

on media memory

collective memory in a new media age



edited by motti neiger, oren meyers
and eyal zandberg

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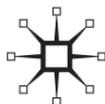
On Media Memory

Collective Memory in a New Media Age

Edited by

Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg

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On Media Memory: Editors' Introduction

Defining the field of Media Memory

The title of this volume, *On Media Memory*, echoes, of course, Maurice Halbwachs' seminal work *On Collective Memory* (1992/1925, 1980/1950), but it also denotes the uniqueness of this volume: alongside the numerous works that are devoted to the systematic exploration of 'collective memory' and the increasing prevalence of this concept (or, at times catchphrase) in public discourse, this book brings 'Media' and 'Mediation' – both with capital Ms – to the forefront of the scholarly inquiry of collective recollecting. While memory researchers often look at media outlets in order to explore the field of collective memory, and media scholars increasingly investigate the role of collective memory in shaping the news, films, new-media contents and more, this book wishes to offer a comprehensive and integrative view of this theme. That is, this collection conceptualizes and probes Media Memory – not merely as a channel or process but rather as a phenomenon in itself.

Hence, Media Memory – the systematic exploration of collective pasts that are narrated by the media, through the use of the media, and about the media – deserves particular scholarly attention. Investigation, such as is proposed in this volume, introduces the manifestation of Media Memory's multichannel outlets, its multiple approaches and research designs, and the various challenges it poses both to current research in the broader fields of memory studies and media studies and to future investigators of the conjunction between communication and collective recollection.

Media Memory studies are a 'descendant' of both media research and memory scholarship – two multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary fields of study. Therefore, in this volume we wish to position the term

'Media Memory' (Kitch, 2005: 175–84) as a salient theoretical and analytical concept while presenting its multilayered and complex nature. This multidimensional field of inquiry studies how the media operate as memory agents (What kinds of versions of the past are shaped by different media? What is the 'division of labor' between local and global media or between commercial and public media?); the cultures in which these processes take place (Media Memory as an indicator for sociological and political changes); and the interrelations between the media and other realms of social activity (such as the economy and politics). In other words, focusing on the interface between media and memory enables us to explore each of these fields by using the insights gained from the other; utilizing the study of media in order to probe the field of collective memory research and vice versa – to investigate old and new questions concerning the operation of the media, by means of insights gained through the study of collective memory.

Beyond addressing these fundamental themes, this volume probes current trends and changes that pose new challenges for scholars of Media Memory: the intertwined globalization and localization of the media, numerous technological developments, and the audiences' ever-widening access to media texts dealing with the past, all call for an up-to-date discussion of the significance and implications of Media Memory. Phenomena such as the increasing use of YouTube as an accessible archive of popular and elite/establishment memory, the unprecedented availability of online databases offering media-based documentation of the past (see in this volume the chapters by Katriel and Shavit, Ashuri, Reading, Hoskins, Pinchevski, and Dekel), the ease with which conflicting representations of the past can now be evaluated and compared, alongside the ease with which distorted or even fabricated versions of the past can now be created and disseminated – all require a comprehensive inquiry into the ever-changing relations between mass media and the recollection of the past.

The term 'Collective Memory' was first coined by Hugo Van Hofmannsthal in 1902 (Olick and Robbins, 1998: 106), but French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs is generally recognized as the founder of collective memory research. As a devoted follower of the Durkheimian school, Halbwachs' work identified individual memories and collective memories as tools through which social groups establish their centrality in individuals' lives. Since the publication of Halbwachs' seminal work *On Collective Memory* (1992/1925, 1980/1950) this field has been researched by scholars in various academic disciplines, who have at times disagreed with many of his initial observations. Yet his

basic argument still serves as a guideline for collective memory studies: social groups construct their own images of the world by constantly shaping and reshaping versions of the past. This process defines groups and enables them to create boundaries that separate them from other groups that share different memories of the past, or perhaps, different interpretations of the same occurrences.

Collective memories do not exist in the abstract. Their presence and influence can only be discerned through their ongoing usage. There can be no 'collective memory' without public articulation hence so many memory studies focus on various forms of public expression such as rituals, ceremonial commemorations, and mass media texts; in short, collective memory is an inherently mediated phenomenon.

The media present an essential and uniquely relevant field for studying questions regarding mediation and social construction. The prime reason for this is the dominance and omnipresence of the mass media in everyday life (Silverstone, 1994, 1999) and their decisive role in shaping current collective recollections (Huysen, 2000). This notion was clearly defined in Gary Edgerton's (2000) introduction to a special issue of *Film & History* entitled 'Television as Historian':

Television is the principal means by which most people learn about history today... Just as television has profoundly affected and altered every aspect of contemporary life – from the family to education, government, business and religion – the medium's nonfictional and fictional portrayals have similarly transformed the way tens of millions of viewers think about historical figures. (7)

Earlier, in her analysis of the role of American journalists in shaping the public memory of John F. Kennedy's assassination, Barbie Zelizer addressed the role of journalists in 'making history':

The story of America's past will remain in part a story of what the media have chosen to remember, a story of how the media's memories have in turn become America's own. And if not the authority of journalists, then certainly the authority of other communities, individuals and institutions will make their own claims to the tale ... It is from just such competition that history is made. (Zelizer, 1992: 214)

Hence, sixty years after *On Collective Memory* was first published, and more than eighty years after Halbwachs' ideas were initially articulated

in 'Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire' ('The Social Framework of Memory', 1925),¹ we propose to view the shift from *On Collective Memory* to *On Media Memory* as part of the larger process of expanding the scope of memory studies and tracing the ways in which memory studies interface with related fields of scholarship. Therefore, the goal of the *On Media Memory* volume is to provide new perspectives on old dilemmas pertaining to the field of Media Memory, and to advance the field by posing new questions regarding the interrelations between the shaping of collective memories and the role of mass media in changing cultural, political, and technological contexts.

Media Memory premises

Throughout the last two decades a number of scholars have advanced and developed Halbwachs' work in numerous ways that connect the guiding assumptions of collective memory studies to the realm of media research (e.g. Kitch, 2005; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Schudson, 1995; Zelizer, 1995). As mentioned, the concept of 'collective memory' rests upon the assumption that every social group develops a memory of its past; a memory that emphasizes its uniqueness and allows it to preserve its self-image and pass it on to future generations.

The fundamental role of mediation and the dominance of social construction lie at the heart of these two fields and tie them together. As a result, both fields are demarcated by similar themes regarding issues of representation, socio-cultural power relations, and the role of narrativity in the process of the social construction of meaning. This fundamental interconnectivity between the two fields enables us to point at key concepts, questions, and characteristics that bind these two realms of inquiry in order to look at each of them through the prism of the other. 'Collective memory' defines relations between the individual and the community to which she belongs and enables the community to bestow meaning upon its existence. Following this basic assertion, we can summarize the main features of the concept of 'collective memory' through five characteristics that illuminate its complexity:

1. **Collective memory is a socio-political construct:** As such, collective memory cannot be considered as evidence of the authenticity of a shared past; rather, collective memory is a version of the past, selected to be remembered by a given community (or more precisely by particular agents in it) in order to advance its goals and serve its self-perception. Such memory is defined and negotiated through

changing socio-political power circumstances and agendas (Edy, this volume).

2. **The construction of collective memory is a continuous, multi-directional process:** Such a process is characterized and defined via an oppositional yet complementary movement from the present to the past and from the past to the present. Current events and beliefs guide our reading of the past, while schemes and frames of reference learned from the past shape our understanding of the present (Schudson, 1997). The process of shaping collective memory is neither linear nor logical, but rather dynamic and contingent (Zelizer, 1995: 221).
3. **Collective memory is functional:** Social groups commemorate their past for different purposes, chiefly to define and chart the boundaries of communities, enabling their members to define group membership in contrast to the 'other' and to reaffirm the group's core convictions and inner hierarchy. And so, social groups may recollect and commemorate their past in order to set a moral example or to justify failures (Sturken, 1997; Zerubavel, 1995).
4. **Collective memory must be concretized:** Collective memory is a theoretical concept that deals with abstract ideals, but in order for it to become functional, it must be concretized and materialized through physical structures and cultural artifacts such as commemorative rituals, monuments (Young, 1993), historical museums (Katriel, 1997), educational systems, the Internet and more.
5. **Collective memory is narrational:** Memory must be structured within a familiar cultural pattern. In most cases, it takes the well-known narrative form, including a storyline featuring a beginning, a chain of developing events, and an ending, as well as protagonists who are called upon to overcome obstacles and so forth. Moreover, the adoption of a narrative structure enables creators of accounts that address the past to charge these tales with lessons and morals that guide and instruct mnemonic communities in the present.

The five above-mentioned features addressing the characteristics, flexibility, and complexity of collective memory can also serve us in pointing at the intrinsic connection between memory scholarship and media studies: Halbwachs described collective memory as 'a reconstruction of the past that adapts the image of ancient facts to the beliefs and spiritual needs of the present' (1941: 7; see also Halbwachs, 1992 [1925]; Douglas, 1986; Schwartz, 1991b). This process of (re)construction requires sites that serve different agents as the ground on which they

build their ideas and versions of the past that are mediated to wider audiences. In modern societies the mass media is the most prevalent site for such construction. Moreover, a basic premise for understanding media operation and investigating it is the social construction of reality (Adoni and Mane, 1984). Thus, questions regarding the ability of dominant meaning-making social agencies to construct media contents as well as common perceptions of the past stress the interconnection between these two fields.

Another fundamental theme connecting the study of collective memory and the investigation of the media is that in both fields the final outcomes/products that are probed by scholars are the result of processes of selection and construction; i.e. the shaping of both mass media products as well as mnemonic signifiers are fundamentally activities that entail (overt and/or covert) decision-making dynamics determining the salience of presentation of various events. This process is coupled with the relative dismissal of other events, the pacing of events through a storyline, the infusion of social morals and lessons into the narrative and so forth.

Thus, White (1973) famously argued that historians focus on traumatic events and transfer them into defined genres that make those events more accessible to the readers, and Tuchman (1973) demonstrated how journalistic processes of routinizing the unexpected 'convert' everyday events into news stories. These two definitive works illuminate the similarity between historical research and media studies. Accordingly, scholars of both history and journalism have exposed the socially constructed nature of their fields and elaborated on the ways in which routine practices connect narrative and authority. Furthermore, it is clear that in these two fields of cultural production even if a specific individual or a group of individuals are responsible for the creation of a given product (a news item, a commemorative monument, etc.) these identified meaning-makers are operating within larger cultural and political contexts that shape and inform their interpretive work of narrative construction.

Within this context, one of the essential differences of opinion among researchers of collective memory concerns the question of construction versus selection in the process of shaping social recollections. The first approach can be traced back to Halbwachs' work, contending that the process of creating collective memories is an absolute one: the need to reconstruct the past and the social group's ability to utilize it are so great that the actual origins of past events are of secondary importance. That is, the facts of the past have only limited significance in the process of

shaping collective memories so as to suit current needs (Halbwachs, 1992 [1925]: 46–51). In contrast, according to Barry Schwartz (1982: 395–6), the main activity in the process of creating collective memories is not construction but rather selection. The past is not flexible in a way that enables us to create, or even invent, historical facts, and thus social memories change mainly via the process by which some events are emphasized and others are concealed. We choose factual elements that fit our larger master-narratives, and ignore or minimize the importance of others.

The selection/construction process of shaping collective memory is ongoing and it involves political, cultural, and sociological confrontations, as different interpreters compete over the place of their reading of the past in the public arena (Sturken, 1997). The media have a distinctive role in this competition: on the one hand, they present themselves and are perceived by society as a platform for socio-cultural struggles. On the other hand, they are also players in the same competition and perceive themselves as authoritative social storytellers of the past. Beyond the sheer overreaching presence of the media stands the multiplicity of venues, storytelling strategies, and modes of operation that characterize the field: the multitude of existing media channels and outlets offer a variety of genres that address the construction/selection question in different and often opposing ways.

In contrast to memory agents such as academia or historical museums which are, by and large, committed to a common ethos of depicting the past according to agreed-upon, publicly known conventions, the divergence among media genres is tremendous. Within this context, it might be useful to first look at different genres and their proclaimed truth-value: from fictional dramas at one end to documentary and news at the other, and docudramas in between. While fictional outlets were considered more closely related to imagined collective memory (influenced by cinema studies: Loshitzky, 1997; Rosenstone 1994; Zemon-Davis, 2002), news (Lang and Lang, 1989; Teer-Tomaselli, 2006), journalism (Edy, 1999; Kitch, 2008; Zelizer, 2008), and documentary (Rosenthal, 1999) were considered closely related to 'true' historiography. Thus, though the discourse on collective memory arose earlier in fields like cinema studies, with regard to journalism, as Zelizer (2008: 80) pointed out, no main theorists of the field of collective memory included 'news making' as an important component in their work that explored the field. Highlighting the variety of media genres illuminates the socially constructed nature of both concepts of historiography and collective memory and similarly the socially

constructed nature of the genres. It also enables placing history and memory across the spectrum of media outlets.

There are, of course, other ways of classifying media outlets with regards to the shaping of shared pasts. One typology addresses media ownership: the seminal question here is what are the characteristics of collective recollections that are manifested via publicly owned media, in comparison to recollections that are mediated via commercial outlets? Rather than a clear-cut binary public/commercial distinction, studies in the field (Lowenthal, 1988; Meyers, 2009; Meyers, Zandberg, and Neiger, 2009) illuminate the complexity of the situation. Hence, when it comes to collective recollection all media – both public and commercial – are influenced by common themes such as ratings, professional norms, legal restrictions, and the socio-cultural environment.

Another classification can be made by type of media: press (Kitch, 2002; Meyers, 2007; this volume: Kitch, Berkowitz; Tenenboim-Weinblatt; Kligler-Vilenchik), television (Edgerton and Rollins, 2001; Shandler, 1999; this volume: Frosh; Ben-Amos and Bourdon; Rueda Laffond), radio (Kaplan, 2009; Meyers and Zandberg, 2002; Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg, forthcoming), cinema (Rosenstone, 1995; this volume: Sheffi), and new media (Garde-Hansen, Hoskins, and Reading, 2009; this volume: Reading; Hoskins; Pinchevsky; Dekel). Within this context, a comparison between the operation of advertisers and journalists as Media Memory agents seems especially telling: a recent study of the construction of the past via advertising revealed that in some instances, advertisers and marketers operate as ultimate Halbwachsian ‘inventors of memory’ manufacturing nostalgic appeals toward a non-existing past (Meyers, 2009).

More generally, some of the most significant features of collective recollection can be illuminated through the study of representation of the past via advertising, due to the extreme, or rather ‘pure’ circumstances of such commercially motivated communication: in advertising, it is always clear who the agent is, sponsoring the specific marketed version of the past, or, at least, the motives are clear, since there is nothing ambiguous about the final, profit-driven goals of advertising; therefore, the logic of advertising offers one of the most ahistorical conceptualizations of the past. At the same time, advertising is also a cultural site that highlights the abstract/concrete paradox which is embedded within the process of collective recollecting: advertising seems to best demonstrate the process by which abstract, or even spiritual, meanings are bestowed upon concrete artifacts (see also Carolyn Kitch’s chapter in this volume in regard to the manufacture of journalistic ‘memorabilia’

after the inauguration of President Obama). Within the scope of Media Memory studies journalism seems to occupy the opposite pole on the construction/selection spectrum. Since factuality and objectivity stand at the core of the guiding ethos of professional news reporting (Neiger, Zandberg, and Meyers, 2010), the straightforward invention of past occurrences by journalists seems improbable, and it is most certainly censured by journalistic communities.

But this is only a partial interpretation of what a comparative look at advertising and journalism as Media Memory agents can tell us about the construction/selection theme. Advertising's seemingly total lack of commitment to historical accuracy enables it, in principle, to present an infinite array of varying pasts. Yet, studies show that the vast majority of advertisements that turn to the past, do so through the implementation of a singular approach, based on nostalgic appeals (Hetsroni, 1999; Unger, McConocha, and Faier, 1991); since advertisers do not for the most part want to question or challenge consumers' perceptions of the past, they tend to present a limited, almost uniform rosy picture of the way things were. In contrast, journalists might be confined, in principle, by the decree to narrate factual accounts about the past, 'exactly as they happened'. Still, their ability to select the past events through which they choose to depict the present and their 'cultural license' to explain how exactly this past is relevant for the understanding of the present, grants them significant interpretive freedom. And so, through the last two decades a growing number of Media Memory studies explored the multifaceted ways by which facts-only-driven, objective journalists manage to interpret and reinterpret the past in a manner that corresponds with the culture in which they operate while it also reinforces their professional-communal status (Meyers, 2007; Zandberg, 2010).

Media Memory: key questions

As mentioned, the interrelations between media and collective memory have led researchers from both fields to follow similar trajectories. Earlier, we examined these proximities through the prism of five characteristics in the dynamics of the shaping of 'collective memory' as a (1) multidirectional process of (2) concretizing a (3) narrative of the past into a (4) functional, (5) social-political construct.

Embarking from these characteristics, we would like to touch upon this process/dynamic through key questions in the field of Media Memory that spring from two fundamental cultural studies concepts – *agency*

and *context*. We would like to elaborate on these themes as they serve as an essential axis throughout the contributions to this volume:

A. Media Memory and agency

Questions of ‘agency’ in regard to Media Memory focus on the capacity and authority of individuals and organizations to operate as memory agents. Such explorations are, of course, related to more general queries concerning the role of the media in shaping collective (national, regional/local, sectarian, global/cosmopolitan) identities.

A1. The question of authority: Who has the right to narrate collective stories about the past? That is, what is the source of authority of the media in general, and of specific media outlets, to operate as memory agents?

The fundamental role of collective memories in the formation of modern national identities, the rise of mass culture and mass politics, and the development of new communication technologies have all led to the current state, in which the right to narrate the past is no longer reserved for academic and political elites. Nowadays, major historical events gain their public meaning not only through academic and state-sponsored interpretations but also through television, films, and the press (Edgerton and Rollins, 2001; Zandberg, 2010; Zelizer, 1992).

This brings to the fore the question of the cultural authority of the media as narrators of the past; that is, how the media work through, or rather reconcile their role as a public arena for various memory agents with their own role as memory agents and readings of the past. Within the contest for authority to narrate the past and infuse it with meaning, the media are uniquely positioned: on the one hand, they provide a public arena for various agents (political activists, academics, local communities and more) who wish to influence the ways in which collective pasts are narrated and understood. On the other hand, specific media outlets as well as individual media professionals act as salient memory agents who aspire to provide their own readings of the collective past. Such a reading is always anchored in individual or institutional experiences of the past and the present while professional, commercial, and ideological inclinations affect the role of the mass media in the narration of the past.

A2. The question of defining the collective: What is the role of the media in defining the boundaries of collectivities and how do such definitions interact with the operation of the media as memory agents?

Many concepts related and connected to ‘collective memory’ have emerged in academia and gained a place in scholarly discourse: ‘imagined

communities' (Anderson, 1983), 'state rituals', 'civil religion' and 'invented traditions' (Bellah, 1967; Hobsbawm, 1983). All of these concepts point to a paradox: although we are referring to the members of modern nations as a concrete community, these members do not have personal relationships with most other members of the nation. The solution of this paradox, the bridging mechanism between individuals and communities, could be found in the mass media. Anderson (1983) refers to Hegel's observation that the newspaper serves modern man as a substitute for morning prayers. Carey (1998: 44), referring to the same claim, argues that 'the line dividing the modern from the pre-modern was drawn when people began their day attending to their state and nation rather than to their God'. The collective aspect of the 'reading the paper ritual' is explained by Anderson in the following way: 'It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion' (1983: 39). Therefore, the role of the media in such processes gives rise to many veteran questions and poses new tensions to the social sciences.

The focus on 'Media Memory' instead of 'Collective Memory' is also derived from technological modifications, especially through the last two decades, the era of the wideband Internet and thereby also the era of 'Digital Memories' (Garde-Hansen, Hoskins, and Reading, 2009). The boundaries of social collectivities are now inseparably connected to the audiences that make use of these same media. From an 'identity politics' perspective, one can manage several identities at once, determining which media to use in order to connect with other community members (e.g. one can watch the BBC as a Brit, read the *Guardian* as a leftist, tune into a local radio station as Scottish, and be part of a few interest groups and forums on the Internet as stamp collector and 'pop-idol' fan). Thus, among various possible memory agents, the media serve as a meta-agent because they constitute the most prevalent and quotidian site of collective recollection in modern national societies (Huysen, 2000; Volkmer, 2006) and serve as an arena featuring the narratives promoted by many other memory agents. Therefore, probing Anderson's analysis we ask whether, in an era in which national media concede to globalized outlets and formats, we are now seeing the dwindling of national memory.

Beyond that, one of the central arguments raised in recent years in the social sciences maintains that more attention should be shifted to

the ‘cosmopolitan turn’ (Beck, 2002; Beck and Sznaider, 2006), the sensitivity of the national society to the transnational arena, or in Beck’s words: ‘cosmopolitanization means *internal* globalization, globalization *from within* the national societies. This transforms everyday consciousness and identities significantly. Issues of global concern are becoming part of the everyday local experiences and the “moral life-worlds” of the people’ (Beck, 2002: 17).

Within this context, we argue that although most of the research devoted to collective memory centers on the construction of national memories, in an era of globalization (Reading, this volume) collective memory and commemoration that exist in a cosmopolitan context (Levy and Sznaider, 2006) do not necessarily promote national values.

This and more, most studies in the field relate to collective memory as a singular and identify a given (mostly, national) collective with ‘their’ collective memory – e.g. the French collective memory with French national community, the commemoration of American presidents with American collective memory, etc. In contrast, fewer studies explore contesting memories within the framework of national (or other) communities.

One can trace this salient characteristic of the collective memory research field to the dominance of the Durkheimian legacy, which implies a particular view of social processes and an increased analytical focus on the construction of social cohesiveness and solidarity and the production of shared meanings. In contrast, some of contributions to this volume address the understudied theme of collective recollecting and inner social conflicts: Katriel and Shavit as well as Ashuri explore oppositional movements operating against the national collective memory; Neiger, Zandberg, and Meyers stress the ways in which contesting memories are shaped through national commemorative rituals; and Bird and Reading investigate the constitution and shaping of contesting as opposed to national-level efforts to silence these dissenting narratives.

A3. The question of personal/private memory vs. collective/shared memory: This question focuses on the tensions and mutual relationships between personal/private memories and collective/shared memory, which are being blurred by an increasingly saturated media environment. That is, what separates (and how can we distinguish between) private and personal/first-hand/individual and social/mediated/collective memories? (see also Bourdon, this volume).

Thus, in this volume we propose that the claims regarding Halbwachs’ giant leap from the personal and concrete (how people remember) to

the collective and metaphorical (how societies remember) (Gedi and Elam, 1996: 43; Schwartz, 1991a: 302) ought to be addressed via the consideration of the role of the media in such processes.

On a personal level, as a phenomenon in cognitive psychology, memory is the ability to store, possess, and retrieve information, processes which have a physiological aspect, in a neurological dimension. Thus, people remember personal events – ‘big’ (such as a wedding) or ‘small’ (a mundane chat at the office) – which are part of their everyday life. These events may be jointly remembered by other people (the participants in the wedding, colleagues at the office), who may or may not have a tangible record of the event (e.g. a wedding video), but they are usually classified as personal memories. Nevertheless, people also recall public events, which gain social meaning and are recognized as having cultural value as a collective event. People may be part of such a specific event (participants, witnesses), but to the wider public who does not attend the scenes – and even for the participants themselves – the occurrences can become part of their memory through a process of mediation.

On the one hand, the media serve as the vessel for shared recollections, their distributor, and the ‘place’ – virtual or concrete, in the public arena or in the private domain – where the social ritual of remembering is performed. Moreover, the media are the main ‘mechanisms which determine and sustain mnemonic consensus’ (Schwartz, 1982: 374). On the other hand, the abundance of media outlets and memory versions are also challenging the memory and commemoration of events, leading them to an era of ‘postmemory’ (Hirsch, 2001), when powerful memories are transmitted to publics that have not experienced the events, but nevertheless adapted them due to their traumatic nature. Hirsch relates this notion to life stories of sons and daughters of Holocaust survivors (‘second generation survivors’), but it also serves as a metaphor for the role of the media in large-scale recollection processes.

Moreover, the media may blur the line between authentic and inauthentic memories. The field of inquiry of ‘flashbulb memories’ (Hoskins, 2009) looks at the interconnections between personal memories, mediated memories, and psychological attributes.

Another close perspective on the role of the media as ‘secondary memory’ relates to what Nora (1989: 14) calls ‘prosthesis-memory’, when he addresses the role of the media archives as one of the realms of memory (‘*Les Lieux de mémoire*’; Nora, 1984–92), and to the concept of ‘prosthetic memory’ (Landsberg, 2004: 8), that is the capacity of current mass media representations of the past ‘to create shared social frameworks

for people who inhabit, literally and figuratively, different social spaces, practices, and beliefs'. According to Landsberg, mass mediated 'prosthetic memories' generated through films such as *Schindler's List* or mnemonic institutions such as the US Holocaust Memorial Museum undermine the distinction between authentic and inauthentic memories and thus enable heterogeneous audiences to identify with the experiences of people who endured severe traumas and were different in many respects from the current consumers of such representations.

B. Media Memory and contexts

Questions of 'context' concern the circumstances and venues where representations of Media Memory can be observed, experienced, and researched.

B1. The question of circumstances: The most prevalent method of investigating the presence and influence of collective memories explores the ways present perceptions shape understanding of the past. This attitude underlies studies that look at concrete and intended commemorations, those that seek to decode the changing ideological givens that constitute shifting views of the past. The second, less common, method of addressing collective recollections aims to trace movement from the past into the present. This attitude is evident in studies of non-commemorative and unintended influences of past phenomena (Schudson, 1997; see also Vinitzky-Seroussi, this volume).

The increased analytical focus on commemorative memory contributes to the relative understudy of journalists as agents of collective memory. This is because most journalistic work is routine and non-commemorative by nature (see, for example, Nossek, 1994). The ways in which the past and present are continuously constructed via routine journalistic work are harder to track down and to conceptualize than the study of state-sponsored rituals, commemorative museums, or lucrative popular culture productions. These two complementary processes highlight the diversity of the media as memory agents: from presenting state ritual as media events on the one hand, to the percolation of the past through metaphors and symbols in advertisements, popular music, or humoristic television shows on the other.

B2. The question of venues/outlets: Although it is hard to separate the questions of 'when' and 'where', for the sake of this discussion we will distinguish between the two. Regarding Media Memory we might ask where we should place our analytical focus in investigating this phenomenon: should we focus on popular or rather elite/establishment venues?

Old or new media? Venues that produce fictional accounts of the past or others that are more concerned with 'truth-value' or factuality?

Questions of research focus also relate to the classic debate over various aspects of the media encoding/decoding process. Communication studies are traditionally conceptualized according to three fundamental research trajectories: studies that focus on the analysis of media texts, studies that focus on the dynamics of mass media production, and studies that focus on the ways by which audiences interpret media contents. An overview of the field of Media Memory research reveals a salient inclination toward textual analyses of sorts (more on this in the next section devoted to the less-traveled trajectories of Media Memory). Hence many of the major contributions to the study of the intersection between media and memory explore themes such as the characteristics, storytelling patterns, or morals embedded in media texts addressing and constructing collective pasts. In fact, this volume is characteristic of this phenomenon as the vast majority of its chapters rely on investigations of various media texts.

Thus, the construction of collective memory is performed across the media and one of the main research trajectories should explore the role of the nature of the media outlet in shaping the memory that is constructed. This calls for comparative research that examines that process across genres (news–documentary–docudrama–fiction), across productions/consumption qualities (popular culture vs. elite culture), and in different media (television, press, radio, new media).

Away from the lamppost: The roads less traveled in Media Memory research

While addressing the aforementioned prevalence of commemorative memory research in comparison to the relative neglect of non-commemorative memory research, Schudson critically commented that the research field of collective memory suffers from the 'drunk-looking-for-his-car-keys-under-the-lamp-post phenomenon' (1997: 3), meaning that researchers tend to look for evidence of the representation of collective memory in the most usual places and times, such as the public sphere during state rituals. Having defined and explored the major tenets of the Media Memory research field, we wish to offer a quick glance at the 'roads less traveled' in the field.

As mentioned, within the context of the three traditional trajectories of communication research (text, production, reception), the vast

majority of Media Memory studies analyze print and broadcast texts that address the past. Scholars who write about collective memory tend, in many cases, to view large-scale, dominant, widely popular media representations of the past as almost straightforward manifestations of the collective understanding of the past. In contrast to this relatively rich textual-analysis-based Media Memory research tradition, a far smaller number of works have probed the mediated memories and 'media biographies' of audiences, or have aimed to assess the role of the mass media in the shaping of 'collected memories' among audiences (Volkmer, 2006). Similarly, very few studies have explored the process by which media professionals construct mnemonic outputs.

A review of Media Memory reception studies yields relatively few results. This area of study bears great significance for memory scholars in general, and especially for researchers focusing their attention on Media Memory. That is because one of the core debates delineating the field of memory studies deals with the interrelations between collective memories and collected memories (Olick, 1999): that is, the interface between the aggregated memories of many individuals as opposed to common public representations of the past. Connerton's famous work explains 'how societies remember' (1989); it is clear that a society, as a whole, cannot 'remember' the way individuals do, yet individuals construct public representations of the past, and individuals utilize personal memories in order to promote specific public understandings of the past; moreover, Halbwachs and many of his scholarly 'descendants' have claimed that personal memories of the past are mediated, or even shaped, through the representations and narratives that are prevalent in the public arena.

Survey studies enable empirical investigation of these aforementioned relations between 'collective memories' and 'collected memories'. A series of studies conducted by Schuman and his colleagues tracked the actual aggregated repertoire of 'collected memories' mentioned by members of societies across the world (Schuman and Corning, 2000; Schuman, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Vinokur, 2003; Schuman and Rodgers, 2004). However, since the media play such a fundamental role in the shaping of collective memories, reception-focused Media Memory studies could illuminate the dynamics by which collective memory influences and shapes individual memories, and vice versa.

A salient example of such an approach can be found in Volkmer's (2006) analyses of 'media biographies' of audiences in nine countries that aim to assess the role of the mass media in the shaping of 'collected memories' among those audiences. One of the most intriguing aspects

of this research project was its exploration of the relations between past events and their 'original' media. That is, the study linked the characteristics of specific media through which past events were consumed for the first time and long-term recollection patterns. The findings pointed to a clear generational distinction: members of the oldest studied cohort had lucid memories of the media (mostly radio or newspaper) through which they first learned about defining memories such as the attack on Pearl Harbor. In their minds, the specific media presentation of the event was integrally related to the event itself. In contrast, members of the youngest studied cohort, who grew up in a multimedia world, could rarely indicate the media technology through which they learned about significant events such as 9/11.

Another important contribution to the somewhat limited corpus of Media Memory audience studies can be found in Neta Kligler Vilenchik's study appearing in this volume. In her study, Kligler Vilenchik combined the 'collected memories' survey method first used by Schuman et al. with media content analysis, in order to trace the ways in which media representations of the past shape, in real time, the importance audiences assign to various past events.

A similar consequence of the heightened focus on textual Media Memory analysis could be found in the relative absence of production studies. Such studies probe the ways in which media organizations operate as well as 'the way structures of power within institutions of society insinuate themselves into the work of elements of the mass media institution' (Turow, 1991: 222). Implementing such an approach toward the study of Media Memory is significant because it enables us to position collective recollecting within the larger scope of the production of culture (Peterson and Anand, 2004); it assists us in addressing – within the specific context of Media Memory production – questions regarding the ways in which media professionalism is defined and negotiated by members of relevant communities of practitioners; and what interrelations exist between the values and norms of media professionalism and the norms and values of other cultural agents that surround and interact with these media organizations (Meyers, Neiger, and Zandberg, forthcoming, 2011).

A salient example that demonstrates the contribution of this production-focused approach toward the investigation of Media Memory can be found in Ashuri's (2007) study of the dynamics of international co-productions of historical television documentaries. Her analysis shows that the current discussion of the role of mass electronic media in the transformation of national collective memories into globalized

memories tends to overlook the actual production dynamics that frame the work of media professionals.

This volume probes production-related themes in several chapters: Elizabeth Bird writes about the effort to assist the construction of the memory of the Asaba massacre; Ashuri, and Katriel and Shavit explore the establishment of testimonial projects that aim to produce and to spread Israelis' particular experience in the occupied territories. All of these studies integrate moral, political, social, and technological questions regarding Media Memory in the twenty-first century.

The structure of the book

This volume is divided into five sections that represent different perspectives on the multiplicity and complexity of the concept of Media Memory.

The first section, 'Media Memory: Theory and Methodologies', focuses on a meta-level discussion of the topic at hand. This section illuminates the epistemological questions that stand at the core of Media Memory research through a discussion of key concepts, methodological advancements and concerns, and new analytical points of view. In her essay, Barbie Zelizer suggests the concept of 'cannibalizing memory' as she explores the ways in which the international media covers national traumas within the context of the global flow of news; Jill A. Edy explains how Media Memory contains democratic potential as various narratives that depict the same event are sprouting and inducing multiple voices that spread within a saturated media environment; Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi discusses the concept of 'banal commemoration' that proposes new 'sites of memory' for future investigation of the field. Finally, Jérôme Bourdon considers the benefits of 'importing' key concepts and methodologies from the life-stories research tradition toward the investigation of Media Memory. The second section of this volume, 'Media Memory, Ethics, and Witnessing', deals with the ethical role (or the ethical burden) of Media Memory and the ways in which this concept interacts with the concept of witnessing. It is interesting to note that all three chapters in this section are dedicated to the role of ICT (information and communication technology) in the construction of memory; moreover, all three essays address the ways in which new media enable and expedite the exposure of distant suffering and the breaking of the silence concerning various atrocities. Tamar Katriel and Nimrod Shavit explore the testimonial project of Israeli soldiers who served in the territories occupied by Israel in the West Bank and the

Gaza Strip. Specifically, the authors inspect the role of the creation of Internet archival memory as moral activism. S. Elizabeth Bird's chapter focuses on the memory of the 1967 Asaba massacre. The essay explores the ways in which new media contributed to the formation and dissemination of narratives that were silenced by the traditional media. Tamar Ashuri probes the tension between collective memory and collective amnesia through an analysis of the use of ICT by a group of Israeli women who bear witness to the activities taking place at military check-points, positioned between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. All three chapters use interviews as a leading research methodology as they explore the process of the constitution and production of Media Memory by politically active memory agents. By doing so, the three works not only contribute to the understanding of Media Memory ethics and witnessing but also enrich the somewhat limited body of scholarly works devoted to Media Memory production.

The third section of the book is devoted to the construction of Media Memory via various popular culture venues. Paul Frosh looks at the British television series *Life on Mars* in order to discuss the interrelations between memory and imagination and the ways in which television utilizes the imagination of memory to reconstruct a historical period. Avner Ben-Amos and Jérôme Bourdon explore the Israeli version of the television show *Such a Life* in order to take on one of the fundamental themes addressed in the first section of the introduction – the tensions between personal and national memories. Na'ama Sheffi probes different (visual and written) versions of an eighteenth-century European historical life story that was represented and reproduced time and again through the centuries. These changing representations are studied via a four-phase research scheme in which each phase reflects different media and memory contexts. Neiger, Zandberg, and Meyers offer an exploration that focuses on the tension between national memory and local memory studied via a four-phase investigation of popular music and verbal interpretations that are aired during radio broadcasts on Israel's Memorial Day for the Holocaust and Heroism. In the last essay of this section, José Carlos Rueda Laffond provides a four-axis tool to analyze the representation of memory and history in television and uses it to close-read a reality show and TV series that are set in Spain of the 1960s.

The fourth part of this volume, 'Media Memory, Journalism, and Journalistic Practice' observes different ways in which journalism, seemingly always focused on the 'here and now', is concurrently engaged in the construction of the past. Carolyn Kitch looks at 'keepsake journalism' – special issues and other items produced by the news media in

commemoration of Obama's inauguration – and the function of these 'Obamabilia' artifacts in the preservation of the interpretive authority of veteran media. Dan Berkowitz conceptualizes collective memory as a journalistic device in a changing media environment through the analysis of two case studies. Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt highlights a novel aspect of mediated collective memory, as she examines the role of the media as a social reminder of the things 'we' (as a society) should do. Neta Kligler-Vilenchik probes audiences' perceptions of the past and the effects of mediation on collective remembrance.

The concluding section of the volume, 'New Media Memory', highlights the relationships between innovative technologies and collective recollecting. Anna Reading develops an epistemology required in order to organize digital media and global memory by analyzing the mediation of the death of Neda Agha Soltan, a young Iranian woman who was shot dead on the streets of Tehran (2009). She shows how, within a few hours, through pictures taken by cell-phones and transmitted by emails and uploaded to various websites, her image became etched in public memory as a potent symbol. Amit Pinchevski discusses the archive as a means of communication by looking at the video archive of Holocaust testimonies at Yale University. In a closely related manner, Irit Dekel examines the new media sources and artifacts used in the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Berlin. This analysis emphasizes the role of museums in the crossroads between 'memory' and 'media' and the different functions of new media in establishing and shaping the museum's narrative. In the final essay of the volume, Andrew Hoskins deals with various new phenomena and changes discussed in previous chapters and proposes a conceptualization of the shift from collective to connective memory as a way of reflecting a 'new memory ecology'.

Through these various sections, *On Media Memory* provides new perspectives on old dilemmas delineating the field of Media Memory, and advances the field by posing new questions regarding the interrelations between the shaping of collective memories and the operation of the mass media in changing cultural, political, and technological contexts. The above-mentioned chapters, which combine provocative theoretical contribution with close readings of various case studies, present a multiplicity of venues and contexts and set a common ground for further investigations into and evaluations of the field of Media Memory.

Note

1. Halbwachs first formulated the concept of 'non-individual memory' in his book *The Social Framework of Memory* (*Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, original

publication in French in 1925, second edition in 1952); yet the book does not use the term 'collective memory'. Sections of this book were translated into English and published as part of a book entitled *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, trans. and ed. L. A. Coser). Halbwachs did define and discuss the concept of 'collective memory', but he only did so in a later book – *The Collective Memory* (*La mémoire collective*, published posthumously in 1950, and translated into English in 1980 by F. J. Ditter and V. Y. Ditter [New York: Harper Colophon Books]).

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Part I

Media Memory: Theory and Methodologies

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1

Cannibalizing Memory in the Global Flow of News

Barbie Zelizer

This volume presumes a link between mediation and memory that sets in motion two central questions: what happens to memory in its mediated states and what happens to mediation when it engages with memory? The answer to both questions rests on an underlying misfit between the work of memory and that of mediation, which rears its head in problematic ways in the global flow of news. When events, issues, and problems become part of journalism by relying on memory to take on meaning, their processing drives the resulting journalistic record in problematic ways. How this happens and what results is the topic of this chapter.

On memory and mediation

Memory studies have long established that memories differ by virtue of the group that uses them, with local, regional, and national prisms each providing different takes on the past. Less discussed but nonetheless implicit is that the broader prism necessarily builds from the smaller one. Memory works as a series of concentric circles, where it must first make sense to the few in order to work for the group at large. Though commonsensical – how can we have memory without its initially being experienced by real people? – the spread of memory from the few to the many suggests a number of postulates about how memory works.

Memory's initial grounding in a local prism reminds us that all memories start from somewhere. As a mode of engaging with the world, it builds by playing first to the proximate over the distant, the personally salient over a range of varied degrees of relevance, the discretely detailed over the broadly scoped. In other words, regardless of how much a

memory eventually grows, it first needs to engage with the past via some local setting, local population, and local experience.

This local prism privileges content over form, uncertainty over certainty, partiality and contradiction over coherence. This means that though local memory, as with memory more broadly, tends to produce simplified, schematic, familiar, composite, and formulaic renditions of what happened at some point in time, this does not happen at once. Instead, as the local experiences of local populations in local settings are turned into the fodder of memory, memory's shaping needs to overcome an initial stage of mnemonic hesitation. Such is particularly the case involving crisis, trauma, and catastrophe, where the question of which memories will be invoked to give meaning remains unclear. Still in formation, the pauses associated with memory's shaping facilitate the simultaneous invocation of multiple memories, which are tested, tried out, and often discarded before an experience is given a more definitive mnemonic form. Thus, the events of 9/11 were immediately referenced by those closest to the scene as a new Pearl Harbor though that interpretation lost consonance as time moved on, while the prosecution of the Gulf War was first likened by American citizens to both World War Two and the Vietnam War when it began. Which memory prevails is only cemented over time, though even then it can and does continue to change.

The *delivery* of memory, however, works from a different set of premises. This is particularly the case when memories are used to shape the news. Organized in mediated systems, news delivery works by parameters that favor the broad over the narrow, the simple over the complex, the uniform over the differentiated, form over content. Consequently, when memory moves into the global flow of news, it by definition loses some of its locality, internal variation, nuance, and particularity. It also loses the starting point so central to memory-work – and its adjacent local pauses, hesitations, and tentativeness – already at the beginning of its shaping. Instead, news works by playing to mnemonic certainty.

Thus, when mnemonic impulses help shape the news, they must accommodate institutional parameters which engage in memory-work as only part of their charter. This circumstance is exacerbated by today's global environment, where news strives to be relevant to increasingly diverse and disseminated populations. In the drive to be ever more global, the capacity to twin memory with its smallest concentric circle diminishes greatly, and the larger the population for news, the more simplistic and unnuanced the mnemonic aspects of its relay become. In

other words, the tendency to squash local memory, its pauses, and its hesitations grows. And the play to form squashes it even more.

This means that in its shaping as news, the nuances associated with local memory-work are effectively silenced. Dissonance – between the characteristics of local memory and those of its mediation – is introduced whenever memory provides the impetus for mediated relays. Though who gets to choose which memory has been a long-standing question in memory studies, it rises to new heights in the era of globalization, where addressing journalism's charter as one of its key vehicles demonstrates time and again how local memories are erased from the global flow of news. All of this becomes even more the case following crisis, trauma, and catastrophe, when the disconnect between mediation and memory becomes even more pronounced. The result is that there is no way to easily match up the needs that memory-work has of mediation with what the mediated environment needs from memory. Instead, local memory is cannibalized in the global flow of news.

The cannibalization of memory

The West's central role as a key player in the global news media environment is instrumental in cannibalizing local mnemonic impulses. In part this stems from the difficulties among those from afar in grasping the often contradictory, tentative, partial, and multiple interpretations that produce mnemonic hesitation among those who experience trauma, crisis, or catastrophe. At the same time, the Western media need immediate mnemonic certainty so as to make their news stories accessible, understandable, and formulaic. Because the mediated platforms of news are most often driven by the West, the memories they invoke thus tend to reflect this need for immediate clarity to explain what happened. They also reflect a Western perspective on events, which easily fills mnemonic pauses with definitive interpretations of what transpired on the local plane, regardless of whether or not they reflect local experience.

Thus, the collapse of Communism in 1989 was depicted in the West in ways that celebrated the embrace of democracy rather than the East/West split or the dissipation of authoritarian governments, described in terms like 'revolution' or the rise of 'civil society' which hardly reflected what took place on the ground (e.g. Marton, 1989; Unger, 1989). Similarly, epidemic in the global South is described in the West as the rampant spread of illness and accumulation of diseased bodies, without paying heed to many of the larger structural circumstances – poverty, unhygienic conditions, depleted workforces, punitive governments, changed concepts

of a civil society – that make the spread's cessation close to impossible (Garrett, 2000).

How does the cannibalization of memory unfold? Four mnemonic stages (occurring either separately or simultaneously) drive it: *minimalization*, *substitution*, *displacement*, and *transportation*. Each stage – communicated both verbally and visually in the news – enables the Western media to affix their own mnemonic interpretations to local experience. Such interpretations follow a simple formula: they forefront what those in the West believe to be true about trauma, crisis, and catastrophe in distant settings, without taking into account the local mnemonic impulses that are still unfolding.

(A.) Cannibalization begins by minimizing local memories. Here, local experience is pushed to the bottom of the global information environment. When the Asian tsunami killed 230,000 people and ravaged the coastline communities of Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Indonesia, and Eastern Africa in December 2004, Western journalists were critiqued because their 'story stopped where the road ended' (Sambandan, 2005). Sky TV News was criticized for sending fifty journalists to Asia and only one to Africa, thereby giving the story an a priori form that reflected Western interests in the different regions (Gidley, 2005).

No surprise, then, that its coverage turned almost immediately to the Western tourists and high-profile visitors then present in the disaster area. While the locals who died were rarely given names, were often depicted as anonymous corpses and were not always confirmed dead, coverage of the vacationing Westerners – both high- and low-profile – was comprised of extensive stories and depictions of identified individuals who both died and were rescued. From the death of British professional photographer Simon Atlee, boyfriend of super-model Petra Nemcova, to the cell-phone images of a Canadian couple, John and Jackie Knill, who took their own final picture as the waves descended upon them, Westerners embodied the faces, stories, and victims of the West's coverage of the disaster (see Zelizer, 2010). The dissonance between local experience and global interpretations of that experience was so great that one Indian journalist proclaimed that 'southeast Asia's biggest tragedy [had] become every American network's Disneyland party.' Disaster, he said grimly, had 'finally found its paparazzi' (Malik, 2004). As the *Guardian's* Jeremy Seabrook noted, Western victims embodied 'a different order of importance from those [others] who have died, who have no known biography and, apparently, no intelligible tongue in which to express their feelings' (Seabrook, 2004). It was no surprise that within the briefest of times, the Western media moved on,

leaving one photojournalist to surmise that 'while the Westerners go home, the Asian's home is gone' (Zerbisias, 2005).

It is consonant with how memory works that over time claims of a full and nuanced media coverage of the disaster prevailed in the West. Journalists congratulated themselves for providing the kind of coverage that brought in substantial monetary aid to the region. One *Variety* editorial, illustrated by a frame grab of CNN correspondent Anderson Cooper standing in front of a ravaged landscape, crowed about the US coverage, noting that

the combined efforts of the networks, cable and broadcast media made the world keenly aware of the magnitude of the tragedy and mobilized resources to aid the victims ... It's moments like this when TV news provides the connective tissues of our increasingly interconnected world. (*Variety*, 2005)

Another reporter reflected 'a consensus in the media industry that the tsunami was covered better than any previous disaster [and that] journalists ... tried to persuade people to donate cash instead of inappropriate old clothes' (Gidley, 2005).

Though this was not the interpretation of their loss and global responses to it among local residents – whom one observer said would have passed notice by the Western media had the tragedy 'not happened on beaches frequented by blonde tourists' (Zerbisias, 2005) – the self-congratulatory perspective of the West persevered. At the same time, the local mnemonic impulses of what had happened to local residents were diminished and wiped from the coverage.

(B.) A second element of the West's coverage is substitution, where local experience is addressed through adjacent events that do a better job of encapsulating the meanings of the trauma, crisis, or catastrophe that the West wants to invoke. This includes both events at the same time and at different points in time. Multiple instances of genocide and mass killing are seen through both the prism of the Holocaust and through a slew of second-generation atrocities following World War Two (for an elaboration see Zelizer, 1998): atrocities in Cambodia of the 1970s merited the title 'Auschwitz of Asia' (*Time*, 1979) while mass slaughter in East Timor became 'another Cambodia' (Kondrake, 1979); El Salvadorean guerrillas were called 'the Pol Pot left' (Gray and Milburn Moore, 1994) and brutality in Burundi became 'the next Rwanda' (Gillet and Des Forges, 1994). In the Balkans, the Albanians were accused of practicing a 'Nazi policy' of persecution, and the war was called

'a parish-pump Holocaust' (Cohen, 1995). In each case, what is unique about the earlier and later instances of sanctioned death gets lost in the act of substitution, even more as substitution becomes a kind of Rolodex as the local experiences of local populations in local settings are diminished. When photojournalist Eddie Adams took a picture in 1968 of a South Vietnamese officer shooting a suspected Vietcong collaborator, the picture took on such resonance that it reappeared multiple times over the following decades in stories about the US invasions of Nicaragua and Afghanistan and other problems arising from American militarism, few of which received their own signal depiction at the time of their unfolding.¹ Again, as with minimalization, the substituted association is that which prevails in memory. Though recognition of the local tragedies of Pol Pot's regime centered on the dictator's brutality, the prevailing association with the Holocaust decades earlier was a far more useful mnemonic interpretation for those in the West than it was for the millions of Cambodians who suffered under the Khmer Rouge.

(C.) A third stage is displacement, where over time the elements imported as mnemonic frames for local experience are sustained at the expense of the original event, even if they were originally misrepresentative, erroneous, or problematic. The respective local circumstances underlying the ongoing famine in Africa, for instance, were displaced by the repetitive display of Kevin Carter's famous photo of a small starving girl being tracked by a vulture in Sudan in 1993. Shown repeatedly over time to depict recurrent situations of famine across the African continent and called by *Time* magazine 'an icon of Africa's anguish', the photo appeared as a poster in a human rights campaign by Amnesty International and persisted years afterward as a signal image for addressing a wide variety of circumstances involving famine: songwriters wrote songs about it, filmmakers invoked it in movies, and documentary films traced its taking (MacLeod, 1994²). Though numerous ethical questions arose as to whether Carter had done enough to help the girl or instead abandoned her to her death, by the following year the *New York Times* called the picture a 'metaphor for Africa's despair', and one journalist observed that it illustrated the 'breakdown of humanity [and] the hopeless plight of a whole continent'. Not addressed, however, was what was achieved by showing an image from 1993 years after it was taken, often in place of more recent images – some less jarring – of different famine-struck regions (Keller, 1994).

Displacement often occurs in the mediated environment beyond journalism, where the recycling of earlier associations offsets the later experience. One well-known picture, informally dubbed the Warsaw

Ghetto Boy, showed a small boy being herded from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 under the stern eye and trained gun of a Nazi guard. The picture reappeared years later to draw a corollary between the Nazi regime and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land: in 1982 Portuguese artist Antonio Moreira Antunes draped the boy in a PLO scarf and affixed the Jewish Star of David to the helmets of the soldiers in a cartoon that appeared in the Portuguese newspaper *Expresso*; in 2003, American artist Alan Schechner depicted both the Warsaw Ghetto boy and a Palestinian boy being arrested by Israeli police, each boy clutching a photograph of the other (Raskin, 2004).

(D.) The fourth stage of cannibalization is transportation, where signal associations are moved into the discussion and depiction of other experiences, even if they conjure up faulty memories from the local perspective. Here, borrowed elements that have been strategically welded together by the Western media move on to additional local contexts, taking with them the impulses that were earlier attached. Often, these impulses have little to do with what happened, and the strategic associations that are forged instead push aside what actually occurred.

For instance, the toppling of statues in the failed revolutions of the Communist regime – such as Prague Spring or the 1956 Hungarian revolution – was referenced repeatedly in both word and image in the toppling of the statue of Saddam Hussein in 2004. Hungarian Premier Peter Medgyessy hailed the statue's dismantlement, saying 'We, Hungarians, who remember October 1956 know what this means', and former US President George W. Bush referenced it in 2006, when, visiting Budapest, he called on Iraq's 'young democracy' to show the patience of Hungarians in 1956 (see, for instance, Abramowitz, 2006; *London Times*, 2006).

The act of transportation was not limited to Iraq. Statue toppling, seen as a visible symbol of a people's rebellion against authoritarian rule, emerged in a statue of Christopher Columbus being uprooted in Venezuela in October 2004, when anti-colonial impulses in Caracas transformed what had been till then the Day of the Discovery of America into the Day of Indigenous Resistance. It also surfaced in facsimiles of statues of George W. Bush being toppled in Canada in an anti-Bush demonstration (Nieto, 2004). In each case, the association signaled more about what was hoped than what actually transpired, for in none of the cases – including the initial referent point of early rebellions against Communism – did revolution actually occur.

The relevance of all of this to the cannibalization of memory in the global flow of news is that what persevere are strategic associations rather than a regard for the local experiences so central to memory-work.

Though problematic, this perseverance is instructive: when local memories are not given space to unfold on their own terms, strategic and often erroneous associations by those with the most pull in the global flow of news become that much easier to sustain.

On the Western media's cannibalization of memory

What does this tell us about memory and mediation? The cannibalization of local memory works in patterned ways. In its play toward mnemonic certainty, it pushes global over local, form over content, singular over multiple, simple over complex, familiar over strange, strategic over actual. It also forefronts the Western news media's interpretations of experiences, populations, and settings that unfold beyond their range of understanding. At risk here of being miscast on the global stage are situations of crisis, catastrophe, and trauma, particularly those occurring in transitional states that cannot produce mnemonic certainty. Making sense of the transitional governments of East African states or those of the former Soviet bloc are but a few examples of memory-work that are presently and necessarily stuck in mnemonic hesitation. Rushing to interpretive certainty by importing mnemonic impulses that provide instant interpretive closure pays heed neither to them nor to those striving to fully understand what is transpiring in distant lands. The differences between those who experience an event from up close or afar, between those who entertain multiple unresolved memories or those who push for closure, and between those who engage with an event's actual dimensions or its strategic associations all need time to find expression in the mediated coverage of crisis, trauma, and catastrophe.

The argument here is that such has not been the case. Relying on a media environment that necessarily neutralizes the localized mnemonic cultures with which it engages means instead that memory takes shape through impulses that regularly produce partial and erroneous understandings of local experience and play to the strategic interests of those who are most powerful in the global flow of news, primarily because the Western media cannot wait for local populations to make sense of the crises, catastrophes, and traumas they are undergoing. This is problematic because by not attending to local uncertainty and hesitation, the West misses the chance to attend to it at any later point in time. Cannibalization, after all, devours its victims, leaving no evidence to contest what went wrong.

All of this raises a number of questions about how memory fares when disseminated globally as news. We know that in the absence of clear

information about the present, journalism is easily able to import information from the past. When memory asserts itself powerfully, it can push aside the contemporary event for one long in the past. The earlier event comes to stand for the more recent one in some way – rhetorically, visually, symbolically – so that one’s engagement is deflected through earlier times. This happens across the board of news events. Contemporary wars get understood through earlier ones; emergent natural disaster is seen through the cataclysmic disasters of yesteryear.

But when the past produces a construction that alters the understanding of local experience in the vehicle most charted with its relay, we need to ask more stridently about the parameters through which memory can, does, and should travel as news. Have the technologies of dissemination overly facilitated its easy transportation? Do formerly primarily archival opportunities now stand in for news relay, even when they do so erroneously? And finally, what has happened to journalism’s former status as the first draft of history? Has the draft come to replace the record, not only now but in multiple transmutations across time and place?

Notes

1. See, for instance, the picture appended to Alter (2004) in *Newsweek*. The picture appeared in the *New York Times* in 1968, twice in 1998, 2004 and 2007; it appeared in the *Washington Post* in 1968, 1978, 1982, 1999, and 2004.
2. This included albums by popular singers Jessica Simpson, the Dead Kennedys, and Richey Edwards, films such as *Beyond Borders* with Angelina Jolie (2003), and the documentaries by Dan Krauss, *The Death of Kevin Carter* (2004) and Alfredo Jaar, *The Sound of Silence* (2006).

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2

The Democratic Potential of Mediated Collective Memory

Jill A. Edy

One finds among scholars of media and politics growing despair over the apparent inability of the mass media, and particularly journalism, to hold government leaders accountable for their actions and to aid citizens in reasoned decision-making about public issues. Media are said to 'echo' (Domke et al., 2006) or 'index' (Bennett et al., 2007) public officials. When officials are united, media are said to be incapable of generating a challenge to the official perspective. Even where there is no official consensus, official perspectives set limits on what Hallin calls the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' (1986; see also Bennett, 1990), which can reduce public debate to a set of procedural choices that fails to question underlying assumptions and perspectives. The perceived nature of the controversy in turn helps determine which political actors can gain access to the debate (for a discussion of the struggle over access, see Wolfsfeld, 1997). Regardless of whether subsequent public policy decisions are good or bad, from a communication perspective, this pattern of behavior represents a failure of democracy. For communication to qualify as democratic, there must be a genuine diversity of perspectives in public discussion, and groups not in power must be able to break into the discussion.

This essay examines the potential of mediated collective memory to generate more democratic forms of public discussion by overcoming some of the weaknesses of journalism identified by other scholars. There are several reasons to imagine that shared memories of public pasts have the capacity to disrupt anti-democratic interactions between government and media. First, shared memories do not reliably serve any political agenda. Second, under some circumstances, a particular collective memory may be unavoidable because the memory is so resonant that its absence from public discussion would be noteworthy. Third,

journalists sometimes introduce collective memories into their stories themselves (see Dan Berkowitz's essay, this volume), and fourth, collective memories can authorize new voices to enter public debate.

