the new technology of the printing press developed fully over the course of the eighteenth century, as the middle classes emerged, with their desire to participate in public memory-making.

V.3 Medium of memory: A compact concept

The theories and histories of memory introduced thus far have profitably applied the concept of 'media', yet a closer look at the relationship of medium and memory exposes an unanswered, fundamental question: What exactly is a 'medium of memory'? What might first appear to be intuitively evident becomes distinctly more complicated when considering concrete processes of cultural remembrance: Media phenomena appear on various levels within cultural memory, and their manifestations and functions are quite diverse. Furthermore, complex social processes seem to be involved in the coding of a medium as a 'medium of memory'.

Understanding the logic of media of memory therefore requires looking at mediality from many different angles. This is not an easy task, as media studies itself proves to be an extremely heterogeneous research landscape with a multitude of often apparently incompatible theories, methods and concepts (see Hartley et al. 2002; Wardrip-Fruin and Montfort 2003). Cultural memory studies has a twofold interest in media: First, it seeks to understand the significance of fundamental forms of mediality for memory. This kind of research is based on an understanding of 'the medium' as an entity that, quite literally, 'mediates' between two or more phenomena – in our case, for example, between the individual and collective level of memory. At the same time, what is at stake is the question about the mnemonic impact of 'the media' as systems of social

and increasingly global (mass) communication. Studying media from a cultural memory studies perspective therefore implies a conceptual balancing act between quite distant areas of current media research.

In an effort to tackle the problem of defining the term 'medium', in his writings on media culture the German theorist Siegfried J. Schmidt has proposed suggestions for what he calls an 'integrative concept'. He notes that 'medium' is indeed a multifarious term, which is used, both in everyday and in scholarly discourses, in very different ways. In order to disentangle the major denotations of the term, he distinguishes among four components:

I conceive of the 'medium' ... as a compact concept which integrates four dimensions and areas of effect: 1. communication instruments (such as language and pictures); 2. technological devices (such as Internet technology on the side of receivers and producers); 3. the social dimensions of such devices (such as publishing houses or television stations); and 4. media offers which result from the coalescence of these components and can only be interpreted in relation to this context of production. (Schmidt 2008, 198f.)

Such a multi-level or multi-component model is even more important for an understanding of 'media of memory'. Studying media from a mnemohistorical perspective usually means considering rather different factors – such as instruments of communication (for example, writing), media technologies (for example, printing), the institutionalization within social systems (for example, canonization), and specific media offers (for example, a new edition of Homer's *Odyssey*). It is only in the interplay of such a range of distinct media and social phenomena that a 'medium of memory' is constituted.

What follows is an attempt to understand the 'medium of memory' as a compact concept. This involves both an adoption of Schmidt's model as well as its modification to speak to the concerns of cultural memory studies. Which factors are actually involved in the creation of a medium of memory? And on what levels are these factors located? Media of memory have a material as well as a social dimension (for mental factors see ch V.4.2). In a first step, therefore, I will define 'communication instruments', 'media technologies' and 'objectivations' as the principal material components of memory media. In a second step I will consider the social dimension, namely the different uses that memory media are put to by social communities.

V.3.1 Material dimension

1 *Communication instruments: Externalization, inter- and transmediality of memory*

Means of communication such as oral speech, writing, images or sound are instruments which make externalizations from individual minds to media possible in the first place, and thus create the very condition for the creation of cultural memory. Because communication instruments can be used in many different media technologies, this opens up possibilities for comparative research – for example, the study of how certain transmedial ‘memory images’ circulate among painting, photography, film, television, and the Internet; or of the intermediality of memory, for example, the interplay of text and image (this has been studied extensively in relation to W.G. Sebald’s novels).

2 *Media technologies: Storage and dissemination of memory*

Media technologies allow for the dissemination, from a spatial point of view, and the storage, from a temporal point of view, of the contents of cultural memory. Instruments of communication such as writing, whether carved in stone, printed on paper, or published on the Internet, reach smaller or larger memory communities and prove to be storable for different lengths of time. Media technologies, however, are far from being neutral containers for memory semioses. Their specific materiality, their potentials and limits contribute to the character of the message (see chapter V.1).

Today, memory research is interested in the impact on cultural remembrance of significant changes in media technology. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC (‘The Wall’), for example, a stone monument commemorating the Americans who were killed in the Vietnam War, found a place on the Internet in the form of ‘My Virtual Wall’. This change of medium and the novel possibilities offered by the technology of the World Wide Web also changed the practice of memory. For example, since every user of the Virtual Wall has the opportunity to customize his or her own homepage, this results in a strongly personalized mode of remembering (see the case study by Angela Sumner in Erll/Nünning 2004).

3 *Media offers: Material objectivations and aesthetic forms of mediated memory*

Homer’s *Iliad*, medieval manuscripts, the British Museum, soldiers’ letters from the trenches of the First World War, Picasso’s *Guernica* (1937),

and pictures in a family album are cultural objectivations which can turn into media of memory. They can, for example, serve as canonized media of national memory; as components of the stored memory they may await actualization in an archive; in the framework of the communicative memories they can transmit the specific everyday experience of a recent past and prompt communication between generations. But no matter what their specific role may be, media products must always be understood as no more than an ‘offer’ to a mnemonic community. This offer can be accepted, but the media product can also be ignored or used in other than memorial ways.