One way to think about the democratic potential of collective memory is to see it as a journalistic tool for resisting the authority of political elites. However, it is also possible to conceptualize collective memory as a feature of the social landscape that has the potential to affect political outcomes. Most models of political discourse consider the interaction of institutions without regard for the social context in which those institutions operate, but when political discourse includes shared memory, it becomes possible to consider how institutional interactions are affected by, and affect, the political environment.

The critique of journalism

Neiger, Zandberg, and Meyers (2010) argue that journalistic criticism is a poorly defined concept, but in general, critiques of institutional journalism question its ability to hold government officials accountable and to foster democratic debate. Modern political communication theory tends to view journalism as an institution interacting with the institutions of government (Cook, 1998; Patterson, 1993; Sparrow, 1999), and these airless exchanges are a frequent object of critique. News routines expect government to be a major source of news and therefore cede to government a great deal of power to set the public agenda. Regina Lawrence (2000) argues that such institutionally driven news is strongly influenced by government actors. Moreover, Lance Bennett (1990) observes that points of view that are not espoused by credible agents of government are not included in the mediated public debate. Leo Sigal (1973) demonstrated that most journalistic sources are public officials, and this is unlikely to change in a modern media environment since Internet bloggers typically rely on journalistic accounts as the basis for their commentaries (Leccese 2009).

Some scholars have noted that in times of perceived national crisis, journalists abandon their professional commitments to objectivity in favor of promoting national solidarity (e.g. Neiger and Zandberg, 2004; Schudson, 2002). However, even in more normal times, critics of journalism argue that professional practices associated with norms of objectivity (see Tuchman, 1972) help hold the profession hostage to government. Objectivity practices limit the ability of journalists to introduce novel interpretive frameworks or to challenge the claims of political elites. Introducing an alternative perspective that is not

espoused by a major political player invites charges of bias. Objectivity rules may require reporting the claims and counterclaims of political actors without regard to their truth value.

Collective memory: a spanner in the works

Many theorists of media and politics have shown that journalism covers issues and events in ways that serve the political agenda of the current regime. However, research has also shown that while coverage of events may serve the short-term interests of political elites, the collective memories generated by such coverage may not reliably serve the interests of those in power over the longer term (Edy, 2006). Lyndon Johnson's administration made the 1965 Watts riots in Los Angeles a symbol of why Great Society programs to alleviate poverty were necessary. The riots, which broke out following the California Highway Patrol's arrest of an African-American man for drunk driving, could have been understood in a variety of ways, and several interpretive frameworks were offered in the news of the time. However, a story about economic deprivation among inner city minorities best served the purpose of those in power, including federal officials seeking justification for anti-poverty programs and local officials who would distribute anti-poverty largesse. While alternative stories never entirely disappeared, the economic deprivation story became dominant.

But the Watts riots were not only narrated this way at the time; they were remembered this way. Thus, when riots broke out in Los Angeles in 1992 following the arrest of African-American motorist Rodney King, collective memory of the Watts riots emerged again, this time to challenge the social policy of the George H.W. Bush administration. Charges of Republican neglect of urban and minority issues had teeth in part because 'the same thing' seemed to have happened 'again'. A mediated memory created to serve those in power now turned against those in power and proved difficult to change or dismiss.

Naturally, the effectiveness of collective memory's challenge to those currently in political authority will depend in part on the ability of those in power to reshape memories of the past. Much collective memory literature has been devoted to the phenomenon of 'presentism' – the influence of the present on shared memories of the past. Maurice Halbwachs (1980/1950) argues that community memories can be destroyed or supplanted when community life is disrupted. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) demonstrate that political authorities can and do invent pasts that justify their authority. However, Edy (2006) found that when

officials were put on the spot by awkward memories, they tended to focus their efforts on shaping perceptions of the present rather than on reshaping memories of the past. Moreover, Michael Schudson (1992: 218) offers a thoughtful list of reasons as to why memories of the past are hard to change, arguing, 'When the past is visibly, viscerally, or palpably alive in the present, it cannot be reorganized at will.' More research will be needed to understand under what conditions political elites confronted with damaging parallels to the past are able to effectively restructure such memories and avoid the challenges they pose. However, the fact that shared memory does not reliably serve official agendas suggests that such memories hold the potential to force more democratic forms of public discourse. They can offer an alternative perspective even when officials are relatively unified or when opposition voices lack access or the courage to speak up.

The irresistible past

Of course, it is possible that given political leaders' influence on the news agenda, they might be able to avoid dealing with counterproductive references to the past. Yet in their work on the 'uses of history for decision makers', Richard Neustadt and Ernest May (1986) show just how difficult it can sometimes be to avoid shared memory and the lessons that seem to emerge from it. They argue that some historical analogies are 'irresistible': 'Everyone saw the events ... being replayed, and everyone agreed about the central lesson of those events' (48). Even historical analogies with less appeal for decision-makers are given categorical labels that suggest the past is hard to avoid. Neustadt and May call them 'captivating' or 'seductive'. They also describe the phenomenon of a 'familiar' historical analogy – one used so frequently 'that attachment develops unnoticed' (48). Unexamined analogies to the past, they argue, can prompt leaders to misjudge situations and make poor decisions.

Just how irresistible are shared memories of the past? One way to consider this empirically is to examine the frequency of references to a specific past in the course of a particular event or public debate. In the year following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the George W. Bush administration engaged in increasingly bellicose rhetoric toward Iraq and its leader, Saddam Hussein. By October of 2002, the United States Congress had authorized war with Iraq. Although the United States has fought many wars, since the late 1970s, the irresistible historical analogy that emerges in debates about military involvement in overseas conflict is the analogy to Vietnam.

Since the Vietnam War is widely considered to have been a 'mistake', although for various and complex reasons (Edy, 2005), analogies to the war are likely to challenge the policies of the administration conducting the war. The George W. Bush administration is said to have effectively kept the press under its thumb throughout much of the war in Iraq (e.g. Bennett et al., 2007), but how effective was it at avoiding references to Vietnam?

A Nexis search of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* during the Iraq War reveals the proportion of stories each month that contain references to both Iraq and Vietnam. This probably underestimates the number of references to the Vietnam War because the shared memory has some of the qualities of a 'familiar' analogy as described by Neustadt and May (1986). There is a good deal of coded language (such as the term 'quagmire') that indirectly refers to the Vietnam War without invoking it by name. Nevertheless, this simple count can tell us something about just how irresistible the Vietnam analogy was. From September 2002, when Bush requested authorization from the United Nations, the Congress, and the nation to go to war in Iraq, until September 2007, when Bush outlined his plan for withdrawal, over 8 percent (about 1 in 12) of the news stories contained an explicit reference to Vietnam. This would seem to be a high proportion of references given how effective the Bush administration's news management tactics were said to be, but there remains the question of whether these references were actually challenging or critical.

At this level of abstraction, it is impossible to tell exactly how the analogy to Vietnam was being used. There are, of course, both dovish and hawkish versions of the Vietnam War memory. The doves say the war was a mistake from the beginning and that the US should never have gotten involved. The hawks say that the US failed to commit adequate resources to the war effort, dooming the US to losing the war. Thus, memories of Vietnam might have supported different interpretations of the progress of the Iraq War. Moreover, the analogy constructed might have been comparative, emphasizing similarities between Iraq and Vietnam, or contrastive, emphasizing differences. However, the pattern of references to Vietnam does reveal that the analogy is more commonly used at points when the Iraq War is widely perceived to be going badly, suggesting that the analogy was comparative and challenged US policy.

There are two time periods of four months each where the proportion of references to Vietnam rises and remains above 10 percent. From July until October 2004, the proportion of stories with Vietnam references ranged from 10.65 percent to 17.37 percent (from about 1 in 10 stories

to about 1 in 6). During this period, the battle of Najaf was waged, a Senate report criticizing pre-war intelligence was released, hearings on Pfc. Lynndie England's role at Abu Ghraib were held, the number of US troops killed reached 1000, and the group sent to look for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction reported that they hadn't found any. From October 2006 until January 2007, the proportion of stories that referenced Vietnam ranged from 10.34 percent to 12.7 percent (from about 1 in 10 to about 1 in 8). During this time, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld resigned, an American television network labeled the conflict in Iraq a civil war, the Iraq study group released its highly critical report, Saddam Hussein was sentenced to death and hanged, and the US troop surge was announced. In contrast, the four-month period with the lowest proportion of references to Vietnam is May until August 2003, the period immediately following the 'Mission Accomplished' speech, when the proportions ranged from 5.48 percent to 4.08 percent (from about 1 in 18 to about 1 in 25). Thus, these apparently irresistible mediated memories of the Vietnam War were almost certainly critical of the Bush administration's conduct of the Iraq War, yet those in political power apparently could not avoid them.

Another aspect of the analogy to the Vietnam War that may make it 'irresistible' even for political elites who wish to avoid it is its resonance with the American public. Resonance is a phenomenon that is poorly defined in the literature. Hua-Hsin Wan (2008) defines resonant communication as having both an emotional and a cognitive dimension. James Ettema (2005) argues that resonance is a characteristic of a text that combines salience and eloquence. Robert Entman (2004) refers to cultural resonance without clearly defining the concept, but suggesting that elements of the political context make some aspects of stories more salient than others. Evidence of the resonance of shared memory of the Vietnam War for the American people emerges indirectly in their willingness to express an opinion about it. Typically, when asked whether a current or proposed military engagement has the potential to be 'like Vietnam', most people offer an opinion, which suggests that they are comfortable evaluating the potential parallel. Even more telling, their likelihood of answering the question does not decline over time. In 1999, less than 10 percent of the public was unwilling to speculate about whether US involvement in Kosovo would become 'another Vietnam'. Yet, by the year 2000, nearly half of all Americans were born after the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution marked the start of significant American military escalation in Vietnam (Edy, 2005). Thus, collective memory of the Vietnam War strikes a chord with average citizens, not

just with those who manage public discourse. Its impacts may therefore be wide-ranging.

The past as independent perspective

Even if shared memory represents a challenge to political authority, there is the question of how it might get into the news in the first place. One of the most compelling elements of Bennett's (1990) critique of journalism is that norms of objectivity prevent reporters from introducing perspectives into the news unless they are advocated by decision-makers. Both he and Entman (1989) argue that news can be quite slanted when government officials and other relevant decision-makers share a common perspective that generates a narrow range of policy choices. Thus, one might ask how effective the past can be in checking power if officials or decision-makers are unwilling to introduce it into the news.

Bennett has cast about for sources of alternative perspectives that would dovetail with the practices of objectivity. Initially, he suggested sustained public opposition to a policy (1990), and in later work, he and his colleagues suggested well-respected non-governmental organizations as a potential source of meaningful opposition (2007). The shared past, too, can offer alternative perspectives on current events and issues, and research suggests that professional commitments to objectivity do not prevent journalists from introducing collective memories into the news themselves. Edy (2006) found that in the first news cycle following the outbreak of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, reporters at both the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* introduced comparisons to the 1965 Watts riots in their news stories. This analogy offered alternatives to official perspectives in at least two ways. First, it suggested that the 1992 violence could not be dismissed as criminal lawlessness. Second, over the course of the 1992 riots, these analogies to the Watts riots became a part of public deliberation about whether Republican neglect of urban poverty had led to the violence, whether the Great Society programs had caused the riots, and about what would constitute effective anti-poverty policy. Thus, the analogy the reporters introduced helped to shape the debate.

Edy and Daradanova (2006) found that journalists also use the past in more subtle ways to generate alternative perspectives. Looking at the press conferences held immediately after the crash of the space shuttle Columbia, they found evidence that reporters based some of their questions on their shared memories of the crash of the space shuttle

Challenger seventeen years earlier. Since the Challenger crash was ultimately blamed on poor decision-making processes at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the questions grounded in shared memory challenged NASA authorities to prove that the past had not repeated itself. Once again, the past was introduced into the news by reporters rather than by officials or decision-makers, and in this case, it shaped the search for information as well as appearing in a variety of guises in the news reports themselves.

If introducing historical analogies into the news does not violate professional expectations about journalistic objectivity, this resource is worth investigating as a potential means for journalists to generate more democratic public debate at moments when political leaders are unable or unwilling to offer meaningfully opposing perspectives.

Shared memory and new voices

Regina Lawrence (2000) distinguishes between event-driven and institutionally driven news, arguing that event-driven news offers greater opportunities for news discourses to escape official control. Accidental events give non-official and marginalized voices a chance to enter the news as groups compete to give meaning to the event. But when faced with accidental events, which marginalized and non-official groups do journalists perceive as relevant to the story?

Edy and Daradanova's findings (2006) suggest that collective memory can make relevant sources that otherwise might not have been given access to the news. Had the crash of the space shuttle Columbia been treated as primarily a technical issue, reporters might have consulted engineers and scientists about the dangers of space flight and the technologies used to keep astronauts safe. Had the crash been treated as a human interest story about brave explorers who perished in the attempt to expand human knowledge, reporters might have gone to the astronauts' families and friends for insights into the character of the flight crew. Collective memory of the crash of the space shuttle Challenger, however, seems to have encouraged reporters to seek out and interview people involved in the investigation of the earlier crash and whistleblowers at NASA. Both groups were critical of the agency.

Work by Edy (2006) demonstrated that being an eyewitness to history also gained average citizens and other non-officials access to the news. Long-time residents of South Central Los Angeles who had personal memories of the Watts riots were asked by reporters to compare their memories to the more recent violence in 1992. Frisch (1989), however,

points out that the commentary of such eyewitnesses is sometimes limited to description of their experiences rather than interpretation of events. Thus, here too, more research is needed into the potential of shared memory to introduce new voices into the debate and enhance the possibilities for democratic deliberation.

Collective memory as political context

Recognizing the democratic potential of collective memory also illuminates an aspect of political discourse that is largely missing from theories of political communication: context. Many political communication theories explain mediated political discourse in terms of the routine interactions and relative power of social and political institutions, including government, capital, and journalism (e.g. Bennett, 1990; Bennett et al., 2007; Cook, 1998; Hermann and Chomsky, 1988; Sparrow, 1999). Although some scholars distinguish between institutionally driven and event-driven debates (e.g. Lawrence, 2000), the latter are typically analyzed in terms of institutional struggles to control their interpretation. The events themselves are treated, to a greater or lesser extent, as raw material, capable of assuming virtually any form depending on the power, competence, and rhetorical needs of institutional actors (see, for example, Bennett et al., 2007; Entman, 1991). Moreover, the audience for these debates is typically treated as a blank slate, subject only to the laws of political persuasion and therefore inclined to accept the interpretation of the institution with the right combination of power and competence. In other words, theories of political communication typically do not account for the political environment in which these interactions occur.

Setting aside the features of the political landscape in examining how political debates unfold in the media is understandable if those features cannot be effectively specified or operationalized. Yet such bracketing also blinds us to important influences on political discourse. Audiences possess independent interpretive resources for making sense of events that pre-date and contextualize the efforts of institutional actors to influence them (e.g. Zaller, 1998). For example, Americans have shared memories of the Vietnam War. Events are not neutral, and while powerful institutions may be able to influence outcomes, some outcomes are going to be easier to attain than others (e.g. Bennett and Lawrence, 1995). No matter how you sliced it, New Orleans was under water.

The study of collective memory offers a way to give concrete form to an otherwise amorphous political context. It posits that widely shared

understandings of previous events give shape to people's understanding of later public events. The force of shared memory will benefit some institutional actors and hinder others. Such hindrances may be offset if institutional actors are willing to expend enough power to reinterpret events or to distract the public, but the point here is that the playing field is not necessarily level. Of course, collective memory will itself have been influenced by previous institutional efforts to shape the shared understanding of events, but the point here is that each new event is not an open text just waiting for the work of institutional actors to give it meaning. Shared memory, then, is more than a journalistic tool; it is a feature of the political landscape that can influence the evolution of political discourse.

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3

'Round Up the Unusual Suspects': Banal Commemoration and the Role of the Media

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Toward the end of the classic (1942) movie *Casablanca*, Captain Louis Renault instructs his men to 'round up the usual suspects' after a Nazi general is discovered dead under dubious circumstances. In this essay I would like to round up the 'unusual' suspects in the question of collective memory. For a great many theoretical and methodological reasons, scholars from different disciplines examine the work of agents of memory as well as the form and content of commemoration during official mnemonic times and spaces. The role of the media in this endeavor, however, is surprisingly much less prevalent and developed (Meyers, 2007; Neiger, Zandberg, and Meyers, this volume), in many ways simply taken for granted and thus overlooked. I would like here to focus on what I call 'banal commemoration', highlighting the role played by the media as the major social domain in which and through which these non-intrusive pieces of knowledge play themselves out. I will use the struggle over the commemoration of Yitzhak Rabin to introduce, address, and illustrate the notion of banal commemoration. Before elaborating on this concept and its social significance, a few words are in order about the present case study and the relationship between collective memory and commemoration.

Yitzhak Rabin's assassination

Yitzhak Rabin was an acclaimed military officer who had commanded a brigade that fought in the 1948 Israel War of Independence. He was Chief of Staff of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during the 1967 War, at the conclusion of which the eastern part of Jerusalem and the West Bank were captured from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Sinai Desert and the Gaza Strip from Egypt (collectively referred to as 'the

occupied territories'). In September 1993, during Rabin's second term of office as Israel's Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, the 'Oslo Accords' were signed by Israeli and Palestinian leaders. This heralded the beginning of the 'peace process', the political and diplomatic efforts taken toward resolving the bitter and bloody 100-year-old conflict between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East.

That Rabin was engaged in a peace process was evident to his political admirers and supporters; but it was not evident to all of his opponents, who perceived any withdrawal from the occupied territories (by now populated with Jewish settlements) as a specter of disaster on both strategic and religious grounds. Thus, soon after the famous handshake between Rabin and Yasser Arafat at the White House in September 1993, Rabin became the primary target of a campaign of vilification organized by elements on the Israeli right who labeled him a traitor (Ben-Yehuda, 1997). The Israeli right, and especially the Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, who felt that the Israeli government had abandoned them, organized vitriolic demonstrations and rallies, which were often led and addressed by prominent right-wing political figures and Jewish rabbinical authorities.

In an attempt to respond to the campaign against Rabin, his government, and the peace process, the Israeli left organized a large demonstration in Tel Aviv on November 4, 1995, with the participation of literary figures and entertainers as well as politicians. Rabin was shot as he was leaving the rally, and he died several hours later in a nearby hospital. Soon enough, the assassination would come to represent and embody the chasm that lay deep in the heart of the nation, exacerbating the right/left, religious/secular divides within Israeli society. While all (save conspiracy theory supporters) concurred that Yigal Amir, an Orthodox Jew and a law student, had pulled the trigger that killed Rabin, there was little agreement over what both the assassin and the assassination symbolized at a deeper level. In very general terms, for the religious right Yigal Amir became 'a bad apple', a fringe lunatic who had acted alone and irrationally. For the secular left, however, Yigal Amir stood within the much broader context of the campaign of political incitement against the Prime Minister (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009). While many secular right wingers felt shame at the assassination, their political leaders allied more with religious right-wing groups, including those representing Jewish settlers, who were less than enthusiastic about commemorating Rabin and the assassination. It goes without saying that left-wing groups insisted on doing so. The commemorations of Yitzhak Rabin have thus been classified as 'a difficult past' insofar as the commemorated event is

disputed, conflictual, and divisive (see Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002; Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz, 1991). Many people who wanted to memorialize Rabin and the assassination did so on their own, forming voluntary associations and creating, for example, the annual memorial ceremony held in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv.² In addition to these grassroots commemorations, in 1997 the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) passed the Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Day Law which legislated mandatory observance of the day for major social institutions (mainly in the educational system) as well as an annual memorial ceremony at Rabin's gravesite. The mainstream media in Israel (both written and electronic) mobilized around the Memorial Day by publishing articles (some of which were highly critical of the commemoration), airing special radio and television programs, etc. However, the illustrations for the present essay are for the most part newspaper items published throughout the year in various newspapers; none of them appeared specifically around the Rabin Memorial Day or in direct connection with it, over the course of the decade in which the research took place (1996–2006).³

Collective memory and commemoration

Collective memory and its (approximate) synonyms – ‘social memory’, ‘popular memory’, ‘cultural memory’, and ‘official memory’ – are probably some of the most popular and engaging concepts to be shared (even if only at the semantic level) by ‘ordinary people’, political and social elites, and scholars from diverse disciplines. This preoccupation with collective memory is hardly the result of a special attraction to history, although the latter's relationship to memory is complicated and has already evoked much discussion (e.g. Nora, 1989; Schwartz, 1997, 2000; Winter and Sivan, 1999). Rather, as two reviews of the field demonstrate (Olick and Robbins, 1998; Zelizer, 1995), this interest is fueled by the effect of the use and abuse of the past on a wide range of issues related to the present; from the formation of collective identities (national, ethnic, or gender-based), to questions of politics and power, tradition and myth, social solidarity, accuracy and authenticity, continuity and change, social order, meaning-making, and culture in general. In other words, collective memory matters, and it has effectively mattered for a long time (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, 2011). Collective memory is important and timely both as a societal and as a sociological concern. As a model for society it represents its ethos and myths, setting its dreams, future visions, and programs (Schwartz, 2000). As a cultural system (Schwartz, 1996), collective memory is probably as crucial for

understanding society as any other sociological tool of this magnitude. Intellectually, collective memory is a tempting concept to work around and think with in an ever-changing world that is, for better or worse, so preoccupied with its real or imagined past. Collective memory – despite its long history – has what one may term ‘contemporary qualities’ in that it is more a process than a stable and fixed entity; it is changeable, malleable, and tricky; it is located somewhere between present needs and past commitments; it includes both individual understandings of past events as well as knowledge of the past that transcends the individual (Olick, 1999); it refers to the relations between individual beliefs, history, and commemoration (Schwartz and Schuman, 2005); and it is articulated through history and commemoration as two different ways in which the past is expressed and known to present generations (Schwartz, 2001). Even Maurice Halbwachs – the founding father of both the term and the field⁴ – did not quite define it. For him, collective memory lay somewhere between historical and autobiographical memory (Halbwachs, 1980/1950; see also Halbwachs, 1992/1925).

Elusive though it be, quite impossible to touch or feel and thus to study, collective memory is out there. Many scholars have deciphered and studied it at the macro- and micro-social levels. They have documented the changes that have taken place in the content of social memory over time and have argued about the power of the past versus the power of the present in shaping this outcome (e.g. Olick and Robbins, 1998; Schudson, 1989; Zelizer, 1995). Like other abstract concepts, such as ‘the state’,⁵ one cannot perceive collective memory by means of the senses. This is where the role of commemoration and the role of the media come into play, and this is why we should care about them. As the tangible public presentation and articulation of collective memory, commemoration includes – as Schwartz (2001) reminds us – written texts (e.g. poems, eulogies), music (e.g. anthems, inspirational songs), icons (e.g. photographs, films, and other forms of visual representation), monuments and shrines (e.g. birthplaces of important people), naming practices (e.g. streets, schools), history books, museums, and mnemonic rituals.

Whether because of its contemporary mediated nature (Hoskins, 2003) or just because much (although certainly not all) collective memory is transmitted by the media in general and by the mass media in particular (Edy, 1999; Neiger, Zandberg, and Meyers, this volume), an interest in collective memory perforce requires an interest in the media, which is probably the primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge and perceptions about the past and thus about the present (the only

serious competition being the educational system which, of course, can be seen as yet another form of media).⁶ In other words, because collective memory is of utmost importance, it is crucial to understand its forms as well as the way in which it is packaged and transmitted to wider audiences. Within this contour, I would like to introduce the concept of 'banal commemoration'.

Banal commemoration

The notion of banal commemoration arose first in answer to a critique of social memory studies that emphasize the formal, the festive, and the intentional forms of commemoration. Phrasing this critique, Schudson argues that 'the past endures in the present not only through self-consciously framed acts of commemoration but through psychological, social, linguistic, and political processes that keep the past alive without necessarily intending to do so' (1997: 3). He suggests that mnemonic practices and artifacts that are self-consciously planned by various social agencies should be distinguished from those that are enunciated unintentionally, and that greater attention needs to be paid to the latter. While this distinction and the resultant concepts (Schudson refers to mnemonic versus non-commemorative public memory) are certainly important, they do not exhaust the entire spectrum of informal, non-intrusive, and mundane commemorations which occupies social reality and life. Moreover, drawing a theoretical line between commemorative and non-commemorative forms of collective memory solely on the basis of the intention of social agency or lack thereof is liable to ignore the 'receiving' side, i.e. the audience and the mnemonic environment we live in, as well as the dynamics of commemoration in a more general sense. And indeed, our everyday life is surrounded by self-conscious acts as well as non-purposeful ones that nonetheless constitute commemoration, some of which are straightforward, outright commemoration while others are more subtle and inconspicuous. Thus instead of Schudson's emphasis on the unintentional acts performed by social actors and agencies, I would like to highlight the everyday mnemonic life of the audience and the appearance of the mnemonic practices and artifacts.

By 'banal commemoration' I refer to non-mnemonic times and spaces in which a commemorated event or person is mentioned. The notion of banal commemoration is inspired by Billig's 'banal nationalism' (1995: 6), which he defines as a way to introduce 'ideological habits which enable the established nations ... to be reproduced'. Using this concept

redirects our attention to the routine, unmarked, habitual ways in which citizens are reminded of their nation and, as in our case, of their past. The ultimate image of banal nationalism would not be 'the flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion [but rather] the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building' (Billig, 1995: 8). Borrowing from this imagery, we could say that in studying banal commemoration, we would not be interested – or at least not only interested – in the huge picture of Rabin hung up especially for a memorial ceremony in a state school or in Rabin Square during the official memorial ceremony; instead we would concern ourselves with the small picture that hangs all year long on the staircase between the second and third floors in a run-down school building, accompanying the pupils every day as they climb up and down the stairs to class. By the same token, we would be interested in streets named after Rabin which pedestrians traverse in the course of their daily routine on the way to and from school, work, shopping, and home without paying much attention to it.

Thus the texture of banal commemorations comprises two different forms; the first are those planned in advance by agents of memory who have a mnemonic agenda in mind and an ability to carry it through. Street names, plaques on buildings marking the fact that an important figure once lived there, and the brass cobblestones inserted into Berlin and Vienna pavements to acknowledge the Jews rounded up from these addresses during the Holocaust are three examples of a much wider phenomenon (which Schudson would consider a commemorative form of collective memory, as it is predicated on intention and planning – 1997). It involves the conduct of everyday life in the presence of an unmarked and unnoticed past whose commemoration is indeed intentional, having been produced through the efforts of agents of memory who applied to – and often struggled with – the appropriate municipal or governmental committees and ensured that the name of the particular person or event bearing the specific memory be allocated to a street or building, but which is nonetheless a non-intrusive commemoration (see Figure 1).

The second form of banal commemoration, which is more akin to Schudson's non-commemorative forms of collective memory (1997), concerns the various convoluted, often curious ways in which past events and people are recollected; hardly intended to become mnemonic practices, such reminiscences and referencing nonetheless are, and thus also require our attention. Referring to a past event or mentioning a person from the past in a conversation, citing it as an example, an inspiration, as part of an anecdote, and so forth – these operate as mnemonic practices because they bring a specific past to the



Figure 1: A sign carrying Yitzhak Rabin’s name. In the Hebrew version the sign elaborates: ‘The Prime Minister and Defense Minister. The chief-of-staff during the 1967 war (1922–1995)’.

foreground. Banal commemorations of this sort include the innumerable Israeli television screenings of Knesset Labor Party discussions in which a portrait of a smiling Rabin adorns the wall in the background. Silent and unexciting, the picture is always there. In the same way, the many mundane and, at times unexpected, moments in which Rabin is incidentally mentioned also constitute banal commemorations – for example, French-Moroccan author Taher Ben-Jalun ends an interview on his new book with the remark: ‘To tell the truth, sometimes I day-dream here, in front of this window, and imagine that Yitzhak Rabin is still alive’ (Alfon, 1999). For Israel’s jubilee fiftieth Independence Day, the *Ma’ariv* daily published a special article, ‘A Unique Event in World History’, written by former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev; the accompanying photo shows Gorbachev with Rabin (Gorbachev, 1998). The headline of an item reporting an auction in Florida reads, ‘Rabin’s Jacket Sold to the Lady in the Second Row’ (Shoval-Shaked and Mordechai, 1998). In a list of the ‘100 Most Eminent Jews of the 20th Century’ compiled by one Israeli newspaper for Israel’s fifty-first Independence Day, Rabin is listed together with Marc Chagall, Steven



Figure 2: The stickers read: 'Enough with violence' and 'Shalom, friend' ('Shalom' in Hebrew means 'hello', 'goodbye' and also 'peace') carrying Rabin's portrait and date of the assassination.

Spielberg, Henry Kissinger, and Yitzhak Perlman (London, 1999). A model and former beauty queen recalls how she was 'shocked' when she heard of Rabin's assassination during the Miss Universe contest, adding that she believes that there is some merit to the conspiracy theory and ending the interview by saying that she 'may enter politics. My model is Yitzhak Rabin ... He was one of the people that I admired the most' (Shilon, 1998). Lawyers describing the election campaigning for Israel Bar Association leadership remarked that 'there hadn't been such incitement [between electoral camps] since the campaign against Rabin' (*Globes*, 2003). In 2001, Sever Plotzker, a prominent Israeli journalist, wrote that 'Netanyahu is the best Prime Minister Israel has had since Rabin's Assassination' (Plotzker, 2001). After the May 2010 Gaza blockade flotilla, a senior military commentator criticized the IDF's handling of the affair by bracketing it with Rabin's assassination as part of a more general process in Israel, what he called 'a blockade of mindfulness' (Oren, 2010). A few years ago I walked into a Tel Aviv store just as a customer was expressing his astonishment at the news heard that day (February 1, 2006): Jewish settlers had thrown rocks at the (Jewish) police sent to evacuate them from an illegal settlement in the occupied

territories. The saleswoman refused to be surprised and, nonchalantly rearranging some mugs and bowls on the shelves, casually remarked: 'And who assassinated Rabin? A Jew.' In ways such as these, Rabin and the assassination are an inescapable part of everyday life in Israel, like Billig's 'unwaved flag' (1995: 10).

Some referencing is planned in advance (certainly in the first form of banal commemoration, and probably some of the apparently nonchalant recollections and reminiscences), some is not. The former beauty queen probably didn't really want to make sure that nobody forgot Rabin's assassination; mentioning Rabin in the interview may have been an attention-getting device intended to earn her more respect. So, too, the lawyers surprised at the intensity of emotions elicited by the Bar Association elections may have thought that the comparison with Rabin's assassination was provocative, but were in all likelihood not concerned with the assassination as a memory that should be maintained *per se*. As far as the news media examples are concerned, even if the references to past events are intentional, 'good journalism is defined as a story that incorporates a new development into a familiar (and thus consumer-friendly) framework' (Meyers, 2007: 721). And my personal anecdote about the store is a totally unplanned mnemonic encounter. But all the instances cited above present individuals who ended up 'doing commemoration' (see Figure 2).

Banal commemoration has social implications. Being informal, subtle, and non-intrusive, it may be able to maintain a memory that otherwise would generate protest and animosity. What might trigger anger, frustration, and tension during the official Rabin Memorial Day (see Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009) is often quietly accepted when it appears in a different temporal and spatial context. At the same time, however, banal commemorations may reflect or symbolize the waning of a memory and its increasing opaqueness and lack of focus. Still, most agents of memory would probably prefer the persistence of a banal commemoration over nothing at all, since the mere existence of such symbols might trigger future questions and resurgent interest and awareness. Listen to one of Rabin's personal assistants who was quite heavily involved with the commemoration:

I'm against all those fancy halls of fame ... I'm for naming streets [after Rabin], naming schools, naming hospitals, naming cemeteries, whatever you can think of. Because every street and every school and every community center [named after Rabin] often – not always, but often – turns out to be part of our daily existence and experience.

So you would say that you are going to visit a friend on Rabin Street, and that you are going to the Rabin Community Center, and that you study at the Rabin School. It is not so important whether you know more or less [about Rabin], but the name is being absorbed and internalized. (Interview, January 4, 1998)

In some ways, banal commemoration is like an alarm clock set to an unexpected hour, waiting to ring and awaken the unsuspected sleeper.

As already noted, the media is a crucial vehicle for transmitting collective memory to wider audiences in general, and its role within the contour of banal commemoration is very compelling. This is especially pertinent for the second form of banal commemoration, the one that is relatively unplanned and that emerges from a text on other issues (see Schudson's work on Watergate – 1992, 1997). If (as was usually the case in my research) a newspaper editor pulls two or three sentences out of an interview for a headline and they happen to refer to Rabin or to the assassination, then the media has effectively turned the unnoticed and the unremarkable into commemoration. Just as commemoration as a cultural form can extract and highlight what was heretofore just another moment in an unnoticed historical chronology (Schwartz and Schuman, 2005), thus making it special and worth remembering, so too the media can extract some pieces of information from a mundane story about a Florida auction and turn them into a mnemonic headline. Needless to say, the kind of editorial work carried out by the media takes into account how the editors envision their readership: If they did not think a headline or caption referring to Rabin would spark some interest in the article or in the paper in general, they would probably choose a different headline. But having decided to run the caption mentioning Rabin or his assassination, they take an active part in maintaining, sustaining, even constructing, collective memory; and this prosaic work of the media must be addressed at least as much as is more purposeful work regarding memory.

Concluding remarks

The role of journalists as active agents of memory is by now widely accepted (Meyers, 2007); and although we may not always be sure how their relations operate and function, the mutual dependency of collective memory and the media, especially the mass media, has become common knowledge. In very general terms, since much of what fills the air and the written media depends on well-planned events it can report

or join in, commemorative practices, among other cultural domains, provide the media with an almost daily deluge of items, stories, events, and content. Thus, as the Rabin Memorial Day approaches, much of the Israeli mainstream media responds both before and during it by covering the official ceremonies (including protests) and the special Knesset session, interviewing Rabin's friends and family, running special stories and features that relate to it, and so forth. From the opposite perspective, if collective memory is to be brought to wider audiences (especially the older ones who are not part of the educational system), the media's cooperation is vital. Thus, for example, when the Rabin Center inaugurated its new museum, it made sure to invite prominent journalists for a special tour of the building, knowing that this kind of public relations would 'get the word out' quickly.

But this essay is less concerned with the formal commemorations that are the bread and butter of the media. I have tried here to draw attention to commonplace, mundane, banal forms of commemoration and to focus on the manifestation of the past in everyday life. As mentioned, banal commemoration encompasses both planned mnemonic artifacts that are barely noticed and are an integral part of our ordinary lives, as well as unplanned remarks and references that evoke events and people from the past. The media is an intrinsic part of contemporary life, and its role is especially crucial in the second form of banal commemoration, which appears spontaneously, sporadically, and without preparation, what Schudson calls 'non-commemorative' forms of collective memory (1997). Unless we treat every form of commemoration as a media memory (since collective memory is always mediated), the role of the media in making banal commemoration a relevant and significant form of social knowledge must be acknowledged, studied, evaluated, and understood.

Formal and informal commemorations are complementary processes that together – although not necessarily simultaneously – construct a complex mnemonic reality. Neither formal nor informal forms of commemoration are fixed or permanent entities, and the boundaries between banal and non-banal commemoration, albeit clear, are shifting and inconstant. Formal and well-planned commemorations may lose their audiences, relevance, and centrality and transmute into ordinary and inexpressive reality, while mundane and non-intrusive mnemonic reality may suddenly attract attention and become a focal point and source of enhanced social activity and awareness. Thus, for example, much of the current argument surrounding Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (usually simply referred to as the Holocaust

Memorial) revolves precisely around the fact that it is home to mundane social activities (e.g. children's hide and seek by day, couples' love-making by night), transforming a formal and sacred mnemonic site into a part of everyday life (Dekel, 2009). By the same token, the memory of an Israeli radical and relatively marginal weekly (*Haolam Hazeh* – 'This World') has transformed from being unmarked to a glorified mnemonic position (Meyers, 2007). Such changes are often affected by wider historical, sociological, and political conditions and always involve the active efforts of agents of memory or their cessation of efforts on behalf of the particular issue. Both banal and formalized commemorations bear long-term consequences, as the manner in which they operate differently on the social and individual body and trigger disparate reactions to and knowledge of the legacies of the past.

At the end of the day, our lives and our understanding of them are probably affected as much by formal and official moments and spaces as by informal, ordinary, and what seem at first sight totally insignificant banalities. The same can be said about the media which so constantly surrounds us that we take it for granted. For a deeper understanding of the wide-ranging performance and reality of collective memory in general, a closer look at the trivial and banal is necessary, including the trivial and banal means of transmission. The usual formal 'suspects' have a story to tell us, and may even hide something; so too the unusual and banal ones.

Notes

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2. On agents of memory or moral entrepreneurs, see Fine, 2001; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009.
3. For an elaboration on the research method used in this project, see Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009.
4. For an evaluation of this assessment, see, Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, 2011.
5. While 'the state' has concrete manifestations in the shape of laws, borders, documents, and much more, it is nonetheless an abstract concept that is in constant need of being symbolically presented, constructed, and maintained (see Anderson, 1983).
6. Obviously, this brief comment does not exhaust the important discussion of the relationship between collective memory and media in general and media technologies in particular (see, for example, Hutton, 1993; Ong, 1967, 2002).

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4

Media Remembering: the Contributions of Life-Story Methodology to Memory/Media Research

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In order to understand the various contributions of life-story methodology to our field, we must first agree to define 'life story'. I think it would be best to define this as an activity more than a complete verbal (or written) output. To make this clear, let us turn the noun into a verb and refer not only to 'a life story', but to 'life-storying'. Individuals rarely tell their 'life stories' from beginning to end, aiming at a coherent, exhaustive narrative. At any rate, exhaustivity is out of reach, although the illusion of a 'full life story' is part of our modern individualist ideological baggage (Alasuutari, 1997; Linde, 1993; Ricoeur, 1991). Mostly, in real-life or in artificial research situations, individuals put together 'some life story', or, to use the verb we have just suggested, 'life-story' when they are prompted to put together narratives about their lives, with a sense of digging in the past. Unsaid or not, 'I remember' is the opening sentence of every life-story (or segment of life-story). It is no coincidence if some modernist writers have used this opening statement for their literary work (Brainard, 1970; Perec, 1978). The conscious sense of remembering is remarkable, not the act of remembering itself. The 'I' is no less important than the 'remember'. Any segment of life-story is generally considered as pertaining to an individual, although it is often built through cooperation in conversation (Linde, 1993: esp. ch. 5). Some authors may talk about 'memories' in such cases, but I think 'life-story' conveys something more precise: what is collected in life-story research is a coherent narrative, in the first person, which is perceived as a fragment of a wider narrative.

In media research, there has been a still small but increasing use of life-story, as I have just defined it. Mostly, researchers who have collected media memories have dealt with the 'early days' or the 'beginnings'

of a specific medium, mainly television, during the youth of the interviewees, in a variety of countries (Gutierrez Lozano, 2003; O'Sullivan, 1991; Van Zoonen and Wieten, 1994; Varela, 1993). They have also collected life-stories connected to radio (Moore, 1988), popular music (Van Dijck, 2009), popular drama (Dhoest, 2006), current affairs and politics (Barnhurst and Wartella, 1998; Bourdon, 1992), cinema-going (Bourdon, 2002; Kuhn, 2002), 'female spectatorship for cinema stars' (Stacey, 1994), or for visual media in general (Drotner, 1998). Life-stories of gay men have been used to retrace the changing perception of this given minority in the media (Kama, 2002). Finally, some have been asked to retrace the whole life span in relation to television in general (Bourdon, 2003). Being aware that they restrict their interviewees to specific moments or themes, researchers talked about 'life-phased' interviews, 'limited life-story', or 'themed life-story'. Not all of them use oral interviews. Some collect written memories in a class, others ask viewers to respond to advertisements in the press, e.g. for 'recollections of female Hollywood stars during the 1940s and 1950s' (Stacey, 1994: 17). Finally, a group of researchers has recently studied 'news in public memory' in a comparative manner, resorting to focus groups (Volkmer, 2006). Clearly, the mode of (re)collection has implications that I will not consider here, such as the type and number of respondents, the length of each individual 'life-story', and, most importantly, the type of memories retrieved.

This chapter will first discuss traditional problems associated with the methodology: the reconstructive nature of memory and the problem of generalization. It will move to the more specific question of the contribution of 'limited life-stories' in relation to specific media technologies or content. Finally, it will suggest two major ways of using the methodology: a history of reception and a sociology of the everyday.

A reminder: memory as an attractive double agent

Let us first briefly recall the relevant lessons from the huge body of life-story research, and from the much smaller body of life-story research connected to the media. Cognitivists and social scientists do not agree on much about memories, except on one point: memory is reconstructive; it constantly re-elaborates the past. Few authors, however, adopt a radically reconstructive view: memory might distort, schematize, conflate different memories into one, but it has, for the most part, something to do with events, people, feelings, which actually occurred in the past. In short, memory is a 'double agent', lying to all, and yet storing some genuine knowledge of the past even if it is the basis for lies.

This trivial point needs a double qualification. First, certain narratives which have been told many times over, are 'stratified', and are less prone to change: the reconstruction process can be considerably slowed down, if not completely halted. Second, and more crucially here, each social agent, even the most informed and educated, remains persuaded that *at some point* her/his memory tells the truth, and informants are very good at convincing researchers of this (Van Dijck, 2009: 109). As memory researchers know well, there might be both obscurities and discrepancies when cross-checking life-stories with other sources. In France, a young man remembers how he got 'dragged into watching' *Santa Barbara* when he got back from school a certain year and found his mother and sister glued to 'these stories you find silly at first' (Bourdon, 2003: 16). Here we can only record a 'structure of feeling' (Raymond Williams), not check the details of the story: which part of the family was 'glued' exactly? For how long? Did he really dislike the show from the start, or did he reflect a 'moral hierarchy' (Alasuutari, 1992) of television programs which included a poor rating of soap operas?

Regarding the tendency of memory to distort, media researchers might have an advantage compared to other kind of memories tied up to an emotionally or historically 'loaded' heritage: an extreme case being the Nazi past of German families which offers systematic reconstruction and reinterpretations (Welzer, 2010). The one factor that might weigh on viewers' narratives is the 'moral hierarchy' of genres (and media) we have considered in the example quoted above: for example, it might be difficult to research a television program which was very popular but disdained by critics, and felt to be 'illegitimate' by educated viewers who might be reluctant to talk about such programs, to remember them, or, which is trickier, to admit that they remember. But these audiences have changed, and the tendency to hide or minimize 'shameful consumption' might not be so strong nowadays (and this change may be projected onto narratives of the past). In different national contexts, sociologists of culture (Donnat, 1994, for France; Peterson and Kern, 1996, for the United States) have suggested that educated audiences would care less about the 'moral hierarchy' of cultural products and manage their sense of cultural distinction in a different way.

From the personal to the collective: life-story and the problem of generalization

The relations of the individual and the collective are at the nexus of many debates in memory studies, and a division of labor seems to be at

work (Sutton, 2007). Cognitive sciences and biology researchers focus on the individual, ignoring the huge developments around the notion of collective memory while social and cultural researchers (like the ones in this book) tend to pay lip service to the cognitive/individual strand of research (despite its more 'scientific' aura). Conceptualizing memories beyond this divide remains difficult. We would like to insist on one point: it is hard to talk of individual memories *per se*, as we learnt from Maurice Halbwachs (1980/1950). There are social dimensions to the apparently most individual memories. This is still a major insight, of great importance to life-story methodology. The lesson was well taken mostly by those who could more easily accept it, historians and sociologists.

The question of generalizing from a few individuals to a whole collective is a classic problem of life-story research. Beyond a significant number of reoccurring cases, researchers say that a model (let's say, of television consumption) is *saturated*. The terminology is borrowed from mathematics, where there is a formal definition of the notion. Researchers working from interviews just start noticing that some patterns reoccur, and stop interviewing, although the justification of this is somewhat imprecise. It is easier to generalize when working on a homogeneous milieu, where patterns of behavior and opinion are more likely to reoccur. The problem is acute in life-story based media research, as the researchers we have quoted tend to generalize about vast segments of society (women), or a whole country, from their interviews.

Here a tendency to fetishize memories as 'highly authentic' sources may be noted, through the form of the 'typical' (or representative) quote, used as the opening (Varela, 1993) or title of a text, which frames the quote as the dominant tone among the memories collected, but on what basis? Did most Dutch viewers feel that the arrival of television 'wasn't exactly a miracle' (Van Zoonen and Wieten, 1992). With more interviews, wouldn't we have reached the conclusion that TV is remembered as a technological miracle of some kind, as it is in other countries where similar methodology was used?

The proper way to generalize is not clear, but some ways of generalizing are clearly wrong. Generalization (or saturation) must not be based on the way the interviewees themselves express a sense of 'saturation': when they say 'we all', or, even 'better', 'the whole nation', researchers must take note and interpret, but such claims are not necessarily connected to the way the 'whole nation' actually felt. The word 'we' is particularly tricky to interpret. Sometimes it is hard to say what the 'we' refers to, especially in countries where the sense of the collective

nationhood is strong and much emphasized by society, as among Jewish Israelis.

This difficulty regarding generalizing might explain a paradox of memory research. Many contemporary historians who want to tackle 'collective memory' head-on do not, for the most part, ask people what they remember. Collective memory researchers tend to use widely diffused cultural texts, notably popular media, but also ceremonies and monuments: just about anything, any 'medium' in the widest sense, can serve to document 'collective memory'. To be blunter, collective memory in research seems to have little to do with actual memories of actual people. And yet, the metaphorical use of psychological and neurological terminology 'misrepresents the social dynamics of collective memory as an effect and extension of individual, autobiographical memory' (Kansteiner, 2002: 170). Much like Durkheimian collective representations, collective memory is conceived as a kind of cloud enveloping everyone. The reason why certain texts should give a privileged access to collective memory is rarely made explicit, oscillating between high circulation (for popular media) and cultural consecration (for cinema, monument). It seems dangerous, however, to stick to textual collective memory: texts have to be appropriated/translated/received at the level of micro-social practices and this process has to be researched, or, at least, explained. In particular, researchers have to explain how the collective memory of a distant, not directly experienced past, is incorporated at the individual level, especially to give national communities a sense of common historical destiny: again, the media play a major part here. Let us think of the way the Israeli media made their audience feel that the Shoah is still there, or might happen again, or has just happened, in short, as a part of their collective memory, not only a chapter in history. Can individual life-stories, however 'limited' and 'themed', contribute to collective memory research, better, or differently, than text-based research? Can both be combined?

Before we try to answer, it might be worth it to go back to Halbwachs again. Before he coined the phrase 'collective memory', Halbwachs offered a different formulation (Halbwachs, 1992/1925), suggesting that each individual belongs to different 'social frameworks of memory', and that individual memory developed within such frameworks: the family, the religion, the profession (the nation, which has become almost automatically associated with 'collective memory', did not preoccupy him much). To understand media memories, which often belong to texts that circulate widely, it might be a useful tool to understand how media texts are 'domesticated' through different frameworks, within a

(seemingly) individual narrative: major dramas ('flashbulb memories' such as assassinations of heads of state) mobilize the national 'we', for example, while quiet 'wallpaper' memories of media consumption are more readily associated with family routines. But one might also detect new social frameworks of memory. In the new, fragmented media age of cable television and the Internet, each age group develops its own memories of media use, detached from that of the parents (who still sit in the living room with the 'old media').

This could be Halbwachs' lesson for modern life-story media researchers: focus on certain subgroups, generational, social, ethnic, and go deeper into each specific 'social framework of media-memory'. Themed life-stories should not be collected among very large populations, but among a social class, an ethnic group, a specific profession, or a specific gender among those groups. This will help with generalization, as life-stories researchers from other fields know well. Interestingly, though, life-stories researchers have focused more on specific genres in certain national contexts, than on specific milieus.

'Limited life-stories' and their problems

Since we want to know if it is worthwhile to interview people about their memory of media (or certain aspects of the media), we must know what is encoded as 'media memory'. When we ask media consumers to recall memories of 'television', 'news and current affairs', 'television drama in the sixties', 'newspaper reading', we prompt them to retrieve something which has been encoded as such. However, not every experience of each media or genre will be encoded under the corresponding label. Media memories can be stored as celebrity memories, as family folklore ... It is well known that asking about a specific period is particularly tricky as we rarely encode according to specific periods or dates. But about other categories we know much less. As Ricoeur (1991: 76-7) has noted, we construct coherence according to certain realms of life ('plans de vie'), and some divisions are socially accepted: telling the story of our family/professional/love life makes sense in our societies (although those realms sometimes overlap).

Memories of specific, discrete events can also be told and retold according to well-known social patterns of narrativity. This applies to some life-story research dealing with the 'arrival' of a new medium. Apart from its historical interest, the topic has obviously been picked up for its quality of 'eventfulness' in the biography of social agents. But even the 'arrival' of a new medium is a polysemic notion: it can

refer to the medium itself as an artifact (memories of the object, location, manipulation), as social occasion (who was viewing, how), or as content ('early' shows; which begs another question: when exactly were new shows no longer perceived as 'early?'). In general, research on technological change often uses methodologies related to life-stories. We tend to assume that the arrival of the telephone/cable TV/cellular phone is an event socially and individually encoded in a clear manner (e.g. Matthews, 2003), which speaks volumes about the place we (both as researchers and social agents) give to technology in our daily life.

Apart from 'the early days', life-story media researchers use themes such as a given medium ('cinema'), or a genre ('news', cross media, or 'drama'). The question of memories attached to a given medium is complex. Beyond the 'polysemic' nature of such memories (noted above) there is another problem: much of our media experience, especially in an increasingly mediated world, is not encoded (or not primarily) as specific 'media experience'. Thus our *knowledge* about the world, what we know of politics, sports, economics, may come through the media, but we probably do not encode this knowledge, or refer to it, as media memories: we remember landscapes, not (for the most part) windows through which we saw them. There might be an exception, when the media play a special part in 'creating the event', e.g. in the case of major 'global soap operas' such as Princess Diana's death, young viewers 'are unsure of the source of their knowledge but [...] quite aware of the media blitz' (Slade, 2006: 27). Instead of researching the memory for a given medium, researchers prefer to use themes like 'news' (Barnhurst and Wartella, 1998) or 'news in public memory' (Volkmer, 2006) or 'politics' (Bourdon, 1992). The contribution of specific media may appear from the life-story, and specific prompts can be used by interviewers to connect fields of knowledge with sources. Nevertheless, research remains to be done, not so much about the memory of a given genre, but about the very possibility of talking about the 'memory of news', 'politics', etc.

But what about other genres? There are some 'media only' genres, which are perceived as a creation of the media – television drama or reality programming – and are probably stored in memory as 'media'. Some entertainment is about news of the world out there – the memory of celebrities, for example, is built through entertainment programs, but also through an array of different sources (other media, the Internet, gossiping). The way it is encoded is connected to a sense of mediation which may vary from one viewer to the other. Drawing on Gamson's typology of celebrity fans (Gamson, 1994: 146), one may assume that

more critical viewers will be more aware of media work, and thus encode 'celebrity memories' as 'media memories', while more 'naïve' viewers will more easily encode this as 'celebrity' in the real world out there.

The memory of specific genres is also subject to variability according to the 'moral hierarchy' which we have discussed from the start. In short, genre research and media memory research need to be combined, and, about each genre, we should ask how easily it is remembered *as genre*, why, in relation to which content (celebrities, narratives, social crises ...) and to which social settings (collective or individual viewing, family, peer-group ...).

A history of reception

What is the contribution of life-story to media research when considering the different disciplines of social sciences? Many researchers dismiss the historical value of life-story research, sometimes explicitly: 'My intention here is not to reconstruct a history of television' (Varela, 1993: 162). Contrast this with a different claim: 'This article aims to reconstruct the early history of Flemish television, and in particular the reception of serial fiction at that time. It is based on oral history interviews with older viewers, about their memories of domestic drama' (Dhoest, 2006: 1). The name used for the material has changed: oral history versus life-stories, but the material is the same.

Why do media researchers find it hard to connect life-story with media history? There seems to be an implicit idea that 'media history' is mostly about institutions, programs, technology, and politics. The very phrase: 'a history of audiences' is problematic as it seems to imply an automatic reification of the object known as 'audiences'. It is true that there is no 'audience out there' to be known as a stable object. To paraphrase Raymond Williams, there might be 'no such thing as audiences, only ways of talking of people as audiences'. The fear of reifying audiences has gone too far, however: not all history of audiences is purely discursive history. If we use, more carefully, the phrase 'history of reception', we can certainly integrate life-stories as a material among many others, not a more 'authentic' source. History is not only a narrative discourse, but a discourse controlled by a certain craft, that of corroborating between different sources, as Ricoeur has noted, contradicting Hayden White (Ricoeur, 2000: 238). Media historians who write about the history of institutions and professionals constantly corroborate interviews of professionals, both with other oral sources, and

with written or audiovisual archives. Historians of reception should do the same.

It is true that interviews 'in production' and 'in reception' (Varela, 2007) are very different. Production interviews are highly structured, and emphasize the power of the medium. In different countries, early producers or directors, for example, tell a heroic story of dramatic change, of a new medium captivating the audience, bringing 'culture to the masses' or promoting a 'new art form' (a discourse which has an ancestry in cinema). Interviews 'in reception' are less precise and relate less to specific content. For television, viewers rarely remember the highlights which mattered so much for professionals. They tell a different story, focusing less on discrete events or shows, more on the apparatus itself, of its slow incorporation into the daily, domestic space. However, they tell a coherent, repeated story, which does not reflect the idea that there are 'infinite, contradictory, dispersed and dynamic practices and experiences of ... audiencehood enacted by people in their everyday lives' (Ang, 1991: 13). If such anarchy is the case, we may wonder what the efforts of reception researchers are worth at all. In short, it is time for historians to incorporate 'media remembering' into media history, which will vivify and renew the field.

A sociology of the 'media everyday'

However, media history is only one of numerous uses we might have for life-stories. The very notion of the 'everyday' which is so often put forward by reception researchers offers us another major area of research. The 'everyday' is a notion which started its career in philosophy (Lefebvre, 1991/1947) and was often picked up by authors (Scannell, 1996; Silverstone, 1994) with an avowed taste for theory, yet life-stories are an excellent avenue to give flesh to a notion which may remain very abstract. The notion of the 'media everyday' I use here refers to the many ways the sense of dailiness in modern life is intertwined with the media (media consumption, media conversation, media remembering, media as clock/calendar, among others).

In my own research about television memories, I reached the conclusion that life-stories allow us to better understand the relation between media consumption and the elusive notion of the everyday. They give a key to understanding television, or certain kinds of television. I did not discover a vocabulary of television programs, but a grammar of television reception. I learnt about the way television punctuates the different cycles of daily lives (daily, seasonal, annual, and across the

life-cycle), and through a typology of television memories, examples of which have been given above: 'media events' (major live ceremonies) or 'flashbulb memories' (of dramatic events) are salient but rare events in narratives dominated by 'wallpaper memories' of seasonal, collective, reoccurring practices routinized and embedded in daily lives. In almost all categories of memories, heroes and celebrities of different kinds play a major part: politicians, sportspersons, entertainment celebrities and hosts. Here, life-story can put to use the classic notion of 'parasocial interaction' and show how media users feel that major public figures 'accompany' them over time, sometimes for most of their lives.

More generally, the method allows us to discuss the varied uses of 'media memories' in social life, especially to organize social and individual time. Life-stories allow us to put technological evolution in perspective. Let us think about the future use for life-stories, and imagine how it will help us with writing the history of 'new media'. If technological change continues at a high pace, 'wallpaper' memories will change as well, and one layer will cover the other more quickly. Technology (including specific interfaces) might appear strongly in the life-stories of the future (moving from Facebook to Twitter might become a meaningful event in the biography of today's teenagers). More local, ordinary heroes of reality shows and small ethnic communities might replace major national celebrities. Much can be imagined still, and we invite readers to conceive their own type of life-story research, about specific media, genres, periods, social groups, countries, and also to compare between several of those.

Note

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Part II

Media Memory, Ethics, and Witnessing

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5

Between Moral Activism and Archival Memory: the Testimonial Project of 'Breaking the Silence'

Tamar Katriel and Nimrod Shavit

Soldiers' oppositional memories

Viewing public memory as a cultural field of struggle over meanings and values, we address the question of how oppositional voices can insert themselves into an institutionally controlled conversation about a nation's past and thereby reshape its memory-scapes. In particular, we are interested in two themes: (1) the interplay of 'archival memory' as a depository of knowledge about the past and its enactment as lived or usable memory in the immediate or distant future; (2) the role played by personal memories in renegotiating public memory.