It is in particular art and literary studies which scrutinize specific objectivations of cultural memory. At the same time, these are the disciplines which emphasize what Fredric Jameson (1981) has called the ‘content of form’. In fact, as Stuart Hall maintains, ‘a “raw” historical event cannot, in that form, be transmitted’ (1980, 129). Incorporating genres, metaphors and narrative structures would therefore seem to be indispensable especially for a conception of media of memory. To give just one example: There are certain forms which are preferred in coding contents of the Cultural Memory. In western cultures, the forms of ‘tragedy’ and ‘epic’ have mediated foundational memory for many centuries. In the case of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667/74), the message is therefore not solely the media components ‘writing’ and ‘printed book’, the canonization process in English society, and the concrete work itself, but first and foremost its form, its epic structure. Forms are generally transmedial phenomena; as such they can migrate across media. However, forms are always tied to concrete media offers; they can only be materialized in cultural objectivations.

V.3.2 Social dimension

Not only does media communication have a material aspect; it is also inherently a social process. Stuart Hall emphasizes that while the “message form” is the necessary “form of appearance” of the event in its passage from source to receiver’, it must also ‘be integrated into the social relations of the communication process as a whole, of which it forms only a part’ (Hall 1980, 129). Social processes are important in any discussion of media, and even more so in the field of cultural remembrance. The three aforementioned material components (communication instruments, media technologies, media offers) are important analytical categories for the study of media and memory. From their specific constellations we can draw conclusions about possible ‘memory effects’ and mnemonic functions of media. The three material

components engender a 'functional potential'; what we say about this potential remains purely hypothetical. The actual transition from a 'medial phenomenon' to a 'medium of memory', however, always comes to pass within the social dimension. This transition often rests on forms of institutionalization and always on the use, the functionalization of a medium as a medium of memory, by individuals, social groups, and societies.

4 *The social use of media*

Ever since Maurice Halbwachs, the social dimension of memory has been a central concern of memory studies. Memory is (re-)constructed in social contexts and it is the 'social frameworks of memory' (in the literal sense) which decide – consciously or unconsciously – which media to avail themselves of in this constructive process. The social institutionalization of memory media finds its strongest manifestation in the framework of national, ideological, ethnic or religious memory. The media which are meant to convey official versions of the past require action in the social dimension in order to ensure their transmission: canonization, the establishment of archives, the creation of school curricula, and so on. This is why, according to Jan Assmann, 'organization' – the institutionalization of memory and the specialization of its carriers – is a constitutive characteristic of the Cultural Memory.

Whether in the framework of highly institutionalized forms of national and religious remembrance or the less stable and more fluctuating everyday reference to the past, say, within a family – the term 'medium of memory' is only appropriate in the case of a corresponding mnemonic functionalization. The sociohistorical context not only contributes in great measure to the effects of media on cultural memory. It also even decides on their definition as such in the first place: Because media must be *used* as media of memory, the memory-making role must be *attributed* to them by specific people, at a specific time and place.

Two fundamental aspects of the mnemonic functionalization must be distinguished, which largely correspond to Stuart Hall's (1980) notion of 'encoding' and 'decoding':

- *Production-side functionalization*: A typical example is the Assmanns' 'cultural text' (see chapter VI.3.1), in which messages for posterity are encoded. Egyptian pyramids, national historiography of the nineteenth century, the 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe' in Berlin – in all of these examples, we are dealing with production-side (and prospective) functionalizations of media of memory: Architects

and historians who create as well as ruling classes and democratic societies which commission media of memory *intend* for these media to elicit processes of remembering in the future.

- *Reception-side functionalization*: A medium of memory exists when people think it does. As soon as it is perceived and used as such, a medium turns into a medium of memory – even if it was never intended to be one. Samuel Pepys's journal, written in England in the seventeenth century, in code and (in light of its juicy details) likely not intended for a broad public, or the relics of everyday life in the GDR that are presented in the German 'Ostalgia' ('Ost' [East] and 'nostalgia')-shows on television are retrospectively assigned the status of 'medium of memory'. Particularly in this area of the reception-side (and retrospective) functionalization, a broad understanding of the mediality of cultural memory must be applied: Here, everything is a medium of memory which is understood as 'transmitting something' from or about the past. In this way, everyday objects and even elements of the natural world can become media of memory. This recipient-side functionalization is not necessarily intentional; often it is only noticed in retrospect that certain phenomena evidently served in a certain epoch as media of memory. However, the question of what attributes of the phenomenon could suggest such a functionalization leads back to the first, the material, dimension of memory media, that is, to the analysis of the functional potential of their specific materiality.

The 'compact concept' shows that a medium of memory is not a given, but instead comes into being through a complex interplay of various material and social factors. Furthermore, this interplay takes place in specific contexts of remembrance; it is therefore historically and culturally variable. Media of memory always materialize against the backdrop of existing configurations of memory. Spaces of experience and horizons of expectation, structures of knowledge, memory practices, challenges and contested memories shape the production, transmission and reception of memory media. Whenever media are studied as parts of memory culture, they must be removed from a generalizing, ahistorical view, and seen in relationship to very specific cultural processes.

To sum up, media of memory construct versions of a past reality. The materiality of the medium is every bit as much involved in these constructions as is the social dimension: The producers and recipients of a medium of memory actively perform the work of construction – both in the decision as to which phenomena will be ascribed the qualities of

memory media, as well as in the encoding and decoding of that which is (to be) remembered. Media and their users create and shape memory, and they always do so in very specific cultural and historical contexts. Whether and which versions of past events, persons, values or concepts of identity are constructed through a medium of memory depends to no small extent on the conditions prevailing within that memory culture.

V.4 Functions of media of memory

V.4.1 On the collective level: Storage, circulation, cue

As we have seen, media of memory come to life in the social world. Once they have emerged, which functions can they perform in mnemonic communities? In what follows, I will differentiate between three functional aspects of memory media on the collective level: storage, circulation and cue. This is a purely heuristic distinction. In fact, only in rare cases will one single functional aspect characterize a particular medium exclusively. On the contrary, the memory media which are most effective are usually those which simultaneously exhibit features of each of the three functions.