We pursue these interests through a study of the testimonial project of a particular group of Israeli veterans, which was launched in the spring of 2004 through an exhibition of amateur photographs taken by soldiers on active duty in the West Bank town of Hebron during the *Al Aqsa Intifada*, the second Palestinian uprising. The *Al Aqsa Intifada* started in September 2000, was at its height in the years 2002–3, and has gradually dwindled in following years although the occupation regime continues.

Although it was mounted in a peripheral venue in the outskirts of Tel Aviv, the exhibition drew considerable media coverage and some 8,000 viewers, many of them soldiers and their families. The exhibition space turned into a performative arena which was populated by soldiers' videotaped testimonies, personal memories orally shared by the organizers as they guided visitors along the exhibition walls, and military vignettes exchanged by viewers in facing the visual display. All these gave both presence and resonance to the personal experiences of soldiers who were part of the Israeli military forces in the Palestinian territories. In response to this initial public interest, the organizers

launched a veterans' organization under the name of *Shovrim Shtika* (Breaking the Silence, hence BTS), making it their mission to collect and publicize soldiers' verbal and visual testimonies of the day-to-day reality of the Israeli occupation regime as seen from the standpoint of the soldiers assigned to uphold it. They thus added their voice to those of other dissident groups, who reject institutional pressure, supported by the mainstream media, to marginalize and normalize the ongoing violations of human rights associated with such routine domination practices as street patrols, curfews, house searches, and checkpoint control. Capitalizing on their insiders' view, the soldiers tapped into their personal memories in offering authentication to public critiques of the occupation regime and attesting to the price soldiers were paying in terms of their own moral footing and emotional well-being. They thus added a distinctive note to the cultural conversation about Israeli society and its soldiers.

BTS testimonial project

As the BTS core group of activists consolidated into a loosely structured organization with a clearer division of labor among its members and a variety of institutional ties, the pattern of systematic labor of collection and dissemination of testimonies, set out from the very start, remained its benchmark. To date, the BTS makeshift archive of soldiers' testimonies has reached some 700 testimonials volunteered by young Israeli men (and recently also women), and the collecting efforts continue. The testimonies are collected by core group members in one-on-one interviews, and, in most cases, the identity of the soldier-witness is kept confidential (apart from the case of a small core group of activists, all witnesses remain anonymous to protect them from possible charges based on their often self-incriminating testimonies).

The process of collecting is described in the group's first booklet as follows:

All testimonies published by our group undergo meticulous research, including fact checking and cross checking with other witnesses and/or with archives of other human rights organizations. In accordance with our journalistic work, the identity of those who testify is not revealed, and they remain anonymous. The testimonies published in this booklet have not been edited, apart from omitting any information which may identify the soldiers who testified. (BTS booklet

entitled *Soldiers Speak Out about their Service in Hebron* [hereafter, Hebron booklet], 2004, English version, inner side of cover page)

Soldiers' testimonies are collected mainly through personal contacts but also in public settings, for example as a follow-up to BTS members' public engagements or through the group's website.¹ Interviewers and interviewees share an in-group language of martial experience as well as a willingness to reflect upon their military service and to have their stories disseminated in public. Segments of these testimonies have been circulated in a range of forms and venues in thematically organized booklets. These have been circulated in BTS-sponsored events or sent out on request; installments of testimonial excerpts appeared in a popular online newspaper; a play based on them was produced; the photography exhibition was upgraded and shown in venues around the country and abroad, and speaking engagements to audiences large and small have been an ongoing feature of the organization's agenda.

The soldiers' commitment to speak out with the authority and authenticity of participants in the occupation regime, is indicated in the group's mission statement, which is posted on its website and was printed in the first of its several booklets:

We got out of the army recently. Hebron was the hardest and most confusing place that we served in ... In coping daily with the madness of Hebron, we couldn't remain the same people beneath our uniforms. We saw our friends and ourselves slowly changing. Caught in impossible situations ... We decided to speak out. We decided to tell ...

The main goal of *Breaking the Silence* is to expose the true reality in the territories and as a consequence to promote a public debate on the moral price paid by Israeli society as a whole due to the reality in which young soldiers are facing a civilian population everyday and controlling it. (Hebron booklet, March 2004, English version, cover page)

The soldiers' collecting effort was designed to provide the evidentiary basis for countering the societal silence and obfuscation that surrounded the occupation regime through speaking out in organized events of one form or another – public talks, press interviews, videotaped testimonies, small-scale meetings. Through this range of inscriptional activities, they

sought to combat the 'collective amnesia' (Zerubavel, 1995)² that they felt threatened the memory of the second Intifada. They thus harnessed their individual memories and the experience of personal change for the goal of promoting public debate and thereby opening up the possibility of wider societal awareness and change.

As the self-reflexive statements by group members indicate, the BTS testimonial project is partly archival in orientation, accumulating soldiers' personal memories as a body of texts whose very existence and availability will affect the way in which the occupation is inscribed in the future. Moreover, it is also oriented to immediate moral-activist goals, demanding attention and calling for public debate and social accountability. Indeed, as in the case of studying heritage museums, actual cases of memory-work tend to complicate the archive/action distinction formulated in the work of Pierre Nora (1989) as a history/memory contrast. As indicated by Katriel, such cases suggest 'the need to develop a more nuanced view of the relationship between "history" and "memory" as dialectically defined orientations to the past, which combine ritual enactment and critical reflection in contexts of collective remembering' (Katriel, 1994: 1). This study makes a similar claim with reference to activist rather than ritual memory. As indicated in the aforementioned mission statement circulated in BTS pronouncements, the group's immediate goal is 'to promote a public debate on the moral price paid by Israeli society as a whole due to the reality in which young soldiers are facing a civilian population everyday and controlling it' (Hebron booklet, March 2004, English version, cover page). Since 2004, they have continuously attempted to do so by disseminating the kind of soldiers' personal memories that had been studiously kept out of the public record and had rarely been acknowledged in private settings. Soldiers' personal memories of the occupation, overflowing with descriptive detail, invoked a shared experience of the occupiers' role. In so doing, they were woven into a generic yet fragmented tale of the occupation writ large. Thus, the BTS project follows a testimonial pattern set by World War One veterans who turned witnessing into a generational enterprise rather than a rarified individual activity, turning testimony into a medium for political activism. Soldiers' testimonies gained resonance not only as reports of facts about the war but also as offering its most authoritative interpretations by invoking their shared experiences (Givoni, 2008).

The ever-growing fund of personal memories gathered by BTS activists has gained archival status as an accessible cultural resource, a potentially 'usable memory'. Yet every instance of their recounting becomes a moment of relived past, marking the soldiers' experience as 'unfinished

business' rather than as a past that they and their audiences can leave behind.

Memory-based moral activism

BTS members address their message to the Israeli-Jewish society in whose name they feel they acted while on military duty. Their repeated references to 'Israeli society' as a reified category, however, become concretized in terms of actual social affiliations – with peer-groups, families, nation. These groups are linked through what Margalit (2002) calls 'thick' relations marked by 'ethical' ties (rather than the 'thin' relations associated with the universalist 'moral'). By sharing their distress with the affiliation groups with whom they enjoy 'thick ties', BTS members hope to turn them into communities of memory for whom the BTS oppositional narrative is part of the memory of the second Intifada.

To get their message across and stir the public debate they feel is necessary, two (not unrelated) conditions have to hold: there needs to be an audience willing to listen to the soldiers' testimonies; and there need to be media outlets to access this potential audience. The fact that the commemorated past events bleed into their present lives turns them into a community of memory sharing a moral commitment to effect change.

By its very self-definition, the BTS group struggles to convey a message Israeli society would rather not hear, so as not to take responsibility for its military policies and actions. In other words, the very existence of an audience for their testimonial project is a big question. Like the 'elephant in the room' (Zerubavel, 2006), the reality of the occupation as the soldiers have experienced and witnessed it, and as other activist groups concerned with human rights have tried to depict it, is not easily conveyed – not only because it is an ongoing, little-changing, out-of-view state of affairs, but also because of the difficulties involved in circulating it to reluctant audiences.

Successful action for BTS activists means changing people's minds by forcing them to see things they could either not know or chose not to know before. The collecting of testimonies is itself seen as part of their persuasive campaign whose significance goes beyond the production of testimonies. Soldiers who choose to be interviewed go through a meaningful process of soul-searching, moral questioning, and personal growth. Some of them become activists themselves. However, the group's goal is to reach a much broader audience. Some activists believe their efforts bear some fruit; for example, Ilan responds to the question

whether he is optimistic about the results of his activist efforts, saying: 'I'm optimistic, otherwise I would not be doing what I'm doing. I'm optimistic even though I see more failures than successes' (Interview, Ilan, November 29, 2007; all interview segments were translated from Hebrew by us). Even when activists are not confident of the outcomes of their activities, however, and do not measure them in terms of their results, they still hope to have some real impact.

From the very start, finding ways to get out their message was a major concern for BTS activists. They have developed a range of strategies for doing so, many of which involve a pronounced performative dimension – privileging variously dramatized oral performances and orchestrated media events and interventions – and some, such as the aforementioned exhibition, managed to attract a good deal of media coverage. They are aware that by radicalizing their statements and formulating them in provocative ways they have a greater chance of attracting media attention. Reaching broader audiences can increase their potential impact and help trigger the public debate they believe to be necessary. Yet they are also aware that their project is viewed by many members of mainstream Israeli society as highly objectionable and they run the risk of further alienating their potential audience (as indicated, for example, in scores of hostile talkbacks appended to online articles they have published or that covered their activities).

BTS activists thus juggle the need to attract media attention on the one hand, with the ever-present concern of alienating audiences to the point of blocking any possibility of public debate on the other. Indeed, their message was variously received at different points in the group's history. The army's reaction to the photography exhibit they first mounted in 2004 was to raid the venue and detain some of the organizers. This gave the group a great deal of welcome publicity. The army then changed its tactics and embraced the BTS call to eradicate untoward conduct and human rights infringements from the ranks, conveniently framing them as 'irregularities' that need to be weeded out. BTS activists tried to resist this suffocating embrace, which they considered to be a clever attempt to silence them by co-opting and diffusing their cause. One of their intervention strategies, therefore, has taken the form of public rebuttals of official military reports of 'irregular' incidents of the harassment of Palestinian civilians that appear in the media from time to time. In responding to such media reports, BTS activists repeatedly stress that these happenings are far from irregularities, as the hundreds of testimonies they have collected clearly demonstrate.

Keeping up this persuasive campaign is particularly demanding for activists who are deeply discouraged by the unrelenting hold of the Israeli occupation regime in the Palestinian territories, the ongoing reluctance of the country's leadership and the vast majority of the populace to attend to the moral issues it raises, and the hopelessness many feel about the political deadlock vis-à-vis the Palestinians. There is a notable gap between BTS's explicitly stated goal of triggering soul-searching and public debate and their belief in the power of their words to effect change and redirect what to them appears to be the country's ongoing downslide. Expressing doubt about the country's very future, one of the activists, Noam, articulates the meaning that taking action even under these circumstances has for him:

I'm not optimistic about this state [Israel] ... I think that from the standpoint of values it has lost all its cards ... I act [in BTS] because I need to act. Also for my conscience, also because I have a lot to atone for, and because I cannot do otherwise. Now you ask me if I'm optimistic about the state? No. (Interview, Noam, January 3, 2008)

Whether they believe in the effectiveness of their testimonial project or not, BTS members view it in activist terms and as part of the political field in the same sense that journalism is. Indeed, they see their role as complementing and countering the activities of mainstream Israeli journalists, who, they maintain, cater to officialdom and practice self-censorship rather than providing credible coverage of the Palestinians' plight under the Israeli occupation. Yehuda formulates this alternative journalistic role as follows:

We will document a testimony, verify it, examine it, probe into archives, we will check everything, cross-check and then we will publish. That is, in a very essential way we see ourselves as completing the work that Israeli media should have done. And because it didn't do it, it is a civil necessity for us to report these abuses. (Interview, Yehuda, April 28, 2007)

Building the Occupation Museum

Another direction in which some BTS members go in accounting for their ongoing involvement with their testimonial project in face of its dubious success is to highlight its archival significance not only as a

backing for their current informational and persuasive campaign but with an eye to its potential future role in shaping public memory. The enormous efforts of BTS members in collecting soldiers' testimonies testify to their archival orientation. Indeed, BTS describe this effort as an act of defiance against the erasure of memory. Yehuda explicitly spoke of the need to keep the popular memory of the second Intifada alive:

That is, the first Intifada [1987–1993] passed somehow and it's simply not in the narrative. It's been erased. The average Israeli doesn't even know what it is ... It doesn't exist in the national consciousness. And the place of BTS is now to create a bank, a museum of the second Intifada, so that when Israeli society inscribes its national narrative about what happened here during these years, it will not be able to ignore the thousands of hours of sound and video of soldiers' testimonies who tell what they did there. (Interview, Yehuda, April 28, 2007)

The idea of creating an archival resource, referred to by other BTS members as an Occupation Museum, is thus seen as part of the politics of Israeli national memory. Group members foreground their self-appointed role as custodians of future memories. In this, too, BTS follows the testimonial example set by post-World War One soldiers – whose stories were told for the historical record rather than for political ends (Givoni, 2008: 128). However, for BTS the concern has shifted from epistemological questions to moral ones. Furthermore, BTS's future-oriented attitude does not involve transcending the past in a euphoric gesture that points to the future, as discussed by Levy and Sznajder (2006). Rather, it is forward-looking in the sense that present-day efforts to inscribe the events of the past are viewed from the standpoint of those who might invoke them in the future. Rather than appealing to a concrete, embodied community characterized by Margalit's aforementioned notion of 'thick ties', the soldiers envisage an abstracted community sharing universalist values and held together by 'thin ties'.

Aware of past erasures, their long-term goal is to prevent the further erasure of uncomfortable memories from the Israeli public arena by future generations through the sheer accumulation of thousands of hours of soldiers' testimonies compiled through the BTS archival project. They thus harness personal oppositional voices in promoting a universalist communal utopia.

Obviously, the line between the kind of journalistic information-gathering and documentation described above and the archival project of amassing hundreds of testimonies for future reference is not clear-cut. While the soldiers' project of speaking out is grounded in their witnessing role, the construction of any memory project, including the envisaged Occupation Museum or archive, is necessarily implicated in the politics of public culture. Nevertheless, members of BTS sometimes draw a locally inflected distinction between activist action and memory-work, between effecting change in the present and shaping the way it will be remembered in the future. Suggesting that their message might be ahead of its time, they seem to find solace in the prospect that their moral witnessing may become more significant in the future, when Israeli society is more attentive to the message they seek to convey.

The distinction between archival memory and moral activism echoes the situated polarity between speech and action, words and deeds, that has deeply shaped Israeli cultural conversation (for a discussion of the words/deeds polarity in Israeli speech culture see Katriel, 1986). Critics from the political left reinforce this polarity as they accuse BTS activists of engaging in just another version of the Israeli 'shooting and crying' syndrome – participating in objectionable martial activities and then clearing one's conscience by confessing one's guilt without taking a stand about such future involvements, avoiding the option of conscientious objection (this line of critique appears in popular venues but also in Handel, 2008). In this subtly graded hierarchy of words and deeds, 'fearless speech' rates highest and is granted the status of action when it is directed to the immediate political environment; for some, declining to serve in the military is also a form of action rather than a form of talk; and the action-potential implicit in the memory archive comes closest to the meta-communicative folk-category of 'just talk'. That this culturally inflected language ideology, in which 'words' are constructed as distinct from, and as secondary to, 'deeds', has come to color an activist project whose declared goal is to provoke public debate, and whose practices involve a range of forms and contexts for speaking, is a telling paradox.

Concluding remarks

Our foregoing discussion has sought to elucidate the nature and workings of the BTS testimonial project as a speech-centered, memory-oriented set of group activities. In the soldiers' own words, their goal in initiating their testimonial archive is to sound a wake-up call to Israeli society.

BTS activists know that they are thrusting their testimonies into society's reluctant lap in ways that can backfire and further reduce their modest impact. They have therefore developed strategies to gain media coverage, using all the cultural forms, artistic and popular, and all media outlets available to them.

Variably focusing on either immediate or long-term goals in their interventions, BTS activists creatively combine face-to-face and mediated contexts of interaction. They use cyberspace to circulate their messages and to create an audience for them, inviting more in-depth, direct contact with members of the wider public in talks, public debates, conference panels, and 'alternative' guided tours to the town of Hebron, to name the most common types of activities. Even though their website is not central to their current activist campaign, it provides a platform that can readily grow into their envisioned Occupation Museum by modeling the selection, compilation, and organization of the display of textual and visual materials.

BTS crisscrossing activities and media products are woven together in an ongoing, orchestrated media campaign that only occasionally reaches the public they seek. For them, the media is not only a vehicle through which to disseminate their oppositional message but also a model in terms of which to understand their own project as a form of alternative journalism. While playing with the idea of a future, utopian community whose collective memory will incorporate the BTS message, they nevertheless maintain their position within mainstream Israeli society, rejecting conscientious objection as an option that would cut many of their social ties.³

Thus, as an insider-outsider organization, the BTS group operates as both an agent of memory and as an activist group, blurring the lines between archival and enacted memory while building on the strength of each of these analytically constructed categories. It has constructed an archive of personal memories that authenticate individual soldiers' experiences and whose power lies in their sheer scale and potential accessibility. Woven into a collective depersonalized tale of 'the soldier in the territories' (for a discussion of the depersonalized image of the soldier in BTS testimonies, see Na'aman, 2008), these personal memories are there to be mobilized for activist work. Combining the resonance of mediated performances and the immediacy of personal contact, they trigger further memories and soul-searching among some of their audiences, public debate among others, and antagonism among the rest.

Notes

1. See the group's website (http://www.shovrimshatika.org/index_e.asp). The website has both Hebrew and English versions and has undergone various changes over the years, but its main content-structure has remained pretty constant, including visual materials (photographs and segments of videotaped testimonies), transcripts of testimonies, press articles by and about group members, activity reports, and relevant links. Its lack of interactive material stands out.
2. For Zerubavel 'collective amnesia' can be the result of intentional suppression. In such contexts, opposition begins with breaking the silence.
3. The BTS booklet published in July 2009 contained incriminating testimonies by soldiers who had participated in the military invasion of Gaza six months earlier. The BTS group was accused by the army, government officials, the media, and the public at large of siding with the enemy, and its ongoing archival effort to keep track of the routine harassments of the occupation regime was eclipsed by the real-time action and reactions to it. The media-monitoring organization *Keshev* devoted a full report to this anti-BTS campaign (in Hebrew). See <http://shout.co.il/org/org.asp?orgId=1359&visitOrgUrl=www.keshev.org.il>

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6

Reclaiming Asaba: Old Media, New Media, and the Construction of Memory

S. Elizabeth Bird¹

What happened at Asaba?

On October 5, 1967, Nigerian federal troops entered Asaba, a town in south-east Nigeria on the west bank of the Niger. The war over the secession of the predominantly Igbo² area known as Biafra had broken out in July; by August, the Biafran army had advanced across the Niger, through Asaba and about 120 km beyond. Federal troops mounted a counter-attack, pushing the Biafrans back across the Asaba Bridge, which they blew up behind them.

Asaba people, though of Igbo ethnicity, consider themselves distinct from those in the East. While some Asabans did side with the Biafrans, most in the Midwest officially favored the government's ideal of 'One Nigeria'.³ When the federal troops rolled in, the approximately 10,000 townspeople were unprepared for what followed. On October 4–6, soldiers occupied the town, and some began killing boys and men, accusing them of being Biafran sympathizers. On October 7, Asaba leaders met, and then summoned everyone to gather, dancing and singing to welcome the troops, and offering a pledge to One Nigeria. People were encouraged to wear *akwa ocha*, the ceremonial white, embroidered clothing that signifies peace, hoping that this strategy would end the violence. Although there was much trepidation, and some refused to participate, hundreds of men, women, and children assembled for the march, walking to the village square of Ogbeosewa, one of the five quarters of Asaba. Ify Uraih, then 13 years old, describes what happened

when he joined the parade with his father and three older brothers, Paul, Emmanuel (Emma), and Gabriel:⁴

There, they separated the men from the women ... I looked around and saw machine-guns being mounted all around us ... Some people broke loose and tried to run away. My brother was holding me by the hand; he released me and pushed me further into the crowd ... They shot my brother in the back, he fell down, and I saw blood coming out of his body. And then the rest of us ... just fell down on top of each other. And they continued shooting, and shooting, and shooting ... I lost count of time, I don't know how long it took ... After some time there was silence. I stood up ... my body was covered in blood, but I knew that I was safe. My father was lying not far away; his eyes were open but he was dead.

Exactly how many died is not clear; between 500 and 800 seems likely, in addition to many who died in the previous days. Most victims were buried in several mass graves, without observing requisite ceremonial practices. Along with his father, Uraih lost Emma and Paul; Gabriel was shot repeatedly, but recovered. The long-term impacts were profound; many extended families lost multiple breadwinners, and the town's leadership was decimated.

Space does not permit a detailed historical background to these events, but some context is needed. Nigeria, cobbled together by colonial Britain from disparate ethnic groups, became independent in 1960. There has long been tension between the predominantly Muslim north and other areas. The Igbo, originating in the south-east, had become the most educated and entrepreneurial group, spreading throughout the country as businesspeople and civil servants. In January 1966, a group of mostly Igbo army officers staged a coup, reportedly in protest at corruption. A short-lived emergency military government installed army officers to run the country. In July 1966, a counter-coup led by northern army officers killed the Igbo leader, General Aguiyi-Ironsi, and a 'pogrom' began against Igbos in the north. Thousands were killed, mostly by civilians with encouragement from soldiers and police. Around a million Igbo fled back to their traditional south-east homelands, which included Asaba. Colonel Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, military governor of the Eastern Region, now renamed Biafra, declared secession from Nigeria on May 30, 1967. Fighting broke out on July 6; the Biafrans

invaded the Midwest on August 7, headed for Benin City. The Second Infantry Division, under Colonel Murtala Mohammed, pushed back the Biafran forces, reaching Asaba on October 5. The war eventually ended in January 1970, with the capitulation of Biafra.

Media and collective memory

Zelizer (1992: 214) writes that in the modern world, 'The story of [the] past will remain in part a story of what the media have chosen to remember, a story of how the media's memories have in turn become [our] own.' By extension, if the media have *not* chosen to remember – indeed, have not told the story in the first place – the official memory is also erased. In this chapter, I address the role of the traditional media in effectively silencing the story of Asaba at the time, before showing how the rise of new media helped the narrative to emerge and spread. In doing so, I discuss the role that colleagues and I now have in contributing to the construction of a more robust official memory. We were invited by Asaba people, both in Nigeria and in the US diaspora, to assist them in the development of a permanent remembrance – in part using new media forms such as a website (www.asabamemorial.org); our interdisciplinary team is recording oral histories from survivors, and a coherent narrative of events is emerging.⁵

Assmann (1995) makes a distinction between everyday 'communicative memory' and 'cultural memory'. Everyday memory is a collection of individual recollections and stories, and is heavily influenced by first-hand experiences and accounts. Cultural memory 'consists of objectified culture, that is, the texts, rites, images, buildings, and monuments which are designed to recall fateful events ... As the officially sanctioned heritage of a society, they are intended for the *longue durée*' (Kansteiner, 2002: 182). Assmann notes that 'The ... crystallization of communicated meaning and collectively shared knowledge is a prerequisite of its transmission in the culturally institutionalized heritage' (1995: 130).

For almost 40 years, the massacres at Asaba existed primarily in communicative memory, not crystallizing into formal recognition, in Nigeria or internationally. A key reason was the absence of media accounts in the first few months of the war. Biafra did become world-famous, but its public, international narrative developed after the retreat of the Biafrans back across the Niger, after which the federal government imposed a blockade, effectively starving the east into submission between 1968 and 1970. The international cultural memory of Biafra is dominated by military defeat and heartbreaking images of starving children. The federal

government's stated position that starvation was a legitimate weapon of war reverberated internationally (Bartrop, 2002). This vivid cultural memory was facilitated by photojournalists such as Don McCullin in Britain and Gilles Caron in France. Caron made three visits to Biafra for *Paris Match* magazine, the first in April 1968 (Cookman, 2008). Cookman noted that the magazine described Biafra as the 'ignored war' until Caron offered the 'first major reportage ... in the Western Picture Press' (2008: 227). Such reportage defined the war for ever. In 1995, Paddy Davies, a member of the Biafran Propaganda Directorate from 1968–70, told the BBC about the early lack of interest by the international press: '[Biafra] had tried political emancipation of oppressed people. It had tried the religious angle; it had tried pogrom and genocide. These had limited successes, but the pictures of starving children ... touched everybody.'⁶

The intense, post-1968 media coverage contrasts dramatically with the dearth of attention in 1967, when the Mid-West Igbos suffered most. The massive Igbo population movement following the 1966 'pogroms' was minimally reported, prompting noted Irish writer Connor Cruise O'Brien to comment in December 1967, 'if the movement had taken place across international frontiers, it would have attracted world-wide attention. Because it was in the geographical unit called Nigeria, it drew no public comment and won no world sympathy' (quoted in Mwakikagile, 2001: 32).

In today's highly mediated world, it can be hard to remember a time when traditional print journalism was the most important source of information; if no reporters were present, many stories remained untold. Such was the case with the recapture of the Midwest; the international press was largely absent, and in Nigeria itself, news was suppressed. A search of the Nigeria *Daily Times* turned up only five war-related stories in October 1967, none mentioning any specifics about the ongoing Midwest military action. Gowon had broadcast to the nation on October 1, stating that Biafra was on the brink of collapse; now he planned for an end to the war and for reconciliation with all Igbo people. *Daily Times* opinion writer Dan Abasiokong, writing on the day of the Asaba massacre, noted, 'Gowon has shown the way Nigerian hearts have been warmed by his latest gracious gestures to the Ibos.'⁷ Abasiokong continued that 'the national objective is not to destroy the Ibos'. 'After all they are still bona fide members of the Nigerian family, their frequent delinquent acts and misdemeanours notwithstanding.' Nevertheless, he concluded that no matter how well they are treated the country should be prepared for 'hostility and treachery' from many implacable Igbos.

In three other stories, the central point was to support Western press calls for an end to the war, demonstrating the high prestige of foreign commentary. On October 6, an uncredited story liberally quoted a *New York Times* editorial⁸ urging the government 'to demonstrate a will and capacity for the national reconciliation and reconstruction it has promised'.⁹ *The New York Times* mentioned Gowon's conduct code for troop behavior: 'He told the troops they were not fighting a war with a foreign enemy, "nor were you fighting a religious war or Jihad".' On October 7, another story noted that 'influential foreign newspapers have ... drawn attention to the stark fact that the game is up ...'¹⁰ The story quoted extensively from the UK's *Guardian*, which praised Gowon and the 'remarkable prowess of the Army', and again invoked the *New York Times*, 'an influential journal of opinion'. A week later, the *Daily Times* quoted the Italian *Corriere della Sera*, which blamed Ojukwu's 'blind determination' for the downfall of the Igbos, while Gowon was 'scrupulous, fair, absolutely free of political ambition'.¹¹ The story also quoted the permanent secretary to the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Industries, Philip C. Asiodu, telling a press conference in Germany that the government's goal was reconciliation: 'there is no question of massacring Ibos in the captured areas'. Asiodu did not then know that his younger brother, Olympic athlete Sydney Asiodu, had been killed in the Asaba massacre a few days earlier. In 2009, Asiodu described how slowly and incompletely word of the event reached Lagos.¹² By October 27, the *Daily Times* was reporting that the Midwest military governor had decreed it would now be an offense to refer to the people of the Igbo-speaking areas (Ika, Asaba, and Aboh) as Igbo, and 'appealed to the people to learn to forgive and forget'.¹³

Clearly, the Nigerian press was mostly reporting official pronouncements or the opinions of the foreign press, which also had few first-hand accounts. The federal government kept a tight rein on dissent; for example in October 1967, celebrated writer Wole Soyinka was arrested as a spy after he met with Ojukwu in an attempt to broker peace. He was incarcerated for two years, later describing in his prison memoirs the large numbers of Igbos housed in the same prisons (Soyinka, 1972). Possibly among them was Asaba native Sylvester Okocha, a senior civil servant, who in 1967 was arrested, incarcerated, and tortured after he attempted to send a letter to the Red Cross describing the Asaba killings.¹⁴

The British media in the immediate post-colonial period were extremely influential among elite Nigerians, and thus especially important in defining the story both to Nigeria and the world (Akinyemi, 1972). Yet they reported little in 1967. Journalist Frederick Forsyth



Figure 3: Elizabeth Bird interviews Mr. Felix Onochie, who is showing her a photograph of his brother, Emmanuel, a victim of the Asaba killings. Photograph: Fraser Ottanelli.

(later a successful novelist), recalls being told by the BBC ‘about six months into the war’ that ‘it is not our policy to cover this war’. He notes, ‘I smelled news management’, and went to Biafra in early 1968 as a freelancer, publishing the book *Biafra Story* in 1969.¹⁵ A search of the archives of the *Guardian* and *Observer*, both prominent UK newspapers, turned up extensive coverage of the war, in which Britain’s government officially supported Gowon’s regime, from 1968 onward. However, no British paper reported directly on Asaba or any of the other killings that accompanied the retaking of the Midwest.

Shortly after the end of the war, Akinyemi (1972) offered an analysis of UK press coverage of the conflict, taking an unambiguously pro-federal government position. In particular, he admired the dispatches of *Observer* correspondent Colin Legum (a noted journalist of Africa), writing: ‘When cries of genocide were rife, Legum personally investigated alleged incidents in Asaba and Onitsha and concluded that the use of the word “genocide” was unjustified’ (Akinyemi, 1972: 420).

Akinyemi was referring to the one *Observer* article that reported on Asaba, almost four months after the event,¹⁶ in which Legum acknowledged credible reports of previous massacres, and confirmed that federal

troops took part in the killing. His account in effect offered an excuse, saying that the Asaba people were 'split over how they should receive the troops'. One group welcomed them with dancing, while another, who remained 'implacably hostile', attacked by surprise as the soldiers relaxed while watching the entertainment. 'The soldiers' instinctive reaction was to scent "Ibo duplicity and perfidy." In this blind mood of anger all Ibo males were rounded up and shot.' This account is dramatically different from the survivor testimonies we recorded, which describe soldiers having disguised their machine guns with branches, before launching a systematic and unprovoked attack. And clearly Legum's story stems not from 'personal investigation', but from second-hand reports. As he wrote, 'there are no war correspondents on either side'. *The Times* of London reported on October 4, 1968 that 'international observers ... found that Ibo people were afraid of Federal soldiers because of Biafran propaganda, but that the fear went when the villagers made actual contact with Federal troops'.¹⁷ A year later, on July 21, 1969, *The Times* reported that there was no evidence of any atrocities. Poland's neutral observer informed *The Times* reporter, 'I tell you that we have been unable to find one single trace of mass killings of Ibos.'¹⁸

The US government remained officially neutral on the war and the Google news database reveals almost no US news stories during July–December 1967, except when war broke out. On September 24, however, Alfred Friendly of the *New York Times* reported that civilians, encouraged by soldiers, had killed over 900 Igbos in Benin City, following federal troops' arrival on September 20.¹⁹ Later an uncredited *New York Times* story reported that in Warri, Western businessmen who remained there estimated 400–500 Igbos were killed by 'civilian mobs' celebrating the return of the army, and a similar number in Sapele.²⁰ While there was no direct report from Asaba, the article continued:

In Asaba ... a few women huddled last week in compounds under the protection of Nigerian priests. They refused to go out into the surrounding forests and coax their husbands back to the shattered town ...

Earlier, Friendly had reported that all 10,000 people in Asaba had fled as federal troops advanced:

the bodies of two that did not leave in time lay near the main road. Vultures picked at the skeletons sprawled amid the pathetic rubble of

panicky flight: empty, battered suitcases, and ruined bedding. Bullet scars pocked the façade of every house on the main street.²¹

Beyond these two stories, no accounts of the fate of Asaba can be found. Much later, in November 1968, Jack Shepherd of *Look* magazine reported in an analysis of the situation in Nigeria that 'perhaps 8,000 Ibo civilians died when the Midwest was "liberated" by troops under Col. Murtala Mohammed'.²² Shepherd noted only one specific incident, in which troops 'cleared' the village of Ishiagu, killing men after separating them from women and children.

Thus the world's media produced no detailed coverage of the 1967 Midwest military operations. Probably because of this, more scholarly accounts written close to the time also typically offer only brief mentions (if any) of civilian killings. In 1970, Oxford historian Margery Perham recalled a visit from a friend who delivered a first-hand account of the massacre at Asaba. She writes that while troubling, it was the kind of 'isolated incident' (1970: 237) that is inevitable in war. John de St. Jorre's much-cited war history expressly acknowledges the work of Colin Legum, and essentially restates his explanation that the massacre 'was sparked off by a Biafran attempt to kill a Nigerian officer and organized by a bitterly anti-Ibo Midwesterner' (St. Jorre, 1972: 285). In his usually meticulously footnoted book, St. Jorre offers no source for this account. Former colonial administrator Sir Rex Niven (1970) offers an unabashedly pro-government war account, acknowledging the full cooperation of the Federal Ministry of Information. Discussing the Midwest action, Niven makes no mention of atrocities against civilians; in an 'author's note' he comments that 'deaths among the civilian population are still a matter of conjecture' (1970: vi). Only one contemporary commentator, Charles Keil (1970: 2), angrily attacked the prevailing desire to move on, arguing clear genocidal intent:

the seasoned army of 7,000 that led the pogroms in 1966 ... should have suggested intent to the most disinterested scholar: the enlarged army of 70,000 that massacred civilians foolish enough to remain behind at Asaba and other captured cities earlier in the war should have suggested intent.

However, such comments were rare, becoming more so as time went by. Orobator (1987), analyzing the role of the Midwest in the war, made no mention of any massacres. Kantowicz, in a historical overview, concluded that 'During the fighting, civilians and some Nigerian soldiers

slaughtered Ibos at the cities of Asaba and Onitsha, but these massacres were exceptional and were not ordered by the Nigerian commanders' (1999: 244).

Reclaiming Asaba

For decades, the story of Asaba remained obscure outside the immediate locality. Our informant Ify Uraih recalls that in college he came close to blows with another student who refused to believe it could have happened; many interviewees also reported disbelief. Perhaps understandably, the immediate impulse after the war was to reconcile and bring the union together, inspired by Gowon's famous statement that in this conflict there would be 'no victor, and no vanquished'. Generally, reprisals against the Igbo were avoided, and a measure of peace prevailed for several years. However, as Ukiwo (2009: 27) noted, resurgences of violence against Igbos since the 1980s engendered feelings of grievance,²³ leading to 'the excavation of collective memories of violence before and during the Civil War, while bracketing the period of reconciliation after the war'.

Ukiwo documented the development of movements either specifically to revive Biafra, or more generally to advocate for Igbo rights. Many began outside Nigeria, among diaspora communities in the United States. Along with other atrocities, Asaba was discovered by such groups, a process greatly facilitated by the development of the Internet in the last decade of the twentieth century. A catalyst was the 1994 publication of *Blood on the Niger*, a book about Asaba written by expatriate journalist Emmanuel 'Emma' Okocha, whose father was killed in the massacre. Okocha's book, based partly on survivor testimony, received attention in Nigeria and among US-based Nigerians, and information from it was introduced at the 2001 Nigerian Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (HRVIC), often known as the Nigerian Truth Commission or the Oputa Panel, after its chairman (Nwogu, 2007). Some survivors, including Uraih, also testified to the HRVIC. Unlike Truth Commissions in South Africa and Sierra Leone, the Oputa Panel was not designed to attribute blame or take action. It produced a lengthy report, which was never officially released, but became quickly available on the Internet. Another landmark occurred in 2002 when Gowon made a public apology to the people of Asaba, saying he had not ordered or known about the massacre. An apology constitutes an acknowledgment, which can be the first step toward reconciliation, since it 'involves the admission that ... wrongful acts were committed, that such acts should not

have been committed, and that those who committed them were responsible for having done so' (Govier, 2006: 15).

The Oputa Panel, Okocha's book (reissued in 2006), and the Gowon apology provided concrete information that was eagerly taken up in online forums that connect the extensive Igbo diaspora with those in Nigeria, and a new collective memory is developing, with many learning about Asaba for the first time.²⁴ And with the migration of the story to the virtual world, it inevitably mutates. In February 2009, for example, the neutral discussion site, Nigerian Village Square, hosted a commentary about Murtala Muhammed, the commander of the Second Infantry Division that perpetrated the massacre. Muhammed later toppled Gowon in a coup, and became President; many revere him as a national hero. This commentator (Nwobu, 2009) refers to him as the Butcher of Asaba: 'In a rain of blood, tens of thousands of innocent youths, some of them just 6 years old were lined up on the streets of Asaba and executed in cold blood on the direct orders of Murtala Muhammed. The Asaba massacre ... remains one of the bloodiest ... in the history of the African continent.'

The 'tens of thousands' description is clearly an exaggeration, but has been repeated in subsequent Internet forums, as a narrative develops that is independent of the personal memories of survivors. The discussion that followed Nwobu's post points to the complexities of developing a new collective memory that honors the dead without inciting an urge for revenge. Many forum posters comment that they are hearing this for the first time; some pick up on Nwobu's call for action, while others argue against the value of such memories. For example, 'Draftman' writes:

When are we going to stop the finger pointing ... let's look at all the killing that Lt. Col. Ojukwu did, he has blood on his hand too ... The war is over, and the Biafra agitators lost, so let's move on.

'Agidimolaja' writes a long account of the events leading up to Asaba, concluding, the 'Asaba massacre did not just happen, one thing led to another'. 'Tony' weighs in:

War ... does not give anyone the right to target and indiscriminately kill civilians as Murtala ... did ... this is why there is an international criminal court in the Hague to try people guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity ... You would scream to high heavens if your people were the victims ... Your Nigeria that you claimed to

have fought for is a shameful disgrace of a nation where injustice and massacres is the order of the day ...

Discussions like these can be found in Nigerian forums all over the Internet, and point to the way that new media have been able to bring previously silenced histories to light, while also opening the door to inflamed passions, exaggeration, and unsubstantiated claims.

The Asaba Memorial Project

Our research team entered the picture in 2009, following a contact by Okocha, who on behalf of a committee based primarily in the United States, invited us to help 'reclaim' the history of the massacres, validate the experiences of survivors and descendants, and eventually assist in the development of a permanent remembrance. As Minow (1998: 1) writes, one of the most destructive consequences of such atrocities is 'the destruction of remembrance ... as well as ... lives and dignity'. Hirsch argues that the move of positivist social scientists into genocide studies has been problematic, based on quantifying and defining genocide, rather than valuing the personal stories of survivors: 'Scientific analysis cannot communicate the sheer human tragedy ... nor can it accomplish the goals of enhancing understanding and of prevention' (Hirsch, 1995: 80). In addition to pointing to the need to study the impact of atrocities on communities, Hirsch argues for the importance of compassionate academic input into the construction of memorials and reconciliation efforts.

Our project now sits at an interesting juncture in the development of formal memorialization, and potentially gives us an active role in that development. Schudson (1997) points out that most contemporary work on collective memory has focused on formal commemorative activities like monuments and museums. He argues for the importance of studying the process of 'non-commemorative collective memory' – the way stories of the past live on through social communication. As he notes, 'formal commemoration often acknowledges not the power of living memory but its fading' (1997: 3), and the impulse to commemorate grows as people are distanced from direct experience. In the case of Asaba, this distancing is through both time, as older generations pass away, and space, as emigrants in the diaspora now seek to know and acknowledge their heritage.

In two visits to Nigeria, we have interviewed more than 40 people whose lives were directly affected by the massacres. It is clear that an

oral, non-mediated narrative about the events is established in Asaba – with the killing in Ogbeseewa as a central trope illustrating a unifying theme of outrage – that Asabans had no reason to expect this atrocity, as innocent, unarmed civilians who supported a unified Nigeria. In reality, the varied experiences of suffering described by many individuals paint a much more complex picture, which will have to be addressed in any memorialization efforts.

The youngest direct survivors are now in their late fifties, and most of those who were adults at the time are dead. A recurring message we received was a sense of urgent concern that the orally transmitted local narrative might die; as Schudson's discussion might suggest, this is when the desire for a 'commemorative memory' begins to grow. Following our most recent visit, we have agreed to work with community leaders and academics in Nigeria, as well as diaspora representatives in the US, to seek funding for an educational museum exhibit that will become a resource for Asaba.

As we proceed, media of all kinds will play a central role. Traditional media helped create the silence; new media have helped break it. Our developing website, which includes video clips of survivor testimony and a virtual archive of relevant resources, is already an intervention in the often-heated diaspora chatter about the memory of Asaba, and is now being followed by some people in Asaba. However, in Nigeria there are major limitations on the ability of new media to reach the general population. Most people do not even have reliable electricity, and only 16.1 percent of the population uses the Internet regularly.²⁵ The 'best' secondary school in Asaba (which is the capital city of Delta State) has only one, old, donated computer in the headmaster's office; the pupils have no access to the Internet.

In the days ahead, engagements with media will be inevitable and needed. As a first step, we hosted an Asaba Memorial Symposium in October 2009, attended by scholars, survivors, and members of the diaspora community in Florida. Press accounts appeared in the US and Nigeria, with extensive commentary in the *Vanguard*, a national Nigerian newspaper with a large online presence. Accounts of the symposium then found their way onto Nigerian blogs and discussion forums.²⁶ During our last visit, in June 2010, we added a blog to our own documentation of the project (www.asabamemorial.wordpress.com). Now we face two distinct challenges (in addition to the need to find further funds!). First is the challenge posed by new media, as everything we do makes its way into the virtual world, where diaspora voices dominate. Second

is the challenge of working in the real world with community leaders in Asaba, where they hope to use more traditional communication approaches, such as town meetings and local media, to create awareness and support for the project. In both contexts, competing visions of correct commemorative memory have emerged and will continue to do so.

We do not claim that the story we will eventually tell will be ‘the truth’; all narratives filter, frame, and select, and the role of our community partners will be as central as ours. We are learning to negotiate the political complexities of both literally and figuratively exhuming the evidence that many prefer to forget. As Ferrándiz (2006: 7) writes in relation to forensic exhumations of massacre graves, ‘the regimes responsible ... become the subject of heated social debates challenging hegemonic versions of an uncomfortable past and provoking disputes about the politics of victimhood’. We will not be able to control the direction the story takes as the process of commemorative memory formation develops. Nevertheless, breaking the silence is surely the right thing to do.

Notes

1. I would like to thank my research partner, Fraser M. Ottanelli, for his advice and continued collaboration on this project. Thanks also to graduate student Nolan Kline for his assistance in locating and searching relevant newspaper stories. This research was supported by grants from the Humanities Institute and Office of Research, both University of South Florida.
2. While the preferred contemporary spelling is Igbo, the older variant, Ibo, is still often seen.
3. For instance the *Daily Times* of Nigeria reported on July 24, 1967, that the ‘Organisation of Ibo-Speaking Midwesterners’, representing people from Asaba, Ika, and Aboh, had signed a declaration that asserted their loyalty to the Governor of the Midwest Region, ‘and strongly condemned the idea of a merger with the East Central State’ (Biafra).
4. The account that opens this chapter is derived from survivor testimony, recorded by the author and collaborator Fraser Ottanelli.
5. The team comprises myself, Ottanelli, and forensic anthropologist Erin Kimmerle. At the time of writing, Ottanelli and I have interviewed 42 survivors in the US, Lagos, and Asaba.
6. Davies was interviewed for the 1995 documentary, *Biafra: Fighting a War without Guns*, in the BBC Timewatch series, which also discussed the role of the public relations firm MarkPress, retained to tell the Biafran story.
7. ‘How to Bring the Ibos back into our Fold’, *Nigeria Daily Times*, October 7, 1967, p. 5.
8. This editorial, ‘Way to Peace in Nigeria’, was published on October 6, 1967 in the *New York Times*.
9. ‘The Ibos Miscalculated in Seceding – Says American Newspaper’, *Nigeria Daily Times*, October 6, 1967, p. 3.

10. 'Ibos were Victims of Ojukwu Propaganda – Says UK Paper', *Nigeria Daily Times*, October 7, 1967, p. 2.
11. 'Ibo Blindness Killed Peace Moves – Italian Paper', *Nigeria Daily Times*, October 13, 1967, p. 7.
12. Asiodu was interviewed on October 9, 2009, in Tampa, Florida. He describes how he was unable to confirm his brother's fate until weeks afterwards. The transcript of his interview is available at www.asabamemorial.org
13. 'Now No More Ika Ibo – By Order', *Nigeria Daily Times*, October 27, 1967, p. 8.
14. We interviewed the 96-year-old Okocha in Asaba, December 15, 2009.
15. Forsyth was interviewed for the 1995 documentary, *Biafra: Fighting a War without Guns*.
16. Colin Legum, 'How 700 Ibos were Killed by Mistake', *The Observer*, January 21, 1968, p. 2.
17. Michael Wolfers 'Nigeria Observers Find no Evidence of Genocide', *The Times*, October 4, 1968, p. 8.
18. Julian Mounter, 'No Evidence of Genocide in Nigeria', *The Times*, July 21, 1969, p. 5.
19. Alfred Friendly Jr., 'A City Shows Scars of the Nigerian War', *New York Times*, September 24, 1967, pp. 1, 3. The *New York Times* seems to have been almost alone among US media in having journalists on the ground in the autumn of 1967. Two interviews (Sylvester Okocha and Emmanuel Nwanze, both recorded December 15, 2009), vividly describe the active involvement of troops in these massacres.
20. *New York Times*, 'Race Hatred in Nigeria, October 22, 1967, p. 3.
21. Alfred Friendly Jr., 'Battle Continues for Nigerian City', *New York Times*, October 13, 1967, p. 1.
22. 'Memo from Nigeria: Old Headaches for our New President', November 26, 1968, p. 74.
23. Ukiwo cites many violent episodes between 1983 and 2003 that he believes radicalized the Igbo, including serious ethnic riots in Kano in 1991.
24. For example, in a long response to the revelations at the Oputa Panel, posted on BNW: Biafra Nigeria World Message Board, attorney Chuck Nduka-Eze wrote: 'it is however crucial to consider where we go from here. Are we simply going to move on as though nothing has been said or simply regard it as something that happened in the past? So far, there has been silence although the scale of the atrocities stunned the public. This country has gone through much that is shameful and perhaps, it is about time the public wake up to their civic responsibilities ...The killing field at Asaba, Isheagu, Ibusa, Ogwashi-Ukwu and other locations remain a wound in the flesh of humanity' (May 24, 2001, http://messageboard.biafranigeriaworld.com/ultimatebb.cgi/ubb/get_topic/f/1/t/000130/p/2.html). See also A. Ehirim, 'Apologies, Reparations, and the Path to Healing', January 31, 2001, on Nigeria Exchange forum (<http://www.ngex.com/personalities/voices/aehirim013101.htm>). Ehirim mentions the Asaba massacre and describes Mohammed as 'a looter, a brute and an avalanche of insanity'.
25. Internet Usage and Telecommunications Reports, Nigeria, 2009 (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/af/ng.htm>).
26. E.g. the blogs 'Chxta's World' (<http://chxta.blogspot.com/2009/03/even-heavens-wept.html>) and AFTRES (<http://aftres.blogspot.com/2009/10/>

take-them-and-work-on-them.html) both reprint the public testimony of Ify Uraih, who spoke at the October 2009 symposium, at the University of South Florida, and who has become a key informant and collaborator. Video of his public testimony is also posted on YouTube. See also I. Emewu, 'Turn-by-turn genocide', May 30, 2009 (<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/columnists/thoughts/ikenna-may-30-2009.htm>).

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7

Joint Memory: ICT and the Rise of Moral Mnemonic Agents

Tamar Ashuri

The objective of this chapter is to address a question which has been neglected from the fast-growing literature on the media–memory nexus: What should we remember? In flagging this question I aim to bring forward the ethical dimension of collective memory. My goal, more specifically, is to consider the manner in which modern mechanisms by which society members deny and commit to oblivion memories regarding violent acts they committed against others can now be challenged with the advent of digital technologies, notably ICTs. I shall address this question through an analysis of a website established by Machsom Watch (‘Checkpoint watch’) (2001) – an all-female organization whose members call for an end to the Israeli occupation and act to monitor the human rights of Palestinians at checkpoints set up by the Israeli army. Members of the group are present at the checkpoints on a daily basis and then post their memories on their website, designed expressly for this purpose.

Collective memory – collective amnesia

In his seminal work *What is a Nation?* (1996/1882), historian Ernst Renan pointed to a crucial component of collective memory: collective amnesia. Looking especially at the history of France, he demonstrated the importance of ‘forgetting’ to the construction of social group, notably national communities:

[...] the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things. No French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have forgotten the

massacre of Saint Bartholomew or the massacres which took place in the Midi in the thirteenth century. (1996: 11)

Writing in the late nineteenth century, Renan noted the modern mechanism by which modern entities (such as nation-states) construct collective amnesia regarding events they wish to expunge (especially violent acts the community committed against others). He argued that the process of forgetting is crucial to the construction and survival of modern communities.

Renan's pioneering conception of the 'nation' as a community of shared memory and shared forgetting was expanded upon in more recent works with theorists looking at the role of modern devices in the construction of collective memory and of collective amnesia. As old traditions and affiliations lost their hold on the people, the argument goes, the bond with their past was reconstructed through 'second-order' simulations. Professional agents produced 'sites of memory' in language, monuments, archives, street names and the like, all of which contained one common referent: the community. In other words, efforts were made to guarantee the community's future by means of captivating traces of its past glories (e.g. Gillis, 1994; Nora and Kritzman, 1996; Samuel, 1994; Zamponi, 1998; Zerubavel, 1995).

Notwithstanding the vast differences between these works, they all share a significant and basic supposition, namely that in the modern era collective memory is built on a division of labor. In his book *The Ethics of Memory* (2002) Avishai Margalit dwelled upon this important observation by coining two terms: 'Common Memory' and 'Shared Memory'. A common memory, so far as Margalit is concerned, is an aggregate notion that refers to a group of people who recall a certain episode that each of them experienced. If the number of those who remember the episode in a given society is above a certain threshold, then, according to Margalit, the memory of the episode is 'common' to that society. In contrast, a 'shared memory' is not merely a compendium of individual memories because it requires *communication*. A shared memory is thus a calibrated memory in the sense that it integrates the different perspectives of those who remember the episode into one version (or a small number of versions). This standardization process allows other community members who were not there at the time of the event to be plugged into the experience of those who were via 'channels of description rather than by direct experience' (Margalit, 2002: 52). Margalit also points to another fundamental distinction between 'common' and 'shared' memory. Whereas common memory (that which is stored

in the memory of many individuals) is usually involuntary, shared memory (calibrated memory) is voluntary. Therefore, shared memory involves an active presentation and retelling of a story, which Margalit coined 'a division of mnemonic labor' (2002: 52):

In modern societies, characterized by an elaborate division of labor, the division of mnemonic labor is elaborate too. In traditional society there is a direct line from the people to their priest or storyteller or shaman. But shared memory in a modern society travels from person to person through institutions, such as archives, and through communal mnemonic devices, such as monuments and the names of streets ...Whether good or bad as mnemonic devices, these complicated communal institutions are responsible, to a large extent, for our shared memories. (2002: 54)

The term 'mnemonic labor' and Margalit's conceptualization of the role played by modern institutions in the construction of shared memories highlight the role played by professional mnemonic agents in the creation and in the upholding of mnemonic channels. These selected few are responsible for constructing shared memories that the community is usually proud of, as well as in charge of committing others to oblivion.

It is my contention that this exclusive role of professional mnemonic agents is now challenged with the advent of digital technologies; devices that enable individuals to make their personal memories visible in the public domain. Such media technologies, I suggest, give rise to the formation of what I shall term 'joint memory'.

Joint memory in a digital age

Like Margalit's 'shared memory', 'joint memory' is an aggregation of memories of individuals which are accessible to members of a community who were absent from the occurrences in time, in space, or in both. Yet in contrast to 'shared memory' which is defined as a calibrated module, constructed and disseminated by professional agents, joint memory is a public compilation of personal recollections. I argue that through the very act of compiling memories in the public domain the individual agent undermines the domination of professional agents who establish, maintain, and hence control the channels of description by which memory travels from people who have experienced a certain event first-hand to those who lack such experiences. Put in different words, joint memory in late modernity is established by direct communication

between various community members who recall a certain episode, and others who plug into their experience by operating in comparable 'technoscapes' (Appadurai, 1996). Yet, there is another significant and distinctive feature of 'joint memory'. Like Margalit's 'common memory', 'joint memory' is the memory of individuals who were present in time and in space in a certain event. Yet, it differs from it because in my estimation, unlike the latter it has a social function – to affect the memory of a collective who were absent in time, in space or in both from the recalled event. Significantly, joint memory is not motivated by personal interests, to tell an interesting story or to reveal new information, but it is driven by a moral purpose; the mnemonic agent who inserts his/her memories into a joint compilation of memories accessible to members of the community, attempts to either frame harsh experiences as experiences of wrongdoing or expose transgressions and suffering the collective wishes to forget. By making such personal memories visible in a public domain the mnemonic agent undermines their exclusion and allows their return to the collective consciousness.

Examining the construction of joint memories in and by organizations' websites I shall demonstrate that online platforms allow for the appearance of a different kind of mnemonic agent which I will term 'moral mnemonic agent' – a condition in which the individual agent recalls his/her memories of wrongdoing before large audiences with the intention of drawing attention to such marginalized or even denied occurrences.

The emergence of the (moral) mnemonic agent

The rise of the moral mnemonic agent who performs his/her cry in and by the media is directly linked to the enormous transformation the theoretical and artistic fields have undergone since War World Two (Ashuri, 2010; Peretz, 2003). In the wake of horrific catastrophes which accrued in the mid-twentieth century it has been suggested that the traditional ways of assessing and representing human experience have failed to encompass and account for the suffering caused by traumatic experiences (e.g. Friedlander, 1992). The horrific event, so the argument goes, overwhelms the victims to the point where they are unable to 'know' the occurrence that traumatized them and hence cannot express or document it in and by language. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (1992) have dubbed this phenomenon 'the crisis of witnessing'. Looking especially at the Holocaust they pointed to the impossibility of bearing witness: the events have left its survivors speechless, not because they did not witness the traumatic event, but rather because they did so

all too overwhelmingly (see discussion in Frosh and Pinchevski, 2009; Peters, 2001). This conception sheds light on an important paradox: the traumatic experience of the survivor must be explicated in order to allow the removed audience to comprehend, judge, and act upon it, but the means of representation (sounds, words, and images) are inadequate for the task at hand (Silverstone, 2004). Scholars have recently taken an important step in the direction of addressing this complex issue. It has been claimed that human experience of traumatic events that cannot be represented as 'knowledge' (in principle, knowledge is universally accessible) should be characterized as a singular event that has been endured and whose existence can only be 'carried' by its victim, who participated in the occurrence. Therefore, the victim is essentially testifying to the excess of an event which only he/she is privy to – a secret which singularizes him/her (Ashuri, 2010; LaCapra 2001; Peretz 2003). It is within this significant observation that the new category of the witness – the individual who suffers the pain and participates in an event that signals a break in the possibility of knowledge – has emerged.

Either explicitly or implicitly the role of media technologies and media institutions in this novel category of the witness has been highlighted. An illuminating starting point is the construction of the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University in 1979. Dori Laub, a child survivor and a psychiatrist, together with Laurel Vlock, a television journalist, have established this project, suggesting that audio-visual technologies (notably video cameras and television screens) could be used successfully to document the testimonies of survivals, to save them for the benefit of future generations, and to disseminate them to large audiences across the globe. However, the function of audio-visual technologies utilized in this project was more than the establishment of audio-visual archive; the media technology became the means by which survivors recovered their traumatic experiences, possibly for the first time. As Geoffrey Hartman explains:

The camera [...] because it focused on the face and gestures of the witnesses, was anything but cold: in fact, it 'reembodied' those who had been denied their free and human body-image in the camps. [...] What is essential is the mental space such minimal visibility ('I see a voice!') allows. Witnesses can now 'see better' into, or listen more effectively to, themselves [...] (Hartman, 2000: 118)

While enabling survivors to recover their repressed narratives, these media generate traumatic experiences for mass consumption and install

memories of them. They function as tools by which audiences who were not present at the events are connected to the survivors' traumatic experiences and can respond to the proximity created by them.