The storage function refers to media's task of storing contents of memory and making them available *across time*. This is the classic function of memory media, and also that which has been the subject of the most research to date (see chapter V.2). As we have seen, the capacity and temporal range of storage techniques is highly variable. But this is not their only contingency. Since storage media 'travel' through time, the danger of the collapse of collective codes is particularly significant. In respect of memory culture, systems of writing that can no longer be deciphered, or monuments whose symbolism can no longer be decoded, are dead material.

From the storage function we can distinguish, second, the circulation function of media of memory. Media enable cultural communication not only across time, but also *across space*. Circulation media can synchronize large memory communities in which face-to-face communication is no longer possible, and disseminate versions of a common past. This function has been performed by the printing press since the early modern period, by newspapers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and by television and the Internet in our times. Circulation media of memory are often part of popular culture (such as movies and historical novels). And in the era of globalization, they are increasingly mass media and new media, disseminating their messages across the globe in 'real time'.

To this point in the analysis, the distinction of two basic functions that media can fulfil – storage and circulation – follows the differentiation between 'time-biased' and 'space-biased' media made by Harold A. Innis in *The Bias of Communication* (1951). However, when dealing with cultural memory, the dimensions of time and space are not the only criteria to distinguish the storage from the circulation function. In addition, especially canonized storage media, such as monuments or epics, tend to refer not only to the versions of the past which they encode but also to themselves. Effective storage media, such as the Bible, Shakespeare's Histories, or the Arc de Triomphe, are usually simultaneously medium *and* content of cultural memory – media which 'remember something' and are themselves remembered.

This twofold nature of time-biased storage media is less often observed in the case of space-biased circulation media. On the contrary, these tend to communicate versions of the past, while maintaining the illusion of transparency. The images of the past that are conveyed by pamphlets, newspaper articles, television documentaries, popular movies and websites are usually more effective the less attention is drawn to their 'mediatedness'. Circulation media are moreover closely tied to the moment in which they appear, to specific ideas, problems and challenges of a mnemonic community; and they thus often fulfil additional didactic and ideological functions. Since their effectiveness is exhausted with the synchronous dissemination of information about the past and they are quickly replaced with more current media offers, circulation media seldom develop any further dimension as contents of cultural memory – or if they do so, then that may be a sign that they have shifted to the area of memory culture's storage media. (This seems the case with certain popular representations of the Holocaust, such as the 1978 television miniseries of the same name.)

Any discussion of storage and circulation media implies an understanding of communication in the tradition of Shannon and Weaver (1949). In their information theory, they introduced the concepts of 'sender, message, transmission, noise, channel, receiver and reception' as well as those of 'encoding and decoding'. The phenomena which communities avail themselves of as media of memory, however, do not always necessarily lead back to a 'sender' or feature a 'message' which has been 'encoded'. This hints at a third functional aspect of media of memory, one which only comes into view when the insights of psychological research are considered. Individual memory processes are set in motion by cues. These cues can be intrapsychic in nature (for example, associations, other memories), but they can also belong to the material

and social context of remembering (for example, pictures, texts, other people and parts of conversation). On the social level, too, media can cue collective remembering.

This last function of media – to trigger collective remembrance – is performed above all by particular locations or landscapes (the White Cliffs of Dover, the Rhine, the Eiffel Tower, the Twin Towers) which the mnemonic community associates with specific narratives about the past. Many of Pierre Nora's sites of memory seem to be first and foremost *cues* for acts of cultural remembrance. As 'media cues' feature neither a sender nor a semiotic code, they cannot be actualized outside the context of the memory culture. Thus, social agreement – or: convention – is of central importance for the effectiveness of media which fulfil a pure cuing function. It is often the narratives *surrounding* such media (such as oral stories, historiography or novels) which determine their meaning.

Nonetheless, what is recalled in individual minds as a response to these media cues – and this also applies to storage and circulation media – is by no means homogeneous. The thoughts and memories inspired by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey will vary based on an individual's experience of war, his or her knowledge, and ideological persuasion. In memory culture there may be a shared core of media cues, which are used again and again to trigger memories, but the resulting mental images of the past are by no means uniform (see Table V.1).

V.4.2 On the individual level: The media frameworks of remembering

On the collective level, media store, circulate and cue collective remembrance. Now we will take a look at the individual level: What role do media play for what has been termed the *collected memory*, for the socially shaped individual remembering? The media worlds we live in exert a significant influence on our perceptions and memories. In fact, the cultural dimension of individual memory derives not purely from social contexts (as maintained by Halbwachs), but to a large degree from media environments. Collected memory must be understood as fundamentally a 'mediated memory.' This notion was introduced by Lev S. Vygotskij (see 1978, 38) in the field of developmental psychology in order to stress the degree to which our memories, from early childhood onwards, are mediated by social contexts, external aids and internal cues. Drawing on Vygotskij's work, James V. Wertsch emphasizes that 'remembering is a form of mediated action ... inherently situated in a

Table V.1 Three functions of media of memory

	Storage medium	Circulation medium	Media cue
Function	stores contents of cultural memory	disseminates/ circulates contents of cultural memory	triggers cultural recall
Type of mediality	sender/receiver, semiotic code, medium of communication	sender/receiver, semiotic code, medium of communication	sender and semiotic code are not necessary (not necessarily a 'medium' in the definition of information theory)
	often both a remembering medium and a remembered content of the Cultural Memory	often popular mass media	dimension as medium of memory develops with the help of surrounding media
Directions of research, for example	research on the canon and the archive	research on memory in the mass media/ in popular culture	Pierre Nora's <i>lieux de memoire</i>

sociocultural context' (2002, 13). And indeed, our parents' and grandparents' oral stories, old photographs, but also movies, television series, and novels shape not only our images of the past we did not experience, but even – often via media schemata – our most intimate autobiographical memories. In this sense, we can speak, modifying Halbwachs's term, of the *cadres médiaux de la mémoire*, the media frameworks of individual remembering.

Halbwachs himself offers some examples for the influence of the media frameworks of memory. In *La mémoire collective*, he relates the anecdote of a 'walk through London': A person visiting the metropolis for the first time is touring the city's landmarks. The way in which he or she perceives these new sights, his or her thoughts and feelings are for Halbwachs by no means of purely individual origin. On the contrary: Halbwachs wants to illustrate with this example that perception and memory are shaped by *cadres sociaux*, social frameworks of reference, and that these frameworks originate in the communication and interaction of social groups. The perception of London, in Halbwachs's anecdote, is to a significant degree influenced by other people with whom

the tourist forms social groups: Conversations with the architect, the historian, the painter, or the businessman each draw the viewer's attention to different facets of the overwhelming abundance of impressions. These people do not even have to be physically present – the memory of what they had said, of reading their books, of studying their plans, or looking at their pictures is enough.

Passing before Westminster, I thought about my historian friend's comments (or, what amounts to the same thing, what I have read in history books). Crossing a bridge, I noticed the effects of perspective that were pointed out by my painter friend (or struck me in a picture or engraving). (Halbwachs 1980, 23)

What these examples all have in common – architecture, oral speech, writing, images –, but what Halbwachs never explicitly acknowledges, is that they are all media through which the person taking the walk through London establishes a connection to social groups. Media make it possible to 'momentarily adopt' a collective 'viewpoint' (ibid., 24): 'In each of these moments I cannot say that I was alone, that I reflected alone, because I had put myself in thought into this or that group ...' (ibid., 23) Through media, the individual gains access both to group-specific knowledge, such as dates and facts, as well as to social 'currents of thought and experience' (ibid., 64). In short, media are the interface between individual minds and what Halbwachs introduces here as the 'collective frameworks of memory' (ibid.).

In the development of his theory of collective memory, Halbwachs thus conceived of the role of media from the very beginning. For Halbwachs the sociologist, however, media are merely the vehicle facilitating the unimpeded access to a more comprehensive social dimension of memory. Such an understanding of media as neutral transmitters of information must certainly be rethought from a constructionist media studies perspective as it has been developed by Havelock, McLuhan and others since the 1950s: The media frameworks of remembering generate media-specific individual memories.

Media frameworks of memory enable and shape the remembering and interpreting of different types of experience – both one's own and also second-hand accounts. Media representations already pre-form our perception and then re-shape our memories along certain paths. What Halbwachs (ibid., 38) writes about social currents of thought also applies to the functioning of *cadres médiaux*: A media framework is 'ordinarily as invisible as the atmosphere we breathe. In normal life

its existence is recognized only when it is resisted.' This is precisely the basis for the memory-making power of media. Exhibits in museums, history books, historical films, everyday stories, and monuments form a mediated mnemonic horizon, the constructed nature of which becomes generally only obvious when we realize contradictions or when we consciously take on an observer's point of view. (For more about literature as a media framework of remembering, see chapter VI.3.3.)

V.5 Concepts of media memory studies

Since the turn of the millennium we have witnessed the rapid development of a host of new concepts in memory studies which address media, specifically mass media and the new media. The reasons for this are arguably to be found in the ever-increasing and accelerating, worldwide dissemination of images and narratives about the past through mass media such as television, and in the triumphal march of the computer and the Internet – both of which now shape the everyday experience of most people, at least in the western world. Andreas Huyssen describes the impact of today's global media circulation on cultural memory in the following way:

Print and image media contribute liberally to the vertiginous swirl of memory discourses that circulate globally and locally. We read about Chinese and Korean comfort women and the rape of Nanjing; we hear about the 'stolen generation' in Australia and the killing and kidnapping of children during the dirty war in Argentina; we read about Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa and Guatemala; and we have become witnesses to an ever-growing number of public apologies by politicians for misdeeds of the past. Certainly, the voraciousness of the media and their appetite for recycling seems to be the sine qua non of local memory discourses crossing borders, entering into a network of cross-national comparisons, and creating what one might call a global culture of memory. (Huyssen 2003, 95)

New technologies and applications, such as digital photography, Picasa, YouTube and Facebook, are rapidly becoming increasingly relevant for the formation of memories. In many ways, they seem to have become the primary site of the workings of Halbwachs's *cadres sociaux*. At the same time, what Anna Reading (2009) terms 'global memory' – globalized and digitized memory – challenges old conceptions of the 'archive',

which in its new, computerized and Internet-based forms, seems more like a collaborative enterprise 'from below' than the apparatus of power that Foucault, Derrida and Agamben have theorized (see Garde-Hansen, Hoskins and Reading 2009).

In order to address these more recent developments in the representation of history, Andrew Hoskins has introduced the term 'new memory'. He holds that our relation to the past must be 'considered in terms of its mediation and remediation in the global present' (Hoskins 2001, 334; for the notion of remediation see chapter V.5.3). The 'new media ecologies' which, according to Hoskins (2009), have come to the fore with the 'connective turn' are characterized by the 'abundance, ubiquity, and accessibility of communication networks' (ibid., 2) and by the 'fluidity, reproducibility, and transferability of digital data' (ibid., 20). Although it remains to be seen whether the 'new media' of our present age (Gitelman 2006 correctly points out that all media were once new) have really brought about a qualitative change in cultural memory that radically distinguishes it from all former epochs, what is certainly true is that the age of mass and digital media has sensitized us to the fact that there is no such thing as a pure, pre-media memory, or: the other way round, that all memory, individual and social, is mediated memory. Thus, 'new memory' can be described as a highly media-reflexive stage in the history of memory culture.