The Holocaust survivor who bears witness to his/her traumatic experience meets the conditions of the 'moral witness' suggested by Avishai Margalit (2002); testifying to suffering that is inflicted by evil. Margalit insists that a person who witnesses either of these elements – evil (e.g. reporting on a vicious plan) or suffering (e.g. surviving a natural disaster) – without the other fails to meet the criteria of a moral witness. In highlighting both these components of witnessing, Margalit touches upon a third element, which in contrast to the first two does not stem from the content of the testimony but from its objective. He argues that the testimony is essentially driven by a moral purpose. It reflects the hope for a moral community that will 'hear' the cry and acknowledge the pain, and thereby usher in a new order. Margalit thus perceives the witness to be a social agent who, in testifying, transforms his/her (passive) addressee into active audiences. Put differently, the testimony's efficacy is measured by the extent to which it establishes and maintains a sphere for moral engagement that persists beyond the moment of the utterance itself.

Employing Margalit's novel category, I shall nuance his conceptualization of the 'moral witness' who recalls his/her memories regarding the suffering he/she has experienced in a public space, and point to the emergence of 'the (moral) mnemonic agent'. In my conceptualization, unlike the 'moral witnesses' who testify about their own suffering, the (moral) mnemonic agents recall their memories about past events by which others have suffered, and in that act of witnessing make this suffering visible and hence difficult to marginalize or deny. The moral aspect derives from the content of the mnemonic text; the testimony is about suffering inflicted by evil. It is the witness of the combination of suffering brought by human actions who can become a moral agent of collective memory.

In the remainder of this chapter I examine the manner by which ICTs constitute sites of 'joint memory' and hence facilitate the emergence of (moral) mnemonic agents. I demonstrate this by exploring a specific website established by members of Machsom Watch.

Machsom Watch and the construction of joint memory

Every day throughout the occupied territories, members of the group Machsom Watch (henceforth MW) show up at military checkpoints

and witness the suffering and humiliation of Palestinians trying to pass through them. Their published memories regarding the harsh daily reality they witness are posted on their website (machsomwatch.org), set up for this purpose. In the homepage of their website (the 'about us' section), Yehudit Keshet, a prominent member of the group, summarizes the goals of the organization and sees the organization's website as a highly effective space in which to achieve these goals:

[W]e set ourselves three very modest goals: monitoring the behaviour of the military, monitoring/protecting (!) Palestinian human and civil rights, and *bearing witness* in the form of reports after each observation ... [T]he computer system, which has undergone many changes and revisions, is the basis for reporting to this day.

The choice of the term 'witness' to describe the offline and online activities of the group is important. The website functions as a metaphorical witness stand, to which the members of MW step up – that is, unlike moral witnesses who report on pain they themselves experienced, the women of MW choose to take on the role of witnesses and recall their memories about the suffering caused to voiceless others in this public's name (Ashuri and Wiesslit, forthcoming). They regard their activity – publishing their memories in a public domain, as a moral mission intended to draw attention to a marginalized or even absent reality of suffering and pain and thereby to change this reality. In the 'about us section' they write:

We call for Palestinian freedom of movement within their own territory and for an end to the Occupation that destroys Palestinian society and inflicts grievous harm on Israeli society.

The fact that the website, in contrast to modern mass media such as books, television, or newspapers, is accessible, and not restricted to carefully 'selected' mnemonic agents, makes it a natural environment for fulfilling the tasks members of MW take upon themselves.

First, online platforms present almost no financial barriers, allowing individuals without capital, like the women of MW, to distribute their memories to many different audiences. This independence from financiers and from their requirements to appeal to the broadest possible public means that Internet users are able to voice controversial opinions, or hegemonic perceptions. This is of special importance when the mnemonic activity has a moral dimension, as in the case studied here.

Internet users can bring before their audiences a marginalized reality of suffering and pain caused in their name. Second, the professional barrier is absent from the Internet. Unlike mnemonic agents (such as historians, journalists, museum curators, and the like) who are committed to the professional norms adopted by the institution they work for (such as 'objectivity' in the case of journalists), non-professional agents, like members of MW, can adopt different norms and present their personal memories and views about a reality they wish to change through their online activity (Ashuri and Wiesslit, forthcoming).

And indeed the members of MW post on their website memories of the events they have witnessed, adopting and developing a style of storytelling that is highly personal in the choice of language, its length, and its focus on the writer's personal experience. This is of special importance in the situation studied here of the mnemonic agent who sees her action as part of a moral mission. As argued earlier, the (moral) mnemonic agent does not set out to expose an 'objective truth' or to calibrate memories of others in a public space, but rather to present a personal memory publicly, that is, to expose a personal memory about a harsh reality in which the mnemonic agent partakes. Exposing this personal memory is made possible in part by presenting a story that conveys, through its own uniqueness, the multifaceted reality that is revealed in a particular way to the author who recounts it. The fact that a website, unlike a television program or a newspaper spread, is a non-bounded space makes it a natural environment for such unique personal memories. Thus, a single website offers, as it were, detailed and lengthy as well as brief and concise representations of personal memories – the sort of representations that underlie (moral) mnemonic acts.

Significantly, members of MW allow Internet users to access their reports in three ways – by subject, by timeline, and/or by location (checkpoint). In opting for this design they make use of a crucial component of the Internet, namely its a-synchronous character. Unlike mainstream media that allow for linear (and therefore sequential) reports, the website constitutes a non-linear timeless archive. As such, it enables its users to be exposed at any given moment to 'new' and 'old' memories. In other words, the archival (non-linear) nature of the Internet makes it possible to represent a routine experience of suffering and wrongdoing. This element is important because modern mnemonic agents when reporting on such occurrences tend to either calibrate the memories of a small number of witnesses who have experienced a certain event first-hand, or publish their own memories about their personal experiences.

One final feature of the Internet that I described as a catalyst for the emergence of the (moral) mnemonic agent is its interactive element. In this respect I suggest that unlike the mainstream media, typified by linear representation of symbolic content, the Internet allows for interactive consumption of its content. This unique feature contributes to the creation of a more active experience of consumption, in which the consumer of joint memory functions also as its editor and, as such, its producer. This unique consumption experience results in a sort of partnership in the creation of a (virtual) site of joint memory. And this, in turn, is an essential element in the emergence of the (moral) mnemonic agent because in compiling memories about evil, the moral mnemonic agent aims to make the addressees share in the experience of it, and responsibility for it. What motivates the moral mnemonic agent to bring public exposure to a marginalized reality of suffering and pain is the hope that if the public she addresses takes responsibility, a wider public response will follow, which will bring about tangible change. 'By exposing the harsh reality', members of MW write on their website's homepage, 'we aim to influence public opinion in Israel and elsewhere and call for an end to the Occupation that destroys Palestinian society and inflicts grievous harm on Israeli society.'

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Part III
Media Memory and Popular
Culture

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8

Television and the Imagination of Memory: *Life on Mars*

Paul Frosh

'The *Invention* of Tradition', 'The Way We Never Were', 'Phantoms of Remembrance', 'History as an Art of Memory', 'Theatres of Memory', 'Memories in the Making': these few titles taken from the vast bibliography associated with the study of social memory display what has become almost a commonplace in much recent thinking: that social memory is the work of a perpetual process of symbolic construction. Hence memory necessarily involves techniques and energies associated with illusion, storytelling, spectacle, fabrication, and art. The rhetorical frisson and critical acuity of these titles arises from the juxtaposition of apparently incommensurate domains. A faculty as seemingly referential as memory, fundamental to the relation between reality and identity, becomes entangled, if not tainted, with the realm of fabulation, phantasmagoria, and artifice: a realm traditionally associated with the role of the imagination in individual and social life, and with cultural processes of fictionalization that are today systemically concentrated in the mass media.

What might media texts reveal about the entanglement of memory and imagination? And what might the intersections between memory and imagination imply about media as mnemonic agents? Given the vastness of the topic, and the diminutive size of this essay, this question will be addressed through the analysis of a conspicuously reflexive media text – the BBC's 2006 drama series *Life on Mars* – and specific medium: television. Overall, the discussion will be informed by two assumptions: first, that memory needs to be theorized in relation to the imagination in ways that move beyond denigrating its illusionary character and ideological motivation; second, that mass media are central to the performance and explicit thematizing of the intersection between memory and imagination, for enabling (and constraining) the imagination of memory.

On this last point I will put forward the idea that media produce imaginary locations for the playing out of mnemonic processes and experiences, and that these spaces of time – these chronotopes, to use Bakhtin's term, where 'time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible' (1981: 250) – are culturally powerful 'ghost effects' (Rotman, 2007) of media, historically specific concretizations of shared temporality, spatial orientation, and social agency.

Life on Mars: the present unfolding of past possibility

The BBC drama series *Life on Mars* (2006),¹ constitutes, among other things, a profound philosophical meditation on the imagination of memory, and on their mediation. It begins with a serious traffic accident in 2006. Its victim is Sam Tyler, a senior detective in the Manchester police force, who has been desperately searching for his police colleague and girlfriend, Maya, following her abduction by a serial killer. Knocked to the ground by a speeding car, Sam loses consciousness only to 'wake up' in the year 1973, where it turns out he is also a Manchester police detective. The series traces Sam's adventures as he attempts to make sense of his new world, deal with its challenges, shape it and escape from it, while also solving criminal cases in a manner befitting a twenty-first-century policeman trapped in the dark ages before personal computers, mobile phones, and DNA testing. Along the way he deals with such apparently antiquated issues as overt sexism in the workplace, football hooliganism, police brutality and corruption, immigration and racism – all from a post-feminist, multicultural, and liberal-bureaucratic twenty-first-century vantage point. He also gets the chance to meet his mother and confront his father's abandonment of his family.

The definitive theme underpinning *Life on Mars* concerns the status of Sam's new-old world: the whole series is pervaded by radical doubt of its reality and Sam's own perceptual reliability. As Sam explains, in the voice-over that introduces all episodes but the first: 'My name is Sam Tyler. I had an accident and woke up in 1973. Am I mad, in a coma, or back in time? Whatever's happened, it's like I've landed on a different planet.' Since this different planet occupies almost the entire space of the diegesis – with the exception of the opening and closing sequences of the full two-season series, all the episodes are set in 1973 – this means that the narrative exposition itself is rendered perpetually suspect almost to the point of self-subversion (if Sam is mad, what are we seeing, and why are we to believe it?). Charged with establishing the persuasiveness of the narrative premise – that we, the audience, are perceiving and experiencing what Sam perceives, and that what he

perceives is open to the most fundamental uncertainty – the first episode contains the series' most concentrated dramatic explication of severe ontological insecurity. One scene in particular conspicuously encapsulates this theme, giving prominence to the vexed relationship between imagination, memory, and reality under conditions of extreme doubt. In it Sam walks down a crowded street and encounters Annie, a woman police officer who has befriended him:

Annie: Where are you going?

Sam: I can't deal with this place.

Annie: So you're just giving up?

Sam: Look. Somewhere out there, Maya needs me. My mind can only invent so much detail you know. So I'm gonna walk until I can't think up any more faces, or streets. I mean, this is just ...

[Sam gestures with both hands at the scene before him and shakes his head in disbelief. Annie turns to look in the direction of Sam's gesture. The camera performs a slow 360 degree pan of the crowded street, showing in great detail passers-by, shop fronts, cars, posters on the walls, buses, buildings – all faithful to the look of 1970s Manchester – before returning to show Sam and Annie.]

Annie: Just what?

Sam: [Still disbelieving]. It's just madness.

Annie: I've got a nephew. And he fell off a pier, and he couldn't remember the name of things. Couldn't tell you what an apple was, or a pencil. And you know what? He stopped believing in them. And then he got better. And everything seemed real again.

Sam: Follow the yellow brick road.

Annie: What'll you find? Mist? A big cliff? A white door?

Sam: I don't know.

[Sam turns and suddenly sees the shop front of a record shop called 'Vinyl Heaven'. His expression changes and he goes over to the shop window.]

Sam: I used to come here! I bought my first Gary Numan: 'Cars'!
[He goes into the shop.]

The presentness of imagination and the givenness of memory

Perhaps the most striking tension evoked in this scene is between the referential abundance and detailed audio-visual realism of the street, and the conviction that the street and all it contains cannot be real,

is really the product of an involuntary subjective fantasy. The scene's astonishing verisimilar persuasiveness, the effect of the real, is actually described by Sam as an effort of imagination, of unwilled, insane yet extraordinarily accomplished invention (in a later scene Sam becomes temporarily convinced of the reality of the new world because, as he says to Annie, 'why would my mind make up *so much* detail?').

One of the implications of this unwilled verisimilitude is the paradoxical autonomy enjoyed by the depicted world: it seems indifferent to Sam, hostile even, certainly not about to adapt itself to him, while at the same time it is described as emerging from him as the product of his imagination. While Sam insists that he is hallucinating it into existence, it is not subject to his conscious will: he cannot make people disappear, or bend walls, and stop bullets (this is not *The Matrix*). Though Sam will discover that he does have agency within this imagined world (see below), it is not unconstrained and – at the very least – obeys the laws of physics, as well as most of the laws of historical chronology. Imagination does not grant mastery.

This paradoxical autonomy of the invented world also foregrounds a key problematic of imagination and memory: the temporal antecedence and givenness of memory, as opposed to the atemporal and autarchic nature of imagination. Memory, in Aristotle's famous phrase, is of the past: it consists of the phenomenological individual perception of elapsed time mapped onto a shared reckoning of cosmological temporality (seasonal cycles, planetary movements, generational substitution). Imagination, in contrast, is not bound to any particular temporal zone or structure, whether individual or collective: 'Each fictive temporal experience unfolds its world, and each of these worlds is singular, incomparable, unique' (Ricoeur, 1984: 128). Moreover, memory is tied to an ambition to be *faithful* to the past. As Ricoeur observes: 'If we can reproach memory with being unreliable, it is precisely because it is our one and only resource for signifying the past-character of what we declare we remember ... we have nothing better than memory to signify that something has taken place, has occurred, has happened *before* we remember it' (Ricoeur, 2004: 21). It would be nonsensical – an exemplary category error – to reproach the imagination with unreliability or falsity, whereas such a claim *is* frequently made against memory (by historians as well as spouses), and it is the potentiality for recognizable error that positions memory on different ontological and epistemological planes from imagination.

Memory, then, makes claims upon the actual. It is concerned with what can be recalled because it once *was*. Or, to phrase it in more

performative terms, to remember necessarily involves designating the antecedent reality of the recalled, imparting to memories a reality-effect concomitant upon their being of the past (this is why Sam's expression changes when he remembers the record shop, since his sudden memory of it vouches for its reality). In contrast, imagination, on those occasions when it too relates to the past, is connected not to what was but to what *might have been*, which is a temporally specific version of imagination's broader theme: not the recovery of the actual, but the discovery of the possible.

Hence memories, whether spontaneously encountered or intentionally recollected, are always presentations of something which has elapsed with the passing of time: this gap between the original experience and its reappearance through remembering means that all memories seem to be pre-given to the consciousness before whom they appear or by whom they are recalled. 'With memory,' says Ricoeur, 'the absent bears the temporal mark of the antecedent' (2004: 19). Imagination, of course, can also be divided into non-intentional and intentional forms: dreams and daydreams and hallucinations, on the one hand, and conscious fabrications and fictions, on the other; or Kendall Walton's distinction between non-occurrent and occurrent imaginings (1990). Yet none of these imaginative modes possesses the givenness to consciousness or pre-fabricated quality that characterizes memory. Imaginings are *coeval* with the time of their performance: they declare no point of origin in a temporality or actuality anterior to the moment of imagining. The thing or experience presented to mind does not claim to precede its presentation, but to issue from it.

Sam's created world is clearly described by him in terms of imagination and invention, powers that are coeval with his own perception: he will, he declares, walk until his mind can no longer invent any more faces or streets. But it is equally clearly experienced by Sam, and presented to the audience, as a world of pre-existing memory. Not only does it share the temporal specificity of memory (it is presented as the chronological past of both Sam and the audience), mapped onto and continuous with a geographical entity – the city of Manchester – that straddles both temporal zones, but Sam's insistence on its imaginative origin is continually contradicted by his experience of its pre-fabricated nature, its status as referentially and ontologically anterior to his being in it: 'I used to come here!'

This experience of memory as pre-given to consciousness – the return of a prior, lapsed, initial perception (and hence secondary retention, in Husserl's scheme) – is, however, more complicated than Sam's encounter

with the record shop shows. In fact, the theme of memory in the series is split according to the two traditional understandings of mnemonic functioning outlined by Aristotle: *mneme* and *anamnesis*. The former refers specifically to the 'simple presence to mind' (Ricoeur, 2004: 15) of memories: the unintentional appearance before consciousness of imprints of prior perceptions or conceptions. Anamnesis, in contrast, is traditionally translated as 'recollection', the active, deliberate process of seeking out and bringing to consciousness these imprints or memories. In Sam's world *mneme* and *anamnesis* are expressed in a clear opposition. On the one hand we find a powerful aesthetic of immersive, perceptual simulation that populates Sam's world with pre-given characters and objects which are simply present before him – like the record shop – irrespective of his will; this aesthetic is paralleled by the theme of socio-cultural determination: irrespective of Sam's desire or his efforts, the physical and technological infrastructure, as well as certain power relations (such as his rank in the police force) and personal relations, are fixed and cannot be altered. On the other hand, we find the theme of individual agency and a corresponding aesthetic of narrative indeterminacy that allows Sam the possibility of decisive action and individual self-development within this mnemonic universe. These two dimensions intersect in complex ways (as determination and agency tend to): later on in the episode Sam undertakes an investigation by instructing some junior police officers to search through the police files for particular names and dates that he 'remembers' from 2006: he realizes that his newly invented spatial habitat provides his memory with an objective correlative – in this case the bureaucratic paraphernalia of 1970s police filing cabinets and archives – that he can imaginatively 're-collect' and act upon.

Thus the modes of memory – *mneme* and *anamnesis* – are aesthetically and narratively reconfigured around the poles of structure and agency, suddenly becoming fluid and alive with the constitutive paradox of historicity: to make one's own history, as Marx said, but not in conditions of one's own choosing. The past becomes unfixed, undetermined by the logic of retrospective narrativization, relieved of the necessity of arriving at the terminus from which it is remembered: through the imagination of memory Sam relives the past as a constraining framework ripe with possibilities.

Central to this opening up of memory to possibility is that its pre-giveness is not experienced by Sam or the viewers as simply 'of the past': the tense of the whole program is in the present. Sam encounters the racism, sexism, and injustice of the past in the program's discursive 'now', and by experiencing them as present confronts them in the

moment of their becoming and challengeability, seeing that things can be otherwise. This diegetic 'now' may be chronologically dislocated by several decades, but the experiential time of the narrative is one of perpetually unfolding present duration. And it is an exceptionally 'thick' present that unfolds; thick not simply with the phenomenological richness of the embodied present that combines an interwoven Husserlian 'comet's tail' of retentions and protensions, but dense with multiple temporal horizons arising from the shift between the contemporary period of the framing device and the main diegetic time of the 1970s. Thanks to this shift the present unfolds, for both Sam and the audience, against the horizon of a personal past (the time of the accident) that is also a chronological future (the twenty-first century): this recollected knowledge of the future opens up the possibilities for imagining otherwise the diegetic present of the main narrative, recognizing the relationship between its immediate being and its potential becoming.

This perpetually unfolding presentness is of course a temporality particularly associated with the broadcast media of radio and television, especially with the ideology, technologies, and default practices of liveness (Bourdon, 2000; Feuer, 1983) as well as with the aesthetics of the synchronously transmitted serial form.² More broadly still it echoes a particular modern understanding of temporality – often associated with the work of Walter Benjamin – as a sequence of accumulating instants in which every present moment bears the potential for significance, change, and development. Here, however, it is a lived indeterminate *past*, rather than the present, that bears the pregnancy of every moment for the future of the individual and the social whole: we thus 'seize hold of a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger' (Benjamin, 1992: 247). And this lived indeterminacy of imagined memory is thoroughly uncanny in its effect, producing alongside transformative agency the revisitation of the past as a present *déjà-vu*, a ghost past which one never entirely reinhabits or from which one never fully escapes.

Reproductive, productive, and modal imagination

The idea of imagined memory developed so far though the analysis of *Life on Mars* is based not simply on the contingent elision of memory and imagination in a particular television program, however, but also on the duality of imagination as both representation and invention. The former is what Ricoeur, following Kant, calls the 'reproductive imagination': the capacity for making present to mind images derived from previous perceptions of things; in short, for representing the

absent. The reproductive imagination seems to be very close to memory, whether defined as the retention of past perception or as the recall or re-experience of perceptions after a lapse of time. In both cases the thesis that memories are re-presentations to mind makes the connection to imagination obvious: memories are frequently understood as types of images (hence memory-images), from Plato and Aristotle onwards – even in the sense that they appear as scenes performed before a spectatorial consciousness in a kind of mental theater. This similarity between the reproductive imagination and memory seems to imply that the boundary between these faculties is more like a porous membrane than a tightly policed border.³

Yet the primary distinction between memory and imagination becomes apparent when we address the creative capacities of the ‘productive imagination’: its ability to present to consciousness ideas, experiences, or things which are not simply absent but non-existent; ‘other-than-present’ in Ricoeur’s terms. The major figures of the ‘productive imagination’ are of course the dream and work of fiction. Productive imagination shares with reproductive imagination the evocation of the absent, but introduces something radically new and socially central: the capacity of the mind for extension and projection, in time, space, figuration, and understanding, beyond its immediate impressions and recollections.

Two points should be emphasized here. The first is that what is of interest are the *generative tensions* between reproductive and productive imagination: neither is replete. Any result of reproductive imagination is a transformation and an embellishment, at least in its marked recognizability *as* an image (or as a memory), its non-identity with the original perception. Similarly, any feat of productive imagination draws upon capacities for reproducing absent things as the building blocks, so to speak, of the new invention. As Nelson Goodman (1978) has it, worlds are made from other worlds. Like most fictionalizing, the represented world of *Life on Mars* builds upon relationships between familiarity and innovation – it is simultaneously recognizable and strange. It utilizes, in other words, both reproductive and productive imagination to generate a new configuration similar to, but different from, the Manchester of 1973. The second point is that in extending and transforming the actual beyond its reproduction, productive imagination allows us to contemplate the possible: this continual consciousness of possible action by ourselves and others – ‘modal imagination’ to use Piper’s (1991) term – is crucial to social action and social experience, to the ability to imagine the future possibilities of one’s own emotions, thoughts, or actions, or the motivations, experiences, or feelings of others.

Insofar as it makes possible the imagination of other people, modal imagination is key to the dynamics of fiction. And like all fiction *Life on Mars* draws upon, performs, and exercises our capacity for modal imagination by asking us to imagine someone else's experiences and perspectives, centered, in this case, on the figure of Sam. The viewer is positioned alongside Sam as companion and spectator to his world, as a silent co-conspirator in its imagining and recollection: we do not entirely share Sam's viewpoint, since we see him from the 'outside' in photographic third-person, but through the camera we share his space of imagined memory, allowing him to 'focalize' the scene. Indeed, we also remember it alongside him. In making Sam's recollections present as concrete forms before our eyes, the program engages audiences in the *modal imagination of memory*, imagining the mnemonic events and practices of another in the mode of fiction, 'as if' they were our own, a process which evokes our own similar personal memories. The viewers become, in effect, Sam's mnemonic companions.

In generating newness from reproduction, and exercising our modal imagination as Sam's mnemonic companions, *Life on Mars* fully participates in the ethos of imaginative work. As Ricoeur explains: 'it is imagination that provides the milieu, the luminous clearing, in which we can compare and evaluate motives as diverse as desires and ethical obligations, themselves as disparate as professional rules, social customs, or intensely personal values' (1991: 177). What is this luminous clearing? It is a space for experimentation: 'the free play of possibility in a state of noninvolvement with respect to the world of perception or of action. It is in this state of noninvolvement that we try out new ideas, new values, new ways of being in the world' (1991: 174). This idea of non-involvement refers particularly to the suspension of instrumentality, or rather, to a shift in the sense of agency from one that prioritizes our immediate concern with manipulation and control. To *do* in the space of imagination is not to act instrumentally on the world immediately around us. It is to focus one's attention on the experience and potentialities of existence, on tryings-out of the possible and the memorable that are divorced from immediate action not simply by Coleridge's oft-cited 'willing suspension of disbelief', but also by the suspension of instrumentality that fiction makes imaginatively available.

Television as an imagined mnemonic environment

The presentness of imagination opening up the givenness of memory is thematized within the diegetic world of *Life on Mars*, while the program turns toward the modal imagination of the viewer in his or her

engagement with the predicament of Sam. However, might there be something distinctively televisual about the way that memory is imagined in this program, as distinct from other media and from popular culture in general, and yet that indicates the overall significance of communication systems in the imagination of memory? Four overlapping characteristics of television suggest an answer: the audio-visual similitude of television as a representational device; the primacy of the present in televisual temporality; the warping of social and spatial scale that television achieves; and the history of broadcast television as an impersonal and centripetal technology of social connectivity. The first two characteristics have been variously discussed already in terms of the detailed representational verisimilitude and unfolding temporal presentness of the remembered world (1973 Manchester), a combination of simulation and temporal immediacy not usually achieved by other media. The latter two, however, need some elaboration.

The televisual warping of spatial and social scale

The opening up of memory through imagination that *Life of Mars* performs has more radical implications when we move beyond the strict framework of the diegesis and ask: *whose* imaginings and *whose* memories are these? There is a fundamental sense of crisis in the terms of spatiality, physical enclosure, and subjectivity at work in the series. Sam's awe at the sheer detail of invention is expressed through the idea of spatial vastness: he will walk, he says, until he can't think up any new faces and streets. For how can the imagined world be contained by Sam's mind? Moreover, if this world is 'going on' in Sam's mind, who is the figure that we see before us? All that we perceive, including us seeing it, is logically a part of Sam's inner space. 'Sam', therefore, is not identical to the character called Sam – who is a mere avatar, so to speak – but is a distributed agency, a multidimensional and super-temporal being, of whom figural embodiment and conscious will are only partial expressions. The character Sam does not know where he is: he is 'in' Sam, the ever-expanding space of representation, the totalized agent of mnemonic imagination.

It is here that the question of mediation becomes paramount for the imagination of memory. For the program presents itself as an allegory – and as a performance – of our relationship to television as an imagining and remembering mechanism. Sam says 'My mind can only invent so much detail you know. This is madness.' And we could say precisely the same things as Sam does, except not only about our individual imaginings, but about the collective energy used to recreate in a studio

somewhere a simulacrum of a Manchester street in 1973, an effort of mnemonic invention undertaken unbeknownst to us but in which we participate through watching, and which draws on our familiarity with similar scenes that were themselves part of the systematized effort of interminable imagining and remembering that we call mass media: a systematized effort of which *Life on Mars* is itself only one small example. What we see 'in' Sam's head is a loving and frequently nostalgic recreation of collectively recalled past times and past places, which Sam does not always necessarily identify as his own personal memory, but which – similar to audience members themselves – he can recognize as familiar from the media fare of the 1970s.

We could go further. For while the diegetic imagining of memory is represented as an expansive, potentially unbounded space, it is nevertheless sealed within an invisible envelope: the body of Sam lying comatose in a hospital bed in 2006, a ghost body whose presence is felt in every episode but who is not viewed from the outside. In other words, while *Life on Mars* depicts memory as a vast virtual place being imagined now, encompassing and bringing forth entire worlds, this huge space is nevertheless contained within the cerebral cortex of Sam's frail, damaged human body: whole universes in a grain of sand, *milieux de mémoire* caged within *lieux de mémoire*.

If this virtual space of individual imagined memory is coextensive with and modeled on a *collectively* produced location, that location is television. The referential ambiguity of the word 'television' – simultaneously signifying a discrete physical television 'set' located in a particular setting (the traditional box in the living room, the contemporary flat screen), and at the same time the entire collective apparatus of audiovisual connectivity and representation of which these boxes and screens are termini – perfectly echoes the scalar confusion of spatial expanses and enclosures, individual address and collective productive imagining, exemplified by Sam's predicament: an interior of seemingly endless verisimilar reproduction that encompasses the entire history and imaginative capacity of television as industry and institution, and which is nevertheless bounded and held within the fixed physical dimensions of the individual television console. Like 'Sam', television strangely warps the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm, as well as between inside and outside: it obeys the *multum in parvo* structure of the miniature and so 'becomes monumental, transcending any limited context of origin and at the same time neatly containing a universe' (Stewart, 1984: 53). And like other monumental structures, television will 'give a visual and/or auditory focus to the experience of living in a

community, allow people to be united in space either vicariously or in actuality ... by forming a nucleus for social life' (Adams, 1992: 126).

Television as a technology of social connectivity

It is no accident that within the diegesis of *Life on Mars* there is only one mechanism for glimpsing the twenty-first-century 'outside' of Sam's comatose body: through the medium of television itself. Sam sees his doctors and relatives in the outside world only when they appear on the television screen. True to the unidirectional nature of television, they cannot see or hear him calling for their help from the other side of the screen. Television therefore figures as the boundary and exemplar of Sam's ghost body: it is the receptive border of the ghost body's physical limits and its opening onto the space-time beyond, and it is the representative of that beyond within the expanding mnemonic landscape that is Sam's consciousness.

Furthermore, television is depicted primarily as a medium of live *connectivity* with the outside world rather than as a representational device. This largely matches our experience of television as characterized not simply by exposure to particular programs, but more fundamentally by the routine, domesticated *givenness* of the potential for mass connectivity that television enables and symbolizes (Meyrovitz, 1986). It is worth recalling that behind any and every program is the phatic constancy of the transmission signal, given memorable and uncanny life for many viewers – and in *Life on Mars* itself – by standard 'test patterns' (US) or 'test cards' (UK) that were broadcast during non-programming hours in the days before 24-hour television.⁴ Hence, as Roger Silverstone famously observed in his account of television as a transitional object (1994), even when there are no programs being transmitted, the television signifies our perpetual connection with an outside world that is separate from us.

But what kind of outside world? Traditional broadcasting is a unidirectional system linking discrete households to large, centralized media bureaucracies that produce, filter, and transmit messages. Unlike the postal system and the telephone, its messages are transmitted impersonally, disseminated to no one in particular and therefore to anyone who can receive them. Such a media system maps onto and routinely evokes a *centripetal* vision of the social totality: the totality is imagined as a spatially fixed and bounded physical territory whose dispersed subjects are synchronized and connected through a central site of communication and coordination, Adams' monumental 'nucleus for social life'.⁵ The impersonality of this vision of the social totality is important: it creates a seemingly neutral space of connectivity at the center of

society that equally reaches and draws in peripheral locations, along with those who inhabit them.

What does this centralized and impersonal connectivity imply about collective memory? That it is a faculty imagined and performed *through* the social nucleus; more particularly, that memory is imagined as a shared audio-visual simulacrum, collected and unfolding in a synchronous 'now', via a central spatial location that is connected to everyone – a location that is synonymous with 'television' as a media institution. In this context, the etymological association of 'collective' and 'recollection' as types of gathering together are multiply and mutually inflected.⁶ Television *re-collects* as a working spatial assemblage both memory objects from the 1970s (clothes, décor, cars, offices, hairstyles, etc.) and mediated-memory sequences from the 1970s (music, cultural icons, narrative scripts familiar from the period's television programming), ransacking its own institutional history and back-catalog of programs in order to gather and renew the collective past at the social centre. At the same time television *re-collects* its audience as participants in this act of synchronous remembering, gathering them together as a collective in the reimagining of a past shared in and through television.

This presentation of imagined collective memory in the form of a simulated, synchronous, connective nucleus is part of what Brian Rotman (2007) would call a 'ghost effect' of media: a hypostasized entity, a concretized fiction, of television. The chief concretized fiction of television is collective consciousness – in this case a unifying world of transpersonal memory – performed, imagined, and experienced as a lived spatial environment. Such an idea goes beyond (though it does not necessarily contradict) definitions of mediated memories 'as the activities and objects we produce and appropriate by means of media technologies, for creating and re-creating a sense of past, present and future of ourselves in relation to others' (Van Dijck, 2007: 20). It suggests that these mediated activities and objects are part of a larger ordered field of experienced and perceived space-time which is itself produced in relation to a historically dominant configuration of media: a mnemotechnical system (Stiegler, 2003). The ghost effect of television – collective memory imagined as a concurrent, all-connecting spatial environment – is what Stiegler would call a projected schema of our society's mnemotechnical system, a unified concept of the order underpinning 'the diversity that appears in intuitive spatial and temporal forms' (Stiegler, 2003: 6).

In conclusion, then, *Life on Mars'* crossing of boundaries between memory and imagination, means that it is not just the individual past

that acquires renewed possibility, but a socially shared collective past that is made fluid and imbued with alternative potentiality. At the same time its particular configuration of space-time, warping the relationships between interior and exterior, microcosm and macrocosm, parallels our sense that media accompany and orient us *within* the socio-historical totality (televisions in our homes and in our pasts), and at the very same time *constitute* the socio-historical totality as a perpetually renewable environment which we inhabit together now. The media are embedded in our lives and consciousness, and we are embedded in the media. *Life on Mars* offers us a rare glimpse of television as a place through which we imagine memory.

Notes

1. *Life on Mars* ran for two seasons and was very successful in the UK. A sequel called *Ashes to Ashes* (set in 1980s London) began broadcasting in 2008 and is currently in its third and final season.
2. The predominance of the broadcasting aesthetic of liveness and synchronous seriality is obviously being challenged by transformations in television and its 'convergence' with other digital platforms. See, among others, Lotz (2007) and many of the essays in Spigel and Olsson (2004).
3. The elision of memory and imagination is of course a time-honored theme, expressed in suspicions about the fidelity of individual memory as well as in scholarship about the susceptibility of memory to artificial enhancement, as readers of Frances Yates (1966) will recall.
4. In the UK test cards were in use as broadcast signals until 1997.
5. This is the legacy not simply of the organization of broadcasting as a unidirectional, professionalized institution, but also of the national histories of most television systems. In contrast, contemporary digital systems tend to evoke the social as a constantly available and visibly shifting associational network of individuals, groups, and organizations, giving rise to what Wittel (2001) has called 'network sociality'. Much like the telephone, and unlike television, connectivity is performed through links that include direct, voluntary connections to other specified individuals.
6. I am grateful to the editors for suggesting this connection.

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9

Life History and National Memory: the Israeli Television Program *Such a Life*, 1972–2001

Avner Ben-Amos and Jérôme Bourdon

On May 8, 2003, in the evening, a distinguished group of people gathered in an auditorium located in Shefayim, a locality north of Tel Aviv, to pay tribute to a television personality and the program with which he was overwhelmingly associated. The personality was Amos Ettinger, who was retiring from the Israeli Broadcasting Authority after 43 years of work in radio and television, and the program was *Such a Life*, which he had produced and hosted between 1972 and 2001. Among the people who came to honor Ettinger were members of the Knesset, major politicians, a retired Supreme Court judge, famous actors and singers, retired high-ranking army officers, university professors, and sports legends. The common denominator of most of these people was that they had appeared, at one time or another, over the years, in Ettinger's successful program. After consuming a rich buffet in the entrance hall, they entered the auditorium and watched a screening of segments from the program's episodes, interspersed with fragments from an interview with Ettinger, performances of several popular songs, and friends' reminiscences about Ettinger's long career. It was a moving event, a mixture of nostalgia, entertainment, and life-story telling – not very different from *Such a Life* itself.

The program, which was based on a surprise studio encounter between a central guest and his or her family, friends and colleagues – an encounter through which the life-story of the protagonist was narrated – was unique in the annals of Israeli television. Not only did it last longer than any other program, it also remained popular throughout the entire period of its broadcast. The list of people who appeared in its sixty-two installments could have been taken straight from the pages of *Who is Who?* of Israeli society, representing its different sectors: the

political, the military, the legal, and the arts and the sciences. But the program was more than a nostalgic, sentimental social gathering.

Since the main guests were all actively involved in the history of the creation and development of Israel, their individual life-stories served as a means to tell and retell that history, as seen through the eyes of its main actors. It constituted, therefore, a version of the state's official history,¹ told with the help of personal anecdotes, an emotional get-together, and visual images – all of which made it more appealing than the version usually encountered in history textbooks. By complementing the 'dry' historical narrative usually provided by school, and by reaching a large audience including children as well as adults, the program made an important contribution to the formation of Israeli national memory.

This chapter describes the creation of *Such a Life*, analyzes its main features, and explains how it became such a successful vehicle in promoting and diffusing the Zionist view of the 'life-story of Israel'. But in order to trace the origin of *Such a Life* we have to look beyond Israel, to the United States and Britain, and back in time, to the heyday of radio in the 1940s. A comparison with the Anglo-Saxon versions of the program will also highlight the unique characteristics of the Israeli version, which borrowed some key ingredients from the US and British programs, but painted them in distinct local colors, emphasizing memory and education rather than emotion and entertainment.

Anglo-Saxon origins

The US version of the program was born in the patriotic atmosphere of the post-World War Two period, under the name of *This Is Your Life*. Its creator, Ralph Edwards, a failed actor, made his name as a radio broadcaster with the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) network during the first half of the 1940s in New York. After the war he was asked by General Omar Bradley, head of the Veterans Administration, to help with the rehabilitation of paraplegics. Edwards thus conceived of a radio program around the life-story of Lawrence Trantor, a paraplegic veteran who had lost his self-confidence and was loath to return to his hometown for fear of being mistreated. Edwards invited him to his show, and he also invited his parents, his twin brother, his old athletic coach, his friends and other acquaintances without telling Trantor in advance, for an emotional, uplifting gathering.

The program, which was broadcast in 1946, was an immense success, and in 1948 Edwards began broadcasting *This Is Your Life* on NBC radio.

In 1952 it became a weekly, live NBC television program, based on the same formula, and it ran until 1961. It reappeared on syndicated, nationwide television between 1971 and 1973, and again, for one-time special editions, in 1981 and 1987. All in all, Edwards created 505 episodes of the program, and during its NBC years it was always among the ten most popular programs according to the Nielsen rating system, receiving thousands of fan letters each week.²

The main features of the program did not change throughout the years: a surprise encounter between a main guest and about ten other invitees – his or her relatives, friends, and colleagues – during which the protagonist's life-story, narrated by the host, was unfolded through a series of anecdotes before the audience both in the studio (a theater hall in Hollywood) and at home. Edwards introduced some elements that became the hallmark of the program, and were used also in the British and Israeli versions: luring the unsuspecting 'victim' of the program to the studio under a false pretext; asking him or her to identify the other invitees after listening to their voices as they spoke a sentence from behind a screen; reading fragments from a large, red scrapbook inscribed with the words *This Is Your Life*, which the guest received at the end of the program. The show, including the commercials, took half an hour, and it was a quickly paced, emotionally charged event, due in part to the surprise element and the fact that many of the participants met after not having seen each other for years.³ The main guests belonged to several socio-professional categories: they included famous actors and singers, successful sportsmen, war heroes, 'ordinary' people who had contributed to the well-being of their community, and disabled persons who had managed to overcome their hardship. Whereas the first three categories accentuated the entertaining and patriotic aspects of the program, the last two categories added a social dimension.

Yet the long-lasting popularity of the program is best explained not by the variety of the guests, but by its being, in Edwards' words, 'a surprise party'.⁴ It was a happy reunion of the members of a certain community around a central, beloved figure; a party in which the audience was invited to participate – albeit from a distance, on their television screens.⁵ By insisting on the surprise effect, Edwards made sure that his 'victims', even the most confident of them, would be caught off guard. They thus became 'normal' human beings, with whom the people at home could identify. The program offered the audience a weekly supply of varied human interest stories, and its anecdotal nature made it easy to follow. Its general mood was 'feel good' upbeat, with an emphasis on the protagonist's successes. Even if the guest had encountered a major

difficulty, like for instance the alcoholism and mental breakdown of the actress Frances Farmer, one of the early guests, the program accentuated the way she overcame her problems and regained her place in society.

The success of *This Is Your Life* and its exportable nature attracted the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and in 1955 it obtained the rights from Edwards and the NBC to present a British version of the program. Its host, Eamonn Andrews, began his broadcasting career – like Edwards – in radio, before becoming a popular television host in 1951 with the program *What's My Line?* He hosted *This Is Your Life* on BBC from 1955 to 1964, when the BBC decided to discontinue it, and he subsequently revived it on the commercial channel ITV in 1969. Andrews died in 1987 and was replaced by Michael Aspel, who continued to host it until 1993 on ITV, and then returned with it to the BBC for the period 1994–2003 (Andrews, 1963, 1978; Bottomley, 1993; Briggs, 1995: 172–5; Holmes, 2010). All in all, the British program ran for a total of 42 years – testimony to its great popularity.⁶ Its main features – length, structure, role of the host, surprise effect, number and categories of guests, and the overall upbeat atmosphere – were the same as those of its US original.⁷ This close similarity was also the main reason for the criticism it received from several British journalists. They attacked it for contributing to the ‘Americanization’ of British television, due to its ‘intrusion into privacy’ (Holmes, 2010); however, this was also the main source of its popularity.

It was in London, in 1955, that Amos Ettinger, who was then seventeen years old and on a trip before enlisting in the Israeli army, watched *This Is Your Life*, with the football player Stanley Matthews, for the first time. Like Edwards, Ettinger wished to become an actor, and in fact did his military service as a member of an army troupe. However, after completing his compulsory army service he changed his career plans, and in 1960 he joined the Voice of Israel (*Kol Israel*), the state broadcasting service, as a radio producer and presenter.⁸

Israel: the history of *Such a Life*

The radio station that Ettinger joined was, as its name implied, an official state-run station under the direct control of the Prime Minister's office (Caspi and Limor, 1992; Oren, 2004). State control of the electronic media was not a unique Israeli phenomenon. As Monroe Price claimed, from its inception in the 1920s to the mid-1960s, electronic broadcasting – first radio, then television – worldwide was under the more or less direct control of the state (Price, 1995: 5–9). However, with

the advent in the 1970s of new broadcasting technologies, such as cable and satellite, and with the growing importance of private broadcasting, which loosened the centralized grip of the state, this situation began to change.

In Israel, too, it seemed as though the state was ready to grant independence to broadcasting. After the resignation of the country's authoritarian founding father, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, and his replacement by the more liberal Levy Eshkol in 1963, the state began to move away from its centralized policies. Moreover, Eshkol was apprehensive of the possibility that state radio would become a tool in the hands of one of his opponents. As a result, in 1965 a law was passed in the Knesset replacing the Voice of Israel with the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA). It was a public service, modeled on the BBC, and together with the army radio station it had a monopoly over radio broadcasting in Israel. In 1968, when official television broadcasting began, it became a subdivision of the IBA, whose basic structure remained the same. However, in spite of the formal similarities with the BBC, the politicians in power continued to regard the IBA as a state agency, and through the nomination of its board members found ways to constantly intervene in its decisions (Caspi and Limor, 1992: 99–101, 148–54; Horowitz and Lissak, 1990: 209).

Ettinger produced and hosted the Israeli version of *This Is Your Life* on IBA radio between 1968 and 1970, before transforming it into a television program. The radio program, like its Anglo-Saxon television counterparts, was centered on the life-story of individuals, told through a surprise encounter between them and their family, friends, and colleagues. However, the Israeli version – on both radio and television – had several unique features: it was not broadcast live but recorded; it was longer – between two and three hours; the behaviour of the host was less flamboyant; and the program was more didactic, trying to recreate the history of the period in which the protagonist played an important part. This was in accordance with the perceived role of the IBA: a public service that saw its main role as informing and educating the public. Hence also the absence of the category of 'ordinary' people from the list of guests, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon program. All guests, in both the radio and the television program, were well-known public figures who had played formative roles in the history of the state. Among the protagonists of the sixteen radio episodes, eight were members of the security forces, five took a major part in the effort to settle the country, two were entertainers, and one was a sportsman.

Ettinger joined television's public, state-controlled channel in 1970, two years after its creation. It was no coincidence that state television

began broadcasting a year after the 1967 Six Day War. Although an Educational Television channel had already been created by 1966, the state was in no hurry to introduce general television broadcasting in Israel. In spite of the recommendation of several government committees, the ruling politicians, afraid that they would be unable to control the new medium, postponed its introduction. After the Six Day War, television seemed the best medium to address the Palestinian population in the newly occupied territories, and security considerations were apparent also in the decision to ceremonially open broadcasting with a live transmission of the May 1968 Independence Day army parade (Caspi and Limor, 1992: 116–17).

While as a radio producer Ettinger made a variety of programs, including much entertainment, in television he concentrated almost exclusively on *Such a Life* – the new name that was given to *This Is Your Life*, to distinguish it from its radio predecessor. Like Ralph Edwards and Eamonn Andrews, before him, Ettinger became identified with the program and survived several attempts by Channel One directors to either replace him or abolish the program altogether.⁹ Between 1972 and 2001 he produced and hosted 62 episodes at a varied pace of between one and seven episodes per year.

This irregular programming was to some extent related to a desire to connect the show with celebrations on the national calendar. At times, it was transmitted on a regular weekday, but at other times it was aired on the occasion of a civic or a religious Jewish holiday, such as Holocaust Day,¹⁰ Independence Day,¹¹ or Passover.¹² The national holiday was, on such occasions, symbolically related to the life-story of the protagonist. The Anglo-Saxon programs, with their weekly broadcasts and the inclusion of ordinary as well as famous figures, were mundane events that fascinated the audience because they allowed them to witness an emotional private moment. In contrast, *Such a Life* reached the status of an exceptional, well-nigh sacred event: it was relatively rare, and sometimes – as said – related to the national calendar; it included, moreover, only well-known public figures, and emphasized history with a capital H (Hunt, 1990; Moore and Myerhoff, 1997).

Who were the protagonists of these 62 episodes? An analysis according to socio-professional categories shows that a little more than a half (33) took part in what was considered by the Zionist movement and the state as serious, state-building activities, suiting the image of the new Israeli Jew: a (former) member of the security forces (17), someone who had contributed to the immigration effort and to the building of the country (9), or someone who had been active in the public sphere as

a politician (7). The second largest category was that of artists (20), fifteen of whom were performing artists – actors, singers, and musicians – and five were writers and poets. The other professions had a much smaller representation: scientists, journalists, judges, and sportsmen had two protagonists each, and there was also one industrialist. Only eleven episodes featured women as their main guests, and only seven had a so-called *mizrachi* Jew – that is, a Jew who emigrated from a Muslim country – as its protagonist. No Arab starred as a main guest. In sum, the program was a collective portrait of the political, military, and cultural elite of Israel, which was predominantly male, of Jewish-Ashkenazi origin, with a secular outlook. For the most part, this elite was identified with the world-view of the Israeli Labor movement, the leading social force that also held cultural hegemony, both before and after the establishment of the state (Horowitz and Lissak, 1978; Kimmerling, 2005). No wonder that the life-stories of its members and its vision of the national past dominated *Such a Life*.

The program was highly popular at least until 1993, when the first commercial channel in Israel, Channel Two, began to broadcast, putting an end to the monopoly of Channel One over television broadcasting. Although there are no ratings figures for the period 1972–95, it is possible to roughly estimate *Such a Life* popularity on the basis of more general information. According to a poll taken in 1990, about half of the population (52.4 percent) regularly watched the daily evening news between 21:00 and 21:30, and it is safe to assume that the percentage of the population that watched *Such a Life*, which immediately followed it, was not much smaller (Caspi and Limor 1992: 120). But even after the creation of the commercial and dynamic Channel Two, and, later, the introduction of cable and satellite television, the program continued to receive a relatively high rating: between 13 percent and 31 percent.¹³

The broadcast episode

In the course of its long history the program underwent some minor changes: it moved from black and white to color in the early 1980s; the use of visual materials became more abundant and sophisticated; and the set in the studio was modified.¹⁴ But the overall format remained the same. This stability enables us to conduct a structural analysis that will highlight the main way by which the program tried to achieve its goal, namely, presenting the official history of Israel and thus creating a common, national memory.

Because of the strong emphasis on the historical dimension, and the length of the episodes, the process of production was longer and more elaborate than that of the Anglo-Saxon programs. A small team – Ettinger, an assistant producer, and a researcher – conducted extensive biographical and historical research, and this put a limit on the number of episodes.

In selecting the guests, two aspects were always taken into consideration: the personal and the social. Ettinger preferred an outgoing and talkative person, capable of holding the attention of the audience, but the main condition was the guest's part in the establishment and development of Israel. In addition, he or she had to represent a certain social, professional, or political milieu, and thus bring a network of friends to the studio. This meant that the guest was usually at the end of his or her public career or, at least, in mid-career, having accomplished certain substantial achievements. The ideal candidate combined the personal and the social features but the more important of the two was the latter. The example of Yitzhak 'Ike' Aharonowitz, the laconic commander of the famous ship, the *Exodus*, demonstrates that the telling of the story of pre-state illegal immigration was more important for Ettinger than having a communicative protagonist.

The tale told by each episode was a complex narrative that included four different story-lines. The first was the life-story of the main guest told, in a polyphonic manner (Bakhtin, 1984), by the guest him/herself, the host, the other guests, and the visual documents inserted by Ettinger. However, this polyphony did not result in a multifaceted and complex portrait of the protagonist. Like a typical life-story, it was a highly selective narrative, which created a coherent, one-dimensional identity (Alasuutari, 1997; Linde, 1993).

The narrative structure of the life-story was simple and linear: it progressed from childhood to adolescence and then to adulthood, showing how the mature vocation of the grown-up person was already visible in their early years (for example, the Air Force Commander Ezer Weizmann playing with airplanes as a child). The narrative center of gravity was the period when the protagonist, as a mature person, fulfilled this vocation. This was also the point in the episode when the second story-line appeared – that of his or her social or professional milieu. This collective story, which concerned, for example, the building of Israel's Air Force (Weizmann) or the formation of the country's legal system (Meir Shamgar), was narrated with the help of friends and colleagues who accentuated the communal aspect of the program and would, at times, join in communal singing – a cultural practice that played an important

role in the nation-building process. In this context, the main guest was only *first among equals*, since, here, his or her individual personality usually merged with the institution or the group to the advancement of which they had contributed.

Beyond the story-lines of the individuals and their milieu lay the third story-line, that of the Zionist movement and of Israel. Its contours were less clear than those of the two other story-lines, yet it was ubiquitous in each episode. The diverse life-stories recounted in the program converged into the same national story-line, which narrated Zionist history as a dialectical movement of the Jewish people from the biblical Land of Israel to the Diaspora in ancient times, and then back to the same place in the late modern period, where they established their old/new state (Somers, 1994; Zerubavel, 1995: 13–36). Even when the show's protagonist was an important poet, like Haim Guri, Ettinger hardly mentioned his literary career, and the show concentrated instead on the military, Zionist aspect of his life-story: his membership in a Jewish paramilitary organization (Palmach); his part in bringing Holocaust survivors to Palestine; and the roles he played in the 1948 and 1967 wars. The three story-lines of the program thus intertwined and reinforced each other. The individual biography and the references to the protagonist's social milieu furnished concrete examples of the national narrative, but they acquired their overall meaning only within the larger Zionist story (Zerubavel, 1995).

Finally, the episode itself, as a broadcast television program, had its own narrative structure which consisted of a visual aspect no less than the spoken parts. The aim of the visual documents that interspersed the show – whether stills, excerpts of newsreels, or home movies – was to enliven the dull, spoken, format, by adding a specifically televisual dimension to what was, otherwise, a radio program transmitted on television. Yet they had another, no less important function. Since the program consisted of oral testimony about past events, the visual documents supplied an authentic historical dimension to the anecdotes, and gave each episode a documentary-like touch. However, the visual documents, usually inserted through editing or projected on a back screen during the recording, served only as illustrations. Ettinger and his guests rarely referred to them and their value as historical documents that might shed light upon a certain event or a period was minimal. This failure to engage with the visual documents seems to be a result of the tendency of Ettinger and his guests to prefer telling (oral culture) to showing (visual culture) (Katriel, 2004).

All these elements – the verbal, the musical, and the visual – created a unique event that had the characteristics of a media ritual with its

own narrative (Couldry, 2003; Dayan and Katz 1992). As a ritual, it was a mixture of a surprise party and a wake, a both happy and melancholy reunion around a central figure whose main achievements already lay in the past. This complex ritual had a precedent in Israeli culture, which served as an implicit model for *Such a Life*. One commemorative tradition, inaugurated after the 1948 War of Independence, consisted of an informal gathering of the family, friends, and colleagues of a fallen soldier, who convened to reminisce about him; subsequently these testimonies were published in a booklet. One of the first and most important publications in this genre was *Friends Talk about Jimmy* (Shemi and Shemi, 1952), written in the memory of Aharon (Jimmy) Shemi. Ever since, the phrase 'Friends talk about ...' has been a common expression referring to both the commemorative gathering and the booklet that was published subsequently (Sivan, 1991). In *Such a Life* the gathering took place in the presence of the hero, who participated in the talking, but the celebratory and commemorative aspects were uppermost.

Yet there was also a major difference between the rituals of 'Friends talk about ...' and Ettinger's show. Whereas the former were mainly local acts of commemoration, and the booklets that they gave birth to remained on the margins of Hebrew literature, the latter was broadcast on the official television channel in prime-time. *Such a Life* was thus directly related to the sacred center, where the history and the values of Israeli society were construed and affirmed, and this was not only because of the social-cultural status of the participants and their life histories, but also because of the nature of the medium. As Couldry points out, the media in general, and television in particular are believed to have 'a privileged relation to that centre' (Couldry, 2003: 45; Geertz, 1983). The audience that watched the show at home was presented with heroes who belonged to that center, and were, therefore, extraordinary human beings; yet they were also ordinary people, who told personal anecdotes, made jokes, sang along, and shed a tear. At once close and distant, they were models one could, and should, emulate in order to become a useful Israeli citizen. The ritual of 'Friends talk about ...' was above all a commemorative act; likewise, *Such a Life* was about the past, but it was in addition an educative occasion and hence a model for future behavior.

Notes

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1. By 'official history of the state' we mean the image of the past propagated by the state through various means that are at its disposal, such as school history textbooks, state commemorative ceremonies, and state-controlled media. These means often help to create the dominant, collective memory of a nation – the national memory.
2. The information concerning Edwards is based on the following sources: M. Desjardins (1997), 'This Is Your Life: U.S. Biography Program', in H. Newcomb (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Television* (Chicago: Dearborn Publishers), vol. III, pp. 1663–4; J. Gould, 'Programs in Review', *The New York Times*, November 28, 1948; D. Jennings, 'It Makes Him Happy to See You Cry', *Saturday Evening Post*, February 4, 1956; 'This Is Ralph Edwards', *Newsweek*, October 21, 1957; J. Leahy, 'He Loves "Life"', *Sunday News*, September 4, 1960; B. Williams, 'On the Air', *New York Post*, January 22, 1971; S. Farber, 'One-Night Encore for "This Is Your Life"', *The New York Times*, April 10, 1987; K. Gardella, 'New Life for Historic Old Favorite', *The Daily News*, April 19, 1987; K. Clark, 'Ralph Edwards' Special Will Add 2 More "Lives"', *Chicago Tribune*, April 15, 1987.
3. Based on watching the following episodes: Laura Stone Marr, October 5, 1952; Ed Wynn, June 3, 1953; Eddie Cantor, December 13, 1953; Harold Lloyd, December 14 1955; Gloria Swanson, January 23, 1957; Frances Farmer, January 29, 1957; Lee de Forest, May 22, 1957 (The Museum of Television and Radio, New York).
4. Clark, 'Ralph Edwards' Special Will Add 2 More "Lives"'.
5. Even when the protagonist of the episode was a Holocaust survivor, like Hanna Bloch Kohner (broadcast on May 27, 1953), Edwards downplayed the mournful aspects of her narrative, and emphasized the 'happy ending' of her survival and second marriage. However, this episode was considered an exception, as testified by the decision of the network to move the sponsor's advertisements from their usual place in the structure of the program (Shandler, 1999: 27–40).
6. For example, according to a BBC audience research report for autumn 1958, the program was seen, on average, by 40 percent of the television public (those who had a television set at home), and 25 percent of the adult population in Great Britain (report of January 1, 1959, BBC – Written Archives, T12/522/2).
7. Based on watching the following episodes: Eamonn Andrews, July 29, 1955; Sterling Moss, April 27, 1959; T. E. Clark, October 31, 1960; Barbara Mullen, March 5, 1964; Lionel Jeffries, April 19, 1971; Googie Withers, May 5, 1971; Frank Windsor, December 3, 1975; Haim Topol, October 18, 1983 (British Film Institute, London).
8. The information on Ettinger is based on the following sources: A. Levav, 'Life without "Such a Life"', *Maariv*, January 31, 1992 (in Hebrew); D. Peretz, 'In England They Changed the Host Only after his Death', *Yediot Aharonot*, January 31, 1992 (in Hebrew); R. Rosen, 'No Complaints against Me', *Haaretz*, March 31, 1995 (in Hebrew); T. Barak, 'Do You Recognize the Next Voice?', *Tel-Aviv Magazin*, December 19, 2004 (in Hebrew); personal interview, Tel Aviv, May 23, 2003.
9. These attempts were made in 1973, 1977, 1992, and 1995. See Peretz, 'In England They Changed the Host Only after his Death'; Rosen, 'No

Complaints against Me'. See also a protocol of the meeting of the board members of the IBA, on June 3, 1973, in which Yeshayahu Tadmor, the chairman, said: 'I tried to find somebody that would replace Amos Ettinger, but I failed. This program [*Such a Life*] is considered to be Amos Ettinger's program. For reasons of collegiality, and apprehension of a failure, other producers are reluctant to take upon themselves the production of the program.' State Archive, Ministry of Education, G-1/5956, Protocol of June 3, 1973, p. 2.