V.5.1 Conceiving of mediated memory

How has such mediated memory been conceived of in memory studies? Of fundamental importance is Marita Sturken's notion of *Tangled Memories* (1997). Studying how the Vietnam War and the AIDS epidemic were turned into elements of cultural memory by means of television, movies and other popular media, Sturken brings out the complex entanglements of memory and media. She emphasizes the active and memory-productive role of media: 'Cultural memory is produced through objects, images, and representations. These are technologies of memory, not vessels of memory in which memory passively resides' (ibid., 9). Focussing more on the role of media for individual remembering, Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin maintain, in their edited volume on *Memory Cultures* (2006, 12f.), that one of media's mnemonic functions consists in 'propping the subject'. Studying memory props therefore uncovers 'the ways in which the specific representational modes of particular media may sustain memory rather than simply contribute to its atrophy or debasement'. A contribution to the volume by Stephan Feuchtwang, for example, shows how the false autobiography

by Binjamin Wilkomirski became a "memory prop" ... for those seeking recognition of their own *actual* Holocaust sufferings.' José van Dijck (2007, 21) goes even further in revealing the inherent mediatedness of all memory. She insists on the co-construction or the 'mutual shaping of memory and media' and defines the term 'mediated memories' as follows: '*Mediated memories are the activities and objects we produce and appropriate by means of media technologies, for creating and re-creating a sense of the past, present, and future of ourselves in relation to others.*'

Addressing the experiential dimension of mediated memory, Alison Landsberg (2004) introduced the notion of prosthetic memory. Landsberg studies the age of mass culture, with a particular focus on the effects that representations of slavery and the Holocaust in literature, cinema and museum exhibits have on memory. She argues that what makes mass media so powerful in memory culture is that they allow us to 'take on' other people's and groups' experiences and memories 'like an artificial limb' (ibid., 20). With this reference to Marshall McLuhan's (1964) notion of media as the 'extensions of man', Landsberg updates classic media theory within the horizon of memory studies. Using the metaphor of 'prosthesis', of memory-as-a-limb, she emphasizes the bodily, experiential, sensuous and affective dimension of media memories and she indicates the interchangeability of commodified memories in the age of mass media. Landsberg defines prosthetic memory as follows:

Prosthetic memory emerges at the interface of a person and a historical narrative of the past, at an experiential site, such as a movie theatre or a museum. In this moment of contact, an experience occurs through which the person sutures himself or herself into a larger history ... In the process the person does not simply apprehend a historical narrative but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live. The resulting prosthetic memory has the ability to shape the person's subjectivity and politics. (ibid., 2)

One striking feature of Landsberg's work is its ethical, utopian moment. Prosthetic memory is characterized by its 'ability ... to produce empathy and social responsibility as well as political alliances that transcend race, class, and gender' (ibid., 21). This specific kind of mediated memory means 'inhabit[ing] other people's memories as other people's memories ... thereby respecting and recognizing difference' (ibid., 24). Rather than proliferating culture-pessimistic views of the 'end of memory' (Nora), contributions such as Landsberg's offer a deeper scrutiny and

highlight also the enabling aspects of new media ecologies in relation to cultural memory.

V.5.2 Visual media: Photography, film and memory

Next to various forms of written documents, it is mainly visual media which have received attention in memory studies (research in auditory media is just coming to the fore; see Bithell 2006; Bijsterveld and van Dijck 2009). The scope of visual culture's involvement in the construction of cultural memory cannot be overrated. It ranges, as Barbie Zelizer's collection on *Visual Culture and the Holocaust* (2001) shows, from graphic novels, the visual arts, television, video, film, museum artefacts and photographs all the way to tattooed bodies and the Web. The sheer power of images for memory was articulated by Walter Benjamin, in his *Arcades* project, when he claimed that 'history decays into images, not into stories' ('Geschichte zerfällt in Bilder, nicht in Geschichten') (1999, N 11, 4; 476). Acknowledging the significance of images for memory also means a challenge to the narrativist paradigm that has prevailed in memory studies so far, since 'memory' consists for most scholars in the *stories* that are told about the past (see chapter III.3.2). This chapter focuses on the two visual media which are the best-researched in memory studies: photography and film.

Studying photography as a medium of memory means a double challenge: Photographs are commonly held to 'bear witness' to the past; at the same time, they often turn out to be staged. As Jens Ruchatz (2008) maintains, we have to realize that photography is usually both 'externalization' and 'trace' of memory. It is the active construction of an image of the past *and* an indexical sign, that is, the result of something that took place in front of the camera at the very point in time that the shutter opened. Because of its indexical quality, photography has always been – and arguably still is, even in times of digital photography – assigned the status of a 'record of the past'. For most people, a photograph appears to have a unique connection to past reality. It seems to say, as Roland Barthes (1980) famously claimed, 'cela a été là' – it has been there ('trace').

Nevertheless, the constructed nature ('externalization') especially of documentary photography has long been exposed, perhaps most powerfully in Susan Sontag's reflections on war photography, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003 [2004]). Sontag contemplates that 'what is odd is not that so many of the iconic news photos of the past, including some of the best-remembered pictures from the Second World War, appear to have been staged. It is that we are surprised to learn they were staged, and

always disappointed' (ibid., 49). The mnemonic value of photography does not seem to correlate with its truth-value. In her book on *Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (1998), Barbie Zelizer therefore asks from a memory studies perspective 'how images function as vehicles of collective memory' (ibid., 2) and discusses the stakes involved in 'using photography to bear witness to war atrocity' (ibid., 10).