10. April 27, 1976, *Such a Life*, with Gabriel Dagan, a Holocaust survivor.
11. April 27, 1982, *Such a Life*, with Yohai Ben-Nun, the commander of the navy.
12. April 20, 1987, *Such a Life*, with Shai Dan, who helped Jews who lived behind the Iron Curtain to migrate to Israel.
13. For example, the episode of Shmuel Macharovski, a sports manager, was watched by 19 percent of the viewers (September 25–26, 1995); Rivka Michaeli, an actress, 20 percent (April 9, 1996); Meir Shamgar, a Supreme Court judge, 22 percent (April 1, 1999); Avraham Deshe, a theatrical producer, 24 percent and 31 percent (May 20–22, 1999); Air Force Pilot course, class of 1950, 30 percent (June 29, 2000) (based on data for the years 1995–2001, archives of the IBA).
14. The analysis of the program is based on viewing seventeen episodes that were selected in order to offer a variety of protagonists and periods of broadcasting: Haim Guri, April 24, 1972; Ephraim Katzir, October 10, 1972; Ezer Weizmann, August 15, 1972; Zeev Vilnai, October 20, 1975; Golda Meir, January 24, 1977; Haim Topol, May 23, 1977; Yohai Ben-Nun, April 27, 1982; Amnon Shemoush, July 27–29, 1982; Yafa Yarkoni, May 14–22, 1986; Shai Dan, April 14–20, 1987; Yaakov Hodorov, April 20–26, 1989; Marcel Ninio and the members of her underground cell, December 27–28, 1989; Natan Scharanski, May 12, 1997; Moshe Peled, May 27, 1998; Meir Shamgar, April 1, 1999; Avraham Deshe, May 20–22, 1999; Yeshayahu Ben-Porat, January 18–25, 2001.

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10

History, Memory, and Means of Communication: the Case of Jew Süß

Na'ama Sheffi

Joseph Süß Oppenheimer's three years as financial advisor to the Duke of Württemberg yielded a plethora of poems, chronicles, witticisms, stories, novels, films, and historical research describing and analyzing his life. This successful Jew, born to an Orthodox family in the late seventeenth century, made his mark as a brilliant financier in the early eighteenth century, and was subsequently executed in disgrace. The fact that now, nearly 300 years after his death, his character is the focus of works of art and scientific studies indicates his uniqueness and the diverse perspectives and ways of commemorating his personality. Süß was a man of contradictions: his family designated him for rabbinical studies, yet he found his vocation as a tradesman; he was brought up in the Jewish ghetto of Heidelberg, but matured in the light of prominent Central European courts; he deeply understood the complexities of commerce and law, and sought to revise them radically; he planned wide-ranging institutional reforms, yet failed to comprehend the political map when it concerned him personally; he was possessive, a hedonist, and a womanizer, and tormented himself before his death; he was among the first Jews to have fully assimilated, but died with *Shema Yisrael* on his lips (Gerber, 1990; Stern, 1950, 1973 [1929]).

These contradictions have given rise to diverse and even conflicting depictions of Süß. Throughout the generations, various writers interpreted his conduct in light of their own reality. Süß has been described through the eyes of the beholder, as Benedetto Croce theorized in the early twentieth century. His figure has been etched on memory in connection with the political, economic, and social shifts which illuminated the relationship between Jews and Germans. In the field of historiography, what began as commissioned chronicles which concealed more than they revealed, was transformed in the spirit of the

nineteenth century into a Leopold von Ranke-like narrative of 'history as it really was'. In the twentieth century, Süß's activity was examined in an economic context and by his role as an overstated anti-Semitic emblem under the Nazi regime. Popular culture offers a particularly rich and varied body of work, unburdened by 'facts'. Therefore, works of art illuminate Süß according to the *Zeitgeist* of the creators' own life and times. Although historians were always subject to 'the eye of the beholder', even before it was defined, they were also more committed to documents. From this point of view, popular culture provides especially authentic evidence of social changes and the construction of memory. Through works of art one can see how Süß's complexity enabled his becoming a channel for diverse ideas.

In this chapter I analyze four phases in the commemoration of Süß: the memory consolidated at the time of his execution through artistic writing, in chronicles and a prayer; the novella *Jud Süß* by Wilhelm Hauff (1802–27); Lion Feuchtwanger's (1884–1958) novel and its film adaptation; and the 1940 Nazi film. The examination of works of art makes it possible to trace patterns that are typical of the remembrance of Süß; they are based on political and social shifts, along with the development of communicational technologies and the dissemination of literacy. The changes in Süß's commemoration indicate to a large degree that they were subordinated to socio-political contexts more than to the means of communication used to express them.

Joseph Süß Oppenheimer was born around 1698 in Heidelberg. His father was a tax collector, and his mother was a strikingly beautiful woman; rumor insinuated that she conceived Süß in an extra-marital affair with a nobleman. Süß abandoned the Jewish lifestyle in his late teens and became a traveling merchant across Europe. His success led to his introduction to the Catholic aristocrat Carl Alexander in 1732. A competent and successful military man, Carl Alexander had always been short of income. Being a Catholic made it unlikely that he would succeed to the throne of the Protestant duchy. Nevertheless, the death of the Duke of Württemberg and his son within a short period changed the destinies of both Carl Alexander and his financial advisor Süß Oppenheimer. Despite his Catholicism, Carl Alexander ascended the throne, having explicitly promised to refrain from imposing his faith on his Protestant subjects (Gerber, 1990; Stern, 1950, 1973). The three years of Carl Alexander's incumbency as Duke of Württemberg (1734–7) provide most of the records available about Süß's life and death. During these years Süß operated as a personal advisor to the duke, even though he had never held any official position. His work provided two

groundbreaking practices on the economic-political and the social-political fronts. He sought to effect a true economic revolution, promoting the first steps in the transition from feudal economy to mercantilism. A by-product of this fundamental change was a generalized radical political reform that focused on eradicating nepotism in the duchy (Breuer, 1996; Stern, 1950; Weber, 1968). Süß's efforts to implement this reform in the midst of a power struggle based on a religious conflict of interests between the Catholic duke and his Protestant duchy only exacerbated existing tensions between Süß – a son of the Jewish ghetto – and the members of the ducal court. Most researchers point to the numerous conflicts at court as the factor that, after the duke's death (from natural causes or poisoning), spurred the move to make Süß a scapegoat for the entire outgoing regime.

The earliest writings about Süß were published during his trial. Lacking a substantial reason to execute him, Württemberg's judicial authorities resorted to an ancient clause that banned sexual intercourse between Jews and gentiles. The public attorney appointed for Süß had limited access to his client's papers and failed in his defense; Süß also rejected the Jewish community's offer to ransom him.

The opposition to Süß, who insisted on conducting himself as an integral part of the duchy, characterizes several of these early works. The popular miniature play 'From the Chat of Farmers' ('Aus einem Bauergespräch', 1738), written in local dialect, presented the Jew as a distinct, almost mythical symbol of wrongdoing, awkwardness, and general rejection. The verses of the 'Song of Süß, the Jew who was Hanged' ('Angebliches Gedicht eines Juden auf dem gehängten Süß', 1738) open with the mention of suspicions regarding Süß's descent, as the apple that did not fall far from the tree: his mother, the notorious courtesan and Süß were both Jews who practiced adultery with gentiles, a just reason for execution. Moreover, in his actions and his genuine assimilation with the *Gojim* (sic), Süß had sucked the marrow of German society, which had been willing to accept him. In this manner he became Judas Iscariot, an anti-Christ who desired to insult the Christians. *The History of Süß, Including His Execution (Lebenslauf des Süß, nebst über seine Hinrichtung, 1738)*, a 28-verse epic, was dedicated to Süß's interrogation by the Inquisition, his trial, and his final moments. The date of his execution and the Jewish prayer he recited are mentioned in the poem, which neglected to mention the legal process that had led to his execution. In a world that conducted itself mostly through oral communication, graphic descriptions and extreme images were perceived as more credible than a detailed account of the trial itself. Another

indication of the oral world-view is the very use of existing narrative templates related to Süß's history while infusing them with different and intensified contents (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Ong, 1988 [1982]).

A further indication of the place of orality in the early eighteenth century can be found in the material used by the chroniclers. Their writings lack the malice of the early art works, and are based on personal interviews with contemporaries. As writers commissioned by the dominant class of society, these chroniclers clearly reflected the hegemonic point of view of their time.

A prayer written by Jews was also published in 1738. Its very publication may suggest that despite their inferior status Jews could express themselves. Moreover, as the Jews felt threatened, they enlisted a tool they had mastered – writing – for the benefit of their own society. This response confirms the thesis of Yosef Haim Yerushalmi. According to his *Zachor* (1982), the Jews' incentive to write – following their expulsion from Spain in the late fifteenth century – was their feelings of deep distress. The 1738 prayer stressed the aspect of martyrdom. Such an emphasis is compatible with the memory of the expulsion from Spain, which was vivid in the memory of the Jewish communities in German-speaking regions.

The essential place of Jewishness in the early writings depicting Süß may be explained by the spirit of the times. It was almost a hundred years after the invention of print before non-religious publications on secular subjects were printed in significant numbers (Gilmont, 2003). In other words, even in an age that allowed the dissemination of publication without Church involvement, the Europeans were still preoccupied with religious matters. Thus, the focus on religious issues may have been a reflection of the obsessive attitude toward Süß's Jewishness as the key factor in the interpretation and condemnation of his conduct.

These early writings should be read in light of the prevailing perceptions of reality, memory, and communication of the day. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the number of literature readers was small. A dramatic portrayal was believed to be more credible than abstract ideas and historical documentation. The renowned example of the story of Martin Guerre, which depicts a sixteenth-century event, is telling: papers may confuse even more than common knowledge (Zemon-Davis, 1983). The rhymed and metered style and the intensive use of blunt images in some of the eighteenth-century publications suggest an understanding of the target audience: the writing style was meant to be imprinted upon the memory of those who could not read the text (Ong, 1988 [1982]; Stephens, 1997). Moreover, the measure of

xenophobia that infiltrated the chronicles may have made it difficult to distinguish 'history as it really was' from fictitious stories concerning the detested Jew.

About a hundred years after the trial, in 1827, the novella *Jud Süß* was published by Wilhelm Hauff, a prominent writer and master of children's tales. Hauff's story focuses on the decadence of bourgeois society (Thum, 1996). In the novella, Süß is the Minister of Finance while his sister is having an affair with a Protestant man, the son of a key figure in the administration. Süß is depicted as a highly manipulative man, but the essence of the novella is the overall disorder experienced by German society, caught up as it was in a national and socio-economic predicament. Hauff published his work at a highly charged historical juncture: innovative socio-economic views were being put forward in France, England, and the USA; the Napoleonic army had retreated and the Vienna Congress called for a restoration of the old order; and the dialogue between Jews and Germans was on the verge of resolution (later realized in the emancipation of the former). The case of Süß had thus been a platform for comprehensive intellectual criticism. Hauff may have foreseen the coming changes. In the decades following the publication of his novel, several writers began to publish socially conscious works, loaded with explicit class- and race-related messages, such as William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847/8) and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852).

Hauff may have also referred to the general denunciation of German society in the context of the beginnings of a German-Jewish dialogue. This dialogue, whose pioneers were Moses Mendelssohn and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, was transferred to the legal arena through the gradual annulment of the barriers enforced upon Jews. Austria and Bohemia were the first to allow the Jews the Edict of Tolerance (1782) (Altmann, 1973; Brenner, 1996). Therefore, Hauff's Süß could be titled Minister of Finance, and his sister could imagine marrying a Protestant. In this context it is worthy of note that the novella was translated into Hebrew in the early twentieth century (Warsaw, 1904), despite the small number of secular Hebrew readers. The translation is accurate and does not flatter the Hebrew-speaking audience. Moreover, the then narrow limits of the renewed secular language exacerbated the harshness of Hauff's style.

At the time of publication of Hauff's novella, European society was already more accustomed to reading non-religious literary texts. Nevertheless, readership was still limited. Indeed, the growing use of bureaucracy in order to implement regulations in pre-modern countries encouraged many to acquire the skills of simple reading. However, literary

reading was still largely confined to the upper classes (Cavallo and Chartier, 2003; Hamesse, 2003). If Hauff was indeed targeting these audiences, it is easy to understand why he chose to level criticism at the bourgeoisie.

The year 1925 saw a significant change of attitude toward Süß, as the first philo-Semitic novel was published by the Jewish intellectual Lion Feuchtwanger. In the preceding years two historical studies were published in Germany, which supported the prevailing view in literature, namely that Süß was to blame for his own fate (Kohut, 1898; Zimmermann, 1874). The view of Süß as a subversive man who desired to shake the administration, the economy, and society was modified only in light of new research by Selma Stern, published in 1929. This Jewish historian was the first to use a variety of sources which gave her a wider context for the explanation of Süß's conduct. In her view his financial activity represented a breakthrough in the transition from a feudal market to a mercantilist one.

As a historian specializing in the history of the Jews in Germany, Feuchtwanger was well acquainted with his people's endeavors and treatment. The novel was written around the time of World War One, when nationalist currents raged in Germany, leading to the murder of two prominent Jews – Communist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg (1919) and Minister of Foreign Affairs Walther Rathenau (1922). However, it may well be that the current political events were not the sole influence that led Feuchtwanger to interpret the story of Süß. Growing up in a Jewish religious home, the author was familiar with *Nathan the Wise* by Lessing, which calls for a true understanding between Germans and Jews (Berendsohn, 1972; Waldo, 1972). In the novel, Feuchtwanger examined the feasibility of the Jews' assimilation into German society. His *Jud Süß* began as a greedy and lustful man, a portrayal which falls into line with previous literature and historiography. Yet, the philo-Semitic Süß had to rethink his attitude once he faced the brutality and low morals of the society into which he assimilated. Feuchtwanger's Süß is consistent with the behavioral patterns of post-Emancipation German Jews. The equality finally granted them eventually led them to consolidate their Jewish affiliation and to search for national identity.

A woman is once again the character that moves the story. Süß's daughter, Naomi, whom Feuchtwanger invented, may allude to the author's historical knowledge; rumors suggested that Süß had an offspring. Naomi's fate determines her father's future. Naomi, whose mother died in childbirth, grows up living with her father's uncle, Rabbi Gabriel, and hardly sees her own father. The two men responsible

for her well-being represent the German-Jewish communities: they range from the assimilated to the Orthodox, and from the local well-integrated Jews to the remote *Ostjuden* who seemed strange and unwilling to assimilate into the neighboring society (Milfull, 1985). While Süß is away, the duke pays a visit to his family and casts a lustful gaze at Naomi. Fearing for her purity, Naomi jumps from the roof to her death. Feuchtwanger reorganized the story, placing the blame on the duchy and its bad manners, whereas the Jew atones for his sinister past.

The novel sold tens of thousands of copies in Germany and was translated into numerous languages, including Hebrew. It was the era of the first 'bestsellers', a new phenomenon in the Western world (Vogt-Praclik, 1987). The novel's favorable reception may reflect the extent of public attraction to liberal ideas that countered the uncontrolled nationalism that erupted during World War Two. In 1934, the work was adapted to the cinema by the Gaumont-British Film Company. Despite the groundbreaking mass medium and the inclusion of leading film stars, the film was a box office failure. In 1934, Süß's story held no appeal for English audiences. Predominantly pro-German at the time, they did not see the historical story as either a symbol of the present or a forewarning of the near future (Rawlinson and Farnum, 1978).

Six years later, another film was made about Süß, this time under the auspices of the Film Chamber in the Nazi Propaganda Ministry. The Nazis waited long enough to distinguish between their adaptation and Feuchtwanger's bestseller. Moreover, at the time they released the film, Jewish intellectuals had already been banished from the Third Reich for several years. The film *Jud Süß* (1940) adopted a radically anti-Semitic point of view, and it was clearly intended to overshadow both Feuchtwanger's successful novel and the first significant historical-economic study about Süß, written by Selma Stern (1973 [1929]; Arns, 1996; Hollstein 1983 [1971]).

The production of *Jud Süß*, directed by Veit Harlan, was part of a film propaganda campaign that also included *The Rothschilds* and *The Eternal Jew*, all released in 1940 (Bartov, 2005). The objective was to prepare Aryan citizens for the next stage – the annihilation of European Jewry. Whereas Feuchtwanger sought to warn the Jews against false assimilation, the Nazis painted the reverse reality, in which the Germans rejected the Jews' attempt to take over Germany. The film's climax focuses on Süß's sin, the reason for his accusation and execution. Süß falsely arrests Faber, one of the duchy's most promising young men. His fiancée, Dorothea, goes to Süß's home willing to do anything in order to release her lover. Süß forces her to pay the ultimate price, her virginity. The scene of the

innocent Aryan maiden's abuse is cut abruptly, with the horrified face of actress Kristina Söderbaum juxtaposed with the sweaty lecherous face of her colleague Ferdinand Marian, both famous German-speaking actors at the time. If there were still viewers who hoped for a happy ending, at this point they were all craving revenge against the Jew.

Along with the conceptual preparation for the murder of Jews, the film contained a unique building block of memory construction – the soundtrack. The Jews' wailing prayers, the sounds of Yemenite music which accompany a scene of Jewish life, and the Yiddish-laced German spoken by the Jews, were all sharply contrasted with the *Hochdeutsch* spoken by the true Aryans and the German classical music to which they listened. The use of sounds as sources of empathy and aversion was the realization of familiar musical concepts of the nineteenth century (Hollstein 1983 [1971]; Wagner, 1973 [1851]). In modern research terms, the soundtrack's themes became 'sites of memory'.

The film's German premiere took place in September, 1940. By 1943, over 20 million Germans throughout the Third Reich had seen it, a substantially greater number than would ever have been otherwise exposed to the history of Jew Süss (Tegel, 1996). The film's success may be attributed first and foremost to the popularity of the cinematic medium in general, and in Germany in particular. Moreover, the film's classification as being 'of unique artistic value' attracted those who wished to see and be seen at the right place, and obligated members of the *Hitlerjugend* to watch it (Hoffmann, 1996).

Had we not known that Süss was a real person, we could have been justified in thinking he was a legendary figure rooted in folk tales. Nonetheless, there is one common denominator in the versions shown here. A woman is always the character that stands behind the turning point of the plot. The application of an old law which banned sexual intercourse between Jews and Christians may be the rationale for the emphasis on women's status in Süss's life. Yet, the reason may also lie in a primordial pattern: women seduce and men cannot fend them off; Lilith and Eve are paradigmatic of such relations. But unlike the common interpretation, Süss himself is the sole accountable character who drives his own fate. He is responsible for each of the punishments imposed upon him in all the versions. It is possible that turning Süss into a seducer whose sexuality is irrepressible echoes a popular Christian conception rooted in the Middle Ages. According to this notion, Jewish men are pathologically different from their Christian counterparts, since they suffer a 'masculine period' which originates in their disbelief in Christ. Moreover, the feminine nature of Jewish

men attributes other feminine qualities to them, such as mindlessness (Gilman, 1990 [1986]).

The preservation of the frame story, while charging it with diverse and even contradictory world-views over the years, is similar to the use of popular templates in storytelling (Ong, 1988 [1982]). In other words, the memory of Süß is not a single unified one, but rather the basis for a collection of narratives that feed off and rival one another (Halbwachs, 1992 [1925]). Süß's basic features are consistent: he is a loathsome Jew seeking to take over German society; a ruthless financier sucking society's marrow; and a repentant Jew rediscovering his religious self. Different means are employed for Süß's portrayal, indicating a lack of correlation between the era and means of communication and the characterization of Süß. Süß is a despicable Jew in the eighteenth century and again in the twentieth; his descriptions are especially malicious in the rhyming verse intended for recitation in an oral society, as well as in his Nazi cinematographic profile. Compassion for Süß is found in a single prayer and in one thick novel, both written by Jews. The shifts between Süß's various images, and especially the sharp transition from Feuchtwanger's complex philo-Semitic image to the cardboard anti-Semitic one promoted by the Nazis, indicate how easy it was to mold Süß into these templates, regardless of the advancement of the media or the literacy of the audience. In this respect we may conclude that the practice of a pattern framework which absorbs various sub-stories is typical of both cultural and communication phenomena, regardless of their stage of development. They also attest to the extent to which Süß's story provided an opportunity for expressing prevalent contemporary ways of commemoration rather than a single historical portrayal.

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11

Localizing Collective Memory: Radio Broadcasts and the Construction of Regional Memory

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This study, which focuses on the interrelations between media, memory, and collectives, examines the significant role played by the media in forming the two dimensions of collective mediated recollections: shaping the memory and defining the boundaries of the collective. One of the central arguments raised in recent years in the field of social science maintains that more attention should be shifted to the 'cosmopolitan turn' (Beck, 2003; Beck and Sznaider, 2006), the process that involves more openness to the transnational arena and the sensitivity to 'universal values' that become part of national societies. Within this context, we argue that although most of the research devoted to collective memory centers on the construction of national memory – in the era of globalization, collective memory and commemoration that exist in a cosmopolitan context (Levy and Sznaider, 2006) – it does not necessarily promote national values. We will contend that, parallel to the 'cosmopolitan turn', a reverse process might be identified whereby small communities – the relations among whose members rely on geographical or ideological vicinity, or yet on common areas of interest – succeed in creating regional-communal-local versions of the collective national memory.¹

According to the underlying view of this chapter, memory and patterns of commemoration ought to be examined from a multilayered perspective; thus, whereas the cosmopolitan aspects of memory are explored at the global level and the national elements of memory are examined in the context of specific nations, the local aspects of memory should be studied at a regional level. These three layers emphasize the complexity and flexibility of the concept of 'collective memory'.

Throughout this chapter, we shall see how changes in the media – in our case, the establishment of regional radio stations in Israel during

the mid-1990s – facilitate changes in the memory-shaping processes by constructing local communities as ‘regional mnemonic collectives’. The regional memory level may well have existed before the advent of regional media, but its introduction makes it more evident and therefore easier for us, researchers, to identify and characterize.

The regional memory version sometimes resembles the national one, yet it retains idiosyncratic characteristics; sometimes it is different from the national memory and even tends to undermine it. We shall furthermore argue that in an era of new media, in which the concept of community is rapidly changing, it can be expected that, in the future, the notion of ‘collective’ to which we relate and which we construct by means of public recollection, will be further challenged. In this era, the mediated memory of regional communities constitutes another focal point of recollection, working alongside the national memory or underneath it. The national memory, in turn, will need to confront both supranational and communal-regional versions. In other words, this chapter also proposes a line of thought in the opposite direction, namely, the construction of not only regional memory but also regional identity, i.e. regional (imagined) communities endeavor to construct their own identity by the different ways in which they address and reinterpret ‘larger’ memories. Hence, for instance the construction process analyzed in this chapter regards an event that is not directly linked to the region, to the ‘small place’, that memorializes it; rather, in our case study the momentous, traumatic event happened sometime else and somewhere far away. This is unlike the recollection of ‘small’ events that happened at the place and thus, in a sense ‘belong’ to that place, and unlike the specific way ‘great’ events that occurred at the small place are commemorated there (e.g. the Battle of Gettysburg as memorialized by the people of Gettysburg). In our test case, however, and through the prism of the media, we are already directing to an imagined community, which while smaller than the national community is still an imagined one, with regional radio acting as a bonding instrument among its denizens.

In order to demonstrate our argument we focus on the broadcasting of regional radio stations during Israel’s Memorial Day for the Holocaust and Heroism (hereafter: MDHH). The regional radio stations were established in the mid-1990s; until then, national public radio stations enjoyed a monopoly over electronic mass communication. This situation facilitates the understanding of the role played by regional radio stations in the development of regional memory, in comparison with the collective national memory that is so central to Israeli culture.

Regional radio stations make an excellent test case because national public media characterize the map of electronic media in Israel. Since the decline of party-sponsored newspapers, the printed media in Israel is dominated by national newspapers; in addition, most of the regional newspapers – which appear only on weekends – are owned by the publishers of the national newspapers. Furthermore, cable TV stations in Israel began operating in 1990 as regional stations but in 2003 all the regional cable TV stations became merged under the common HOT brand, and so cable television broadcasting lost its original, regional character, so that there are, in practice, no local-regional television stations. Therefore, regional radio stations remain the sole mass media operating on an everyday basis addressing regional-local-communal audiences.

This angle is worth attention no less than the collective memory studies, which are habitually limelighted. As posited by Kitch:

Most studies of mediated memory have focused on elite-news-media coverage of extreme events ... but like local newspapers and television news, magazines are worth attention because of their overt points of view, their audiences' long-term devotion to them, and their open identification with those audiences. In both of these types of media, journalists use an inclusive language and address their readers or viewers as members of a social group with common values, with similar problems and needs, and with a shared understanding of its past. (Kitch, 2008, 312–13)

In this chapter, we will focus on three regional radio stations: Radio Tel Aviv, Radio Jerusalem, and Radio Kol-Rega (the latter broadcasting in Northern Israel), and will analyze their programs on MDHH between the years 2004 and 2007. The study centers on an analysis of the repertoire of songs featured on these stations in the course of the MDHH, on talk programs, and on texts spoken by the presenters of the stations. The limited scope of this chapter does not allow for a wide-ranging elaboration on the concept of 'collective memory' and the evolution of discussions of the subject (see authors' introduction to this volume for an elaborated review). Nevertheless, before presenting the analysis dealing with the shaping of 'regional memory' of the Holocaust, we wish to anchor our analysis within several specific contexts: recent developments in the commemoration of the Holocaust in Israel, the place of regional radio within the map of Israeli media, and the legal context of regional radio broadcasts on MDHH.

The evolution of Holocaust remembrance in Israel during the 1990s

The remembrance and commemoration of the Holocaust play a central role in the shaping of Israeli civil religion (Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1983). National-Zionist ideology frames the memory of the Holocaust through a reliance on the formula 'from Holocaust to Resurgence'. It represents the Holocaust, in many aspects, as the inevitable nadir point of Jewish existence in exile, and as an absolute justification for the existence of the State of Israel (Ofer, 1996; Segev, 1993; Zandberg, 2008; Zerubavel, 1996).

The investigation of Israeli Holocaust memory from the 1990s and thereafter is characterized by two main trends, which correspond to changes in the world and in Israeli society. One of these trends is the increasing emphasis placed by Israeli culture on the representation of the Holocaust. Therefore, the investigation of collective Holocaust memory has begun to deal with not only with politics and history, but also with television (Shandler, 1999; Zandberg, 2006; Meyers, Zandberg, and Neiger, 2009), cinema (Loshitzky, 1997), the press (Neiger, 1999; Zandberg, 2010), and popular music (Meyers and Zandberg, 2002; Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg, forthcoming, 2011). The second trend is the growing research focus on the public discourse, viewed from a reflective standpoint, which explores the place of memory and post-memory in Israeli society and culture. Zuckerman (1993) studied the 'Holocaust discourse' that arose during the first Gulf War (1991), Ben-Amos and Bat-El (1999) explored the MDHH ceremonies in schools, and Romi and Lev (2007) analyzed the impact of memorial journeys to Poland on Israeli youths. Another trend, which began back in the 1980s, is the emergence of representatives of the 'second generation' and 'third generation' (children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors) as prevailing factors in shaping Holocaust memory in the public arena. Since then, the focus of Israeli memorializing discourse has shifted from the presentation of Holocaust chronologies, to a reflexive discussion of Holocaust representations as cultural and political phenomena, while illuminating the constructive dimension of collective memory shaping (Holtzman, 1992; Zandberg, 2008).

Radio and the forging of the national community

Katz and Wedell (1977), who studied the role of radio in new nation-states, contend that the new regimes in these states made extensive use of the medium, after they realized its efficacy in conveying messages

between the authorities and the citizens, and in imparting educational and national contents. In this context, radio proved superior to television (which was costly to produce and expensive to buy) and to written journalism (whose consumption necessitates literacy).

In Israel, radio played a decisive role in establishing and consolidating the nation during the first decades after the creation of the State (Pansler, 2004). The exclusive position enjoyed by radio in the field of electronic broadcasting during the crucial first twenty years of Israel's existence since 1948, when the press was politically divided and television was absent – Israel's first television channel started broadcasting in 1968 – gave it much weight in setting the collective agenda. In the specific context of MDHH broadcasts, it is important to point out that, besides the prohibition of commercials, state laws governing the Rules of Observance of Memorial Day decree that these shall include the following elements:

On Memorial Day, two minutes of silence will be observed nationwide. All manner of work and transportation must cease to operate during that period of time. Memorial services, public gatherings and ceremonies will take place in military bases and educational institutions ... *Programs aired on the radio will express the uniqueness of the day* [authors' emphasis]; entertainment venues will feature only appropriate contents. (MDHH Law, 1959)

Hence, the state itself ascribes radio, as a national instrument, an importance commensurate with such rituals as flying the national flag at half-mast and congregating popular meetings at schools and military camps. Since the advent of fourteen regional-commercial radio stations in the 1990s that began broadcasting parallel to the existing nationwide public networks, regional radio programming focuses on regional or sectoral actualities, serves and fashions specific cultural tastes, and enables the establishment and shaping of 'socio-geographical' regional and sectoral identities within Israeli society. In the words of Liebes, 'the radio is perhaps the most dramatic accelerator of the unity at the stage of establishment as well as at the stage of society splitting into differentiated groups (1999: 97).

The idiosyncratic nuances of regional radio broadcasting on MDHH

Before the advent of regional radio stations in the 1990s and even concurrently with their appearance on the electronic mass communication scene, public radio in Israel operated according to almost uniform patterns. One of the salient characteristics of public national radio MDHH

broadcasts is the intensive airing of soft, minor, and melancholic Hebrew songs. Such songs, dubbed in the popular parlance 'Holocaust Day songs', are relatively old Israeli songs dating from the 1970s and even earlier, and they symbolize a nostalgic and sentimental imagination of the common past. Interspersed with the songs, short explanatory texts and traffic or news reports were sometimes aired by station anchors, and in many cases, the radio just aired song after song without any interruption or intervention. An analysis of almost 17,000 songs aired on national and regional radio during the 1990s reveals a stable repertoire of songs frequently aired by all stations throughout the years. These include many songs whose lyrics are taken from Hebrew poetry, and songs written by Holocaust victims or those that were written and performed by second-generation composers and singers; however, most of these songs patently *do not deal with the Holocaust in itself*. These are mostly lyrical, quiet songs, which speak about the human condition in the world, and may be read as 'secular prayers'.

The regional radio stations, on the other hand, challenge the way that public radio deals with the national mourning ritual and offer a version of their own.

In the following sections we will examine examples of the way MDHH programming is framed by three different radio stations; two of these, Radio Jerusalem and Radio Tel Aviv, operate in Israel's two largest cities and articulate the tensions between the different identities that each of these cities expresses. The third station, Radio Kol-Rega, broadcasts from the more peripheral Galilee region, in Northern Israel. For the purposes of this investigation, we reviewed the songs aired during MDHH (see also Kaplan, 2009; Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg, forthcoming, 2011).

We referred to the programs of the national radio stations as a point of reference, against which to assess the extent to which the regional radio stations are associated with or detached from the way memory is framed by national public media. These examples express diverse approaches to the national broadcasts: construction of regional patterns of commemoration parallel to the national model; a challenging of the national forms of commemoration; and construction of a narrative similar to the national narrative with some regional nuances.

Radio Jerusalem: emulating national patterns of commemoration while adding local hues

Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and the site and center of its government, but from the point of view of Israeli media, the center is Tel Aviv, which is considered the secular business and cultural center in general, and the heart of Israeli media in particular. The most important newspapers,

commercial television stations, the Stock Exchange and the largest economic concerns, the main theaters, the Opera House and most other places of amusement, are all based in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

As on other important memorial days and festivities of the Jewish-Israeli civil religion, on MDHH Jerusalem becomes the center from which legal and ethical authority emanates, governing the nature of the observance. State commemorative ceremonies take place in Jerusalem and on these days, all eyes are turned toward this city. Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Museum, is located in Jerusalem, and the wreath-laying ceremony is held there. Following this ritual, the Israeli Parliament holds the 'Unto Every Person There is a Name' ceremony, during which names of Holocaust victims are read aloud. All of this means that, on MDHH, Jerusalem's institutional authority is amplified, and all its 'local news' echoes as 'national news'.

The public radio and television networks are also based in Jerusalem. During the decades when they were the sole broadcasting stations in Israel, these channels established the collective patterns of commemoration. As mentioned, the prohibition of the airing of commercials on MDHH neutralizes the economic dimension of commercial broadcasting; and so on MDHH, commercial media emulates, in many respects, the programming patterns of public networks (Meyers, Neiger, and Zandberg, 2009).

In recent decades, the tension between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv as agents of the two dimensions of Jewish-Israeli identity have become more focalized. While Jerusalem has asserted its place as the capital of the Jewish People (which assigns much importance to the religious dimension and is generally seen as having a conservative and right-wing outlook), Tel Aviv is identified with the universalist, secular-liberal facet of Israeli culture (Vinitzki-Seroussi, 1998). To what extent is this claim borne out by MDHH broadcasts on regional-local radio stations? It would seem that Radio Jerusalem positions itself as the closest follower of the mainstream and continues the broadcasting patterns established by national radio stations – with regard to the music and texts, the tone of its programs, and the personages that populate its MDHH broadcasts. As to the kind of verbal texts that accompany the songs, this station emulates the national public news network, Reshet Bet, as it continues to observe the secular daily ritual of reading the newspapers during its morning programs. The following is an excerpt from *Radio Jerusalem's* 2007 MDHH morning program:

The time is 9:22 a.m. and here are the headlines ... [The newspaper] *Ma'ariv* brings this distressing information: 130 Holocaust survivors

die each day; Memorial Day 2007, witnesses of the atrocities are passing away, while anti-Semitic incidents in the world become ever more frequent ... The paratroopers in a letter to the Prime Minister: 'You have forsaken the captive soldiers'; reserve service soldiers are on the offensive. Still in *Ma'ariv*, about the law that is likely to contribute to corruption in government contracts: contracts worth less than two million shekels will be exempt from the obligation of competitive tendering. History returns to Masada: after forty years, hundreds of ancient archeological findings were returned to the site. New drivers: the revolution of driving licenses in Israel.

The plan: motorists having passed the drivers' test will have to undergo a six-month trial period before they are issued a permanent driving license. The author of the best-seller 'Kennedy' reveals the secrets of the Mossad; according to the author, he served as a covert agent for the Israeli intelligence services and carried out missions in Syria and Iran. Also about the vanishing hum: the connection between cellular phones and the disappearance of honey bees ...

Many of Israel's radio stations habitually read aloud the headlines of the morning newspapers, and Radio Jerusalem continues this daily ritual, as does the national public radio Reshet Bet. However, at the same time, many of the news items that populate this segment of the broadcasts on this specific day deal with MDHH events or the fate of Holocaust survivors (Zandberg, Neiger, and Meyers, 2010). The trend of espousing established modes of commemoration also finds expression in the predominance of quotations from state leaders and figures of prominent public and biographical standing. This includes the President of the State; the Prime Minister; dignitaries who are also Holocaust survivors, such as (former) Chief Rabbi Israel Lau; and representatives of survivors' and voluntary organizations that assist survivors (e.g. 'Amcha').

Continuing this trend, Radio Jerusalem chooses to broadcast the national commemoration ceremony live from Yad Vashem. This ceremony is aired by all three national television channels and by the national public radio networks. By putting this ceremony on the air, Radio Jerusalem emphasizes that it continues the commemoration and programming patterns shaped by the national broadcasting channels. Unlike other radio stations that present their own version of the commemorative ritual, Radio Jerusalem affiliates itself with the Israeli establishment.

The characteristic feature of the music aired by Radio Jerusalem on MDHH is its manifest similarity with the music aired by public

radio stations. Of the three regional radio stations examined, the playlist featured on Radio Jerusalem is the one that most resembles that of the national radio stations. The playlist includes songs such as 'A Walk to Caesarea', 'Angel Tears', 'For the Man is the Tree of the Field', songs by Yehuda Poliker presented by the announcer saying, 'Yehuda Poliker, from *Ashes and Dust*, an album entirely dedicated to his parents, who are Holocaust survivors', and songs by mainstream Israeli singers. Interestingly enough, some of the songs are particularly identified with Israel's Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers, which the nation observes a week after MDHH. Overall, we can see that along with the traditional musical repertoire of the national radio, which is based on old-time songs, Radio Jerusalem adds a number of new songs, albeit remaining within the quiet and melancholic music style; these, however, are lyrical love songs that do not deal with the Holocaust or with bereavement.

Radio Tel Aviv: challenging national commemoration patterns

The choices of Radio Tel Aviv single it out among the other radio stations (both national and regional) and, in fact, differentiate it to the point that it becomes, in some sense, an alternative, oppositional or even avant-garde type of radio vis-à-vis the dominant voice in MDHH broadcasts. For example, on 2004 MDHH eve (in line with Jewish tradition, MDHH commences on the eve of MDHH and ends on the following evening) the station aired only quiet music, while the other regional radio stations aired the newscast at 7 p.m., and from 8 to 9 p.m. they aired the MDHH ceremony live from Yad Vashem. At this very significant point, Radio Tel Aviv set itself apart and did not join in the national broadcasting mourning ritual.

As mentioned, while the ceremony was aired on other stations Radio Tel Aviv chose to air quiet music. Every hour, the announcers explained in a single-sentence, ritualistic speech, the significance of the change in their habitual programming: 'It is the eve of MDHH; we will [now] listen to an hour of quiet music.'

The nonconforming character of Radio Tel Aviv broadcasts expresses itself also in the station's MDHH music playlists. While the other radio stations choose to air soft, traditional Hebrew songs, Radio Tel Aviv also airs non-Hebrew music along with relatively up-to-date Hebrew songs. These are not rhythmic rock or pop songs, and they are characterized by a quiet, lyrical tone; yet the list of singers and songwriters also includes some of the most currently popular performers of Western music such as Coldplay, Robbie Williams, The Cardigans, George Michael, and Sting.

Thus, the preferences of Radio Tel Aviv point to a different type of collective memory; the main feature of Radio Tel Aviv programming signifying its observance of the mourning ritual which constructs 'holy time' is the station's calm and minor tone. As mentioned, this is not, however, an exclusively Israeli quiet tone, but rather a more universal one. Tel Aviv is the most cosmopolitan city in Israel, and this fact is echoed on MDHH as well. To paraphrase Ann Swidler's 'toolkit' conceptualization of culture, it can be said that Radio Tel Aviv quite deliberately offers a toolkit completely different from the one proffered by other Israeli radio stations. The contention of Radio Tel Aviv is that 'it can be done otherwise' (or even, maybe, 'it should be done otherwise'), and that its audience needs a different soundtrack in order to bestow meaning upon the mourning ritual.

In so doing, Radio Tel Aviv pours new contents into the existing ritual and offers a transgressive substitute to MDHH as it exists on the other radio stations and as it was before the advent of Radio Tel Aviv. Critics of this approach may argue that by detaching itself from the conventional norms of observing the national bereavement ritual Radio Tel Aviv exemplifies an outward-looking stance rather than the widely shared national inward-looking point of view. Even more grievously, they may assert that this trend means an abandoning of the national mourning tradition (even though respecting the letter of the law) while emphasizing continuity of routine broadcasts.

This argument can be taken even further. By customarily featuring non-Hebrew contemporary music (even though quiet) and refraining from addressing the Holocaust itself, these broadcasts of Radio Tel Aviv might be said to cancel the special content character of the commemoration. What is left is merely 'shape devoid of content', and this detachment between shape and content leads to Radio Tel Aviv broadcasts expressing a kind of general melancholy disconnected from the memory of the Holocaust.

At the same time, it may be argued that, because the listeners are members of Israeli culture and are aware that this is MDHH (from other indications, such as the sounding of the siren), they do not need another resonating reminder in the form of songs directly identified with Holocaust commemoration, just its recognizable tone. The very essence of regional radio is creating cultural pluralism and providing different sectors with a means of expression. Within this context, Radio Tel Aviv indeed reflects a specific sector: young people living in central Israel, who wish to connect to the mourning ritual in their own way and get a 'memory menu' reflecting a style of their own.

As mentioned, Tel Aviv is the cultural and business center of Israel; yet on remembrance days, the status of Jerusalem as a 'center' challenges Tel

Aviv's assumed supremacy. On days such as MDHH Jerusalem produces and disseminates the information, values, and accepted rules that define the mourning ritual. Still, if we re-examine the definition of 'periphery' according to conventional models, Tel Aviv cannot be labeled as such, even though on remembrance days it stops functioning as the 'center'. On those days, Tel Aviv does not dictate the dominant values and norms, but it is far from being 'peripheral' because it does not accept the values of the 'center'. A more appropriate way to label Radio Tel Aviv broadcasts on MDHH is to use definitions such as 'independent' or even 'avant-garde', which challenge the mainstream center and propose a different cultural toolkit. In other words, these findings support the view that concepts such as 'center' and 'periphery' are not static but rather dynamic and defined through ongoing cultural negotiation.

Finally, a testimony to the complexity of the decision to air only Hebrew songs on MDHH can be found in the choice of songs aired in the last year examined for this study. On MDHH 2007, Radio Tel Aviv featured only Hebrew songs. Possibly, this change is related to the fact that in 2007, Radio Tel Aviv changed hands, and the new owners have a rather conservative outlook that clearly opposes the purportedly 'elitist approach' that characterized this station until then. As Shimon Elkabetz, the manager of the station in the years 2007–2010 declared, 'you can't broadcast to the State of Tel-Aviv', reflecting the popular notion that Tel Aviv is a state within a state (Shalita, 2010) that serves only a small highbrow segment of Israel's population.

Radio Kol-Rega (Northern Israel): a regional version of national modes of commemoration

Radio Kol-Rega is geographically far away from central Israel and is supposed to represent the voice of the people of the northern region of the country, the Galilee. Relative remoteness from the center, a more limited budgetary allocation for development, and lack of political, cultural, and economic influence have shaped this region as 'peripheral'. Therefore, unlike the preceding two radio stations, which compete over the shaping of the values of central Israel, the question we will ask here is to what extent geographical remoteness also means cultural isolation. This underlying question was also addressed by Haim Hecht, the manager of Radio Kol-Rega and one of its owners who writes for the station website: 'This station was modeled in the shape of the region covered by its license.' Therefore, in our analysis we claim that Radio Kol-Rega offers a regional adaptation of national commemoration patterns.

The exploration of the repertoire of songs aired on Radio Kol-Rega during MDHH shows a mix of many singers located at the top of the playlists of the national networks, alongside a number of artists whose songs are very seldom heard on the national public networks. The most salient diversions from the national repertoire could be found in the inclusion of Middle Eastern pop songs ('Mizrahi music', see Regev and Seroussi, 2004) in the playlists. On MDHH, Radio Kol-Rega offers musical compositions ranging from veteran songs from the 1970s and 1980s (performed mostly by singers of Ashkenazi-Western origin), to current Mizrahi music performed by younger singers. Many of the songs are love songs and some even challenge the minor tone set in the center.

One of the explanations for this musical choice can be found in the outlook of the manager of the station Haim Hecht, a second-generation Holocaust survivor, who considers the Holocaust a central theme in Israeli culture and his own biography:

I grew up in Holon [a city near Tel Aviv]. The atmosphere was that of the *shtetl* [a typically small town with a Jewish population in pre-Holocaust Central and Eastern Europe], something that was copied from Lodz; a father whose entire family was wiped out in the [concentration] camps and who never opened his mouth, and a mother who never shut hers; an uncle who had been in Auschwitz and never stopped telling stories. I heard these stories hundreds of times ... My Zionism stems from the belief that we must fight for this 60-year-old country. The Holocaust is the most important and concrete ideological foundation of my Zionism. On the [Israel's] Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers, we focus on the battles that took place in this region. On the Holocaust Day, I have no such geographic connection, but I will indeed present Holocaust survivors living in the area. Their accounts create a link between the Holocaust and the region ... Most of the media handles the Holocaust as something broadcasters must do even though they do not really believe in it; they feel that they have no choice regarding the Holocaust Day and act unwillingly, or due to extreme regulatory pressure. (Interview with Hecht, July 15, 2008)

Thus, Hecht identifies himself as a firm believer in the idea that the Holocaust must be treated as a central theme and must be given wide and dominant expression. This is perhaps the reason why Radio Kol-Rega styled and produced special MDHH jingles, which repeatedly reminded

the listeners 'Memorial Day for the Holocaust and the Heroism – remember and never forget!'

In keeping with the views of the station manager, one of the salient characteristics of Radio Kol-Rega MDHH broadcasts are the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, interspersed with songs. On the one hand, the station includes testimonies of Holocaust survivors residing in the region (and not representatives of the political establishment, as is the case on Radio Jerusalem); on the other hand, however, these testimonies are fashioned to fit the Israeli commemorative meta-narrative and to support and sustain Zionist ideology. By their very nature, these testimonies are perceived as particularly trustworthy: the witnesses were 'there and then' (i.e. in Europe during the war) and they tell the story of their individual lives in the first person. They are also 'here and now'; they now live in the region and so their personal stories are intertwined with the national narrative.

The following are two short examples of these types of testimonies, aired between the songs:

My name is Dorka Sternberg, and I have been a member of Kibbutz Lohamei Haghetaot [lit. Ghettos' fighters] for fifty-four years. I arrived in Israel on March 20 [1949] and went directly to Lohamei Haghetaot. For the last twenty years, I have worked at the educational center affiliated with 'Beit Lohamei Haghetaot' museum.

I am Franka Kant and I have been a member of Kibbutz Beit Zera for more than fifty years. I was born in Poland. I believe I am the only survivor of my entire family, all of the others are gone: my parents, a brother, uncles, cousins and their children, so many children ... Families were large, extended, with many branches. The entire family disappeared, only I and another brother, who lived here, were left.

I arrived in this country after the war, which lasted five years. I came here, married, and joined the Kibbutz ... We built it from zero, from nothing, and, though I am old now, I pledge that my duty in life, besides building my family and the country, is to remember and never forget. First and foremost, every child of a nation must know what happened to their people: where it came from, what came to pass upon them there, what their past was – so they will know what their roots are; first of all [you must] learn where you come from, and then you can know where you are going.

Besides the monologues of Holocaust survivors residing in the region, during the day the broadcasters repeat set phrases such as 'To remember

and never forget. We memorialize those who were exterminated, and support, embrace and love the survivors.' This reference to the survivors is uncharacteristic (certainly in comparison with other stations) and interesting because it is typified by the adoption of emotional-communal rhetoric. Geographically, Radio Kol-Rega is the most peripheral among the radio stations examined in this study, and this 'neighbor-embracing' rhetoric can be considered a sign of the communality that the station endeavors to convey to its listeners. In other words, the station chooses to center on the people living in the region in which it broadcasts and on the 'here and now' of its audience.

As previously mentioned, the testimonies of Holocaust survivors aired by Radio Kol-Rega during MDHH correspond with the national meta-narrative often summarized in the phrase 'from Holocaust to resurgence'. Coinciding with this national narrative and with survivor testimonies, the texts spoken by the broadcasters of the station emphasize the importance of the existence of the State of Israel, as one of the lessons that ought to be learned from the Holocaust. Let us consider, for example, the following excerpt from one of Radio Kol-Rega's programs on MDHH 2006:

The remembrance day that annually marks Holocaust and Heroism is an event that speaks to the communing soul in two voices: on the one hand the grief, wrath, and despair of the survivors and their children; on the other hand, the revival, the determination, the tenacious holding onto the trunk of life, of memory. We are commanded 'to remember and never forget': to remember those who fought and those who were massacred; those who believed and those who lost their faith; the blessed ones who had the good fortune of seeing the light again, and the ones for whom a malignant darkness will be their eternal companion. Let us comfort the low-spirited and be proud of the upstanding. One and all are engraved onto our lives, onto our landscapes, on the history and the legacy of their generation, as well as on the discourse, which every year complements the Memorial Day for the Holocaust and Heroism. As every year, today again we remember them, the mosaic that makes up the impalpable experience called the genocide of our people. I am Ami Kabri, enjoy listening!

This quasi-homily is a striking example of the texts that accompany the songs. On the one hand, the presenter made a point of stressing the uniqueness of the Holocaust and its commemoration several times, and, therefore, the exceptional character of the day's programming; on the

other hand, he was unable to depart from the broadcasting habit and ended with the commonplace exhortation, 'Enjoy listening!'

The power fields of memory: national, cosmopolitan, and regional

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, each of the three radio stations we examined proposes its own version of representation of the Holocaust in national memory. They do not reject the modes of representation on the more traditional national level, but rather offer three different approaches: Radio Jerusalem follows the conventional forms of commemoration and stresses its adherence to the political establishment on this day, while adding local tones; Radio Tel Aviv offers an alternative to the conventional national forms of commemoration; and Radio Kol-Rega proffers a communal variety of the national memorializing patterns. It is important to point out that, overall, the three stations embrace the salient characteristics of the national format (predominance of minor tone Hebrew songs), to which they add other components. Therefore, regional memory does not void the national one, but rather constitutes an additional stratum: the regional radio stations maintain a dialogue with the features of national commemoration, which are shaped by the established national public media.

The relationships between the different modes of commemoration allow us to depict the relations between the cultural and ideological center and the periphery: Radio Jerusalem positions itself at the heart of the Zionist-Jewish-Israel center; Radio Tel Aviv offers an alternative that challenges the conventional-national form of commemoration, which echoes the secular center of the state. Radio Kol-Rega shapes itself as an Israeli-peripheral voice; the emphasis on testimonies of locally residing survivors and the consolidation of a distinctive soundtrack (Middle Eastern music) sets this station well within the national frame, yet in a definitively peripheral position.

Another way to illustrate the relationship between the stations and the Israeli center/periphery model is to look at the tension between ritual and routine. Radio Jerusalem presents the most distinctive disparity between its broadcasts during MDHH and routine broadcasts; it follows the establishment in moving sharply from the mundane routine into the sacred ritual. Radio Tel Aviv does not make such a clear distinction between ritual and routine broadcasts, and Radio Kol-Rega is closer in its programming to that of Radio Jerusalem, and to society's mainstream.

This research also underscores the central position of the media in establishing and shaping collective memory. The media plays a key role in both consolidating and defining the boundaries of the collective. As mentioned, the regional radio stations are an exceptional case, because they are the sole regional electronic mass communication media in Israel. In the absence of regional television stations, or strong and dominant independent local newspapers, these radio stations constitute the sole voice expressing specific regions and sectors of the population. Before the advent of the regional radio stations, it was not possible to discern separate modes of media commemorations of the Holocaust for the regions of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the Galilee. Therefore, this chapter demonstrates the process whereby mass communication media can establish and shape regional memory.

We feel bound to qualify this assertion, however, by stating that we should take into account that the media is not the sole channel that creates the regional-communal memory, but rather it serves as the means allowing memory researchers to identify such a memory existence even in the absence of mass media. In order to isolate the singular role played by the media in this process, it would be necessary to analyze the different forms of collective memory (local commemoration ceremonies, regional museums, commemoration programs initiated by educational institutions, etc.).

Such an examination might dwell upon the questions of whether, and to what extent, these relations are bi-directional, that is, whether these are only bottom-top relations, from the regional to the cosmopolitan level via the national one, or whether they work in the opposite direction as well: the regional level influencing the shaping of the national and even the cosmopolitan levels. One of the characteristics of the global era is the acknowledgment of small communities and narratives alongside the cosmopolitan ones. In other words, despite the common denominator in shaping memory, in the era of new media and saturated media environment, memory is also shaped by small groups, which, via the media, can interact on a 'common memory ground' or memory sphere, whether it is a geographical area or a cyber-space.

Notes

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1. Ulrich Beck (2003) pointed at the connections and conflicts between 'cosmos' and 'polis' (city/state), 'cosmos', and the multilayered identity that emerges in a new cosmopolitan era.

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12

Televising the Sixties in Spain: Memories and Historical Constructions

*José Carlos Rueda Laffond**

Many works study the role of television as an agent of historical narratives and as a producer of collective memory (Edgerton, 2001; Moss 2008; Wheatley, 2007). This chapter contributes to the existing literature by offering four levels of analysis of two case studies from Spain. These exemplify the coexistence of different explanatory logics which represent, in different ways, the relationship between the present and the past: the series *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (*Tell Me How It Happened*) and the reality show *Curso del 63* (*Class of 63*). Observing their discursive framing and their narrative strategies the analyses focus on four levels: the cosmopolitan memory axis, the national memory, the musealization aspect, and television self-memory and the role of nostalgia.

This study argues that the relationship between media and collective memory involves formulation processes and management and public use of representations and images but the manners of discursive construction of the media memory and its involvement in social culture are complex. Peter Burke (2007) points out the problematic relationship established by the coexistence of opposite and alternative memories – public, familiar, local, class, or group. Memory also is fed by idealizations and traumas (Coonfield and Huxford, 2009; Neal, 1998). Remembrance politics have occasionally stimulated the paradox of socializing the assimilation of pain as opposed to the possible loss of emotional control that is implied by bringing it up to the present (Pickering and Keightley, 2009).

Zelizer (1995: 214) has pointed out that:

By definition, collective memory thereby presumes activities of sharing, discussion, negotiation, and, often, contestation. Remembering becomes implicated in a range of other activities having as much to

do with identity formation, power and authority, cultural norm, and social interaction as with the simple act of recall.

Amongst the agents involved in these processes, television may be described as a medium aiming to create new meanings regarding representation of reality, in order to reinforce those generated by other agents of socialization, as Berger and Luckmann (1966) said. This phenomenon can be seen in several documentaries, which can be taken by the audience as didactic and plausible stories about the past. However, other proposals based on fictional dramatization also establish representation criteria that tend to create an illusion that aims at a sensation of objective realism about past.

Fictions and extensions in the production of memory

Cuéntame cómo pasó and *Curso del 63* were aired in prime time by the state-funded channel Televisión Española (TVE) and the private Antena 3, and they were both broadcast in autumn 2009. These programs connected with a wider process of transtextuality. They were set in a broad strategy of remembrance that has occurred in Spanish television since the beginning of the twenty-first century, from retrospective reports to testimonial documentaries, fiction, and even musical contests. They all had in common the treatment of this decade as especially relevant to the nostalgic past.

Cuéntame cómo pasó and *Curso del 63* were conceived as narratives about everyday life (Straubhaar, 1991). They introduced emotionally loaded devices, which dramatized the evocation and interaction between characters and the past. However, the programs showed clear differences in terms of content and format. *Cuéntame cómo pasó* was a weekly series of generalist fiction about a middle-class family in Madrid; it associated televised remembrance with saccharine nostalgia. Its discourse emphasized the 'happy Sixties' cliché. *Curso del 63* was a reality show that proposed a trip to that period from the present. Its plot consisted in locking up a group of students in a television set with the appearance of a boarding school. Its goal was to confront today and yesterday, explaining the past with anachronistic values of order and authority.