In more ways than one, a photograph is a sign for the past. In fact, all three dimensions of the sign according to Charles Peirce are relevant when viewing photography from a memory studies perspective: As an 'index', a photograph is causally linked to the past – and thus often understood as a powerful trace, document or witness of history and ascribed a specific truth-value. As an 'icon' it re-presents the visual shape of past events and existents. And as a 'symbol' it stands for the meaning of the past. Photographs which prove to be powerful media of memory usually lend themselves to a realization of all three dimensions. For example, Robert Capa's photographs of the Spanish Civil War were long seen as infallible documents of war (although, in fact, many of them were staged). Viewers also turned them into iconic representations: still today, Capa's images determine 'the look' of the Spanish Civil War. And, finally, they stand symbolically for war's atrocities and victims. However, because of the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified, by which the symbol is characterized, the mnemonic meaning of a photographic image is not inherent, but the result of convention. In different social contexts, the meaning of an image can change considerably. For example, in fundamentalist Islamic circles the burning Twin Towers of '9/11' may be seen as a symbol of triumph, whereas in most parts of the western world the image stands for catastrophe and victimhood. Also over time, symbolic meanings of photographic images will be de- and reinscribed.

Apart from the fact that photography – like all media of memory – constructs versions of a past reality rather than reflects it, what is striking about this particular medium (in contrast to most written or filmic media) is that it is essentially non-narrative. Taken by itself, a photographic image does not tell a story. It can depict what Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in *Laokoon* (1766) termed a 'pregnant moment'. It can provide an *occasion* for narration or cue a story in the observer's mind. What photography needs in order to function as a medium of memory is narrative contextualization, either by captions that come with it or by stories that surround or emerge from it. Studies which conceive of photography as a medium of memory therefore tend to stress its social embeddedness and intermedial relations.

Focussing on private photography, Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister (2006, 1), for example, propose to examine pictures 'in situ'. In their collection of essays fittingly called *Locating Memory*, they set out to 'literally locate – place – the images in the social world, bringing them "to life"' (ibid.). Similarly, in *Family Frames* (1997), Marianne Hirsch has concentrated on family pictures and emphasized that they depend on 'a narrative act of adoption that transforms rectangular images of cardboard into telling details connecting lives and stories across continents and generations' (ibid., xii). Indeed, an old family portrait that we find at a flea market 'tells us' little or nothing. For the foreign observer, it has at best a vague function as a medium of memory; for example, the stance and clothing might be interpreted as typical expressions of a past era. A great-granddaughter who knows the family stories, in contrast, will be able to actualize the photograph as a media cue, which then triggers much richer memories of past times. This transgenerational dimension of photographic memory is one of Hirsch's major concerns. She introduces the term 'postmemory' in order to explain how traumatic experiences of parents and grandparents are transmitted through photography and narrative to children and grandchildren. For her, photographs are 'the medium connecting first- and second-generation remembrance, memory and postmemory' (ibid., 23).

Research on historical film has traditionally addressed the difficult divide between, on the one hand, the historian's claim to be the sole provider of (methodologically sound) representations of the past in the apposite medium of historiography and, on the other hand, the incomparably wider appeal and impact of filmic versions of history – fictional, semi- and non-fictional (see Rosenstone 1995; Sobchack 1996; Landy 2001). Film stands out as a medium with a distinctly double mnemonic dimension. Film appears, firstly, as a (fictional) re-presentation of history ('historical film') and, secondly, as an archival source ('historical footage'). We find combinations of these two aspects in documentaries, and their increasing blurring in 'docufictions', with their mixture of historical footage and fictional re-enactments of past events.

An early, rather critical stance on the question of film and popular memory was taken by Michael Foucault. In an interview of 1974, he contended that in the 'fight' over memory, cheap books, television and cinema function as 'apparatuses ... reprogramming popular memory', which – he thinks – was formerly coded by the people themselves in oral stories or songs. He goes on to assert that 'if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism ... their experience, their knowledge' (Foucault 1975 [1974], 25). More recent contributions to

the field seem to agree that indeed we cannot overemphasize the power of popular culture and its mass media to mould our images of the past (see Lipsitz 1990; Sturken 1997; Landsberg 2004). However, they also show that mass culture and the possibilities for remembrance it offers can be enabling for individuals and social groups, while at the same time the active role of audiences in appropriating media of popular memory puts them well beyond simple mind control.

Arguably, the most impressive popular versions of the past can be encountered in the cinema of cultural memory – which produces and disseminates what I call 'memory films'. These films fall into two broad categories: Movies such as *Blade Runner* (1982), *Total Recall* (1990) and *Memento* (2000) address concepts of memory, and problematize and imaginatively realize acts of individual and collective remembering. They are thus memory-reflexive films. *Apocalypse Now* (1978), *Schindler's List* (1993) or *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), on the other hand, tell us little or nothing about the workings of memory, but they have led to the powerful global dissemination of images of the past. These are memory-productive films. Addressing this latter category, Paul Grainge emphasizes in his seminal study *Memory and Popular Film* (2003, 4) that it is specifically Hollywood which 'has functioned strategically in the articulation and codification of the cultural past', nationally as well as transnationally. A movie like *Schindler's List* can certainly be criticized as part of the 'Holocaust industry' (Norman Finkelstein). But we must also acknowledge – and find ways to study – what Grainge (ibid.) calls 'the nature of popular film and its function as a approbate or "authentic" memory text'.