Nostalgia and the representation of authority were the discursive frames of *Cuéntame cómo pasó* and *Curso del 63*. These key points established the frame package with the aim of diagnosing the past, to assess it and construct meanings for the present (cf. Entman, 1993: 52). The role of the medium as an agency of production of memory

was located within these parameters. The representation proposed by both programs linked with different practices of recall in television. From here it is possible to point to dialectics between codes of representation, and certain formulations of global, national, local, and self-referential intersections (cf. Barker, 1999; Straubhaar, 2007; Wiley, 2004). At this point it would be useful to underline different specific non-exclusive levels of memory building:

1. The first level works with a representation placed in the axis of cosmopolitan memory (Ashuri, 2006; Beck, 2002; Levy and Sznajder, 2002). The idea of cosmopolitanism refers to the existence of long-range themes and global values of recognition, located in differentiated social-territorial contexts (Ong, 2009). However, its implications are complex, and they also incorporate dynamics of local internalization. Internal globalization refers to the idea of this type of international references about the past converging with local characteristics, therefore being redefined and producing 'glocal' resultants (Levy and Sznajder, 2006: 1–4).
2. A second level refers to the limits of national history. Traditionally, this level has been predominant in mnemonic television practices. This includes examples of what could be defined as the dominant public memory about the nation. Price (1995: 52–3) has stressed the importance of the popular television narrative in the circulation and updating of national conscience, dispelling distances between elites and society in fictional tales. Castelló (2007) has studied fiction in television as a nation-builder. The reference to the national memory should be understood then as a meeting point that frames that identity's common roots. History locates itself in the gathering coordinates of the national and state heritage, understood as imagined community (Anderson, 1983).
3. The third level is the musealization of memory. Musealization alludes to a redefinition of meaning, 'like the objects in a museum which have lost their use value having become mere signs of their former use values' (Böhn 2007: 145). This concept can also be explained as the stabilization and permanence of certain milestones of the past, which become intense symbolic points for remembrance in television. Musealization would be part of the aspiration of setting recognizable signs, with the aim that these could be understood from the present (cf. Huyssen, 1995: 25–7; Sherry, 2003: 313).

The exaltation of certain processes, such as the transition to democracy in Spain, would constitute an example of this kind

of media exercise. The period from 1975 to 1981 is frequently characterized as the time when the contemporary Spanish nation was founded, but also as a paradigm for later international experiences (democratization in Latin America or the Balkans). So it links with the inclusive scale of national memory and larger values, characteristic of cosmopolitan memory. Television musealization usually tends to operate through reiteration, emphasis, and simplification. Some events, like the coup d'état attempt in Spain in February 1981, illustrate these characteristics through the insistence of focus points, such as the military occupation of Madrid's Parliament (Rueda and Coronado, 2009: 131–98).

4. A final level is television's self-memory based on two directions: recalling the presence of the medium in the past, and across an emphasized reutilization of background files with the intention of stressing the idea that story is history because it has been a broadcast narrative. Both strategies set an autobiographical discourse, based on the notion of the small screen as a historical eye. Both these perspectives can be expressed as symbiotic with the selective and gratifying appeal of nostalgia (Wilson, 2005: 30–2). But nostalgia is also a marketing device (Meyers, 2009) that makes it possible to connect the self-memory with strategies of self-reference. In this case, the self-interpretation may be formulated in relation to the design of the corporate image of the channel, and the frame of the discourse would introduce the idea of the 'media as a part of the history' (Zoch, 2001: 199).

***Cuéntame cómo pasó*, or the allegory of the past that looks at the future**

Cuéntame cómo pasó, broadcast on the public channel TVE, has run for a long time (1968–78), characterized by economic development, generational changes, and the transition towards democracy. This production has been the subject of several analyses (Corbalán, 2009; Cueto, 2009; Estrada, 2004). Its values of idealized nostalgia have been defined as essential recognized marks, particularly among older viewers. Its long duration (almost two hundred episodes) is a measure of its economic profitability, due to the use of memory registers based on familiar everyday details, in order to illustrate the structural context of modernization.

Its discourse about the past has been drawn with selective framing criteria: the intimate family, communal integration, and the proximity

of the neighborhood's culture. The changes in generational relations are not shown as a violent breakdown between parents and children, nor is female emancipation depicted as fracturing the traditional familiar mold. The series has rationalized the passage of time through the connection between personal past and collective memory and also through adjusting to a strict chronological rationalization. Its didactic mode has been based on the experience and interaction of the characters in a historical environment.

Cuéntame cómo pasó has harmoniously internalized the four memory levels described above. The dramatization is organized from the perspective of the national past as a coherent system. It takes place in a clear location, Madrid, which has been introduced as the natural point allowing the confluence of a range of diverse characters, including immigrants from Europe, or from a particular context like Catalonia. The program presents a symbiosis between local and national references. However, references to the Spanish nation are not expressed with reference to a Unitarian political dimension, but through issues such as consensus, solidarity, and collective integration (cf. Castelló and O'Donnell, 2009: 49).

This TV program must also be related to other contemporary projects that have adapted the idea of national history about the 1960s to television fiction, while fitting it into scales of representation by region within the same framing mold. Both *Temps de Silenci* (Televisió de Catalunya, 2001–2) and *L'Alqueria Blanca* (Canal Nou, 2007) have focused their schemes on family relationships, which reflect historical and cultural change from dictatorship to democracy. All this is adapted to private registers linked to its natural consumer markets (Catalonian, the Valencian community). It has been translated linguistically (the substitution of Spanish by Catalanian or Valencian), and through particularized spaces (Barcelona and L'Alcoia).

Cuéntame cómo pasó is also a good example of musealized memory. Its discourse is far from the idea of the traditional or Catholic nation used during the Franco regime. This fiction has recreated the period 1968–78 modeling its representation standards to what has been defined as 'transition's myths' (Juliá, 2006: 59–62). So, *Cuéntame cómo pasó* has become a transmission vehicle of a popular media memory that has stressed the exemplary character of the process (peaceful and consensual), and the identification between the citizens and the elites heading the political reform. The result has been a view of the change defined as paradigm (Pérez Serrano, 2004: 66), and as essential root of the present. This aspect is connected with the orientation of the media management of

that period, stressing these facets of the democratic transition as the beginning of the present in Spain.

These facts are also emphasized in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. However, the experiences shared by the characters are, according to the program thesis, what construct the past identity, fed by everyday life (cf. Turner, 2005). The references to certain political affairs – the assassination of Carrero Blanco or the designation of Suarez as President – lead the dramatic situations. These external facts have been stressed, providing episodes with a documentary format. They have provided a very useful resource for the story's credibility because they have been interspersed in the flow of the story, strengthening the docudrama effect.

The idea of continual progress in Spanish history has been expressed by the proactive sense given to television itself. The medium has always constituted an omnipresent element in the familiar life recreated in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. The first episode, broadcast in 2001, recalled the purchase of a television set. Its significance as a tool of modernity and consumerism was reinforced by the allegorical connection to the end of the season, in which the principal family enjoyed its first holidays at the beach. In October 2006, a hybrid episode – fictional and documentary – was broadcast, showing the social impact of television. These examples of self-reference must be related to the strategies of public visibility of TVE (Moreno, 2007: 11–20). This corporate body has evolved from other documentary offers, like *La imagen de tu vida* and *La tele de tu vida* (2006–7) or *50 años de ...* (2009–10), conducted by a succession of short fragments of programs broadcast during the last fifty years. All of these are examples of nutrients of a 'television menu of memory' (Meyers, Zandberg, and Neiger, 2009), focused on the 1960s and 1970s as lived times.

Television as a source of idealizing nostalgia and as an expression of the material welfare of the middle class is also the link that joins *Cuéntame cómo pasó* with a wide intertextual net. Values stemming from cosmopolitan memory are found in it, as is the representation of the 1960s as a time of aspiration and of first experiences. This specifies the dialogue between the Spanish series and other American references, such as *The Wonder Years* (ABC, 1988–93) or *That 70s Show* (Fox, 1998–2006). Their plots have emphasized the basic sociability frames, operating with the historical event as a point of fixation for the fictional drama (Rueda and Guerra, 2009). Similar characteristics can be found in the Chilean productions *Los 80* (Canal 13, 2008) or *Mis años grossos* (Chiletelevisión, 2009), or in the Argentinian *Verano del 98* (Telefe, 2009).

These affinities have been stronger in the adaptations of *Cuéntame cómo pasó* in Italy (*Raccontami*, RAI, 2006–7) and Portugal (*Conta-me como*

foi, RTP, 2007–10). In them, there has been a mimetic translation of situations or characters, according to the logic of the identity of ordinary people living in the outskirts of Rome, Madrid, or Lisbon. This is a recreation of what has been lived, sketched by resorting to the selection of historical facts that have been made recognizable. In this way, the same stories have been adapted (*Raccontami* started at 1960, coinciding with Rome's Olympic Games), or have resorted to relativizing the status of female autonomy in *Conta-me como foi*, stressing the importance of the agrarian culture in family relationships in Portugal.

***Curso del 63* as a clash between the past and the present**

Cuéntame cómo pasó introduced the 1960s as a golden age, presenting the period as the root of the values system of contemporary Spain, and emphasizing the discontinuity between the characteristics of the past and current identity. The private channel Antena 3 broadcast it in October and November of 2009 at prime time. This program adapted the British *That'll Teach 'em* (Channel 4, 2003–6), also shown in France as *Le pensionnat de Chavagnes* (M6, 2004). The basic concept of the three productions was similar: to show the difficulties of adaptation in an environment ruled by rigorous values and norms. The postulate was dramatized by locking a group of teenagers in a set, depicting a boarding school in the mid-twentieth century. The experimental format was created in Great Britain and set out to evaluate the efficiency of traditional pedagogical methods through the conducting of final tests. This procedure was not carried out in the Spanish version. In this case the selected young people came from a mid-to-low educational background and income, stressing their lack of general knowledge. The ritual logic of the reality show provided other dramatic variables, such as the alliances adopted by the characters, the emergence of relationships, or the confessions before the cameras.

Curso del 63 can be observed as a clear game based on demotic statements and redefinitions of identities (cf. Turner, 2010: 12–3, 42–7). A first level in this game would be set in connection with the format rules, based on joint discourse about the real and television spectacle (Biressi and Nunn, 2005: 35–57; Kilborn, 1994; Murray and Oullette, 2009). Also the recourse to the past would trigger conflict in teenagers of this kind, distorting their current identity and transforming them into pupils in 1963.

In this range of factors, the distinctive characteristics of national historical identity were implemented. *That'll Teach 'em* evoked a stereotype

of the authoritarian school as a reference of musealization. The program proposed the school as an instance of pre-modern socialization, but removed any aristocratic tone. That is, the students were from multicultural backgrounds, projecting the idea of national identity of the current British society with the presence of ethnic minorities. The representation of Spanish people in *Curso del 63* was solved through a logic of integration similar to that existing in other similar shows broadcast in the first decade of the twenty-first century by national channels (López, 2009). In those, the chosen contestants came from the large communities of Latin American or Maghrebian immigrants, or from several places in Spain, like Catalonia or Valencia, although in that case they did not show a local character, for instance through their vernacular languages (Catalan and Valencian). The sense of integrated community was built as the reality show progressed with a compact formulation of 'national family' (Morley, 2004): that is, formalized through everyday cooperation exercises that require adaptation, solidarity, or resistance (indiscipline, protests, mocking the teachers ...) as a response to the hostile environment.

This definition of Spanish identity should be compared to other similar shows broadcast by some regional channels, which used the same argument points but in settings related to local history. Such is the case of *A casa de 1906*, broadcast in 2006 by the Galician channel TVG, and later adapted in *El cortijo de 1907* (Canal Sur, Andalucía) and *La masía de 1907* (TV3, Televisió de Catalunya). In these three examples we find rules of adoption and adaptation (Buonanno, 2006, 127–31) from *The 1900 House* (Channel 4, 1999), the reality show that forced a contemporary British family to prove its survival capacity by moving them into a Victorian city environment. Veyrat-Masson (2008: 88–91) has stressed that *The 1900 House* is an example of mixture and elimination of frontiers of genre. This show and its sequels and adaptations tackled living in the past and acting with it, dramatizing the hiatus caused by the passage of time and social changes. But these productions also formulated a symbolic sense of memory and local identity. In the Spanish regional sequels, the environment used as a setting for the main families was drastically ruralized, emphasizing the agrarian roots as an ancient common signal. It was about going back to the earth, through the television translation of a pre-urban ethnicity that acted as a metaphor of primitive identity.

However, the historical complexity of the Spain of the 1960s was diluted in *Curso del 63* by opposing the dominant figures ('teachers') and the dominated ones ('students'). The program did not tackle the specific

ecosystem of values of the Franco regime. This aspect was defined in the mid-decades of the twentieth century thanks to diverse academic indoctrinating subjects, or by the relevance acquired by Catholic values in the education system. But in the show they worked with a simplified memory of Francoism, understood only as a temporary content.

The program proposed a sketch of a secular school, without physical violence or gender segregation. That is, the notion of historical time was determined by the cultural time of the audience, understood as a community of significance and of interpretation (Zelizer, 2001: 182–3). In the moments when an episode of violence occurred it was not as a consequence of the action of the agents in authority, but as a result of the internal frictions in the subordinated group. In the first episode, one of the contestants criticized another contestant in a humiliating way because of his being homosexual. This aspect underlined a current issue in Spain: the present debate around the social visibility and the legal recognition of the gay community. This clash was used by the reality shows' managers to make all the contestants express their opinion, although spelling out a homosexual identity was an inconceivable anachronism in the Francoist school's parameters and also in its legal categorizing, because it was a crime according to the Vagrancy Act (1954).

The historical setting of *Curso del 63* lacked, due to insufficient funds, the presence of television in the 1960s as shown in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. The program only included short inserts with a documentary tone, illustrated with files from the newsreel *No-Do*. These references were not expressed in a mention about the historical role of television in the 1960s, but television was an essential part in the discursive mechanism in *Curso del 63*. Apparently, the eye of the program watches it all. This omniscience was solved through a farce that compared life in the imaginary school with other situations in the radical present, as ordinary ambits of teenagers in their everyday life. From this point of view, the reality show was based in their own environment, despite sharing strong gender links with other similar programs, Spanish or European.

A historic time reference, two memory practices

Cuéntame cómo pasó and *Curso del 63* can be considered narratives of proximity that glorify the 1960s as a privileged scenario for media memory. They mobilized key identity points about the Spanish nation, although from diverse codifying genres: the familiar fiction series and

the reality show. Both programs presented an interesting intersection between remembrance, memory topics, imagination strategies, and use of the past in the present. *Cuéntame cómo pasó* and *Curso del 63* must be placed in the context of the internationalization of formats, and in the narrative of the 1960s as an object of recognition for transnational cosmopolitan consumption. They can be analyzed as links in a wider transtextual chain – with other European, American, and Spanish proposals – which have combined global and particular symbols.

Cuéntame cómo pasó and *Curso del 63* also mobilized key points of historical evocation to the same wide community of interpretation: the Spanish general audience. Therefore, both productions offered differentiated didactics about the past. In *Cuéntame cómo pasó* the strategy of the evocation was involved with a nostalgic musealized memory, and insisted upon stressing the existing lines of continuity between the democratic transition and the present time. That approach was intensified thanks to the reference to television, which was introduced as a modernizing agent. In *Curso del 63*, on the contrary, the ‘no nostalgia’ theme is prevalent. The program stressed the existing rift between an outdated scenario – the hierarchical and authoritarian education – and an individualistic stereotype of present youth. *Curso del 63* shows a living experience and adapts well to the international norms of a genre, in which its representation of reality is born and dies radically at the present time. From that premise is built the shaping collective memory.

These programs emphasized a dynamic and distinctive notion of change. Their practice of media memory underlined the notion of progress from several approaches. *Cuéntame cómo pasó* has set a memory discourse that tends to objectify an image of the 1960s and 1970s as a historical and national foundation. *Curso del 63* presented a notion of the past as an anachronism before the socio-cultural values of today. The two productions connected in a wider meta-narrative, that of the representation of the past as external time, but also as an accessible time thanks to the production of memory by the power of television.

Note

*This study links with the research projects ‘La mirada televisiva. Evocación histórica y representación de la cultura política en España’ (CCG08-UCM/HUM-4017), ‘Televisión y memoria: estrategias de representación de la Guerra Civil y la Transición’ (HAR 2010-20005), and ‘El relato histórico televisivo: narrativas, representaciones culturales y proyecciones identitarias’ (Proext-MICINN PR2009-0035).

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Part IV

Media Memory, Journalism, and Journalistic Practice

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13

Obamabilia and the Historic Moment: Institutional Authority and ‘Deeply Consequential Memory’ in Keepsake Journalism

Carolyn Kitch

In just the first three weeks after the November 2008 election of US President Barack Obama, ‘perhaps as much as \$200 million’ was spent on commemorative products, according to *New York Times* media columnist Stuart Elliott (2008, 2009), who was among the first to use the term ‘Obamabilia’ to describe these items. This may seem unsurprising in an American culture full of commercial nostalgia, where ‘collectibles’ are produced for everything from sports victories to celebrity deaths. What was newer this time was the centrality of journalistic media – and, in particular, the most elite American news organizations – in the production and marketing of Obama commemorative products. Of course, as many commentators have noted, these products were meant to yield ancillary revenue and to ‘extend the brand’. Yet their content reveals that they were meant to do something more as well. Through words and pictures, this wave of commemorative journalism repeatedly reaffirmed the authority and value of elite, ‘old media’ at a moment when those institutions appeared to be in crisis.

The clearest example of these status claims can be seen in the most expensive of these memory products, which in early March 2009 debuted on *The New York Times* Best Seller List at number 3: the *Times’* own oversized, hardcover book titled *Obama: the Historic Journey* (2009). Executive Editor Bill Keller’s Introduction was not about Barack Obama; it was about the *Times’* pre-eminent position in journalism, even in a souring economy and in the face of competition from new media. He noted that many newspapers had not been able to afford to cover the full primary campaigns, but ‘The Times has always prided itself on sparing no necessary expense to cover the news, and we did not compromise on this one ... Times reporters were sometimes the only ones

who showed up in the early days ...' Of the increased importance of online journalism in this election, he explained: 'From the outset, we determined that our Web and print coverage would be one organic journalistic endeavor, produced by the same expert cast of reporters, editors, photographers, graphic artists, multimedia specialists and producers, exploiting the possibilities of both mediums' (Keller, 2009: 16).

Of politicians' (and others') criticism of news media during the campaign, Keller wrote: 'Attacking the messenger is a time-honored way ... to change the subject. ... When it comes to our job of afflicting the comfortable, we try to be equal opportunity afflictors ... Among news reporters and editors, fair play – the discipline to set aside any personal predilection and let readers be the judge – is regarded as a fundamental of the job' (2009: 18, 19). Yet he also recalled that Managing Editor Jill Abramson, whose 'career had begun in 1976, when she helped cover the New Hampshire primaries for *Time* when she was a student at Harvard', kept up the paper's 'ritual' of attending the 'traditional Election Day lunch at The Palm steakhouse' (2009: 186).

In a few paragraphs, which seem to merely open and close the 240-page book, the *Times* made several points that have long typified the claims of elite, mainstream journalism: that it does not put economic concerns above its dedication to comprehensive coverage; that it is just a 'messenger' – accurate, comprehensive, and 'fair' – even while it 'afflicts' the powerful; that new technology is merely a new way of delivering the same, quality product; that its practitioners are 'disciplined' even while they have inside access to the halls of power; and that those journalists are very well connected to each other and to other powerful institutions.

Journalism scholars use the terms 'news repair' or 'paradigm repair' to describe the process of how news organizations make such claims, often within the news product they create, in order to reaffirm or re-establish their own professional authority and reputation. Dan Berkowitz writes: 'Paradigm repair attempts to restore faith in the paradigm of objectivity by isolating the people or organizations that stray from the rest of the news media institution' (2000: 126). Such a definition presumes that mainstream news media become 'fixers' only when there is a clear departure from the norms of journalism. Oren Meyers (forthcoming) points out, instead, that it may be more useful to study how challenges are made to the status and reputation of mainstream news organizations on an ongoing basis, and not only with regard to professional transgressions. Using George Gerbner's term 'critical incident' (1973: 562) to describe such rifts in the norms of news practice, Barbie Zelizer explains that, '[w]hen employed discursively, critical incidents refer to

those moments by which people air, challenge, and negotiate their own boundaries of practice ... discourse about critical incidents suggests a way of attending to events that are instrumental for the continued well-being of the journalistic community' (1992a: 67). Elsewhere, she writes: 'Reporters use discourse to discuss, consider, and at times challenge the reigning consensus surrounding journalistic practice, facilitating their adaptation to changing technologies, changing circumstances, and the changing stature of newswork' (1993: 233).

As a number of scholars have noted (e.g. Hartley, 1982; van Dijk, 1988), the ongoing, daily practice of journalism is itself a discourse; thus, 'special' products issued by news organizations provide a meta-discourse about journalism. Method follows from theory in this study, which offers a discourse analysis of the parts of this coverage in which journalists wrote about the purpose, process, and products of their work. The evidence studied for this chapter includes a total of seventeen commemorative products created by three national or otherwise influential newspapers, two national news magazines, and three national television-news networks. The intent of this study is to understand how major, largely elite US news media produced special products (separate from their regularly dated work) as a way of affirming their own institutional status while also staking a claim on American public memory of Obama's ascension. They did so by explaining journalists' roles in the following four ways.

'Showing him unguarded': insiders with 'extraordinary access'

Most of the news organizations claimed to have had unprecedented, exclusive, or unparalleled access to Obama – claims that, of course, could not be true in combination. Much emphasis was placed on 'behind-the-scenes' content, in which journalists were the revealers of the personal, backstage truth, not just the political front stage, of Obama's campaign and life. The commemorative DVD issued by CBS News actually used the phrase 'All Access' in its title, and one segment was titled 'What You Haven't Seen' (*60 Minutes Presents*, 2009).

Time magazine's 'Commemorative Edition' featured the work of photographer Callie Shell, who had been with Obama on the long campaign trail. In an introduction, the magazine's managing editor explained that Shell 'has become, as an Obama staffer puts it, "part of the family"'. More than anyone else, Shell has been able to show the private side of Obama, what he is like in repose, when he is not onstage or behind

the podium. Shell's artistry reveals Obama's true self by showing him, unguarded, in places where almost no one gets to see him' (Stengel, 2009: 6). Like *Time*, *Newsweek's* first special issue on the election began with a short essay introducing readers to Charles Ommanney with a picture of him sitting close to Obama on a sofa, the two of them laughing. The photographer's work followed, in a 'portfolio' of double-page pictures showing Obama: crouched (as if surfing) on a Chicago rooftop, against the city's skyline; sitting with his feet up on a locker-room desk while an aide tossed a basketball in the air; jogging out of an SUV in the rain; and literally backstage, with Michelle in a hallway during the campaigns (A Portfolio, 2008–9: 8–25).

Newsweek also issued a hardcover book that was not a reprint of its earlier coverage, but rather provided a new, campaign strategy summary narrative by staff writer Evan Thomas. The promotional copy on the book's jacket referred to a *Newsweek* reporting project through which, for the past 25 years, the magazine has had embargoed but 'remarkable access to the candidates ... The result is a story that reads like no other coming off the campaign trail' (Thomas, 2009: inside book jacket). At the close of Thomas' narrative is a reprinted interview with Obama done by another reporter, Daren Briscoe, who provided this reminiscence:

... as we began to talk, it quickly became apparent that he wasn't in campaign mode. Away from the unblinking eyes of the TV cameras that tracked him at every debate, and from the brace of microphones at every campaign stop that recorded his every utterance, later to be pored over for any gaffe or possible gaffe, Obama seemed more at ease. His speech fell into the natural pattern that his advisers had tried to drum out of him, full of pensive pauses and compound sentences. (Briscoe, 2009: 197)

In this fascinating condemnation of television news, the *Newsweek* reporter was not only backstage; he was the wise friend with whom the candidate could be 'natural' and feel safe.

'They need our help in being heard': representatives of the common American

While some news institutions claimed unparalleled backstage access to the candidate, others claimed unparalleled access to ordinary Americans. ABC's DVD *50 States in 50 Days* (packaged inside a book

titled *America Speaks*, which was a joint project with *USA Today*) showed reporters for the network's various news programs traveling across the country as they covered the campaign. The places they visited were symbolic of 'real America' – covered bridges, diners, cornfields, barber-shops, front porches in small towns – as were their means of transportation: *World News* reporter David Muir traveled down the Mississippi on a boat; anchor Charles Gibson's bus was pulled out 'the rich Iowa dirt' by a John Deere tractor; and the *Good Morning America* team took a 'Whistlestop Tour' aboard vintage Pennsylvania Railroad cars, a trip Diane Sawyer described as 'our travel into America' (*50 States*). In an essay in the *America Speaks* book, *GMA* reporter Robin Roberts explained the reason for these journeys:

Our audience told us why, in emails, letters, postings on our Shout Out message board. They were hurting and, in this all-important election year, they needed our help in being heard. They were relying on us to listen and get them answers ... In Massachusetts, Diane went door-knocking, going right up to people's homes to find out their concerns. (Roberts, 2008: 10–11)

Their last stop was Washington, DC, where they stood on the outdoor balcony of the Newseum, overlooking the route between the capitol and the White House, which Obama would travel on inauguration day. Here, at this building that pays tribute to the importance of journalism, Roberts assured viewers that, 'at every stop, we were listening to your concerns about the economy, your concerns about what's going on' (*50 States*).

In the DVD's segments of his tour of 'battlefield' states (largely Midwestern), anchor Charles Gibson interviewed laid-off autoworkers; at the Cloud Nine Café in Wapakoneta, Ohio, he noted, 'we sat down with some of the regulars'. In his essay in the book – titled 'America from the Asphalt' – Gibson stressed the need for journalists to 'listen', not only to the political candidates but also, indeed primarily, to the American people: 'So often they have the most to say. And they "get it"' (Gibson, 2008: 6, 7).

USA Today also produced a commemorative DVD that began as a multimedia project on the newspaper's website. It was a rare example, in this kind of journalism, of an 'old media' institution embracing rather than dismissing new media (or, at any rate, video) as part of its assertion of institutional authority. In keeping with the interactive nature of new media, this production was all about 'the people', especially

African-American people. It told the stories of those who traveled to Washington for the inauguration, including the marching band of Grambling State University, a Historically Black College, who performed in the parade, and two former Tuskegee airmen, one of whom had also been at the 1963 March on Washington. Scored with swelling music, the DVD began with a sound-bite from Obama's convention speech that also summed up the tone of this commemorative product: 'This election has never been about me. It's about you' (Allender et al., 2008–9).

'That Great Gift of Freedom': expert witnesses to 'history'

The opposite might be said of the tone of other commemorative journalism, beginning with the *New York Times*, whose self-congratulation was quoted at length previously. Such institutions claimed to be central not only to Obama's story, but to democracy itself. Like the *Times*, the *Washington Post* produced a hardcover book, with a solid, dark-blue cover bearing, along with the book's title (*A Photographic Journal*), the *Post* logo and the Seal of the President of the United States. The volume contained a Foreword by Editor-at-Large Ben Bradlee, who recalled witnessing the inauguration of John F. Kennedy 48 years earlier (2009: 7), and an Afterword by Executive Editor Marcus Brauchli noting that the newspapers' 'coverage of a great metropolis and the national government and rituals of democracy have been closely intertwined since our founding in 1877'. In his view, Obama's inauguration was 'a testament to the durability of the American democratic experiment' (Brauchli, 2009: 159).

Similarly, *Newsweek's* 'commemorative inaugural edition' was not a chronicle of Obama's win, but a special issue on 'The Great Gift of Freedom'. Editor Jon Meacham explained that that magazine had 'commissioned some of the country's leading historians, writers and activities to explore the origins and course of American liberty in light of the 44th president's historic victory' (Meacham, 2009: 8). These nineteen writers included Alice Walker, Henry Louis Gates Jr., James McPherson, Vernon Jordan, and Tom Brokaw. Although the issue opened with the text of Obama's inauguration speech and fifteen pages of photographs from that day, it then quite formally turned into a history book, a chronological story of 'freedom' in America, beginning in 1607 Jamestown, Virginia, and sprinkled with quotations from historical documents including the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address.

Despite its emphasis on the backstage informality of its photographic glimpses of Obama, *Time* magazine implied through its design and production choices that its commemorative issue was a history book, too. While its editorial content was reprinted material from its own previous issues, the type was set differently in the commemorative edition, stretching across the full page in justified text, rather than the usual, journalistic columns of ragged type. *Time* published both of its two commemorative editions first as 'magabooks', with softcover but perfect (glued, not stapled) binding and a textured, matte (rather than glossy) finish (*Time*, 2009). Its content was further reified as it became a hardcover book.

'Deeply consequential memory': makers of the official keepsake

As suggested by their theme and their packaging, the special issues of *Time* and *Newsweek* and the hardcover books authored by the nation's two most prominent newspapers were meant to be saved. The material nature of these products was key to their designation as 'historic' and their presumed use as physical prompts for future memory.

For this reason, the television-news networks produced DVDs that were editorially as well as literally weightier than their regular coverage. While Americans can access much television news coverage online, they cannot 'own' it or 'keep' it, words used in much of the marketing of the commemorative products. One example was ABC News's invitation to viewers to 'Own a piece of American history' by purchasing its inauguration DVD. 'You can hold onto (sic) a newspaper', ABC News Executive Producer Marc Burstein told the *New York Times*, but 'How do you hold onto (sic) a TV show? This allows you to do that' (Stelter, 2009: B2). In promotional copy, NBC News claimed that its inauguration DVD 'deserves a special place in every American's video library', while CBS News promised: 'You can now own the most complete account of what may be the greatest American political story ever told' (*NBC News Presents*, 2009; *60 Minutes Presents*, 2009).

Despite such hyperbole, the network news commemorative products made only a small sound within the din of proclamations of the material value of newspapers. Within the profession, Obama's election was hailed as a triumphal moment for print journalism. *New York Times* media columnist Stuart Elliott quoted *Time* magazine editor Richard Stengel's claim that his readers were 'looking for a talisman of history, to mark a milestone in their life and the life of the country' (2008: B5).

The *Washington Post* quoted citizens who said ‘You can’t put a computer screen into a scrapbook’ and ‘You can’t show your children your BlackBerry.’ In another swipe at electronic media, the newspaper contended: ‘People who stayed up late, bleary-eyed from television or online page clicking, woke up needing something to touch. They sought physical proof that it wasn’t all just a dream from a computer monitor’s blue glow.’ This, the *Post* explained, was why Americans had stood in line for hours, in Chicago as well as Washington, to get copies of newspapers reporting the election results: ‘In 30 years’, one citizen told the *Post*, ‘my children will be able to touch and feel these papers when I tell them all about this historic day’ (Dvorak, 2008: A25).

Similar language was used in the introduction to a book published by the Poynter Institute that reprinted the post-election front pages of 63 US and 12 international newspapers. While its content was primarily documentary, the book opened with an introduction written by Doonesbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau, whose comic strips appear in most American newspapers and had been sharply critical of the Bush administration. Trudeau offered these thoughts about the run on newspapers, noting that while people could get election results online,

What they couldn’t get was the crisp, tactile, iconic artifact that is a daily newspaper – that tangible proof that something big had really happened. The morning-after newspaper, with the huge headlines reserved for historic events, continues to be seen as the indispensable keepsake – one that can forever evoke and refresh a deeply consequential memory. (2008: xi–xii)

Discussion

Commemorative products are often dismissed by scholars and other cultural critics as just another thing for sale, the opportunistic recycling of words and images for quick profit. Yet it is notable that these Obama ‘keepsakes’ contained a certain kind of reflexive discourse at a time of presumed crisis in American journalism. Major, daily newspapers across the United States were laying off workers or shutting down completely. News magazine journalism became a two-publication field when *US News & World Report* – for 60 years a competitor of *Time* and *Newsweek* – went monthly in 2008. Ratings for the nightly national television news broadcasts continued to decline. The decreasing importance of traditional news media was confirmed by the Obama campaign’s own successful use of new media as a major means of political communication.

Mainstream news media were being attacked from the right as well, by politically overt journalism whose commentators condemned 'gotcha' reporting. Critics claimed that journalists were out of touch with the feelings of ordinary people, and polls confirmed that only a minority of Americans had confidence in news media. This set of professional crises was unfolding against the backdrop of the worst US economy since the Great Depression.

Therefore, Obama's election and inauguration were potentially 'historic moments' for mainstream news organizations as well as for the country, a chance for those media to hitch their wagons to his star. These occasions offered editors, anchors, and reporters a very public stage from which to address a huge crowd, defending their profession and reflecting on its continuing importance. Their commemorative discourse was threaded with professional discourse confirming the authority and functions of journalists – as revealers of the backstage truth, as the public face of ordinary Americans' hopes and fears, as witnesses to and explainers of history, and as the makers of keepsake memory.

Interestingly, at the same time that it attempted to shore up the reputation and relevance of traditional journalism, the professional discourse within these commemorative products also exposed contradictions in traditional journalistic norms, the very ideals that critics have contested and new media have sought to challenge with alternative formats. Chief among those ideals is that of journalistic objectivity. It seems impossible to aver detachment while proudly claiming insider (even 'family') status among the elite and front-porch familiarity with the non-elite. The retrospective view of commemorative journalism, however, leaves room for this contradiction: as James Carey (1986: 192) once noted, when a reporter looks back over time, 'he abandons his pose as critic, adversary, and detective and becomes a member of the community'. The backward glance of journalism, especially when the outcome of events is known, tends to be a communal one.

That communal voice has a tone of finality that, ideally, journalism is meant to avoid in its normative dedication to what is *new* and unfolding in the world. The official editorial and material nature of these commemorative media products thus also contradicts traditional definitions of the nature of news and purpose of journalism. Yet as many memory scholars have observed, such official journalistic narratives can eventually become unmoored or at least reshaped, even when they are retold by the same news institutions. In his study of commemorative supplements marking various anniversaries of the founding of Israel, Oren Meyers observed that 'the uniform and authoritative narrative of the

earliest supplements' gave way to more complex memory in later years (2002: 201). Thus, future commemorative journalism about Obama's presidency – which seems inevitable given the ubiquity of commemorative products in American culture generally – may unravel 'the historic moment' and rewrite history anew. In response to the familiar statement that 'journalists write the first draft of history', Jill Edy notes that journalists also '[do] the rewrites' (1999: 71).

Tracing journalistic revisitations of the Kennedy assassination, Barbie Zelizer (1992b) found that, over time, journalists positioned themselves as this story's official tellers even while recasting their own roles in the event, when alternative tellers and understandings of that story emerged. She also contends that television journalists in particular fueled a professional discourse in which their coverage of the assassination, at the time of the event, established their own pre-eminent authority as *new* media. This study has found that strategy still very much at work in the authority claims of the national television news networks and other nationally prominent news media, albeit in defense of their status as *old* media.

Commemorating the American President 45 years later, their broader assertion is that old media still matter and that journalism is indeed an important draft of history. In these products, though, history is understood not as a chronicle of the American past, but rather as a moment of the present that is 'captured' and interpreted during, or soon after, its occurrence. What makes it 'historic' is not past history but future memory, the stated purpose of its use – to be viewed and reviewed by its 'owners' over time. In the same sense, statements about the meaning of news are meant not only as defenses of current journalism, but also as future evidence of the role of American news media in 2008. Through commemorative products, their authority lives on, reread and replayed, entwined with the historic moment itself.

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14

Telling the Unknown through the Familiar: Collective Memory as Journalistic Device in a Changing Media Environment

Dan Berkowitz

Journalists are often faced with telling news of the unusual and unexpected, yet they must report on tight deadlines with little information. One device that journalists can draw on to get their job done is collective memory of society's revered events and people. Collective memory allows news to gain a semblance of the familiar – journalists are able to tell their stories in a way that seems resonant to both news organizations and news audiences. In essence, through collective memory, their version gains authority as *the* version.

This chapter draws on two case studies that demonstrate how collective memory has been incorporated into news stories to create resonance and build journalistic authority. The first case concerns Americanized memory of the Holocaust to recount the story of an unexpected hero in the April 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech. The second case discusses how collective memory of cherished presidents was introduced by the 2008 Barack Obama campaign and then adopted by journalists to report the story of a man who did not fit the typical mold of a presidential candidate. In both cases, collective memory helped make news stories appear natural and compelling, all the while streamlining the work that journalists needed to undertake.

Media memory as journalistic device

Maintaining interpretive authority is a key to the forms of journalistic practice that are considered legitimate and appropriate when journalists report on unfamiliar and unexpected occurrences (Carlson, 2007). These arrangements allow journalists the ability to fulfill their professional ideals, creating authoritative news that nonetheless represents a

constructed reality emerging as a by-product of strategic work practices. To retain their authority in society, journalists work through standardized practices that render readily acceptable interpretations through the application of collective memory.

The act of accomplishing journalistic work in itself carries meanings that speak to the culture of journalism – when journalists do their work, the value and significance of that work both follows from its enactment and also leads toward work done in a way that yields professional rewards. For example, when local television journalists produce stories and newscasts during rating periods (or ‘sweeps’), they function as a competitive team that becomes part of their larger cultural activity (Ehrlich, 1995). There, the act of engaging in journalistic work carries important meanings to daily life for those within the culture (Zelizer, 1993a). Likewise, when disaster strikes, journalists become part of a storytelling community, functioning as ‘bards’ of the times to help society reflect on itself and join together for healing from the trauma that has been created (Berkowitz, 1992; Kitch and Hume, 2007; Vincent, Crow, and Davis, 1989). When the integrity of the journalistic institution is threatened by an individual journalist or news organization that has violated professional principles, the broader institution comes together to show how the aberration was isolated to one person or organization – the institution as a whole is thus not represented as flawed, with the blame placed solely on those who have deviated (Frank, 2003; Hindman, 2005). In each of these examples, the emphasis is on the culture of journalism, blending the meanings of the product that journalists create with the meanings they see in the production work itself.

The concept of collective memory – wherein journalists draw on events from the past to report on occurrences in the present – is a rich cultural approach for understanding how news comes to be (Edy and Daradanova, 2006; Robinson, 2009). In a most basic way, the notion of collective memory directly contradicts the professional journalistic paradigm’s core tenet of objectivity that calls for new occurrences to be treated independently – journalism is supposed to be ahistorical except for drawing on the past for context in an ongoing issue or event. Nonetheless, journalism draws on historical memory on a regular basis to add perspective through commemoration, historical analogies, and presentation of historical contexts (Edy, 1999).

For example, it is one thing to assert that a presidential candidate is a dynamic figure with a strong drive toward social reform, but something much more powerful to elicit comparisons between the candidate and

American presidents like Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy. That is one of the key advantages of understanding the construction of news from the perspective of collective memory. Although it is often said that 'News is a first draft of history', it is equally plausible that history helps journalists create a first draft of news (Kitch, 2008). Often, these historical accounts become the main source of historical memory, so that news becomes not only a first draft, but a final one, too (Zelizer, 1993b).

However, to use memory as a storytelling device consciously would imply that a journalist is simply rehashing an old story to fit a new one – journalism is supposed to be in the present, extracted from the past and value free. But without the narrative aid of collective memory, news cannot resonate with its audience and seems 'wrong'. In all, there exists a paradox between the 'telling it fresh' aspect of the news paradigm and the cultural need for telling news 'the way it is supposed to go'.

Placing media memory in context

To move from the abstractions just presented to a tangible demonstration of the concept, news articles were gathered from Lexis-Nexis searches related to two events that were told through the use of collective memory: the 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech and the Obama presidential campaign in 2008. News items were read multiple times through the interpretive lens of collective memory, with an effort to develop key themes related to connections between the recent events and specific links to the past. For example, readings were done with an eye to historical references, seeking insights into the ways that past events and figures informed interpretation of the present.

Collective memory in news of the Virginia Tech shootings

When Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 students and faculty and wounded many more during a shooting spree at Virginia Tech in April 2007, his act created not only a local trauma but a national one. Calling on collective memory of similar events, many news reports soon called it the nation's worst school shooting (e.g. Bykowicz, Harris, and Olson, 2007). As the story of that trauma unfolded in the news media, the narrative of the hero became a large part of how the tragedy was retold. Through reliance on the use of collective memory, the heroic story of Liviu Librescu emerged most visibly as a symbol of hope and healing from this national trauma: a frail, elderly professor who ironically survived the Holocaust only to die at Virginia Tech. Librescu thus became a hero

beyond the ordinary who – through news narratives of his deeds – could help the nation heal in a way that no other story could, in part by invoking memory of the Holocaust.

On the day of the shootings, only one story appeared with a Holocaust mention, but once it was known, this connection became much more prominent in the following days. In a *Boston Herald* profile of those who had died, the significance of this detail and its irony stood out:

The 32 victims of Monday's horrifying massacre at Virginia Polytechnic University included athletic all-American teenagers, hard-driving foreign-born scholars and a professor who survived the Holocaust only to die at age 76 shielding his students from the killer. (Gelzenis, 2007: 4)

Likewise, a news roundup in the *Houston Chronicle* looked back into history as it described Librescu's deed:

As a child, he had survived the Holocaust. As an adult, he had survived persecution for defying Romania's brutal communist regime during the Cold War. At last, he and his wife, Marlena, seemed to have found a safe haven on a quiet university campus in rural Virginia. But Monday, trouble found him once more. (2007: 8)

A *Chicago Sun-Times* editorial (2007b: 41) elaborated on this point, showing how the sacrifice and horror of the Holocaust enhanced the magnitude of Librescu's final act:

...76-year-old lecturer Liviu Librescu knew all about history's capacity to dwarf individual acts of courage. He survived a Nazi labor camp in his native Romania and fled the Communists there when they punished him for not swearing his allegiance to them. After all that, he found himself, on Holocaust remembrance day, again doing something symbolizing the ultimate in valor.

Some news articles drew on a speech by President Bush, who spoke at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, as he referred to that commemorative day (Yaniv, 2007: 7):

'On the Day of Remembrance, this Holocaust survivor gave his own life so that others might live. And this morning we honor his memory, and we take strength from his example', Bush said.

Other articles highlighted a funeral service held for Librescu by an Orthodox Jewish group in New York who Librescu had not met, but who wanted to remember him as a Holocaust survivor:

Liviu Librescu's coffin came yesterday afternoon to a place he had never been.

In the heart of Borough Park, Brooklyn, the unadorned wooden coffin was shouldered by Jewish men who had not known the science professor, but whose fathers and grandfathers were, like Librescu, Holocaust survivors. (Perez, 2007: A41)

Especially telling in this story is how those carrying Librescu's coffin connected their deed with Holocaust memory, turning these men into stand-ins for their ancestors. In this way, the trauma of the Holocaust was symbolically re-enacted, and the ceremony represented mourning for yet one more Holocaust victim. This point was summed up effectively in an editorial appearing in the Charleston, South Carolina, *Post and Courier* (2007: A12): 'Monday's mass murder at Virginia Tech and the Holocaust have a depressing common trait: stunning inhumanity. Yet they have something uplifting in common, too: Professor Liviu Librescu.'

In sum, although the initial news items stuck to the basic facts, collective memory helped both journalists and their audiences know how the story was 'supposed to go'. Letters and editorials first identified the narratives expected for this kind of event, and then news items filled in the details suggested by those basic narrative expectations. This was a journalistically strategic approach for covering a fast-moving news story efficiently, but it was also a way of adding cultural resonance to news texts that could meet society's expectations for the story. In essence, journalists of different cultures gather 'data' to tell different stories that offer a close cultural fit to their audiences, so that an American account of a terrorist act in Israel might apply a 'Wild West' narrative, while an Israeli news story of the same event could use the lens of the Holocaust instead (Nossek and Berkowitz, 2006).

Collective memory in the making of a president

In an era when most presidential candidates have come from privileged, well-established roots in mainstream society, Barack Obama broke the mold as an African-American growing up in a single-parent family, and at the time of the 2008 campaign, he was a relative newcomer to the American political machinery. As the subject of intense national

scrutiny when his candidacy gained stock, Obama's background posed a problem for journalists whose job it was to quickly observe issues and occurrences, and then present them within a framework that resonates with their audiences. Again, collective memory served as a convenient journalistic device.

To explore collective memory's role in news of Obama's candidacy, news items were examined from key time points in the campaign. Separate searches were also conducted for Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy, since all of these leaders were mentioned at some point in the campaign.

Conjuring Abraham Lincoln

On a cold Saturday morning in February 2007, Barack Obama addressed a group of journalists and citizens outside the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois, a spot where another Illinois legislator-turned-president had spoken nearly 150 years earlier. By doing so, Obama had carefully set up a connection with President Abraham Lincoln through collective memory. As an editorial in the *Chicago Sun-Times* (2007a) aptly explained:

There was nothing subtle about Sen. Barack Obama's choice of the Old State Capitol in Springfield, where Abraham Lincoln gave his famous 'house divided' speech, as the setting for Saturday's announcement that he is running for president. He not only wanted to note the historic nature of his campaign as the first viable African-American presidential candidate, but he wanted to invite comparisons between himself and Abraham Lincoln, another Illinois legislator with little experience who went to Washington and united the country.

The story more or less told itself for the news media and was readily accepted, including one case where journalists called Obama's announcement 'a journey rich with historic possibilities and symbolism':

Wearing an overcoat but gloveless on a frigid morning, Mr. Obama invoked a speech Lincoln gave here in 1858 condemning slavery – 'a house divided against itself cannot stand' – as he started his campaign to become the nation's first black president. (Nagourney and Zeleny, 2007)

The *Chicago Daily Herald* took the comparison between Obama and Lincoln one step further: "The life of a tall, gangly, self-made Springfield lawyer tells us that a different future is possible", Obama

said. "He tells us that there is power in hope" (Krol and Patterson, 2007). This matchup between the two was eagerly reported by the news media – Obama offered the collective memory comparisons to Lincoln, and the media quickly accepted them. As a reporter for *The Pantagraph* observed (Erickson, 2007):

U.S. Sen. Barack Obama gripped the historic coattails of one of the nation's most revered presidents Saturday, hoping to use the nation's admiration of Abraham Lincoln to help guide him to the White House.

The Lincoln connection thus continued beyond Obama's initial event, so that fond collective memory actually stuck further into the campaign. Lincoln's presence constituted a 'beacon in history' as a shining example of racial equality (Schwartz, 2000), with virtually all journalists incorporating this comparison because of the ease of storytelling and the resonance of the story. In essence, the current equation between Obama and Lincoln could be viewed as yet another incarnation of Lincoln's memory.

Media memory of John F. Kennedy

If collective memory of Lincoln resonated because of Lincoln's success in reuniting a torn country, then collective memory of John F. Kennedy served a different purpose. By calling on the memory of Kennedy, Obama helped assure the nation that minimal experience did not preclude success in office. As a *Boston Globe* correspondent concluded at the launch of Obama's campaign:

With only two years in the Senate under his belt, Senator Barack Obama of Illinois acknowledged yesterday when he announced his candidacy for president that some skeptics may find it premature.

'I recognize there is a certain presumptuousness, a certain audacity, to this announcement', Obama said in front of the historic Old State Capitol in Springfield, Ill. He is the youngest candidate in the large field of Democratic hopefuls for 2008, but he hopes to turn that into an asset, as John F. Kennedy did. (Ratto, 2007)

Recalling Kennedy, though, was related to his public speaking ability, as well:

He certainly knows how to work a crowd. Even as he stands out on a podium, bareheaded in the bitter cold, there is no doubt Barack Obama can deliver a well-turned speech, one imbued with passion

and elegance in the tradition of the men he so admires, Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy. In this, he leaves Hillary Rodham Clinton in the dust. (Hunter, 2007)

Other writers commented on the similarities between Obama and Kennedy, such as this commentary by a Newhouse News Service reporter:

The time was 1960, the place was the Los Angeles Coliseum, the man accepting the Democratic nomination was John F. Kennedy. I was there, a young reporter for the Newark (N.J.) News, and much of what happened that day long ago came back to me as I watched Obama deliver his address.

The similarities are striking. It's history in the process of repeating itself not exactly, by any means, but closely enough to evoke long-ago memories. (Farmer, 2008)

Key in this excerpt is the acknowledgment that explicitly raising the similarities between Obama and Kennedy evoked media memory, quickly and resonantly drawing on its utility as a journalistic device.

Calling on FDR during times of crisis

The coat tails effect of the use of collective memory continued into the later stages of the Obama campaign with reference to Franklin D. Roosevelt, a president who had dealt with an adverse economic climate and a divided nation. At the Democratic National Convention, Obama tied himself to the collective memory legacy of the party's high points. As one news item reported:

The 47-year-old freshman senator from Illinois did so by invoking not only the political gods of the Democratic Party – John F. Kennedy and Franklin D. Roosevelt, most notably – but also the promise of America. (Shepard and Herman, 2008)

This comparison was first set up through the words of vice-presidential nominee Joe Biden. When Obama spoke after him, both the media and their audiences were primed through collective memory:

Our greatest presidents – from Abraham Lincoln to Franklin Roosevelt to John Kennedy – they all challenged us to embrace change. Now, it is our responsibility to meet that challenge. Millions of Americans

have been knocked down. And this is the time as Americans, together, we get back up, back up together. ('Sen. Joe Biden', 2008)

Obama was then able to draw an even broader sense of collective memory by comparing himself to the Democratic party as a whole:

We are the party of Roosevelt. We are the party of Kennedy. So don't tell me that Democrats won't defend this country. Don't tell me that Democrats won't keep us safe. The Bush-McCain foreign policy has squandered the legacy that generations of Americans – Democrats and Republicans – have built, and we are here to restore that legacy. (Marinucci, 2008)

Weeks later, the nation's financial woes worsened, with the federal government working to develop a bailout solution. A *Washington Post* reporter connected the overall presidential race to the memory of Roosevelt, who also launched his presidency in difficult financial times:

Not since Franklin D. Roosevelt came to office in 1933, during the depths of the Great Depression, has a new president confronted the kinds of challenges that await the winner of the campaign between Barack Obama and John McCain.

Roosevelt is remembered best for the flurry of action that marked his first 100 days in office, but what transpired between his election and inauguration was equally fateful. How the next president-elect interprets that history could have a profound effect on his entire presidency. (Balz, 2008)

Conclusion

When journalists need to write about little-known situations and social actors, they draw on elements of their society's culture to make the unfamiliar seem familiar. These cultural templates help sense how the story should go and how the actors should be presented, offering news that resonates with how society sees itself. One tool that can be used to create such a cultural template is collective memory – where journalists draw on meanings from the past to convey understanding about the future. As these two case studies have shown, collective memory can infuse journalism in two main ways. First, journalists can introduce collective memory through comparison to other social actors, especially when a connection with the past makes memory too obvious to avoid. Secondly,

sources can initiate a comparison explicitly through comments made during interviews or through speeches. In both cases, collective memory became part of news narratives because of its resonance to society.

Both the Virginia Tech shootings and the Obama campaign presented journalists with a challenge for reporting. At Virginia Tech, an unusually large shooting spree, a remote location, and unexpected central characters – an old Holocaust survivor and a young Korean immigrant – made resonant storytelling difficult amidst the chaos in a relatively remote location. If these shootings had taken place in an urban campus with a typical Caucasian-American perpetrator journalistic work would have been more routine. In this case, though, memory of the Holocaust gave journalists a subtle background upon which to cast the story and its actors; it was almost as if the Virginia Tech shootings story became a small-scale Holocaust re-enactment.

In the case of the Obama campaign, the country was closing in on eight years under the presidency of a folksy, Ivy League, former governor whose father had also been a president in recent memory. Both came from white, privileged backgrounds and both had been political insiders for some time. Even the two-term president who served between them had a long-standing political career as a governor.

As an African-American political newcomer whose family background included a twice-married mother whose former husbands had both been born outside the US, Obama's story was difficult to capture. His life and career path matched no conventional political actor in recent times. His success as a mainstream African-American had no parallel, either. But by connecting Obama's story to revered cultural stories from the past, the media could offer compelling content that resonated with their society's culture.

In essence, news grows from the values of the society that creates and consumes it. Those values are delivered through familiar news narratives that help heal during times of trauma and make the unfamiliar more comfortable. By doing so, collective memory helps connect those timeless stories to a tangible construction of a society's history, turning new events from something generic to something reflecting that which a society holds dear. At the same time, collective memory helps predetermine what the work of journalists should look like and how the journalistic product can be accomplished.

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15

Journalism as an Agent of Prospective Memory

Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt

In everyday language, we use the terms ‘remember’ and ‘forget’ to express two very different temporal meanings (Neisser, 1982) – we remember, or forget, what happened in the past, and we remember, or forget, what we need to do in the future, or what we promised ourselves or others we would do: pick up the dry cleaning, get a gift for mother’s day, finish a journal review, follow through on campaign promises, bring our kids home from school; or at the national level, and the example that I will use in this essay – bring our hostages home from captivity.

In the psychological literature, this second type of memory is called ‘prospective memory’ – to be distinguished from ‘retrospective memory’ (Meacham and Leiman, 1982) – and it is more formally defined as ‘remembering to carry out intended actions at an appropriate time in the future’ (McDaniel and Einstein, 2007: 1), or simply as ‘memory for one’s intentions’ (Marsh, Cook, and Hicks, 2006: 115). In the past two decades, prospective memory has become a flourishing area of research in memory studies (e.g. Brandimonte, Einstein, and McDaniel, 1996; Glicksohn and Myslobodsky, 2006; McDaniel and Einstein, 2007). However, unlike the case of retrospective memory, the study of prospective memory has not yet moved beyond the confines of cognitive psychology. Thus, when communication and journalism scholars study the relationship between collective memory and the media, they tend to focus solely on retrospective memory, thereby missing an important dimension of memory-related practices in the news media.

This is not to suggest that the study of mediated collective memory focuses solely on the past. As researchers and theorists of collective memory have emphasized time and again, putting the past in service of the present is one of the defining qualities of collective memory (Blair, 2006; Halbwachs, 1992 [1925]; Zelizer, 1995). In the area of journalism

studies, scholars showed how collective memories of the past are used to make sense of current events (e.g. Edy and Daradanova, 2006; and the essay by Berkowitz in this volume), how journalists work to shape future collective retrospective memories of current events (e.g. Kitch, 2003; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2008b), and how different types of memory work are used to establish journalists' own cultural authority in contemporary media environments (e.g. Carlson, 2007; and the essay by Kitch in this volume). However, the memory itself is of events which already took place or of people who passed away.

Exploring the role of journalism as an agent of prospective memory, rather than only as an agent of retrospective memory, can add an important dimension to our understanding of how journalists work out and negotiate the complex relationship between past, present, and future in the coverage of current events. It can also answer Barbie Zelizer's (2008) call to further explore what is unique about journalism's memory work. Unlike other types of memory, for which journalism is not necessarily the primary vehicle in the contemporary media environment, reminding the public or government officials what needs to be done can be seen as a type of memory work that distinguishes journalism from other, multiple mediators of memory. Finally, the framework of prospective memory can be viewed as a much-needed bridge between cultural scholarship on media memory and more traditional approaches to understanding the roles and effects of the news media, in particular the framework of agenda-setting. The purpose of this essay is to provide some starting points for incorporating the notion of 'prospective memory' into communication and journalism studies, and to illustrate some of the ways in which the news media shape and represent collective prospective memories.¹

Collective memory and public agenda

One of the most influential and widely used frameworks for understanding the ways in which the press shapes present concerns and near-future actions among citizens and government officials, has been the notion of agenda-setting. That is, the idea that by emphasizing certain issues and certain attributes of these issues, the news media play an important role in determining the topics that are at the center of public attention and action and that are perceived as important by the public and policy-makers. The media agenda, which in turn influences the public agenda (and less conclusively, the policy/political agenda) is conceptualized as based, at one level, on the amount and prominence of coverage given to

particular issues, and at a second level, on the emphasis given to particular attributes of these issues within the media coverage (see Coleman et al., 2009; McCombs, 2004, 2008; Rogers, Dearing, and Bregman, 1993; Walgrave and Van Aelst, 2006).

Two decades ago, in the first systematic exploration of the relationship between collective memory and the news, Lang and Lang (1989) argued that there was a functional analogy between public agenda and collective memory, similar to the analogy between history and futurology. However, they also emphasized that while each news story is always framed by both the past and the future, we should keep the concepts of public agenda and collective memory sharply distinct:

We can begin to restore the original clarity to the concept of public agenda by restricting it to issues or problems that mandate some resolution or response and by reviving the concept of collective memory to refer to the public awareness of a common past ... When the mass public recognizes the existence of a problem that demands action, then, but only then, is the term agenda appropriate. The agenda focuses political discourse on a limited set of issues. The collective memory, insofar as it serves the same function, can be considered as the functional equivalent of an agenda ... to repeat: an agenda embodies an orientation to the future; collective memory toward the past. (Lang and Lang, 1989: 126)

While such a view does acknowledge a link between the two concepts – a link which faded as the two concepts were appropriated by different ‘camps’ within communication studies – the binary construction of the relationship between collective memory and public agenda obscures important dimensions of the complex ways in which past, present, and future are blended in the coverage of current events, especially against the background of the growing engagement with the past and the weakening of temporal boundaries in contemporary societies (Hoskins, 2009; Huyssen, 2003). This dichotomy obscures, in particular, the ways in which public agendas are shaped by interpretations of past intentions, promises, events, stories, and myths; and the uniqueness of journalism’s memory work in relation to other memory agents.