The actual study of memory films can proceed from the different dimensions of the medium. We can take on technological, aesthetic and/or social perspectives. From a technological point of view, one can address, for example, the different mnemonic qualities of analogue and digital filmmaking or the significance of filmic remediation (see chapter V.5.3). But there are also certain formal and aesthetic strategies which contribute to memory-effects in film. Anton Kaes (1992) has drawn attention to the fact that, through certain aesthetic structures, historical films often enable their viewers to 'experience' the past. I have argued elsewhere that it is indeed a combination of 'experientiality' and 'saturation with the past' which lies at the basis of most memory-productive films – and that both effects are created by technological and aesthetic means (in Erll and Wodianka 2008, 139–69). But while aesthetic strategies may be responsible for marking a movie as a medium of memory, they can only endow it with a *potential* for mnemonic effects. This potential has to be

realized within situative, social and institutional frameworks. Put simply, in order to become a memory film, a movie must be viewed as a memory film. Films that are not watched may well provide the most intriguing images of the past or perspectives on the workings of memory, yet they will not have any effect in memory culture.

What seems to be essential for the cinema of cultural memory is a certain kind of context, in which films are prepared and received as memory-relevant media. Scrutinizing the social practices surrounding memory films from *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) to *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others*, 2004) it becomes clear that what turns mere 'movies about memory/the past' into veritable memory films is often to be found not in the movies themselves, but instead in what has been established around them. A tight network of different media representations prepares the ground for memory films, leads reception along certain paths, opens up and channels public discussion, and thus endows movies with their mnemonic meaning. Reviews in national and international newspapers and movie magazines, special features on TV, carefully targeted marketing strategies, merchandise, DVD versions (including 'making of' segments, interviews with producers and actors, historical background information, and so on), awards, political speeches, academic controversies, the publication of 'a book about' or 'a book based on' the film, and, last but not least, the didactic formats which turn movies into teaching units in classrooms – all of these advertisements, comments, discussions, and controversies constitute the 'pluri-media networks', or constellations, of memory (Erll and Wodianka 2008) which channel a movie's reception and potentially turn it into a memory film, that is, a medium reflecting or producing memory in specific social contexts. Good examples of how different mnemonic contexts may turn the same movie into very different memory films can be found in the case studies collected by Loshitzky (1997) on the reception of *Schindler's List* in Britain, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, and the USA, as well as in van der Knaap's (2006) work on the international reception of Alain Resnais's *Nuit et Brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1955).

While movies still seem to provide the grand narratives of popular memory, television exerts its memory-making power by virtue of its constant presence. In *Television Histories* (2001, 1f.), Gary R. Edgerton contends that 'television is the principal means by which most people learn about history today'. Specifically addressing 'history TV' (as we find it on history channels), he reminds us that screening the past is, above all, 'big business'. The format of history TV follows certain rules.

It is, for example, subject to 'the twin dictates of *narrative* and *biography*'. Television moreover has a tendency to personalize history (whereas historiography has long tended to regard larger historical structures and processes); it creates '*intimacy* and *immediacy*', which involves viewers in the historical matters represented.

TV events sometimes prove to be landmarks and turning points in the development of societal – and indeed global – memory discourses. One case in point is the American TV miniseries *Holocaust* (1978) which initiated – or at least served as a catalyst for – a new phase of engagement with the Shoah worldwide (see Shandler 1999). However, television audiences are not passive consumers of a pre-set agenda of televised history. In his investigations of the role of TV for German collective memory, Wulf Kansteiner (2006, 109–80) draws on audience research and contends that – through consumption practice – viewers are an active force when it comes to the question of which parts of the past are represented, where, when, and how: 'The consumers' influence on television policy and programming can be described as a veto power' (ibid., 135).

News coverage is another television format which bears on cultural memory, screening not the past, but present events and thus encoding them for future memory. News footage is the raw material of filmic memory, fulfilling – just like news photography – the functions of a document while being the result of a highly selective and constructive media representation. In *Televising War* (2004), Andrew Hoskins studies the Gulf War of 1991 as the first 'TV video war' (ibid., 16) and draws attention to the fact that 'television and particularly television news produce a new and apparently reliable stream of historical consciousness of today's events'. He contends, however, that television news coverage can effect a '*collapse of memory*', because televising the Gulf War and other warlike events such as '9/11' actually 'prevents memory through its satiation and overload of images, yet at the same time crystallizes memory of events around scenes that it obsesses over' (ibid., 5f.; see also Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2007; on news magazines as a medium of cultural memory Kitch 2000).

V.5.3 Diachronic dynamics: Remediation – premediation

In his reflections about 'new memory', Andrew Hoskins maintains that memories 'should not be considered as fixed representations of the past in the present, but, rather, they exist across a continuum of time'. Therefore, 'the process – the way in which memory has "lived" across this time in many different forms – needs to be addressed' (2001, 335).

One possibility of tackling this task is making use of the concept of 'remediation' which David Bolter and Richard Grusin have developed in their eponymous edited volume *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999). With its subtitle, Bolter and Grusin, too, refer to Marshall McLuhan's now classic text of media theory. They do so in order to underline their ambition of uncovering the logic of new media – and, interestingly, this turns out to be essentially a memory-logic. The term 'remediation,' according to Bolter and Grusin, refers to 'the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms' (ibid., 273). 'Each act of mediation depends on other acts of mediation. Media are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other, and this process is integral to media' (ibid., 55). Studying remediation means paying attention to the diachronic dimension that underlies each (new) media technology, to the fact that media are constantly 'borrowing from, paying homage to, critiquing, and refashioning their predecessors' (Grusin 2004, 17). Remediation is therefore a concept which refers to what might be called 'the memory of media', following Renate Lachmann's description of intertextuality as 'the memory of literature' (see chapter III.2.2). (For the equally important focus on the 'oblivion of media', or 'neglected, abandoned and trashed media technologies', and an inquiry into the mechanisms involved in the fading and persistence of media, see Acland 2007: xixf.)

What Bolter and Grusin (1999, 5) have called the 'double logic of remediation' – its oscillation between 'immediacy' and 'hypermediacy', transparency and opacity, between creating 'the experience of the real' and 'the experience of the medium' – is also visible in the operations of mnemonic media. On the one hand, most media of memory strive for ever greater immediacy. Their function is to provide a seemingly transparent 'window' on the past, to make us forget the presence of the medium and instead present us with the illusion of an unmediated memory. On the other hand, this effect is – paradoxically – usually achieved by hypermediacy, that is, the recycling and multiplication of media: Internet platforms of remembrance such as www.YadVashem.org offer online photo archives, written testimonies and virtual museum tours, thus combining many different media to provide access to the past and occasions for remembrance. The relatively new TV genre of 'docufiction' attempts to present viewers with a window on the past by combining documentary media with witness interviews and fictional re-enactments. Many war movies and history films employ what may be called a remediation-as-reality-effect: Historical documentary material (such as war photography and filmic footage) is incorporated into new

movies. Such an integration of older media, which are commonly held to have 'witnessed' the past, into a new medium produces an *effet de réel*. The fiction film suddenly seems indexically linked to the historical events it depicts. Hypermediacy thus serves to create immediacy; remediation is used to endow media representations of the past with an aura of authenticity.

With the concept of remediation we are able not only to fathom the evolution of media technology as a mnemonic process or to highlight the double logic of media of collective memory. Refashioned into a distinct concept of memory studies, it has also helped to describe the diachronic and intermedial dynamics that underlie the very production of cultural memory (see Erll and Rigney's *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, 2009). As a concept of memory studies, remediation has therefore been defined as the ongoing transcription of a 'memory matter' into different media (ibid.). Memory matter – those images and narratives of the past which circulate in a given social context and may even converge into sites of memory – is a transmedial phenomenon; it is not tied to one specific medium. Contents of cultural memory can therefore be represented across the spectrum of available media: in handwritten manuscripts and printed newspaper articles, in historiographical books and in novels, in drawings, paintings and photographs, in movies and on websites. This is exactly what can be observed when studying the history of memory sites such as 'Odysseus', 'The Fall of the Roman Empire', 'The French Revolution' or 'Anne Frank'. What is culturally remembered about an ancient myth, a revolution, a hero (or any other story or image) usually refers not so much to what one might cautiously call the 'original' or the 'actual' events, but instead to a palimpsestic structure of existent media representations. Repeated representation, over decades and centuries, in different media, is exactly what creates a powerful site of memory.

Remediation tends to solidify cultural memory, creating and stabilizing certain narratives and icons of the past. Such stabilizing effects of remediation can be examined, for example, in the emergence of '9/11' as a global site of memory. The burning Twin Towers quickly crystallized into the one iconic image of the event, and this icon has been remediated ever since: in television news, movies, comic strips, on websites and so on. But such iconization-through-remediation is not restricted to visual media. Another example connected with '9/11' is the icon of the 'falling man', which stands for those people who were trapped by the fire on the upper floors of the World Trade Center and decided to jump rather than die in the flames. The first representation of the 'falling man' was

a photograph taken by Richard Drew. It shows a man falling into certain death, his body upside down and in eerie symmetry with the façade of the WTC's North Tower. The image appeared in newspapers, on TV, and in the Internet, but it was also remediated in narrative form: among others, in a magazine story, a TV documentary and finally in Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* (2007). These remediations feature different semiotic systems and media technologies, they tell different stories and convey even contradictory meanings, but at the same time they all contribute to the stabilization of the 'falling man' as an icon of '9/11'.

But why is *one* image of '9/11' remediated time and again and turned into a mnemonic icon, while virtually thousands of other visual representations are left to oblivion? One reason for such choices is the (media) cultural resonance of a given representation. The 'falling man' seems to resonate with Biblical accounts of the Fall of Man, but also with, say, John Milton's classic account of angels falling from heaven in *Paradise Lost* (1667). Moreover, its clear black-and-white structure echoes a modernist aesthetics, ironically the very device of creating order in a world perceived as falling apart. These are but two examples of the workings of 'premediation', the companion term to remediation, which draws attention to the processes of mediated memory that are at work even *before* the choice for representing a matter in a certain fashion is made (for similar concepts see Grusin 2004, 2010; Thrift 2004). Premediation means that existent media circulating in a given context provide schemata for future experience – its anticipation, representation and remembrance. In this way, for example, representations of the colonial wars premediated the First World War; and the images and narratives of the First World War, in turn, were used as models for understanding the Second World War. But not only depictions of earlier, yet somehow comparable events shape our understanding of later events. Media which belong to even more remote cultural spheres, such as art, mythology, religion or law, can exert great power as premediators, too. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), with its 'Valley of the Shadow and Death' episode, premediated many journals and letters written during the First World War. (At the same time it was itself a remediation of the Bible.) And the American understanding and representation of '9/11' was clearly premediated by disaster movies, the crusader narrative as well as Biblical stories. Premediation therefore refers to cultural practices of looking, naming, and narrating. It is the effect of *and* the starting point for mediated memories.

It is the twin dynamics of premediation and remediation – the medial preformation and re-shaping of mnemonic images and narratives – which

links each individual representation of the past with the history of mediated cultural memory. Pre- and remediation are basic processes of cultural memory. Their functions are manifold: first and foremost, they make the past intelligible; at the same time, they can endow media representations with the aura of authenticity; and, finally, they play a decisive role in stabilizing certain mnemonic contents into powerful sites of memory. The field of research into such complex intermedial processes of memory has only just opened up. However, with its general interest in the 'travel' of representation across time, space, and cultures – and thus with transmedial and transcultural memory – the study of pre- and remediation must be located in the tradition of one of the founding fathers of memory studies, Aby Warburg (see chapter II.2).