Breaking the notion of ‘collective memory’ into its retrospective and prospective dimensions allows us to enrich and deepen our understanding of the complex interrelationships between public agendas and collective memories.² Within the framework of collective prospective memory, many of the items on a public agenda – from health-care

reform to a hostage crisis – can be conceptualized as representing issues or tasks that were formed in the past, but were planned to be addressed, resolved, or executed at some point in the future. In this view, the news media serve not only as attention-focusers with regards to these issues, but as *reminders* of collective commitments, promises, and intentions. The media agenda, as understood in this context, can take the form of a *to-do list* (a primary memory aid of prospective memory tasks) rather than that of a list of topics and attributes for consideration and discussion (as commonly understood by agenda-setting theorists), although the degree to which the news media call for concrete actions is likely to vary across different journalistic and political cultures.

The third component of the proposed model is retrospective memory. Any analysis of the relationship between public agenda and prospective memory would be incomplete without considering the crucial role played by retrospective memory in shaping agendas and prospective memories. It is not only that in order to perform an intended activity one needs to remember what the content of the intentions that were formed in the past was (McDaniel and Einstein, 2007: 4), but these intentions and commitments, particularly at the collective level, are almost always tied to the group's formative stories, myths, and values, which need to be remembered and reinterpreted when the group forms its agendas or to-do lists.

It should also be emphasized that while this essay focuses on ongoing, open news stories, where the prospective dimension is most pronounced, all collective memories – including those of events that ended or people who died – have a prospective dimension, typically in the negative form of 'never again' (as in the cases of the Holocaust or 9/11) or the positive form of maintaining the spirit and tradition of certain personalities and events (as in the cases of Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King).³ The prospective dimension of these primarily retrospective memories in turn influences the selection of contemporary issues and events that constitute the media agenda. Still other cases are located between the two poles of ongoing and past stories, such as Oren Meyers' study of commemorative newspaper supplements marking Israel's anniversaries and simultaneously looking at the past and future of the country (Meyers, 2002); or the essay by Tamar Katriel and Nimrod Shavit in this volume on the testimonial project of the Israeli organization Breaking the Silence. In the case of Breaking the Silence, the story is, on the one hand, the need to end the ongoing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (the prospective dimension). On the other hand, in the absence of a social commitment to end the occupation or even a meaningful

debate on the topic, it becomes a story of past events and experiences which are archived for future retrospective uses. In these and other cases, it is precisely the social negotiations over the relationship between the retrospective and prospective dimensions which shape the place and framing of these issues on the public and media agendas.

In the psychological literature, prospective and retrospective memory were initially treated as independent, dichotomous processes, and it is only recently that researchers started examining the interaction and similarities between the two (Marsh, Cook, and Hicks, 2006). In moving from the individual to the collective, the interplay between prospective and retrospective memories needs to be one of our starting points.

Constructing collective prospective memory tasks

Another starting point should be the underlying idea of collective memory studies, according to which collective memories are not retrieved, but are rather constructed, reconfigured, contested, and socially negotiated (Halbwachs, 1992 [1925]; Sturken, 1997; Zelizer, 1995; Zerubavel, 1995). In cognitive psychology, the question with regards to prospective memory is how or under which conditions people retrieve previously established intentions (e.g. Ellis, 1996; Graf and Grondin, 2006; Harris, 1984). In studies of collective prospective memory, the appropriate question is how prospective memories are socially constructed and negotiated, including the intentions/commitments themselves and the timing, means, or conditions for executing the intended actions.

To illustrate these ideas and the role of the news media in shaping collective prospective memory tasks, I will use examples drawn from the press coverage of the case of Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier who was abducted by Hamas militants in 2006 and who, as of this writing, is still being held captive. To remember, as Paul Frosh points out in this volume, is to give presence to the absent. Practices of collective memory thus include various strategies for representing events and people that 'had gone missing' in time and space, and in this context, kidnapping and captivity stories can serve as a paradigmatic example of memory work. However, acts of collective remembrance in these cases refer not only to that which had already happened (i.e. the kidnapping itself), but, far more significantly, to the need to remember what has not yet happened, namely, the release of the captive. Thus, when we hear calls not to forget the hostages still held by the FARC in Columbia, or when the main headline in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Israel's most popular daily newspaper, reads 'Gilad was Forgotten' (May 25, 2009),⁴ the primary reference is to the memory

of the tasks *yet to be done*. As the subhead in *Yedioth Ahronoth* explains: ‘two months have passed since the government was sworn in: the special ministerial committee on the issue of the kidnapped soldier has not yet convened, Ofer Dekel’s replacement has not yet been appointed [Ofer Dekel was the Prime Minister’s special envoy on the Gilad Shalit issue]; and Gilad Shalit is imprisoned somewhere, still waiting’.

Yet, significantly, the prospective task of releasing Shalit rests upon past promises, stories, myths, traditions, and collective traumas. These include the Jewish tradition of redeeming captives (‘Pidyon Shvuyim’; see Blidstein, 1992; Troen, 1992); Zionist rescue narratives (Katriel, 2011); military myths (Gavrieli, 2006); specific promises made by public officials with regards to Gilad Shalit, alongside the ‘unwritten contract’ between the State of Israel, its soldiers, and their parents; and particular stories of other Israeli captives, especially the story of Ron Arad, an Israeli soldier who was taken captive in 1986 and later disappeared without a trace, and whose story has come to occupy a central place in Israeli mythology and collective memory (see Kaplan, 2008; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2008a).

All of these retrospective elements were invoked, to different degrees, in the process of shaping and debating the parameters of the collective prospective memory task of bringing Gilad Shalit home, a process in which the Israeli press played a crucial role, in part through the constant interplay between prospective and retrospective elements in the front-page coverage of the Shalit case. For example, when Yuval Arad, Ron Arad’s daughter, visited the protest tent set up by the Shalit family outside the Prime Minister’s residence, the front pages of all four major Israeli daily newspapers⁵ prominently covered the visit, with similar headlines such as: ‘Yuval Arad: Bring Gilad Back, Don’t Make the Same Mistake that was Made in my Dad’s Case’ (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, March 10, 2009); or ‘Learn From My Father’s Case: Gilad can Still be Returned’ (*Ma’ariv*, March 10, 2009). These were accompanied by pictures of Yuval Arad with Gilad Shalit’s father – or in *Ma’ariv*, the picture of Yuval Arad juxtaposed against a background of Gilad’s faded picture – and a column entitled ‘A Heartbreaking Reminder’, in which *Yedioth Ahronoth* journalist Sima Kadmon reinforced the positioning of Yuval Arad as a painful reminder of the need not to forget Gilad Shalit and act immediately to secure his release (Kadmon, 2009).

Windows of opportunity and event/time-based tasks

As explained by McDaniel and Einstein (2007: 7), ‘prospective memory is characterized by a window of opportunity in which an intended action can be appropriately performed’. It can be argued that, to a certain extent, the news coverage of ‘prospective memory cases’ is comprised of a series of

socially constructed windows of opportunity. In the case of Gilad Shalit, one of several such windows was in March 2009, when the story of Shalit was at the top of the agenda of the Israeli news media, or more accurately, at the top of the media's to-do list for the government and Israeli society more broadly. For more than two weeks, the issue of Gilad Shalit rarely got off the front pages of the four leading daily newspapers, in eight cases occupying the whole page. The message of the coverage was clear: it was time to pay the debt. The time had come to follow through on our promise to Gilad Shalit and his family and bring Gilad home. But why then? At that point, it was almost three years since Shalit was kidnapped, and while there were negotiations between Israel and Hamas on a prisoner swap deal, there were no significant, known developments at this point in time – at least not in the beginning of this intense coverage.

The prospective memory literature discusses two major types of prospective memory tasks: event-based tasks and time-based tasks (Ellis, 1996; Graf and Grondin, 2006; McDaniel and Einstein, 2007). Time-based prospective memory tasks are those in which one should remember to execute the task at a particular point in time or after a certain amount of time has passed (e.g. remembering to remove the cake from the oven after 40 minutes). Event-based prospective memory tasks are those in which there is some kind of event that serves as a reminder, or a cue, to complete the activity (e.g. removing the cake from the oven when the top gets golden brown). In the social-political sphere, we usually do not have such clear instructions. While there is general agreement within Israeli society on the need to bring Gilad Shalit home from captivity, the appropriate time, circumstances, conditions, and measures to do so are a matter for social and political negotiation.

In March 2009, the Israeli media, in cooperation with the campaign for the release of Gilad Shalit, constructed the mission of bringing Gilad home as a combination of event-based and time-based prospective memory. The event was the end of the government led by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert – after the general elections in February 2009 and before the new government was formed. During that period, the press helped push the idea that before Olmert went home, he must not forget to carry out the task of bringing Gilad home (first, because Gilad was kidnapped on his shift, and second, because the upcoming right-leaning Netanyahu government would supposedly not be able to execute this task). 'Decide Now', demanded, for example, a large-font, front-page headline in *Ma'ariv* (March 11, 2009), accompanied by an opinion text which suggested that failure to act on the issue at that point in time would weigh on the conscience of Olmert and the other ministers (Shelah, 2009).

Olmert, whether in response to, or independently of the media/public pressure, sent his envoys to emergency negotiations with Hamas in Cairo and scheduled a special meeting of the government to discuss the prisoner swap deal. The Israeli media closely followed these negotiations (which eventually fell through), presenting them as a narrowing window of opportunity that would close when Olmert stepped down.

If the event that signaled the need to execute the prospective memory task of bringing Shalit home was the fall of the Olmert government, the time cue was the count toward one thousand days of captivity. The count was incorporated into the media coverage in various textual and visual forms, including front-page logos and a ticking clock on the corner of the television screen (on Channel 2), counting the days, hours, and seconds that had passed since the abduction. Accordingly, the one thousandth day of captivity was prominently marked in newspapers' front pages and television newscasts. The answer to the question of how much time in captivity is enough or too much is of course arbitrary. However, it is necessary in order to anchor the prospective memory, as much as it is necessary for anchoring retrospective memories. Indeed, there are some similarities between the ways in which society and the news media mark one thousand days, or an anniversary, in captivity, and the ways in which they mark the anniversary of events such as the September 11 attacks, the JFK assassination, or the Rabin assassination. However, the meaning, functions, and temporal orientation of these rituals are quite different, with the latter oriented toward past events and the former toward present/future goals (although every such ritual contains, to different degrees, both prospective and retrospective elements).

The distinction between retrospective and prospective memory can therefore be seen as closely linked to the distinction between commemorative and mission-oriented rituals, the latter referring to rituals which attempt to repair, restore, or save the group rather than only re-present or re-enact the past in the present (Marvin and Ingle, 1999). As I argued elsewhere, while commemorative rituals have received considerable attention in the literature on the ritual and memory work of journalism, little attention has been given to reparative or mission-oriented rituals (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2009). Integrating the idea of prospective memory with the idea of reparative rituals can be a very useful framework for analyzing certain news stories.

Representing absence

Representing prospective memories, particularly visually, is a major challenge, which is further accentuated by stories of kidnapping and

captivity, where the main protagonist is absent. How do you represent something that needs to happen but has not yet happened? How do you visually remind the public or the government what needs to be done? How do you give presence and visibility to issues and people when information, images, or visible developments are not available?

In the case of Gilad Shalit, the Israeli media found creative ways to address this challenge, including practices which often did not meet conventional standards of newsworthiness or were ethically questionable. Such practices were particularly prevalent during the several 'windows of opportunity', when the Israeli press looked for ways to give daily, high visibility to the story. In March 2009, for example, *Yedioth Ahronoth* obtained several pictures from Gilad's childhood and used them to construct the retrospective message. At Purim, the Jewish costume holiday, a picture of Gilad Shalit in a swing, dressed as a clown, filled most of the newspaper's front page, under the unusual headline 'Sad Clown' (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, March 10, 2009). While the clown in the picture did not actually look sad, the message was that of repair: we need to release this clown from his chains (represented by the long swing chains in the picture) and make him happy again. A few days later, a front-page story about late-night negotiations with Hamas and the postponing of the special Cabinet meeting on the prisoner exchange deal was juxtaposed with a large picture of Gilad Shalit and his brother as children. While there was no direct connection between the news report and the picture, it was a way of giving bodily-visual presence to Shalit and implicitly suggesting that this was the picture that needed to be in the heads of the Prime Minister and the ministers when they made the decision about the swap deal.

On the same day (March 16, 2009), *Ma'ariv*, *Yedioth Ahronoth's* long-standing competitor, used another retrospective mnemonic strategy, bolder and journalistically questionable. The newspaper's front page was dedicated to an imagined letter from Shalit, which was composed by former captives and family members using Gilad's handwriting (thereby giving him indexical presence) and started with the words: 'I don't know what you think and if you remember me at all. Have I failed by staying alive?' Both the content and form of this letter illustrate the unique challenges and problems associated with the representation of prospective memory in the news sphere and with the execution of collective prospective memory tasks, in comparison with the representation and enactment of retrospective memory (in particular the commemoration of the dead). Investigating these complexities, as I have tried to argue in this essay, is a worthwhile challenge for communication and collective memory researchers.



Figure 4: 'The protest tent' near the Israeli PM's house in Jerusalem, July 2010. The captions on the signs read: 'Gilad is still alive', 'Soon, you will return', 'The people with Gilad Shalit'. Photograph: Motti Neiger.

Notes

1. I thank Tamar Katriel and Oren Meyers for their insightful readings of this essay, as well as the participants of the 'On Media Memory' workshop (Haifa, Netanya, and Jerusalem, June 30–July 2, 2009) for their wonderful comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this chapter.
2. Neta Kligler-Vilenchik's essay in this volume provides another useful direction for analyzing the relationship between collective memory and agenda-setting. We could say that if her essay focuses on 'collective memory as a form of agenda-setting', then this essay focuses on agenda-setting as a form of collective memory. Another important distinction between the two approaches is that whereas Kligler-Vilenchik examines the similarities between present and past oriented processes of agenda-setting and memory-setting (thereby creatively developing what Lang and Lang described as the functional analogy between public agenda and collective memory), my own essay addresses the blending of these processes and temporal orientations.
3. See Tamar Katriel's (2008) analysis of the discourses surrounding International Holocaust Day and the International Day of Nonviolence.
4. All translations from Hebrew are mine.
5. The four newspapers are: *Yedioth Ahronoth*, *Ma'ariv*, *Ha'aretz*, and *Israel Hayom*.

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16

Memory-Setting: Applying Agenda-Setting Theory to the Study of Collective Memory

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Collective memory can be viewed as consisting of two complementary components: one being the abstract knowledge and conceptions held by individuals about the past, and the other the concrete mnemonic signifiers which are thought to shape these perceptions (Bar-On, 2001). However, collective memory research has focused mostly on public representations of memory, paying far less attention to the shared memories of individuals (though see Volkmer, 2006). This gap in research stems partially from a prevalent assumption that media representations necessarily affect the memories of individuals.¹ As Huyssen asserts: 'one thing is certain: We cannot discuss personal, generational or public memory separate from the enormous influence of the new media as carriers of all forms of memory' (2000: 29). However, as media scholarship has shown that direct effects of the media may often be weaker than anticipated, there is need for a method to empirically test the assumption of an 'enormous influence' of the media on the shaping of public memories. This essay proposes the application of a classic media theory – agenda-setting – in order to analyze media's impact on the construction of collective memory.²

Originally, agenda-setting research examined the media's influence by analyzing the correlation between the *media agenda* – the set of current issues most salient in the media – and the *public agenda* – the current issues perceived as most important by individuals in a given society. Applying agenda-setting theory to the study of collective memory would enable examining the *media memory agenda* – that is, the set of past events most salient in the media, and the *public memory agenda* – the past events perceived by individuals as most important.

Such an approach offers several advantages for collective memory research. First, it enables quantitative comparisons among different

media and public memory agendas. These comparisons can be done diachronically – over periods of time, before/after crucial events – as well as synchronically – across different types of media or between different social groups or nations. Public memory agendas, though not termed this way, have been analyzed and compared in the work of Howard Schuman and colleagues (Scott and Zac, 1993; Schuman and Corning, 2000; Schuman and Rodgers, 2004; Schuman and Scott, 1989). This work has provided intriguing insights about changes in collective memory over time, as well as between different generations or different nations. Media memory agendas, though often analyzed qualitatively, have rarely been examined through quantitative content analysis, as is suggested in this method (though see Meyers, Zandberg, and Neiger, 2009).

The proposed application, however, goes one step further, toward the examination of ‘memory-setting’ – the ability of the media to set the public memory agenda. Its application can thus enable empirical testing of the unproven assumption of the media’s influence on individuals’ memories. At this point, however, it is important to note that while agenda-setting theory focuses on correlations between media and public agendas, it does not rule out alternative explanations – one of the core requirements for determining an effect. For this reason, the essay discusses the application of a technique which can increase the ability to detect causality.

Much work in collective memory discusses the ways in which meanings assigned to events, characters, and images from the past may vary, both in the media and in people’s perceptions (e.g. Meyers, 2002; Schuman, Schwartz, and D’arcy, 2005; Schwartz, 1991). Given that the same event may ‘carry’ different meanings, one could question the significance of asking *which* events are remembered, instead of *how* they are remembered. However, one of the powerful ways in which mnemonic agents can attempt to influence collective memory is by highlighting or marginalizing the memory of specific events. This is particularly important in the case of past events which have acquired certain political meanings over time. For example, it would be easier not to mention the Vietnam War in a given context at all, than to try and assign an altogether different meaning to it. Thus, while understanding how events are remembered is crucial, much ideological power lies in the mere question of which events are salient on the memory agenda and which are forgotten.

After introducing agenda-setting theory, the core of this essay consists of a theoretical analysis of the theory’s underlying assumptions, in order to examine whether these can be applied to the study of collective

memory. Based on the conclusions of this analysis, findings are discussed from a study applying a memory-setting approach in Israel, showing the insights which can be gained from such an application.

Agenda-setting theory and its application to the study of collective memory

Since the seminal study of McCombs and Shaw (1972), agenda-setting theory has established itself as one of the most eminent communication theories (McCombs and Reynolds, 2009). In its basic conception, agenda-setting theory examines the ability of the media to set the agenda for a political campaign, through its influence on the importance voters assign to different issues on the agenda.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) operationalized agenda-setting as a correlation between the issues salient on the media agenda and those perceived as most important by the public. They asked a sample of 100 undecided voters to state the key issues of concern as they saw them. Concurrently, they conducted a content analysis of the media that served these voters. The rank order correlation between the media and public agenda reached an impressive coefficient of 0.979. This high degree of correlation was seen as the first evidence for the agenda-setting role of the news media, setting in motion what some view as the 'agenda-setting paradigm' (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

Over the years, agenda-setting has evolved in myriad ways, including the examination of second-level or attribute agenda-setting, or examination of the media agenda as a dependent variable (McCombs and Reynolds, 2009). The following analysis, however, is based on the 'classic' concept of agenda-setting. The reasons are twofold. First, despite its many later variations, the basic notion of agenda-setting is the most known and most widely cited. Second, as the aim of this analysis is to judge whether the underlying assumptions of agenda-setting can be applied to collective memory research, it is advisable to test this on the most fundamental argument of the theory.

In their classic discussion on the logic of explanation, Hempel and Oppenheim (1948) claim that each theory, or scientific explanation, consists of two components: general, universal laws under which the explanation functions, and certain antecedent conditions that must take place in order for the explanation to be valid. These laws and antecedent conditions serve as underlying assumptions of the theory that are often unstated. In applying a theory from one context to another, however, it is important to explicitly state and examine the assumptions

that each theory carries with it, and to ensure that those are still valid in the new application (Burgoon, 2001). Thus, I have deduced four assumptions that underlie agenda-setting theory. In the following, these assumptions are analyzed, while examining their applicability to collective memory research.³ Through this analysis, it is possible to theoretically justify the applicability of agenda-setting theory to the study of collective memory.

The media agenda/media memory agenda as socially constructed

Understanding all media content as a social construction is one of the most basic assumptions in media scholarship. In the context of agenda-setting theory, this points to the fact that the issues salient on the media agenda are not necessarily the ones that are 'objectively' of most social importance. Instead, agenda-setting sees journalistic practices and values as determining which issues and events are deemed most newsworthy (Weaver, McCombs, and Shaw, 2004). The reliance on shared journalistic values is also the basis for creating a relatively unified agenda among different media, which is an antecedent condition for agenda-setting. The tendency for a unified agenda is further increased by the phenomena of 'inter-media agenda-setting', in which different media align themselves according to the agenda of other, more prominent media, notably the *New York Times* (e.g. Golan, 2006).

The social construction of memory is a key notion in the study of collective memory as well. Halbwachs (1992 [1925]) saw collective memory as being constructed and reconstructed according to the interests and concerns of society at different time periods. In this sense, collective memory serves as a resource through which current societal needs are reflected, discussed, and addressed. As in agenda-setting, the presentation of past events in the media is shaped partially by journalistic values. Thus, Edy (1999) discusses the journalistic uses of past events, particularly in three instances: anniversaries of past events, analogies with past events, and supplying historic context to current events. Such journalistic practices may lead to the creation of similar memory agendas among different media, as assumed in agenda-setting. Important differences exist, however. Unlike current issues on the agenda, collective memory is present not only in the news media, but also in other genres, governed by other values, such as artistic values. Furthermore, as the past is not usually the main conscious concern of the media, a process of 'inter-media memory-setting' is not likely. Thus, when applying a memory-setting approach it is advisable to test the consistency of the memory agendas of different media.

Different groups within society compete over the promotion of different issues/past events

Agenda-setting theory was originally devised in the context of political campaigns, in which different candidates are interested in highlighting different issues by which their competence will be judged. In a process termed 'issue ownership', different issue proponents are seen as competing over the promotion of 'their' issues (for example, in US politics Democrats will focus on welfare while Republicans will lead the discussion to questions of national security).

As with the issues on the media agenda, there may often be a conflict surrounding the presentation of past events in the media. Different groups within society may try to promote (or hinder) the public discussion of different past events according to their varying interests, or to assign differing meanings to the same event (Edy, 2006; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Zelizer, 1995). We can think of such groups as 'past event proponents', who may compete with each other over the salience of 'their' past events in the media. Unlike agenda-setting, however, in the context of collective memory it is much more difficult to identify clear past event proponents. Often, it is not as clear which social groups actively promote certain past events in order to attain their political or social goals. Also, in the context of collective memory a major mnemonic agent is the state, which actively advances specific histories that are seen as supplying 'proper' contents to national identities (Zerubavel, 1996), both through the media and through other channels. This is a significant aberration from the campaign setting in which agenda-setting is traditionally studied: in influencing the media agenda, the state is a particularly powerful mnemonic agent, which often does not have likewise powerful competitors. Consequences of changing this assumption to the application of a memory-setting approach will be further discussed.

People are influenced by the salience of issues/past events on the media agenda

Agenda-setting theory rests on the assumption that the salience of issues in the media influences people's perception of their importance. While early conceptions of agenda-setting did not explicate the underlying processes of such effects (Kosicki, 1993), this has been increasingly attempted in the past two decades, using social cognition research.⁴ Such processes represent universal laws, which according to Hempel and Oppenheim (1948) are part of any theoretical explanation.

The most common cognitive principle used in explaining agenda-setting theory is the accessibility bias, stating that when making judgments,

people will use the information that is most easily recalled. Accessibility is in turn determined by factors such as frequency and recency of activation (Shrum, 2009). Thus, issues that are frequently activated by the media, or that have recently been activated, are most likely to be used when people come to make judgments. Moreover, in a process termed chronic accessibility, some constructs may acquire high activation potential, regardless of whether they were recently activated. A construct may acquire chronic accessibility if it has been frequently activated in the past, or when it is related to a person's self-concept (Price and Tewksbury, 1997: 190).

Understanding agenda-setting effects as functioning through an accessibility bias means that the effect can be applied to the study of collective memory as well. Thus, a past event salient in the media will become highly accessible, and readily used when making judgments about important past events. However, the concept of chronic accessibility makes this application more complex. In the context of collective memory, the characteristics of chronic accessibility – frequent activation in the past and/or links to a person's self-concept – are highly applicable to past events which are deemed as central to a group's identity. Such events are often repeated and retold, from childhood on. In the long term, such events may become chronically accessible, and so would not require recent activation to come to the foreground.

The media⁵ as the main source for learning about political issues/ past events

Among the four underlying assumptions discussed, this is the only one that is explicitly mentioned by McCombs and Shaw (1972: 176): the mass media is seen as the main, if not exclusive, source of information about politics and current events. This assumption is an antecedent condition for interpreting a correlation between the media and public agendas as a media effect.

This assumption is the most problematic one to apply to collective memory research. In the second assumption, we discussed the state's power to influence the media memory agenda. But furthermore, the state can impact collective memory through other mnemonic channels, such as the educational system, museums, and national holidays. With regard to knowledge about the past, the media 'competes' with those alternative channels. Furthermore, unlike current political issues, notions of the collective past are instilled into citizens from childhood on, for example through the celebration of national holidays in schools. By the time the media enters the picture, citizens may already have relatively immutable preconceptions about the major events of the collective

past. These past events may furthermore be emotionally charged and linked to a person's sense of identity, lending them added tenacity.

However, despite the caveats in applying this assumption to the context of collective memory, it does not render the application unsuitable. First, media memory researchers stress the media's prominent role as a mnemonic agent (Kansteiner, 2002), one that reaches huge audiences with powerful messages that cannot be easily avoided (Edy, 1999). Moreover, most often the media do not actually compete with the state as a mnemonic agent, but instead reflect its 'memory-work'. For example, while a crowd of a few hundred people may attend a national memorial ceremony, hundreds of thousands may watch it on television (e.g. Meyers, Zandberg, and Neiger, 2009). We must, however, acknowledge that the media is an *additional* major agent in the shaping of collective memory, though not an exclusive one. The media can resonate past events that the individual already sees as important, or increase the scope of the effects of other institutions, but nonetheless it plays a major role, through its intense messages and high reach.

Based on the examination of these four underlying assumptions, we may conclude that it is possible to apply agenda-setting theory to the study of collective memory, that is, take a memory-setting approach. The major adjustment necessary in doing so is to take into account the powerful position of the state in the shaping of collective memory.

From theory to praxis: methodology and data exemplifying memory-setting

Based on the conclusion that agenda-setting theory is applicable to the study of collective memory, a memory-setting approach was realized in an empirical study conducted in Israel in 2008, which is detailed in depth elsewhere (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2009). For the purposes of this essay, only those findings are discussed that most exemplify the insights enabled by a memory-setting approach.

The aforementioned study comprised two components: a content analysis and a survey. The content analysis identified the media memory agenda by quantifying mentions of past events in two major mainstream Israeli newspapers and two mainstream TV channels.⁶ The survey, administered to a representative sample of the adult Jewish-Israeli Hebrew-speaking population, elicited the public memory agenda of past events deemed most important to individuals.⁷

As discussed earlier, a weakness of agenda-setting is that it yields correlational, rather than causal data. In order to closer enable causality, the

study was conducted as a field experiment, using two time points and a natural manipulation. The first time point was one of routine media coverage, in which no specific commemorative activity was anticipated (T1). Between the first and second time point, Israel celebrated the 60th anniversary of its Independence Day. In the media coverage, this event served as a moment of historical reflection, in which myriad past events in Israeli history were discussed, particularly, but not exclusively, the establishment of the State of Israel (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2009). The study utilized this phenomenon as a natural manipulation, with the second time point of the survey occurring immediately after this week of highly increased media coverage of past events (T2). A comparison between the public memory agendas in T1 and T2 thus enabled examining the effect of increased media coverage of past events.

The three categories of findings most relevant to the applicability of a memory-setting approach can be termed commemoration, consistency, and correlations.

The commemorative function of the media

The study's research design was built on the expectation that the extent of coverage of past events would increase around the celebration of Israel's 60th anniversary (T2). And indeed, a significant increase is notable. At T1, a week of routine news, 415 newspaper mentions and 225 television mentions of past events were recorded. In comparison, during T2, the week of Israel's 60th anniversary, mentions of past events surged to 2,319 in the newspaper and 1,042 on television, a statistically significant increase of 458 percent ($\chi^2(1) = 1326$, $p < 0.001$) and 363 percent ($\chi^2(1) = 527$, $p < 0.001$) respectively. The event with the highest increase was the establishment of the State of Israel, as can be expected, but many other national past events were stressed as well. This increase highlights the commemorative function of the media, often alluded to, but rarely empirically quantified. During national events, the media plays a considerable role in bringing events from the past to the foreground. Though the reasons for this commemorative function can be debated (national allegiance? journalistic practices?), its extent is striking.

The consistency of the public memory agenda

The public memory agenda showed a remarkable consistency between T1 and T2, with a correlation of $r = 0.983$, $p < 0.01$. This high consistency is an important finding, as it points to the stability of collective memory. Despite the surge of mentions of one specific event, the establishment of

the State of Israel, in T2, the two different representative samples at T1 and T2 very much agree between them about the most important past events. In contrast to claims regarding the fickleness and fragmentation of collective memory, this finding points to a generally shared, stable, and agreed-upon set of important historic events in a given society's perceptions. One of the explanations for this consistency may be the concept of chronic accessibility. A certain set of past events, including World War Two, the Holocaust, and major Israeli wars, have been so frequently repeated and linked to national identities, that they have been rendered chronically accessible. Thus, even if the salience of one event or the other in the media changes in the short term, such stable perceptions will not so easily sway.

Memory-setting: correlations between media and public memory agendas

The data presented so far examined the public and media memory agendas separately. According to the memory-setting approach, however, we are interested in the correlation between these agendas. As memory-setting would suggest, a significant correlation was indeed found between the media and public memory agendas, both at T1 ($r = 0.616$, $p < 0.05$) and at T2 ($r = 0.828$, $p < 0.01$). The basic claim of agenda-setting – that the media agenda correlates with the public agenda – is thus supported for the case of collective memory.

In order to attempt to infer causality, the correlations at the two time points were compared. Due to the increased media coverage of past events, which would increase media's memory-setting ability, it was hypothesized that the correlation between the media and public memory agendas would be significantly higher at T2 than at T1. This was confirmed (for $\alpha = 0.05$), pointing to the media's increased ability to set the public memory agenda following a week of increased coverage of past events.

As mentioned earlier, the public memory agenda was quite consistent between the two time points. However, between T1 and T2, the types of events mentioned shifted between three categories: major Israeli events (events in Israeli history mentioned by over 10 survey respondents, e.g. the establishment of the State of Israel), minor Israeli events (mentioned by less than 10 respondents, e.g. the Gulf War), and international events (e.g. 9/11). Between T1 and T2, mentions of major Israeli events increased, while mentions of international events and minor Israeli events decreased. While these shifts were small, they corresponded with the media's coverage, in which major Israeli events increased by almost

600 percent. The higher correlation between the media and public memory agendas at T2 thus shows how the media's commemorative function – highlighting major events in Israeli history – was subsequently reflected in the public memory agenda.

Conclusion

Collective memory, as the different essays in this book depict, is an intriguing and multifaceted phenomenon, with important implications for individual and national identity and politics. While the media have often been assumed to be an important agent in the shaping of collective memory (Edy, 1999; Huyssen, 2000; Kansteiner, 2002), limited empirical methods have been available to test this assumption. This essay suggested the use of agenda-setting theory in order to examine media's effect on collective memory – a memory-setting approach. As the presented study's findings show, the memory-setting approach can shed new light on lingering questions in the field. Nevertheless, a methodology that attempts a quantifying of collective memory will most likely present a reduction of this complex phenomenon. Therefore, this method should be seen as complementing in-depth qualitative analyses, and by no means replacing them. What the proposed application offers is more solid ground to claims both about the extent of shared memories, and of the media's role in shaping them.

Notes

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1. For additional reasons for the paucity of research focusing on memory of individuals, particularly the question of generalization, see the essay by Bourdon in this volume.
2. An intriguing discussion of the links between agenda-setting and the study of collective memory from a different aspect – that of prospective memory – is offered in the essay by Tenenboim-Weinblatt in this volume.
3. In examining the application of agenda-setting to the study of collective memory, I use an operational definition of collective memory as the set of past events that are deemed most important to a group of people (Schuman and Scott, 1989), or are most salient in the media.
4. While cognitive mechanisms are key in explaining agenda-setting effects, some researchers claim that they do not fully account for the effect, and that there is also a deliberate agenda-setting effect taking place, in which people make active inferences from the media about the important issues on the agenda (Takeshita, 2006).
5. In this study, the media analyzed was mainstream media. With the proliferation of new media and the declining readership/audience of mainstream

media, this choice can be challenged. In Israel of 2008, however, mainstream Channel 2 still gained viewership of around 20–30 percent of the population during prime time broadcasting hours (Israel Audience Research Board, compiled by Tele-Gal TNS). The mainstream newspapers, while suffering from declining readership, upload much of their content to their highly read websites, thus still serving as a major source of information. In the survey, the audience was asked for the major media outlets serving them, and these corresponded with the mainstream media chosen.

6. Particularly in a state as ethnically and politically complex as Israel, the memory agenda of ethnic media and of diverse ethnic groups is of great interest. However, as the audience that was surveyed was Jewish Hebrew-speaking Israelis, it was imperative to examine the media that most serves them, which is the mainstream Hebrew-speaking media. It would be of great interest to replicate this study focusing on the memory agendas of ethnic media and specific ethnic groups.
7. Building on the work of Schuman et al. (e.g. Schuman and Scott, 1989), individuals were asked the following question: 'Of all the events and changes that have happened in Israel and the world in the past 100 years, please mention the two events which seem most important to you'. Each respondent mentioned two events, and these were aggregated to build the public memory agenda.

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Part V

New Media Memory

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17

Memory and Digital Media: Six Dynamics of the Global Memory Field

Anna Reading

Introduction

Neda Agha Soltan, a young Iranian woman, was shot dead on June 22, 2009 on the streets of Tehran during protests following the Iranian June elections. Her death was digitally witnessed by a friend nearby using a camera phone: the data then went viral. He emailed the data to another friend in the Netherlands. The camera phone video was uploaded to a number of websites; within hours still images from the video were captured, printed out, and used in protests at her killing and at the results of the Iranian elections in cities around the world, including Los Angeles, New York, and Vienna. The next day, Neda's dying images were broadcast by major television companies and made worldwide headlines including newspapers in Britain, the US, and Australia. The image of Neda's face, covered in blood, was recolored, reconfigured, and reassembled across multiple media forms. The witness video prompted the creation of a number of memorial websites, a Twitter icon, a number of Facebook groups, two Wiki pages, memorial art works, and songs commemorating Neda's life and death.

This chapter develops the theme of media and memory through the argument that new media ecologies and virally globalized memories require a paradigm shift to a new conceptualization of mediated memory with a concomitant epistemology. The chapter suggests a ground for knowledge that seeks to build a conceptualization of the dynamics of globalization and digitization as working coextensively in what I have termed the 'global memory field'.

The digital witnessing of the shooting and death of Neda Agha Soltan is then better understood as a memory assemblage that is dynamic and involves transmedial, globalized, mobile connectivities and

mobilizations. These traverse, reconfigure, and extend established memory binaries such as the organic and inorganic, the personal and the shared, the digital and the analog, the individual and the media organization, the local and the global. As Urry (2007) suggests, globalization means that societies are on the move in new ways with mobility not only of people and things but also in terms of data. At the same time, digital media technologies and digitization enable the capture and storage, management and reassembly of data records in ways that in relation to earlier mediated memories are less costly, globally connected, and reproducible across different media. Mediated memories of events may be personally and locally produced, before being rapidly mobilized, traveling and settling in multiple, globalized dispersed sites enmeshed within various local contexts. At the same time, all of these networked and mobile mediated memories are intermediated through digitization, the process of encoding and decoding through binary code and the unseen social relations of protocol, algorithm, and database.

The term 'global memory field' is a derivation and combination of a number of other terms. 'Global memory' is used in computing to describe a process that allows private memories to be combined with those that are shareable through the simultaneous parallel access of different memories. 'Global' brings together global with digital through its resonance with 'bit' that denotes binary values of 0 and 1 that as a contiguous sequence make up the smallest meaningful sequence of data – a byte. The term 'global' thus refers in terms of memory to the synergistic combination of the social and political dynamic of globalization with digitization. Combined with the term 'field', this resonates with and extends Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) sense of the field as a struggle of cultural production, circulation, and consumption, in this case, to mean the field as a struggle by memory agents over the assemblage, mobilization, and securitization of memory capital. The global memory field extends Bourdieu's concept to suggest a memory field that exists both vertically and horizontally and that is electric, algorithmic, geographic, and psychic.

The creation of the global memory field as a concept, as Deleuze and Guatarri (1994: 23) suggest, in part, resonates with earlier concepts within memory studies, within digital cultural studies and theories of globalization and, in part, is a concept that has 'becoming' of its own. It constitutes something new in terms of how it describes the relationships between communication and memory and shares with other concepts established patterns and underlying structures. Hence, the chapter begins by examining the ways in which globalization has been discussed within

memory studies, followed by an examination of some of the relationships between digitization and memory and key work on media witnessing.

The chapter seeks to build a theoretical structure for the ways in which the global memory field may be understood as characterized by transformations across six dynamics. These are: transmediality, velocity, extensity, modality, valency, and viscosity. The transformations of these dynamics are briefly demonstrated in relation to the empirical example of the mobile witnessing of the shooting of Neda Agha Soltan in 2009 which is compared with the media witnessing of the Battle of Waterloo which became mediated around June 22 – the same date as the shooting of Neda but in 1815. This comparative example was chosen because the cultural memory of the Battle of Waterloo was linked within the global memory field to the shooting of Neda: the shared date meant that the Times On-Line website provided a hyperlink to other events that had taken place on that day in history and that had been covered in earlier news accounts that are now digitally archived and accessible on-line.

Globalization and memory studies

Memory studies has, conventionally, conceptualized collective or shared memory in terms of the nation and national boundaries, or in relation to ethnicities or subgroups within them. Mediated memory has tended to focus, as a result, on the ways in which a nationally based broadcaster or certain newspapers articulate particular memories or the ways in which a nation memorializes its past through particular memorials or national museums. However, there is another strand within memory studies that has become more significant in the past decade which understands memory to be multileveled, porous, and mobile, with mediated memories, especially, traveling across borders and circulating beyond nation-states to be reconfigured in various different ways transnationally (Conway, 2008; Huyssen, 2003, Legg, 2005; Levy and Sznajder, 2005). Transnational memory, Moses and Stone remind us, preceded 'modern globalization' through links between colonialism and genocide (Moses and Stone, 2007). Michael Rothberg's (2009) concept of multidirectional memory stresses how (shared) memory is structurally multidirectional and requires the use of transversal methods. Rothberg argues, for example, that multiple memories can intersect and interact with each other within public spaces: 'the borders of memory are jagged; what looks at first like my own property often turns out to be a borrowing or adaptation from history that initially might seem foreign or distant' (2009: 5).

Within recent theories of globalization, however, memory is not dealt with explicitly. This, despite an increasing recognition in globalization studies of the significance of the media and culture. Nevertheless, in approaches that discuss globalization and the media, it is helpful to consider the implications of different approaches in terms of power and agency, in the dynamics of the globalization of mediated memory to contribute to a conceptualization of the global memory field.

Globalization theories, according to Diane Crane (2002), can be understood in terms of four models. The first model conceptualizes globalization in terms of a one-way process of cultural imperialism. The second understands globalization in terms of flows and networks. The third perspective gives emphasis to the role and activity of audiences in cultural production and the fourth sees as axiomatic the importance of state and superstate competition. These four models, if extrapolated in relation to memory and the global memory field, suggest how it might be possible to emphasize the place and significance of power and agency in different ways. The global memory field might be understood in terms of, first, a view that suggests that particular memories will dominate; second, that there will be multiple memories with multiple flows; third, that memories will largely be created by individuals; or fourth, that power largely lies in the hands of public memory institutions which will play the main role in securing shared memories. The global memory field might be understood in terms of none of these models, or all of these in combination. However, as Paul Hopper's (2007) approach to globalization and the media reminds us, digital media are not evenly distributed and connected and they are difficult to map and to measure. The global memory field may be characterized by lack of connections, by lack of electricity, by global divisions. Memory assemblages may have different flows and connectivities which are also difficult to measure, and have varying velocities and extensities.

John Urry's (2007) argument that what is needed is a new social paradigm that takes mobilities as axiomatic to society and culture, resonates with the ways in which digital memories travel and are mobilized through the combination of digitization and globalization, as suggested by the example of Neda at the beginning of this chapter. Conversely, though, in terms of memory this might also suggest the need to be attentive to when memories do not travel, are not mobilized, or when memory institutions and states seek to securitize memory assemblages in the global memory field.

These mobilities and moments of securitization in the global memory field involve both people and data, as the Neda example suggests.

This movement of data made possible through digital media in combination with globalization could be seen as a new form of collective consciousness, what Mark Poster (2006) terms the 'human machine', which resonates with the ways in which memory through globalization and digitalization traverses established boundaries between the human and machine, the organic and inorganic. Poster's human machine points to how the global memory field may be thought of not as a global digitally networked memory prosthetic that is distinct from human beings but rather that we are agents constituted in and through it.

Digitization and media memory

There are other important antecedents for thinking about how media technologies impact on human consciousness and memory practices. Walter J. Ong argued in relation to the technological transition from orality to literacy, that the complex process of training involved in creating a literate society resulted in changes to societies including human memory (1982). The same can be said of digital media technologies: in combination with other shifts, including globalization, they are changing human memory practices both individually and collectively.

There are, however, as Lev Manovich (2001) argues, a number of key principles of difference between old and new media: these include numerical representation, or the conversion to binary logic; modularity, the ways in which there can be discrete and independent elements within a larger whole; automation, with software able to automatically adjust content; variability, with the production of slightly different versions; and transcoding, the translation from one format to another with a computer.

Yet Manovich's schemata remain situated within a positivist tradition in which new media are seen as primarily cinematic in form (Hansen, 2004). This prevents Manovich from developing digital media's ontological or material significance:

Regardless of its current surface appearance, digital data is at heart polymorphous: lacking any inherent form or enframings: yet so long as it is tied to the image-frame of the cinema, this polymorphous potential will remain entirely untapped. (Hansen, 2004: 34)

It is this ontological significance that is important to understanding the relationships of digital media, globalization, and memory and to developing a conceptualization of the global memory field. Part of digital's ontological significance has been articulated in terms of what John

Monk termed the digital unconscious arising out of the shared digitality of computer code (Monk, 1998). What this points us to in relation to memory is the significance of the obscured and taken for granted elements of digitality and digitization that may be changing human consciousness in relation to the global memory field. Underneath the friendly graphical digital interface of the read, write, clickable screen of the global memory field is code, the database, the algorithm, the on-off states of the electric grid.

This is a key dynamic of distributed memory within the literature on Human Computer Interaction: global computer and communication networks are perceived as constituting an autonomous intelligent system with global shared memory, which through shared knowledge enables the development of a 'digital collective unconsciousness' (Goertzel, 2001).

Yet, what this does not account for within the conceptualization of the global memory field are the interconnections between human and machine, and the traversals between and across human language and computer code. It is this 'intermediation' that occurs across and between human and computer that it is important to recognize (Hayles, 2005). Memories concurrently exist in both the brain and material culture: they are manifestations of 'a complex interaction between brain, material objects and the cultural matrix from which they arise' (Van Dijck, 2007: 28). The global memory field involves a complex intermediation between the digital and the analog.

Mobile witnessing

The example of the viral circulation of the camera phone images of the death of Neda Agha Soltan is suggestive of the ways in which the media are increasingly implicated in public memory in terms of the public witnessing of events. This is also suggested by more recent studies on witnessing, in which the media are given more attention and significance (Ellis, 2000; Peters, 2001). Yet what this work does not do is address the particular significance of digitization to witnessing and the intermediation of the digital with the analog. The most resonant in this regard is Frosh and Pinchevski's (2009) work on 'media witnessing' which draws on Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of the 'assemblage' pointing to how digital images intersect coextensively with other objects. The digital witnessing of Neda is no longer to be understood in terms of an analysis of the discrete camera phone images themselves but in terms of how these involved the coextensive intersection of her images with other images, of her images prior to her death, of other distinct images. One

version meshed her image with the Statue of Liberty for example. In addition, Neda's witnessing involved compositions with other heterogeneous objects, including their intersection with moblog posting strings and comments on memorial websites, on YouTube, as well as its juxtaposition and linkage with other historic events, such as the Battle of Waterloo.

The memory as assemblage within the global memory field can then be conceptualized as working along two axes. The first axis involves a composition of things and bodies with utterances and expressions. This composition of material practices and discursive formations is then consolidated and changed through the other axis, according to Frosh and Pinchevski, through the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization (2009).

This in turn suggests that digital memory research and analysis within the new paradigm of a global memory field involves the tracing of these material practices and discursive formations as well as analysis of the dynamics of these in terms of how they are then mobilized and secured across and between the local and global, the national and the international, the individual and the collective. Memory as assemblage in a global memory field may involve the witnessing practices and discursive formations of prosumers that are then further mobilized through the territorializing processes of global media organizations and public memory institutions. These may attempt to secure the assemblage that is then deterritorialized across (inter-) national boundaries and becomes insecure and open to change.

The global memory field: six dynamics

How then is the global memory field structured in terms of dynamics which may be different from, or that extend earlier forms of media witnessing? Here, a specific, though brief, examination of the example of memory assemblages relating to the digital witnessing of the shooting of Neda Agha Soltan suggests that there are six coextensive dynamics. These suggest both differences and extensions from mediated collective memory identifiable as the global memory field. These include the dynamics of transmediality, velocity, extensity, modality, valency, and viscosity (see Table 1).

One way to clearly explain the significance of these dynamics is by taking the example of the digital witnessing of Neda alongside the media witnessing of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 as suggested by the assemblage's hyperlink to that earlier event on the Times On-Line website on June 22.

Table 1: Memory and digital media: six dynamics of the global memory field

Witnessing – Mediated Witnessing – Global Assemblage		
	Witnessing of the Battle of Waterloo, June, 1815	Cameraphone witnessing of the Shooting of Neda, Iran, June, 2009
(Trans) Mediality	Analogue Organic + Inorganic	Analogue + Digital (Numerical, Computer)
Velocity	3 + 2 days to reach London	Minutes, hours
Extensity	Local-nation	Local-global-local-glocal
Modality	Person to mass communication Limited	Person – wearable prosthetic – network – prosthetic Multiple
Valency	Dialogical	Poly-logical
Viscosity	Fixed/solid	Liquid
Axis	X Vertical	X Vertical and Y Horizontal = Z

Transmediality. In its immediate aftermath and in the public witnessing of the Battle of Waterloo, material practices and discursive formations were limited to the written press. The subsequent cultural memorialization of the event has taken place in multiple forms and include tourist visits to the site of the battle itself, the creation of Lion’s Mound in 1820 on the site where the Prince of Orange was shot, numerous paintings, stories, and references within popular songs and culture, as well as performative re-enactments of the event. In contrast, with the digital witnessing of the shooting of Neda, within minutes the event became transmedial: the combination of digitization and globalization within the global memory field means that memory is an assemblage of discursive formations and material practices not limited or bounded by one medium.

Velocity. The Battle of Waterloo was witnessed and was news prior to the use by newspapers of the electric telegraph in the 1850s. Roseneder notes that it was four days between the battle on June 18 in 1815 and the newspaper reports that appeared in *The Times* newspaper on June 22. This is very different from the present-day coverage of battles in war in which the media report casualties the same day (Roseneder, 2006). The digital witnessing of Neda, in contrast, took place within minutes and hours. The combination of mobile and socially networked media is transforming the speed with which events are publicly witnessed and their subsequent memorialization. Between the moment in time in which the event took place, what Derrida calls the instant of witnessing, and its reproduction through multiple assemblages, the instances of witnessing that are simultaneously archived, public, and commemorative,

are collapsed and much closer within the global memory field. This is not to say that this is always the case, however: digital time has multiple valences, but with the example of Neda high speed characterized the velocity between the instant and instances of witnessing.

Extensivity. The global memory field is characterized by greater extensivity. With the Battle of Waterloo, the discursive formations and material practices of witnessing were limited to the local/national site at which the event took place followed by compositions of national reach for the parties concerned. With Neda the local instant of witnessing in Tehran became rapidly global in extensivity with articulations that flowed via data networks as well as the diasporic networks of people from Iran. Discursive formations and material practices were deterritorialized to other local sites around the world and then reterritorialized in Iran.

Modality. The initial witnessing of the Battle of Waterloo was limited to the personal witnessing, organic mind-bodies of those present, followed by text-based stories subsequently articulated through the press. With the witnessing of Neda, the initial organic witnessing of her being shot was visually and aurally recorded using the wearable memory prosthetic of the mobile camera phone. Captured as data this was then transferred via connected media and email, and rapidly networked through multiple modalities. However, although different at the time, the two events then both become part of the global memory field and with the earlier events such as the Battle of Waterloo, then also develop multiple modalities.

Valency. The term originates from chemistry and refers to the number of chemical bonds formed by an atom of a given element. It refers in the dynamic structuring of the global memory field to the extent to which memory assemblages through multiple discursive formations and material practices form bonds with other memory assemblages. In the case of the witnessing of the Battle of Waterloo, at the time, these were primarily dialogical involving bonds to the event itself. With Neda, the witnessing assemblages were 'polylogical' and 'polylectical' with multiple bonds to other memory assemblages of other events. Earlier events – such as the Battle of Waterloo – are subsequently within the global memory field and so too have developed multiple valences – one of them with the witnessing of Neda.

Viscosity. Bauman's thesis in *Liquid Modernity* (2000) contends that some parts of the world have entered a new stage of late modernity in which nomadism, fluidity, and change are the norm. Christian

Pentzold's (2009) study of the creation of memory in Wikipedia suggests that Wiki sites in memory terms constitute the floating gap between what Jan Assmann (1991) terms communicative and cultural memory: they constitute a global memory space that is fluid and changeable. Viscosity in scientific terms describes a liquid's degree of internal resistance to flow. It is used here to describe the degree to which a memory assemblage resists the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization or remains open to the processes of fluidity and change.

With the Battle of the Waterloo the mediated witnessing of the event was slower to reach the public sphere, but when the account did so in the UK, it was more viscous and secured through the press. With the witnessing of Neda the memory assemblage was faster to reach the public sphere, but then was less viscous and open to change for some days. For several weeks, for example, there were two Wiki pages with slightly different versions of the event.

Axes. Within the global memory field, the first axis (x) involves a composition of material practices and discursive formations ('assemblage') that in memory terms is (de-) securitized through the other (y) axis by the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization. With the Battle of Waterloo the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization were relatively weak and operated predominantly vertically, from person to organization to person. With the witnessing of Neda, the y axis was stronger, with them operating both vertically from digital witness or citizen journalist to media organization to prosumers as well as operating horizontally between citizens via Twitter and social networking sites and through telephone calls.

Further, the example of Neda suggests that with the global memory field, if one way becomes blocked, or disarticulated, other ways are found. So although the Iranian authorities banned a memorial service at the Nilafor Mosque (www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/22/neda_soltani_death-iran), memorials were held on-line and at other places. At the same time, it is important not to overplay the power of citizen journalists and citizen media. Using three different search engines – Google, Baidi (the most popular Chinese search engine), and Ayna (an Arabic search engine) – a search for 'Neda' showed, four months after the event, that while Wikipedia or Facebook were the number one hit, mainstream media organizations (the BBC, the Guardian, Tom Media Group; Fox; CNN; US Salon Media Group) dominated the other top four hits. They had in all cases reassembled citizen journalist material and material from other citizen-produced websites (on-line search, November 3, 2009).

Summary

The global memory field invokes the use of multimodal, transversal methodologies and analysis of the dynamics of digital traces and trajectories (code and language) and their constellations within socio-economic formations. The example of Neda is only briefly discussed here but it bears similar characteristics to another example of digital witnessing: the 2005 London bombings (Reading, 2009a, 2009b). The global memory field is characterized by memory assemblages that have multiple non-linear transmedial trajectories and connectivities that may be uneven and contradictory. These traverse conventional communicative binaries, body/machine, analog/digital, public/private; they include discursive formations and material practices of prosumers, citizen journalists as well as mass media organizations and public memory institutions. However, the processes of territorialization and (de-) and reterritorialized struggles suggest that media organizations and public memory institutions have greater economic and technological resources to disassemble and reassemble, and to mobilize and securitize meanings about the past. The global memory field requires new grounds of knowledge for the study of media memory that implicates research designs for the study of memory, as well as the development of more transdisciplinary and traveling methodologies that reconfigure forms of analysis. In turn, the global memory will also require us to rethink ethics in relation to how we research media memory.

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18

Archive, Media, Trauma

Amit Pinchevski

Discussions on memory nowadays seem to proceed in two general directions. On the one hand, there is a growing interest in mediated memory: the various forms by which memory is formed and shared by means of media technologies, especially new media and multimedia. On the other hand, there is a consistent preoccupation with traumatic memory, that is, with the ways past episodes, which have been blocked out of private or public consciousness, return to haunt the present in various displaced manifestations. I want to argue that these two seemingly divergent types of memory (and ways to account for memory) are in fact interlinked, both historically and conceptually. What links them together is the technological apparatus of the archive, which has seen significant technological transformations during the last three decades. These transformations have given rise to new archival formations that in turn feed into the social practice of memory. At issue, then, is a triangulated relationship between archive, media, and trauma, the general outline of which is explicated below. While it is still too early to gain a comprehensive understanding of the developments underway, some emerging trends are nevertheless perceptible. Viewing the archive as a medium of memory may thus offer valuable insights into the contemporary challenges of contending with the past.

Archive and media

Pierre Nora has famously identified the rise of the *lieux de mémoire*, the sites where memory is constructed and maintained artificially, with the decline of *miliuex de mémoire*, the socially shared, living memory. A paradigm case of such sites is the archive: 'Modern memory is above all archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy

of the recording, the visibility of the image' (Nora, 1989: 13). Thus as an apparatus of material memory, the archive thrives on the ruins of living social memory. Nora further notes an important shift in the archivization of memory: whereas collecting and storing were traditionally specialized practices of the ruling elite (the church, the state, the royals), such practices have become common and popular, as everyone is now an archive producer of sorts, collecting and storing pieces of one's own individual history. This form of memory, according to Nora, is a monument to the living memory, to the passing of the affective community of memory of which Maurice Halbwachs (1980 [1950]) spoke. A 'prosthesis-memory', the archive is thus a secondary contrivance, foreign to social life: 'This form of memory comes to us from the outside; because no longer a social practice, we interiorize it as an individual constraint' (Nora, 1989: 14).

There are two problems with the way Nora understands the archive (an understanding that is not specific to him, but is in fact a common understanding). First is the dichotomy between natural memory and so-called artificial memory, that is, the external, technological, or prosthetic, memory. Not only is this dichotomy historically questionable, it essentially contradicts the very logic of memory, which is always affected and conditioned by its *aide-mémoire*, the 'artificial' means and modes of memorization and recollection. As Bernard Stiegler (1998) affirms, the externality and internality of memory are mutually constitutive and co-primordial, as every memory is essentially prosthetic memory. Yet more important for the purposes of the present discussion is Nora's relegation of the archive outside the social, deeming it the 'storehouse of a material stock of what it would be impossible for us to remember' (1989: 13). External to the everyday, to the here-and-now of living memory, the archive is where time is accumulated but not lived – a paradigmatic example of what Michel Foucault designates as 'heterotopia', the ex-territories of ordinary social space, and more specifically the type called 'heterochony', where 'time never stops building up and topping its own summit' (1986: 26). I want to suggest the opposite observation: that with the advent of electronic audio-visual technologies, and more intensively with the introduction of interactive new media and multimedia, the archive has undergone a profound technological transformation and no longer operates according to the heterotopic logic. In fact, rather than calcifying memory, the archive has become an eminently social practice, a veritable living memory.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines archive as 'a place in which public records or other important historic documents are kept'.

This definition bespeaks the time-honored view of the archive: the out-of-the-way repository where various yet select documents concerning the public are stored away from the public. Etymologically, 'archive' comes from the Greek *arkheia* for 'public records', the plural form of *arkheion*, 'town hall', which is derived from *arkhe*, 'government' (as in *archon*, a magistrate, ruler) but also 'beginning', 'origin', and 'first place' (as in *archeology* or *archetype*). As Jacques Derrida (1996) notes, the question of the archive is inherently inscribed in the polysemy of *arkhe*. In the ontological sense, the archive relates to origin and commencement, to the foundational and the originary, and hence to the original and the authentic. In the nomological sense, it is concerned with issues of law, power, and command, with the authority to archive as well as the authority to determine what is archivable and classify it accordingly. In the topological sense, the archive involves a certain location, the place where some things are collected and kept, thus consigned to the collection. Implied therein is exclusivity in two different ways: first, collecting what presumably does not exist anywhere else (otherwise there would be no reason to archive in the first place), and second, controlling accessibility to the archived collection, which is always accessible but never, by definition, to everyone or at all times.

Recent digital media technologies have introduced significant changes to the logic of the archive as per the three senses above: ontologically, nomologically, and topologically. Today, when most archiving practices, both personal and public, are conducted by means of digital multimedia technologies, in what sense can we still speak of originality and authenticity of archived items? With digitization the principle of reproducibility reaches its ultimate stage: rather than Walter Benjamin's notion of reproduction, which implies temporal seriality and hence some kind of originality to be re-produced, the more adequate contemporary term would be transduplication, as digital copies are equally manipulatable and utterly interchangeable (file, image, audio, video). That the archive has become common, popular practice, as Nora observed, serves to pluralize its *nomos*, the law of the archive and the authority to archive. Not only can anyone now be technologically capable and authorized to archive, but the very definition of what is archivable is also shifting, as contemporary technology allows for storage and retrieval on the most rudimentary, bit-pixel level. But perhaps most crucial is the topological transformation of the archive: no longer circumscribed and exclusionary, the digital multimedia archive is an on-line network archive – an inter-archive – which is, by default, accessible and shareable. As Wolfgang Ernst (2006) notes, what defines the multimedia archive is its

hyperlinkability and interconnectivity: the catalog no longer refers to a specific item set aside in some remote storehouse; rather, the catalog is now the link to the actual item – the actual website – with multiple cyberspace consignations. The combination of the Internet and digital media has transformed the configuration of the archive, its preselection now being inclusivity rather than exclusivity.¹

Given this development, archiving can now be viewed as a form of social intervention, a participatory social practice, which turns the archive as a whole into a collective project. Personal memorabilia now serve, perhaps more than any time before, as basis for more or less ephemeral social ties, as numerous users of Facebook, MySpace and YouTube experience every day. Moreover, the interactive archive presents new opportunities for the construction of collective memory, away from and beyond national or genealogical constraints. As Arjun Appadurai argues, the archive allows for the forming of voluntary communities of memory: ‘where natural social collectivities build connectivities out of memory, these virtual collectivities build memories from connectivities’ (Appadurai, 2003: 17). No longer exclusive to formal institutions like the state and its extensions, the archive is gradually and deliberately becoming a site for the creative production of memories by intentional communities. Indeed, as Appadurai suggests, it is possible that we are entering a stage in which collective memory and the archive have coextensive and mutually formative possibilities. With the inter-archive, collective memory becomes a matter of elective affinities, of active involvement and personal investment, and hence of imagination as much as of recollection. It is in this respect that the technologically mediated archive occasions the return of collective memory to its original sense as intended by Maurice Halbwachs (1980 [1950]) – to the remembering community and to the collective will to remember.

Archive and trauma

The Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University was first initiated in 1979 as a collaborative project between television producer and documentarian Laurel Vlock and psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Dori Laub. From its inception, the archive had a dual rationale: on the one hand, documenting the personal memories of survivors under the pressing conviction that ‘time is running out and that every survivor has a unique story to tell’; on the other hand, employing videotape technology to capture the testimonies, as ‘It was felt that the “living portraiture” of television would add a compassionate and

sensitive dimension to the historical record' (Fortunoff Video Archive, 2010). This rationale is far from obvious. Presumably, the documenting of testimonies could have been undertaken by means of transcription, audio recording or even film. Videotape technology had two important advantages for a project like the Yale archive: it introduced the capability of an in-house production, including shooting, editing, and postproduction to be done on site. But more crucially, the videotape constitutes at once a medium of archiving and a medium of broadcasting, as affirmed by Geoffrey Hartman, director of the Yale archive since 1981:

The principle of giving survivors their voice has been a sustaining one. Also that of giving a face to that voice: of choosing video over audio, because of the immediacy and evidentiality it added to the interview. The 'embodiment' of the survivors, their gestures and bearing, is part of the testimony ... Audiences now and in the future would surely be audiovisual. We decided to make video-recordings of public broadcast quality, to build an Archive of Conscience on which future educators and film-makers might rely. These living portraits are the nearest our descendants can come to a generation passing from the scene. (1996: 144)

The claim here is that videotestimony (Hartman's term) can both capture the uniqueness and authenticity of the storyteller, the 'embodiment' of the survivor bearing witness, and at the same time allow for public participation and intergenerational communication. At the base of this archive is therefore an exceptional imperative: to make its unique possessions accessible for increasingly wider audiences. Indeed, this imperative goes into the structure of testimony itself: according to Laub, testimony is facilitated by the recovery of an empathic listener (an interviewer or a therapist) who 'takes on the responsibility for bearing witness that previously the narrator felt he bore alone, and therefore could not carry out' (Felman and Laub, 1992: 85). Yet what Laub leaves out in relation to the Yale archive is the presence of video cameras, which provided survivors a holding environment unattainable in the solitude of an off-camera interview. The cameras served as a technological surrogate for an audience *in potentia* – the audience for which many survivors had been waiting for a lifetime. Bearing witness was from the outset bearing witness on camera, already with the duality of safekeeping and dissemination in mind. The logic of the inter-archive was already inscribed in the material being archived, that is, in the

videotestimonies, by seizing survivors in the double prospect of about-to-die and about-to-be-broadcast. It is in this sense that the Yale video archive provided what Hartman called, referring to Maurice Halbwachs' term, 'a provisional "affective community" for the survivor' (2001a: 220). For Halbwachs (1980 [1950]) 'affective community' designated the social ties and common experiences from which collective memory emerges; in Hartman's rendering, it is the archive that now doubles as the enabling context for the construction of an ever-growing collective memory. With ensuing projects currently offering their archive on-line, like Steven Spielberg's *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History*, the videotestimony has become part and parcel of the global memory of the Holocaust.

Yet beyond the propagation of Holocaust memory, the audio-visual archive has also changed the way we understand that memory. The audio-visual archive is the context for some of the most original and influential theoretical developments of the last decades in the humanities. Recent discourses of trauma and witnessing, I would argue, owe much to the analytical possibilities opened by the archive – specifically, to the lending of audio-visual testimonies to the professional analysis of literary critics, psychoanalysts, and critical historians. The audio-visual testimony is, arguably, one of the most significant cultural texts of our time, providing source material for some of the generation's most prominent intellectuals. In this sense, the archive might be considered as the technological unconscious, as it were, of what came to be known as 'trauma theory'.

Consider Lawrence Langer's 1991 award-winning *Holocaust Testimonies: the Ruins of Memory*, in many respects a forerunner of later speculations on traumatic memory. Based entirely on survivors' testimonies from the Yale archive, Langer proposes an exacting literary analysis of Holocaust testimonial narratives. One of the most penetrating concepts in his study is 'deep memory': as opposed to common memory, which 'restores the self to its normal pre- and postcamp routines', deep memory 'tries to recall the Auschwitz self as it was then ... [it] suspects *and* depends on common memory, knowing what common memory cannot know but tries nonetheless to express' (1991: 6). Deep memory is thus the subterranean memory that lurks beneath common memory, the traumatic *then* infecting and intruding the habitual *now*, forever beyond proper articulation and comprehension. The videotaped testimony, argues Langer, engages its audience with new challenges beyond that of traditional written narratives. Unlike written texts, these testimonies create meaning through the very production of narrative, performing

the double temporality of deep and common memory in real time. As such, they impose on the audience a complex audio-visual narrative, which calls for the development of collective skills of interpretation and active engagement.

Ultimately what distinguishes videotestimonies, according to Langer, is their 'reversible continuity', which is 'foreign to the straight chronology that governs most written memoirs' (1991: 20). Yet is it not the nature of the medium, rather than of the narrative, which Langer is referring to, always under the technological potential of halting and reversing the flow of narrative? After all, what better approximates the co-temporal *now* as it is interrupted by the traumatic *then* than a technologically reproducible narrative? Moreover, would it even be possible to detect and locate deep memory without the ability to pause, rewind, and replay? For how else could Langer analyze the moments where deep memory intrudes into the narrative, the pauses and silences that turn in his text into ellipses, without being able to reproduce these moments time and again? Consumed by the flow of the here-and-now, these moments of intrusion are revived and rendered meaningful only as they are reproduced – only as reproducible – which means that deep memory is in fact an offshoot of videotestimony – and by extension, of the new archival formation. Searching for deep memory in videotaped testimonies is analogous to searching for what Roland Barthes (1981) dubbed as the punctum in a photograph: in both cases the past returns to puncture the present by means of technological mediation. If, as Langer states, 'videotaped oral testimonies provide us with an unexplored archive of "texts" that solicit from us original forms of interpretation' (1991: 19), the potential for discovering moments of deep memory is limited only by the archive's storage capacity.

Following Langer, Saul Friedlander asks 'whether at the collective level as well an event like the Shoah may, after all the survivors have disappeared, leave traces of a deep memory beyond individual recall, which will defy any attempt to give it meaning' (1994: 254). To the extent that deep memory is a by-product of the audio-visual archive, this question seems only partially relevant. For deep memory is not properly an individual memory within the reach of personal recall; it is rather a mediated form of that memory, its recorded afterlife, which makes it not only safe from oblivion but also infinitely reproducible. To paraphrase Thomas Edison's quip on the phonograph, with the audio-visual archive, deep memory has become, as it were, immortal. Far from disappearing with the survivors, the archive is the ultimate depository of deep memory. Whether this memory will continue to defy meaning

is a different question, but that possibility, I would argue, is not necessarily averse to the increasing accessibility of these videotestimonies. There is actually reason to believe the situation is reversed: that what makes these testimonies so universally compelling is their continuing allowance for the ungraspable and the unintelligible. Put differently, it is precisely the unmediated quality of trauma that makes it so inclined to mediation.

Media and trauma

Perhaps the key text in the growing discourse of witnessing and trauma is Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (1992). This book is probably the first to articulate testimony at the juncture of narrative, memory, and history from both critical and clinical perspectives. With one of the authors a co-founder of the Yale archive of Holocaust testimonies, it should not come as a surprise that large portions of this path-breaking book deal with survivors' videotaped testimonies. But also of note are the circumstances that instigated the writing of this book for the other author. As Felman recounts, it was the events following the screening of a videotaped testimony in her class: 'Something happened, toward the conclusion of the class, which took me completely by surprise. The class itself broke out into a crisis' (1992: 47). The work the students submitted turned out to be a 'profound statement of the trauma they had gone through and of the significance of their assuming the position of the witness' (1992: 52). The events reported by Felman seem to correspond to what psychologists identify as secondary or vicarious trauma, which is said to typically afflict professionals such as therapists and social workers who treat people suffering from severe trauma. Thus, what constituted, in Felman's words, 'the germ – and the germination – of this book' (1992: 47) was a case of the transference of trauma as occasioned by a specimen of the audio-visual archive. With this novel archival formation, the crisis of witnessing becomes commutable, felt both by the survivor bearing witness and, by extension, by those who witness the witness.

The effect of the audio-visual testimony, the affective impact of witnessing the witness, was a major concern for the founders of the Yale archive. It was clear from the beginning that these first-person accounts should do something more than merely inform, and convey something beyond what Jean Amery called the 'cold storage of history' (1980: xi). As Hartman affirms, the videotestimony 'gives texture to memory or

to images that otherwise would have only sentimental or informational impact' (1996, p. 138). The audio-visual testimony is therefore expected to register both emotionally and cognitively in its audience; it should work affectively as well as cerebrally. Yet this expectation produces a double anxiety: there is the fear that now, with the ubiquity of Holocaust representations and of the testimonial genre in general, the effect of these testimonies is fading. Once in the throes of mass reception, audio-visual testimonies are threatened with the fate of other mass media products: that 'archives of conscience like ours may not be able to resist being turned into gigabytes of information' (Hartman, 2001b: 119). This links with the more general concern that 'We become, through the media, impotent involuntary spectators' (Hartman, 2001b: 119). Such is the predicament Luc Boltanski (1999) designates as 'distant suffering' – the contemporary disproportion between our media exposure to atrocities and our inability to do something about them. This makes the videotestimonies a historical lesson on, as well as a powerful metonymy for, the dangers of public indifference in the face of suffering.

And then there is the opposite anxiety: that rather than having too little effect, audio-visual testimonies might be almost too effective. Here the risk is of over-identification with the victim – the point where the line between primary and secondary traumatization becomes blurred. The most famous and infamous example is Benjamin Wilkomirski, whose *Fragments* (1997) received both critical and public acclaim in the mid-1990s as a rare document of a child survivor. His story was soon revealed as fake, together with serious doubts about his Jewish identity. Consequently the book might be better categorized as fiction rather than memoir. For Hartman, Wilkomirski is an extreme yet telling example of what he terms 'memory-envy': 'The author internalized what he has heard, read, or seen in movies and photos, and it emerges as his own experience' (2001b: 120). Wilkomirski's story is a fateful leap from media witnessing to Holocaust witnessing (Frosh and Pinchevski, 2009). Another example reported by Hartman is an almost verbatim repetition of a Yale testimony in a monologue in Harold Pinter's play *Ashes to Ashes*, which deals with violence and loss but has nothing to do with the Holocaust. According to Hartman, 'We glimpse here how diffusion occurs: how Holocaust memory influences *affectively* a wider public' (2001b: 121). Holocaust memory has become so universally ingrained that it no longer requires the memory of the actual events, only their affective residue. The Holocaust, so it seems, has become the definitive hallmark of the traumatic experience.

This development would not have been possible without the new archival formations. In fact, the contagious potential of trauma is already registered in the logic of the videotestimony, as evinced by the events in Shoshana Felman's class. From its very conception, the videotestimony was to be a non-standard archival material, one that is to be shared collectively and touch individually. With the expansion of such inclusive archives, we witness the radicalization of the tendency of trauma to form ad hoc communities of bereavement. Viewed from this perspective, the case of Wilkomirski might seem more exemplary than extreme as latter-day testimonial archives in multiple media are now summoning our indigenous identities and sympathies to new challenges. In this sense, Wilkomirski stands on the far end of a continuum inhabited by us all. This is also true of Holocaust survivors themselves: there is the recurring story of many Auschwitz survivors who remember going through a selection by Mengele on the train ramp, as though the notorious doctor was there to accept each and every shipment. That survivors' memories tend to be more alike can also be attributed to the ubiquity of the archive. And yet the consequences for Holocaust memory could be even more far-reaching. Despite consistent worries about Holocaust denial, it seems that the tendency these days is more toward the popularization rather than the refutation of the Holocaust. As Andreas Huyssen has argued, the Holocaust now functions as a universal trope for other traumatic histories and memories, which allows it to 'latch on to specific local situations that are historically distant and politically distinct from the original event' (2000: 24). Thus as the Shoah becomes an immense beacon of pain, more people and groups have greater stakes in identifying with it than in questioning its existence. The full scope of this process is yet to be determined, and the hopes and perils that might be involved therein call for a detailed examination.

For better or worse, the new archival formations have opened new opportunities for experiencing trauma through the media. At issue is not just the mediation of a traumatic event as it occurs (9/11 is the obvious example), but more pointedly the traumatic experience that is felt only as mediated. Recent theoretical developments speak precisely to this possibility: Marian Hirsch proposes the concept of 'postmemory' as a belated, second-generation memory whose 'connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through representation, projection and creation'; what this mediation entails is 'adopting the traumatic experiences – and thus also the memories – of others as experiences one might oneself have had' (2001: 220–1). Similarly,

Alison Landsberg develops the idea of 'prosthetic memory': 'privately felt public memories that develop after an encounter with a mass cultural representation of the past, when new images and ideas come into contact with a person's own archive of experience' (2004: 18). In both cases someone else's memory is deeply felt as one's own precisely due to its mediation. Such memories are traumatic only inasmuch as they are distinctively mediated, that is to say, prosthetic. Perhaps what we are facing with the advent of the interactive archive is the emergence of new constellations of communities of memory, brought together by the wish and will to remember. To the extent this prospect is plausible, traumatic memory, like the new archival forms of collective memory, might also become a matter of elective affinities.

Note

1. It is possible to identify some precedents to the interactive archive. Traditional analog media can be said to constitute such an archive in the combination of recording and broadcasting, which is evident as early as the 1920s with the coupling of radio and the phonograph. While exhibiting some archival characteristics, this combination does not ultimately constitute a species of the interactive archive, where the primary motivation is simultaneously both collection and dissemination. What distinguishes the more recent archival technologies is that they are equally archive and media while compromising neither durability nor accessibility, which is not the case with analog media. A forerunner of the inter-archive is the Internet in its early ARPANET configuration, where the logic of storage and retrieval unbound by space-time limitations is embedded in its very construction.

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19

Mediated Space, Mediated Memory: New Archives at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin

*Irit Dekel**

The Holocaust Memorial in Berlin is a site experienced by individuals in and outside its confines in time and place. This is true of other memorials whose experience always exceeds their physical boundaries and the temporal confines of the visit. Unlike other such memorials, this one, with its abstract form and location on a large lot in the center of Berlin between Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz (and near the Reichstag building), is considered 'non-authentic' with regard to the Holocaust. This new characteristic of a Holocaust Memorial frames how one experiences it, and contrasts with 'authentic' memorial sites, in which, it is presumed, some approximation of the victim's voice can be represented (DeKoven Ezrahi, 2004).

This chapter looks into the ways the Holocaust memorial experience is mediated by media and technology (Hoskins, 2003; Young, 2000), and asks whether the various media create new forms of engagement with the past. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in the memorial and interviews with its workers in 2005–6 and in winter 2010, I show how, when looking at the ways memory of the Holocaust is presented in new archives, one can see the shift from the discourse on memory transmission to mediation of the experience of memory.

Beneath the memorial, which was designed by architect Peter Eisenman and resembles a field of stones in various heights, a small installation called the Information Center presents the history of the Nazi persecution of Jews and uses various audio-visual media. The Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which was appointed by the Bundestag in 1999, manages the memorial. The unique self-understanding of the memorial is as both transcending space and time and being non-immediate or 'inauthentic', in the sense that it is not the site where the event of extermination itself took place but where the political leaders orchestrated it.

The Information Center mediates and directs the experience of the memorial and knowledge about it and the Holocaust, both in its content, the focus on individual fates of Jewish victims and the European dimension of annihilation, and its form, the presentation in its four rooms, as well as in its archives of information adopted and newly researched from other memorial museums (Quack, 2002). This essay focuses on the form of presentation and usage of interactive media in the Information Center and especially on the work of new archives which use information from archives in other memorial museums, as well as compile new information about the memory of the Holocaust in Europe. As noted, in the Information Center some of the newly searched information is presented, as in the projection of text and photos of last letters or notes of victims in the first room, 'The Room of Dimensions'. In the 'Room of Names' names of Holocaust victims taken from the Yad Vashem database are projected on the wall in a dark room while their short biographies are recited in German and English. In the 'Room of Families', documents, photos, short films, and maps present the fate of fifteen families. In the 'Room of Places', short films, photos, text, and audio stations present the places of killing.

There are five archival presentations, which are new in the ways they employ documents and photos that are presented elsewhere and newly researched for their presentation in the Information Center: (1) Yad Vashem's victims' names database; (2) the European Holocaust memorials database; (3) a database to the specific Holocaust Memorial debate. The last two have been created by the Foundation Memorial. Finally, there is (4) the Fortunoff archive, a database of survivors' testimonies¹ which opened to the public onsite in fall 2008, and (5) the memorial book of the Federal Archive which has been open to the public since 2008 and presents the fates of Jews in Germany between 1933 and 1945, with their name, date of birth, residence, and date of deportation and death. All archives can be searched by interested individuals visiting the Information Center. The Memorial Foundation presents information taken from Yad Vashem and the Fortunoff archive of Holocaust testimonies in the Room of Names, or as in the case of the Fortunoff archive, 850 testimonies were adopted for presentation in the memorial, digitalized, transliterated, and codified, so that visitors can look up relevant information directly from the testimony texts and fast-forward to those topics and events in which they are most interested.

The new archives are seen here as interactive media, used in the memorial to create a certain kind of involvement in memory action that is inherently in flux and is directed toward perpetual discussion

of the Holocaust and ways to deal with it. The information taken from other sites – photos, texts, recorded testimonies, and archival materials – is presented and adheres to the wish of visitors² to be alone, in a meditative mode. It happens in what Hall (2006) calls an ‘experiential complex’ in themed exhibitions that engage the senses and circle around the story memorial museums create in a manner that connects the authentic and the simulation in the Information Center, with the effects of light and darkness. Voice and texts located on the ground, on the wall high by the ceiling, and in front of the visitors’ eyes are presented through audio-visual engagement in the ‘Room of Places’ and the archives. Information about the Holocaust raises knowledge and emotions and alludes to other known images of the Holocaust and their meaning in the place and time of their display (Zelizer, 1998). These means of representation also create a precarious proximity to the time of the Holocaust, to victims and survivors, while keeping distance from the authentic places of memory precisely through new modes of presentation and the experience they afford the visitor, who is an active and critical consumer, citizen, and tourist.

From knowledge toward experience

Katriel (1997), following MacCannell (1973), claims that museums as memory sites turned their orientation from enhancing knowledge to affording an experience. This complicates the relations between representing and experiencing, as the latter takes precedence over the former. Crane (2000) maintains that like memories, museums exist on several levels: in the spaces of their building and their exhibition spaces, shops, and cafés, and in their portable versions: the catalogues, YouTube, Facebook, and their own Web pages. In the Information Center, one can see that certain media are used to offer information and raise questions (such as the relations between the numbers of Jews killed from each country in the Room of Dimensions and the last letters on the floor of this room) but avoids the so-called ‘shocking’ effects, by offering a more soothed version of Holocaust representation and meditative areas such as the six large portraits of Jewish victims in the entrance and the Room of Names. In conversations with Memorial Foundation workers I was told that the place is meant to move people, but that it is not meant to shock, like authentic memorials. What is of interest for us here is the reference to the possibility of being moved in the place, as a starting point of experience.

The Holocaust Memorial is not a museum. However, it corresponds with museum presentations as it presents documents taken from other



Figure 5: The Room of Names (Room 3) in the Information Center at the Holocaust Memorial, Berlin. © Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Photograph: Stefan Müller, 2005.

archives and memorials. Some become ‘memorial objects’ (Lustiger Thaler, 2008) with an aura of authentic museum exhibits. Such are letters and notes written as a last testimony of Jews in the Room of Dimensions. Some are endowed with the aura of museum objects, although their presentation form in an installation or an archive that also exists elsewhere makes them ‘once removed’ from representing the experience of the Holocaust, while connecting the Holocaust Memorial to those archives and memorials and to their commemorative tasks.

The Holocaust Memorial separates the two main functions of the museum: collection and presentation (Williams, 2008). The goal of the Information Center, as stated by guides and the Foundation Memorial’s personnel, is to mediate between the memorial and the visitors, or between its form and understanding what it could be about: the Holocaust and its memory. The other goal is to move people to engage with the memory of the Holocaust either in the subversive form wished by Chancellor Schröder: ‘as a place to which people will happily go’ (Leggewie and Meyer, 2005) or conversely, as a place by which they will be moved, altered, and transformed. Taken seriously, both options help us shift the theoretical framework away from trauma theory as means for the understanding of memory work, for they focus on a different

experience that does not assume affective engagement as the means of transmission, but mediation, or a 'third party' that stands between the survivor-victim and the visitor: the archive.

Literature discussing the characteristics and limitations of representation of the Holocaust to generations who did not experience it often observe it through the means and possibility of transmission (Hartman, 2004; Hirsch and Kacandes, 2004; Landsberg, 1997). 'Post-memory' assumes this transmission between those who experienced the Holocaust to those who are related to them and most importantly, to their stories (Hirsch, 2008). In the post-memory age, video testimonies and archives can be catalysts for individualized, affective engagement with the Holocaust among generations to come (Heckner, 2008).

I suggest, though, that trauma theory is insufficient for the framework needed to probe the means of transmission, which is no longer between generations 'inheriting' the experience and affect of trauma but among actors for whom we cannot readily assume knowledge or affect in relation to the Holocaust. Those people thus display a mix of perplexity and questions regarding the right way to deal with the Holocaust. For instance, after visiting the Information Center, many visitors admit to guides: 'I did not know that so many people were shot or that there were so few German Jews' and in the same breath reflect on the ways visitors behave in the memorial above ground. The new archives in the memorial display how the 'medium' is no longer pure transmission, but affects the 'message' (here, knowledge and dealing with memory of the Holocaust) and vice versa. As in 'authentic' memorials – such as former concentration camps – the Holocaust Memorial mediates, above all, absence (Lustiger Thaler, 2008). However, unlike memorials where atrocities took place, the reflection of absence of people, evidence, and means to fathom and represent what had taken place on their ground, the Holocaust Memorial adds to the referential absence of those sites from the point of the presence of visitors in a new site. Some of those 'present' visitors above ground then go underground to the Information Center to 'supplement experience with knowledge'³ while also literally deepening their memorial experience.

The work of archives in the Information Center

I use here an extended sense of the word archive, which describes not only institutional collections of records but also libraries, museums, Internet sites such as YouTube, and semi-, sub-, or counter-institutional stores of knowledge.⁴ The Holocaust Memorial's archives present fragmented information on individuals in a way that grants authority and



Figure 6: View of the Holocaust Memorial toward the line entering the Information Center. Photograph: Irit Dekel, 2006.

legitimacy to both presenters and visitors by the very act of research, compilation, presentation, and again, search of personal information. The media of archivization and its various forms, together with that which is being archived and how it is presented, I maintain, produce knowledge, rather than storing it, while also creating new forms of engagement. The memorial develops a technique of supplementing and connecting with knowledge at any point of the visitors' interest and at any stage of their willingness to engage with such information. This is a technique, I argue, and not a strategy, not merely due to the mediated form of representation in the deployment of technology in the Information Center, but because this deployment provides a mediating tool for engagement, and because using this technology in this manner creates the possibility of mediation through research.

Memorial Foundation workers told me that visitors enter the Information Center and come out different both in regard to knowledge about the Holocaust and in regard to justifying the building of the memorial. According to Uhl (2008), the Information Center offers a synthesis of making the visitor emotionally overwhelmed, contemplating,

and empathetic. This is not the most expected mix of categories to describe the work of a memorial experience, and Uhl clarifies that precisely these contents and spatial limitations of the Information Center originated a new type of institution, which amalgamated the reception of 'historical information' with 'emotional remembrance'.

Landsberg (1997) discusses the politics of empathy as a mode of transmitting memory after the survivors, or the 'living memory' passes away; one manifestation of this phenomenon is the attempt to extend the life span of living memory by the assembly of video archives of survivor testimonies. The Fortunoff archive which is used in the Information Center is the largest. Landsberg (1997: 66) argues that 'Mass cultural technologies [...] are making available [...] strategies and arenas within which an alternative living memory gets produced in those who did not live through the event.' In order to produce living memories in those who did not experience events one has to assume some kind of physical and emotional proximity to the act and will of remembering. The Holocaust Memorial relies instead on accidental engagement with memory through curiosity about the Field of Stelae, its history and experience. As far as it was conveyed to me in conversations about the site and in the press discussing it, the memorial 'works' best when people visit with some background knowledge about the Holocaust and the site itself. In any case, Memorial Foundation workers do not take for granted that visitors know about the Holocaust or are willing to engage with its memory.

In the same vein, Landsberg suggests: 'It might be the case that contemporary mass cultural forms enable a version of experience which relies less on categories like the real, the authentic, and sympathy than on categories like knowledge, responsibility, and empathy' (1997: 75). We can look into this claim through the examination of modes of knowledge production used in the memorial's archives and the distance between the mediated knowledge and its experience not in terms of intensity but as a mode of political engagement.

The interpretive framework developed in the memorial makes a parallel between the originality of the memorial's structure, and its 'inauthentic' place, which corresponds to the inauthentic qualities of the materials presented in its archives. It allows for an encounter that in itself is supposed to afford the visitor an authentic experience (Wang, 1999) of memory-work, disconnected and reconnected to the work of memory done in authentic sites. At the same time, however, experiences of the Information Center mediate, index, and choose certain materials from the archive, thereby liberated from the political engagement with history they entail.⁵ In a workshop presenting the Fortunoff archive to

memorial guides in February 2010, one guide reflected on the search tools of the testimonies: 'The narration and indexing is great. I looked at the testimony of Mr. [...] and was wondering when he was going to talk about the Displaced Persons camps. Then I could go to this part of the testimony.' As an expert, the guide considered the technical tool as helpful in research, but this technical ability also enabled her to 'skip' parts of the survivor's history in which she was less interested. This technical ability can reflect a different 'will to memory' (Eyal, 2004) that is not directed by the message of remembering trauma, or being traumatized by memory, but involves distancing oneself through exploration which can be based on knowledge, as in the case of the guide skipping to the DP camp part of the story, or the visitor wondering about information they were not aware of in the 'story' of the Holocaust.

As we have seen, archival information in the memorial is used more for pedagogical purposes than as proof. The tension between the real and the unbelievable, the authentic and the reworked adds a new form of authority to the Foundation Memorial: *not* to carry authentic materials and knowledge but rather to store and make available and accessible old, well-esteemed, and already exposed and presented artifacts. Here again, we can see the motion from reflection on what is available or unattainable, the impasse of space,⁶ and what can be presented differently from other sites, and re-presentation in the Information Center.

This new experience of memory not in a place of atrocities, through newly researched and coded materials that are presented in the original in other places of memory, enables new forms of authority in relation to the past, which do not rely on singularity of the artifacts but rather on the order and form of their display and the unique experience they afford the visitors. It is a second-order presentation that *restudies* the factuality of the artifacts and exists simultaneously in a few places, including on-line, as in the case of Yad Vashem's names database. The memorial thus draws visitors who would not otherwise visit places of atrocity, but encounter their second- and third-order representations, onsite and in browsing the archives, that are themselves fluid and selected, alluding to the old, fixed archives. The Foundation Memorial becomes a mediator between the first presentation in place and time of the information that its archives present, and short-term research within the time of the visit at the Information Center.

From documentation to transformation to mediation

We will now look into the experience of the archives as a site of knowledge-searching located in a site of mediation and meditation.

The visitor becomes engaged in investigating the archives for information, a search which takes place in a setting that raises one's apprehension, alluding to the feeling and experience in authentic memorials: the rooms are dark and there is very little noise but the reading of names in the Room of Names. Stoler (2002), following Foucault (1972), calls attention to the archive as a site of knowledge production, and not merely as a site of its storage and retrieval. The five archives in the memorial reproduce knowledge in its re-presentation onsite in reference to its original sites of preservation and presentation.

According to Derrida 'the archive takes place at the place of ordinary and structural breakdown of the said memory. There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority' (1996: 11). At first glance, the multiplication of consignation places strengthens archival authority. But we should ask whether the fragmented archive which is presented in two, three, or more locations is still an archive, since it is brought back to the realm of memory through the mimetic. According to Derrida, 'the archivization produces as much as it records the events' (1996: 17). '[T]he archival technology [...] no longer determines [...] merely the moment of the conservational recording, but rather the very institution of the archivable event' (1996: 18).

Thus, the medium of archivization and its form, together with what is being archived and how it is presented, produces and transmits certain knowledge and ways of attaining it. As for the two archives that are of interest here, Yad Vashem's names database and the Fortunoff archive, they both speak with other archives and to the visitors – in a German voice in the Room of Names, in Israeli-originated script at the computer of Yad Vashem's names database, and in the voice of the survivors at the Fortunoff archive.

In the seminar room where the Fortunoff archive's computers are located, parts of testimonies in a variety of European languages, and in German and English translation, are written on the surrounding walls, together with a photo of the survivor. The dead are brought back to life for a glimpse, in their relocation in time and the space of the memorial and the archive. The Fortunoff's archive project at the memorial is called 'living with memory': one is aware of the fact that the survivors and those who heard them had to live with memory and so do the visitors hearing and reading them today.

Moreover, by facilitating a search in the archives in the format of the museum database the Memorial Foundation also changes the form of their possible research and produces them as museum objects in relation to other objects in the Information Center and in other museums.

Benjamin, a host, told me that a young Israeli visitor once took a picture of the Yad Vashem database computer, with the screen showing his grandfather's handwritten page of testimony. When Benjamin approached him and offered a printout of the page, the visitor said that he had accessed this page many times, and could do it at home too, but the very fact that it was in the memorial is important and moving. I heard this same story from other hosts and Foundation workers, who related to the significance of the very existence of the Yad Vashem database in Berlin. The materiality of the computer terminals inside the Berlin Memorial thus blends with the performance of searching and finding something, in this way connecting to an 'authentic' experience of revelation and as a powerful 're-presentation' of the victim in the site that serves to bare memory to the atrocities.

Stoler and Strassler (2000) separate colonial archival production from the politics of its consumption. The initial storage of this information and its openness to research in original archives such as Yad Vashem is separated from the display of this information in other places such as the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, and not just because the location produces a different experience of the archive, and a different context to browsing it. One can browse it from any computer connected to the Internet. It is, and the other four archives at the Berlin Memorial help us see this clearly, an act of saving from oblivion at the new site, achieved through the multiplication of archives or their fragments that (a) speak to the visitor, and (b) produce a database. The Memorials' database and the Memorial debate archive exist only in the Berlin Memorial and act as original archives with the innovation of their virtual materiality: they dwell only in the Information Center, only in a computer.

The Information Center does not offer a biographical exhibition. Instead, it displays fragments of biographical stories, much like other museums,⁷ in order to make identification and understanding of a historical era easier, while keeping the stories broad enough to contain other unknown lost lives. The exhibition, however, tries to create a biographical narrative that uses fragmented personal stories of both the people exhibited and the visitors. They do so in workshops offered by Memorial Foundation guides, trying to bridge the gap between the dead Jewish victims and the living visitors (the majority of whom are Germans), then and now. But they add a layer of engagement with the biographical objects on display. They tell visitors that these objects (like the notes before death, or photos of individuals) had not been recognized in the past for various reasons, most of them having to do with the sheer magnitude of annihilation. They were forgotten, and the memorial, alongside other institutes, saved them from oblivion.

In the following concluding remarks I expose the relations between memory, new media, and the archives in the memorial. As opposed to museums and memorials offering a past which had either taken place on their premises, or is presented in them exclusively as in the example of the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London (Hoskins, 2003), the Holocaust Memorial does not offer a 'documentary past'. It displays a mix of documents, with post-Holocaust references both in the media of display and in the subjects and scope of presentation, reaching to the question of how places, events, and people are remembered or forgotten today.

Recognizing the uniqueness of the information on display in the Information Center's rooms and archives enlarges the evocative power of these objects, since they are not 'authentic' and stand for the 'saving power' of other potential stories and individuals. These objects could exist simultaneously in the past and in the present (Albano, 2007: 18), but we are told that they did not exist for a long awaited past, and would have remained unknown if they had not been researched and displayed here, open for personal research and forming a stronger relationship with the absent subject that is created and documented in them. They thus bind the new experience of the archive with the new burden to research and identify documents and traces that in their second- and third-order research reconnect visitors, guides, scholars, and other memory activists to a new experience of memory. This new experience is always already located in the present, and always potentially changing, in a way that not only diversifies the people who come across this knowledge but also the form and time of their pursuit.

Notes

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1. Taken from the Fortunoff archive of survivors' testimonies at Yale University.
2. As seen in the 2009 visitors' questionnaire in the Information Center.
3. See in the memorial's official website the presentation of the Information Center as complementing the memorial: <http://www.holocaust-mahnmal.de/en/thememorial/informationcentre> (accessed March 28, 2010).
4. I follow the illuminating formulation of archival knowledge of the Graduate Research Program 'Archives, Power, and Knowledge. Organizing, Controlling, and Destroying Stored Knowledge from Antiquity to the Present': <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/geschichte/forschung/gk1049/index.html>.
5. See Confino (2004) on the general trend in German historiography to understand Germany's preoccupation with post-1945 memory of National Socialism.

6. The Information Center is very limited in space and thus the curatorial choices were difficult, alongside the fact that by law, the place could serve neither as a museum, nor as an archive.
7. See Yad Vashem, Lohamey Hagetaot, the Jewish Museum in Berlin, and concentration camps exhibitions. As opposed to this trend, another one can be seen in the new exhibit at the House of the Wannsee Conference, and in the exhibition of the Diaspora museum in Tel Aviv, which features only very few (one or two) authentic objects.

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20

Anachronisms of Media, Anachronisms of Memory: From Collective Memory to a New Memory Ecology

Andrew Hoskins

This essay highlights uneasy orientations to the 'collective' in contemporary discourses of memory and suggests its resonance is in part embedded in another out-of-synch conceptualization of the 'collective', namely that of the 'mass media'. Instead, the paradigm shifts in the fields of media studies and memory studies require a bolder and more comprehensive vision of the nature of media and memory in terms of contemporary 'ecologies' of media/memory (cf. Brown and Hoskins, 2010). This approach illuminates 'connectivity' as one of the key dynamics in the forging and re forging of what I have called the 'mediatization of memory'.

'Collective memory' has a particular resonance in memory studies as well as across a range of disciplines and wider public discourses encountering and examining memory today. Its persistence is in the face of rapid and extensive shifts in the very nature of the ways in which groups and 'the social' are formed, encountered, and self-identified, as well as being increasingly anachronistic when seen amidst the plethora of new and renewed metaphors that seek to shape our comprehension of memory, and a related conceptual and theoretical revolution with the comprehensive splintering of 'memory' into an array of forms and taxonomies.

Despite the discomfort claimed by some as they continue nonetheless to employ the term as pivotal to their analysis, collective memory has a certain resonance in public and academic discourses. Notably this is as a concept, metaphor, and form, in the study of memory that goes beyond (but also includes) that of the individual, as well as imposing a significant presence in the lexicon of debates about societal orientations to the past more broadly conceived. By way of a fairly representative definition of collective memory I take Eviatar Zerubavel's as broadly

instructive. He states: 'Rather than a mere aggregate of the personal recollections of its various members, a community's collective memory includes only those shared by its members as a group. As such, it invokes a common past that they all seem to recall' (2003: 4).

However, it is not possible in the parameters of this chapter to undertake a substantive critique of 'collective memory', nor even (and perhaps more controversially) to posit 'cultural memory' as its near default secondary if not counter-discourse. Rather, I will merely point to a conceptual corollary between collective memory and 'mass media', in their jarring against the paradigmatic shifts underway in the fields of memory and media studies, respectively. Furthermore, these terms are mutually reinforcing ways of restrictive thinking that combine as a transdisciplinary force (albeit not consciously) to inhibit the revelation of the transformations being ushered in by the processes of 'mediatization'.

To expand this point, a supremely significant and consequential shift for memory (individual, social, and cultural) is embedded in the move from the broadcast to the post-broadcast age. None of the 'what', 'how', 'why', and 'when' of remembering and forgetting are untouched by the advent of digital media. The 'mediatization of memory' is premised upon our being at that very juncture of transition of a 'connective turn' (Hoskins, forthcoming), promoting an emergent tension between a perspective overwhelming informed by the theories, models, and methods of an era of unambiguously 'mass' media (including the idea of 'media events'), a corollary of which is the re-establishment of the notion of collective memory, and a diverse if somewhat fragmented scholarship that adopts a more radical position. The latter necessitates a critical re-evaluation of the legacy of mass communication/media studies, and proposes a more dynamic and diffused model of 'the mediation of everything' (Livingstone, 2009). Today, this challenge extends to addressing the impact of the fluidization of digitized content, the revelation of a 'long tail' (Anderson, 2007) of the past, the new modes of participation in semi-public memory through the increasingly affordable and available tools of digital recording and dissemination, as well as the 'inter-medial' and 'trans-medial' (Erll, 2008) dynamics of old and new media, and the related rise of a 'convergence' culture (Jenkins, 2006). Put differently, the mediatization of remembering and forgetting shape and occur within what is rapidly becoming visible as a 'new memory ecology' (Brown and Hoskins 2010; Hoskins, forthcoming).

First, however, I will briefly outline a trend in the development of collective memory discourses especially over the late twentieth century in relation to accounts of 'mass' media, culture, and communication.

Mass media and collective memory

There is a great deal of work that aligns the mass of collective memory with the production, circulation, and consumption of mass products, culture, and media. For instance, Peter N. Stearns (1994: 149) writes: 'the essential expansion and multiplication of modern memory as mass media fabricate and commercialize an ever-growing number of collective memories turning the past into a commodity for mass consumption'; George Lipsitz (2001: viii) argues, 'electronic mass media make collective memory a crucial constituent of individual and group identity in the modern world'; and Barbara Misztal writes: 'In today's society, collective memory is increasingly shaped by specialized institutions: schools, courts, museums and the mass media' (2003: 19). And, drawing on McLuhan (1962) Misztal goes on to state: 'Today, the most important role in the construction of collective memories is played by the mass media' (2003: 21–2). Yet, the notion of an agreed or testable measure, or threshold for collective memory, seems to evade many of the accounts which claim to identify a mass mediated collective memory. In addition, the task seems even more problematic in attempting to grasp the workings and implications of a notion of collective memory especially outside of certain obvious forms of remembering and notably of events whose impact is thought likely to affect a 'sizeable collective' and/or is deemed significant by a society (through its media) at a given time. Thus, as Wulf Kansteiner (2002: 193) argues: 'As one leaves behind the relatively safe ground of eyewitness memories, agency in memory politics, and concern with powerful events like genocide and war, collective memory begins to escape one's conceptual grasp. In fact, one faces a veritable paradox: the more "collective" the medium (that is, the larger its potential or actual audience), the less likely it is that its representation will reflect the collective memory of that audience.' For Kansteiner, this is a part of a methodological problem for memory studies, thus: 'there remains the distinct possibility that the monuments, books, and films whose history has been carefully reconstructed can quickly pass into oblivion without shaping the historical imagination of any individuals or social groups' (2002: 192). Collective memory studies that take various media as their *modus operandi* often perpetuate the homogenization of the 'user-experience' (Merrin, 2008) and worse, temporally extend this homogenization to presume a continuity and stability, both of the collective, and of the memory.

One can look to assumptions as to the nature and impact of the mass media, as well as collective memory, to begin to unravel an explanation.

Nick Couldry (2003, 2005) for example, argues that contemporary social life operates through 'media rituals' that construct the media as providing privileged access to a mythical 'center' of the social sphere. He sees the mass media (or rather what he calls 'central' media) 'through which we imagine ourselves to be connected to the social world' (2005: 60) as reproducing "'the myth of the mediated centre": the belief, or assumption, that there is a social centre to the social world and that, in some sense, the media speak "for" the centre' (2005: 60).

If Couldry's model of the naturalization of media power holds, then one can extrapolate this out to 'the myth of the mediated past', at least in relation to ideas about assumptions as to the role of mass media in forging collective memory. Interestingly, Couldry's (2003) account of media rituals, although including a very small section which notes the likely and growing significance of the Internet, doesn't see the symbolic power of the (central) media as being radically challenged by the growth of digital technologies and media. Indeed, this is despite (or perhaps even because of) his somewhat pessimistic view of the complicity in 'current structures of media power' of 'our standard, centralized concept of mediation' (2003: 139). In other words, Couldry's notion of 'mediation' which he defines as an approach that seeks to shake off the confines of earlier media studies (a much less radical version of Merrin, above) through seeing that 'the very *existence* of media in our societies transforms those societies, for good or ill' (2005: 59, original italics), is far from making the idea of the myth of the mediatized center and thus the symbolic power of the central media redundant.

Couldry's treatment of the mass media and his delimiting of the prospects for a model of mediation are indicative of a disjuncture in media studies around the paradigm shift identified here in terms of an emergent new media ecology (Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 2010). Even with the insight afforded through the critical evaluative tool of mediation, it is clear that the discourses of broadcast-age thinking (institutions and audiences, for example) clutter the way forward.

These unfortunately seem too readily translated into theories of collective memory. For example, Aaron Beim (2007) although acknowledging the power of an array of conceptual frameworks applied to remembrance of the group, argues that collective memory studies have nonetheless been inhibited by defining memory to be collective only when it is institutionalized. Part of the problem for Beim is that 'collective memory analyses conflate the production of the object and its reception' (2007: 7). This is an interesting articulation of the conceptual challenge when applied in the context of the new memory ecology. Namely, a central dynamic of the emergent mediatization of

memory is precisely the complicating of the notions of production and reception. The terms themselves are synonymous with a broadcast era model of mass communication. In fact, it is easy to identify the age of mass media (or 'central media', in Couldry's terms, above) as the age of collective memory, conceptually and experientially. Radio and later television's capacity to mediate simultaneously first to a national and later routinely to a global audience provided in this way a common and shared experience, imagined or otherwise, and thus arguably memories, of nodal news events.

In the academic study of so-called 'media events', i.e. when programming schedules are interrupted and 24-hour news channels move to continuing extended coverage of a major news story, these are seen as extraordinarily powerful in shaping memory. Dayan and Katz (1992: 213), for example, argue: 'media events and their narration are in competition with the writing of history in defining the contents of collective memory. Their disruptive and heroic character is indeed what is remembered, upstaging the efforts of historians and social scientists to perceive continuities and to reach beyond the personal.' The simultaneous televisual mass audience is indeed a seductive phenomenon, both in terms of the supposed unifying reception of the event and the national and/or global collective memory arising from this shared experience of the real-time vicarious witnessing of the event.

Indeed this notion has driven a whole subfield of memory studies, not from sociology or media studies, but from cognitive psychology, namely the study of 'flashbulb memories' (FBMs). In relation to the study of FBMs of public events, psychological approaches have focused on the mass media, and often exclusively television (see Hoskins, 2009a). Notably, this is the remembering of the hearing (and also viewing) of news of a momentous event that marks historical memory (an assassination of a political leader, a natural catastrophe, or a terrorist attack, for example). Of course, the potential influence of the mass media in shaping memory is related to the idea of a 'mass' audience in forging a collective (often simultaneous) reception of an event (i.e. the 'media event': Dayan and Katz, 1992) and its later anniversary-marking (the expansion of Western news programming has fed the current obsession with commemoration and memorialization). Thus, there is little shortage in terms of a glut of recycled and instantly recognizable image stills and video that perpetually feed FBMs, as Hirst and Meksin (2009: 213) succinctly put it: 'Media coverage is the quintessential externally driven act of rehearsal.'

Most of the archetypal media events (the 1967 assassination of US President John F. Kennedy; the 1986 explosion of the space shuttle

Challenger; the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997) that have informed the genesis of FBM studies are products of an age of broadcast media. In this way they carry with them the residues of the medium that they were produced by and experienced through, one might say 'old memory'. Yet their resonance in the new memory ecology is transformed via their accelerated remediation via digital media.

Of course, there is an inherent reflexive dimension to events constructed as nodal in the broadcast era, and particularly in their cyclical feeding by commemorative or memorial cultures. However, the media – or whatever one wants to call the media and communication technologies that forge our everyday connections with others and with 'the world out there' – no longer only or occasionally amplify or cohere memory around or on events they make public and newsworthy. Rather, there is a radical diffusion of memory, through the digital networks of the early twenty-first century (Hoskins, 2009b). This is not to argue that the broadcast media no longer represent public events thought to be nodal in collective memory (mythical or otherwise), for the same commemorative rituals are still played out across a range of news media. For example, in June 2009, the twentieth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre and the sixty-fifth anniversary of the D-Day landings were both filling broadcast airtime and news and other websites (as well as ceremonial events held around the world) and were indicative of the continuing commemorative boom of twentieth-century conflicts and catastrophes. However, it is the digital media which command the revelation of a 'long tail' to past events, the publicly mediated memories of which in the pre-Internet broadcast era, were largely constrained by the mostly cyclical coverage and of course the technological limits of the media of the day.

The expansion of television in the digital age, as well as the vastness and velocity of the Internet, have enabled a greater mixing of the personal and the public, and a routine meshing of the witnesses to events (including those seen as perpetrators and victims) and archives comprising data of these and other events deemed connected. The components of news sites marking the anniversaries of events deemed newsworthy are now well established. The BBC News website, for example, published its '20 Years On: Memories of Tiananmen' pages online on May 28, 2009, comprising an array of photographs, and audio and video recordings of the event and of interviews by the 'people affected by the massacre' as well as by those journalists who also witnessed the event as they reported on it. The memories represented included the accounts of a senior Communist Party official of the day, a student protest

organizer, a bereaved mother, a worker's spokesman, a local resident, and Jeff Widener, the photographer who took the iconic image of the single protester standing in front of the convoy of tanks in the square.

It is too simplistic to see this saturation of commemorative discourses, or even perhaps the commemorative component of the saturation of media, as indicative of an intensification of collective memory. The simultaneous mass audiences of the era of which Dayan and Katz wrote in 1992 have since become diffused in their media consumption across thousands of television channels and millions of websites. Moreover, they have become equipped with the tools of digital consumption, organization, and production, notably as 'prosumers'. Although this is not necessarily the end of media events at which times large audiences tune into television and on-line to breaking news stories deemed momentous, rather it is their later and ongoing mediatization that is more radically diffused and extended in the post-broadcast era. Furthermore, the accumulation and increased accessibility of the digital media documentation of past events may actually diminish a 'collective memory' in the sense defined above, i.e. its strength being adjudged on the basis of a (undefined and unattainable) quantitative measure.

Revolutions

Revolutions create a curious inversion of perception. In ordinary times, people who do no more than describe the world around them are seen as pragmatists, while those who imagine fabulous alternative futures are viewed as radicals. The last couple of decades haven't been ordinary, however. Inside the papers, the pragmatists were the ones simply looking out the window and noticing that the real world was increasingly resembling the unthinkable scenario. These people were treated as if they were barking mad. Meanwhile the people spinning visions of popular walled gardens and enthusiastic micropayment adoption, visions unsupported by reality, were regarded not as charlatans but saviors. (Clay Shirky, 2009)

Shirky in his influential blog observes how despite the industry's awareness of the advance of the Internet it could not envision journalism without newspapers (the 'unthinkable' in his title). In this way searching for an organizational and economic model to 'save newspapers' was (and is) an entirely pointless pursuit. This way of thinking is indicative of a broader field of stubbornly persisting analyses of the nature and influences of that still called by some the study of 'the mass media',

'the media', and 'mass communication' and the forms, technologies, content, influences (power), institutions, owners, controllers, producers, audiences, and other components thereof. I take this problematic as not only a corollary of, but also deeply embedded in contemporary ways of thinking about memory, and especially the ubiquitous notion of collective memory, as already outlined. It is not just that identifying 'paradigmatic' trends is difficult until some time after the changes they usher in have long since become unremarkable, but that resistance is sometimes invested in most by those who have shaped the theories, models, and methods that have illuminated that which is now and suddenly in flux.

To give a pivotal example. In 1998 Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst published their *Audiences: a Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*. Their book proposes a model for conceptualizing audiences developed from a chronology of three audience research paradigms they identify as: (1) 'Behavioral' (audiences were thought to be influenced by 'media effects' and this could be tested through empirical 'before and after' measures); (2) Incorporation/Resistance (this defined audience research in terms of 'ideology', in that members were seen as traversing a spectrum of incorporating and/or resisting the dominant ideology of the day through their media consumption); and (3) the emergent 'Spectacle/Performance' paradigm redefines both what an audience is and what it does. It is this latter idea implying that the very *concept* of 'audience' may actually be challenged (even though in a book called 'Audiences') in relation to its prior history that heralds a significant shift in the field. Abercrombie and Longhurst defined three types of audiences (although not exclusive of one another): 'simple', 'mass', and 'diffused'. The first type, the 'simple', describes the gathering in public spaces involving a high degree of co-presence between spectators and event. The 'mass' is the audiences of mass communication, of the broadcast media, the consumers of the DVD, the video game, for example. The 'diffused' type of audience describes the nature of the audience-media relationship in our 'media drenched society' (1998: 69) in which 'everyone becomes an audience all the time' (1998: 68). Thus, 'being a member of audience is no longer an exceptional event, nor an everyday event. Rather it is constitutive of everyday life' (1998: 68-9).

Although overlooked at the time, particularly the idea of a 'diffused audience' was quite visionary (especially in the context of the date of its publication) and has since gained more traction. Evidence of this comes from the dismissing of Abercrombie and Longhurst by some of the leading audience traditionalists. For example, David Morley

(2006: 115) rejects the need to significantly reconceptualize issues around the advent of 'new media' and paraphrases Abercrombie and Longhurst as he complains that: 'We are endlessly being told that we need to "go beyond" old models of media – and even that we should now abandon the very idea of an audience as a separable entity – as we are now, audiences almost all of the time.' Martin Barker is even more damning in his deriding of what he lumps together as 'a crop of "general theories of the audience"': 'At their worst they are so bad as to be laughable. My own personal "favourite" of this kind is Abercrombie and Longhurst's *Audiences* (1998) ... Not all are as bad as this one, but even at their best, they read more like clever position-taking than as attempts to advance our overall understanding of audiences and audience research' (2006: 126). It is perhaps ironic that both Morley's and Barker's castigation of what they perceive as a threat to the contemporary relevance of the long-standing field of audience research is based on their presentations to a 2003 conference entitled 'The Future of Audience Research'. Whether one is sympathetic to the grounded trajectory of empirical research of the British traditionalists, or whether one sees their position entrenched through a *modus operandi* of the broadcast media, there is nonetheless a clear disjuncture here.

To return to the Shirky extract above, the 'unthinkable scenario' as applied to the world of British media studies is the end of the relevance of the term 'audience'. Continuing this analogy, a modern-day 'pragmatist' in straightforwardly espousing the 'unthinkable' is William Merrin. In his call for a 'Media Studies 2.0' he observes in his 2008 blog: 'Look at the violence done to the richness of the new media user-experience in reducing their functioning to an "audience". They represent instead a fundamental challenge to and transformation of the broadcast-era model of the discipline. They demand a richer, more sophisticated reading of the complexities of the digital era: they demand a post-broadcasting, digital paradigm.' To be fair to Barker and Morley the publication of their articles (above) was three years after their conference presentations, and my using them as exemplars here is another five years on. In terms of the pace and the extent of the technological and cultural developments in digital media in the twenty-first century, this time lag is a lifetime. Thus, the disjuncture I write of here may already have been surpassed, or, as I suspect, even further engrained to a degree that the concept of 'audience' is seen as only a remnant of broadcast models of communication. Moreover, the profound difficulty with attempting to comprehend such rapid and profound changes is that which commentators attempt to describe (especially through the temporal-lags of academic articles

and books) as pre-paradigmatic. So, on 'audiences', for example, Merrin argues: 'For many, new media seemed to offer a realization of the "active audience", extending those practices they had identified with new possibilities of interactivity, but this interpretation is backward-looking, still trying to understand the post-broadcast world through broadcast-era categories.' The difficulty then is not only in providing terms adequate for description and analysis of our experience in and the consequences of the shifting mediatized environment, but also in the prolonged conceptual and theoretical hangover of the terms and parameters of the debate.

To propose an exploration of the new memory ecology then is ambitious, owing to the challenges in identifying and seeking to understand 'revolutions' as with Shirky's articulation above, including the natural resistance to such an endeavor and also to the inherent instability of pre-paradigmatic models. Yet, the two ecologies (of media and memory) are related through the co-evolution of memory and technology, most recently marked by the connective turn. This conceptualization is deliberately in contradistinction to the pervasive and jaded notion of 'collective memory' in that what is needed is a shift of the locus of individual *and* social remembering to the dynamic of connection in the present. However, it is the connectivity and potentiality of connectivity through digital media and communications that not only becomes a greater determinant of what is treated as and becomes 'memory' and that which is forgotten, but also which shapes the very character and quality of memory. Thus, it would be wrong to assume that accessibility and abundance necessarily shape a coherent, deep, and stable social memory, but that the parameters of the terms of remembering and forgetting in our new memory ecology have been transformed. And as the character of mediatized memory in late modern society remains in rapid evolution, some of the recycled broadcast-era explanatory tools appear, unfortunately, to proffer traction over timeliness.

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