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Duindam, D.A.

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Chapter 1: The Dynamics of Sites of Memory

An *in situ* memorial museum mediates a specific narrative relative to the history of its specific location. The question is whether the memory of such a site is inherent to its materiality, or whether this memory is constructed and projected by architects, curators and visitors. This raises various issues which this chapter addresses while situating them within broader academic fields and concerns: particularly memory studies, with a focus on the remediation of memory; critical heritage; museum studies; and the spatial turn. Memory studies investigate many ways in which the past is actively shaped in the present. The study of the remediation of memory focuses on the involved medial processes. It is important to stress that *in situ* sites of memory are not comprised of one coherent discrete medium. Rather, they are spatial configurations that allow visitors to create affective, real and imaginative connections between the past and present. Critical heritage studies emphasizes that heritage is a process in the here-and-now. However, if heritage is merely a construct in the present, why do we attach so much meaning to authenticity? It is therefore important to trace the development of heritage sites. In order to do so, we turn to museum studies and the museum script. This allows us to combine both a synchronic and diachronic perspective by investigating the historical development of the Hollandsche Schouwburg into a memorial museum while analyzing its current presentation. We do so cautiously, aware of the fact that the present situation both embodies and mediates the past, but is not fully determined by it. In the last section, the spatial turn is addressed. The importance of spatial and material characteristics of sites of memory has been underscored by several important memory scholars, a perspective that places these sites within larger networks and landscapes of memory. However, how can we actually account for the dynamic nature of spatial memory?

1. *Performing Memory and the Remediation of the Past*

There is continuous debate over the fundamental concepts and methods of memory studies. The intellectual wealth, unremitting urgency and multi-disciplinary nature of memory studies are testified by various academic journals, handbooks and anthologies.[1] The proliferation of critical concepts such as post-memory; prosthetic

[1] Important publications include *History and Memory* and *Memory Studies*; Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and*

memory; traumatic memory; social memory; communicative memory; and cultural memory has led to productive approaches, but also to a fragmented field without common ground. Historian Alon Confino comes to the conclusion that memory studies 'lack a clear focus and have become somewhat predictable'.[2] Several scholars warn us of 'terminological profusion' and a subsequent loss of 'precise meaning' of the ubiquitous term memory, that can lead to political 'abuses of memory'.[3] One answer to these doubts and objections has been to formulate a very broad definition of the central term: memory as 'the ways in which people construct a sense of the past', memory as 'the ability to retrieve some impression of some past experience or some past event that has had some impact on our minds', or cultural memory as 'the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts'.[4] This dissertation acknowledges the great variety and interdisciplinary character of memory studies and rejects the idea of an overarching readymade theoretical framework. In this section several relevant notions and developments within memory studies are discussed, namely collective memory, *lieu de mémoire*, cultural memory, performativity and remediation.

Memory studies is based on an extensive metaphor, that of human memory, including the related phenomena of forgetfulness; repression; distortion; trauma; self-deception; and misrepresentation. This metaphor has proven to be extremely productive in order to study the different ways in which the past is represented in the present – but it also has its limitations. This becomes apparent when we look at one of the foundational concepts in memory studies: collective memory. This concept is problematic because it evokes the image of a well-defined community with a collective memory that functions according to the mechanisms of individual psychology, including collective trauma and amnesia. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs coined the term in order to argue that individual memory is always shaped by the subject's position in society and that his or her actions are structured by social arrangements. '[I]t is in society that people normally acquire

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Interdisciplinary Handbook (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008); Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

[2] Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (December 1, 1997): 1387.

[3] Wolf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (May 1, 2002): 181; John R Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3; Jay Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the 'Memory Boom' in Contemporary Historical Studies," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, no. 27 (2000): 13; David C. Berliner, "The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology," *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2005): 197–211.

[4] Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History," 1386; Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory - What Is It?," *History and Memory* 8, no. 1 (1996): 43; Erll and Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 2.

their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories'.[5] Halbwachs argues that we have individual or autobiographical memory; collective or historical memory, those events that we only experience indirectly. For instance, we all have personal memories of the country we grew up in, but we also have memories of this country through books, movies and history lessons. According to Halbwachs, these two strands of memory are intertwined, and at some point can no longer be disentangled. The latter is strongly connected to the formation of collective identities: the way the American Civil War is remembered plays a key role in the American identity, just as the Second World War is important to the very notion of being Dutch. This demonstrates the political nature of collective memory, since it relates directly to a politics of identity and subsequent mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Historian Ernst Renan already argued in 1882 that one is obliged to forget painful parts of the past in order to create and maintain a nation.[6]

There is a crucial problem with this conception of collective memory. It assumes that there is such a thing as a collective; a well-defined social group that has a common memory. Halbwachs has been criticized for his anti-individualist approach where one well-bound social group has one or various shared memories.[7] Some researchers stress that Halbwachs never argued that collective memory is a product of a group mind that precedes individual memories, but rather that the collective memory is carried by individual members of the community.[8] Even if that were the case, the problem remains that this collective memory seems to be pre-formed rather than constructed by either a collective or individuals. There is no collective memory that predates the collective; rather, it is in the process of creating a shared image of the past wherein communal ties are forged. The term collective memory acquired a life beyond Halbwachs' work and became a common place for group memory that functions detached from society with all the characteristics of an individual's personal memory, such as amnesia, repression and trauma.[9] Here, we need to be careful of the limitations of memory as a metaphor: a society does not function the same way individuals do. Historian Amos Funkenstein rightfully argues that 'memory can, after all, be attributed only to individuals who act, are aware and remember. Just as a nation cannot eat or dance, it cannot speak or

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[5] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago etc.: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.
[6] Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?," in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, Book, Section vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41–55.
[7] Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chapter 1; Gedi and Elam, "Collective Memory - What Is It?"
[8] Gerald Echterhoff and Martin Saar, *Kontexte und Kulturen des Erinnerns: Maurice Halbwachs und das Paradigma des kollektiven Gedächtnisses* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2002), 21.
[9] Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory," 185–190.

remember.'[10] This dissertation does not employ the term collective memory in order to prevent connotations of a predetermined and coherent entity that underlies a fixed and stable community.

To demonstrate the shortcomings of collective memory and amnesia as conceptual tools for the purpose of this study, it is useful to examine how World War II in the Netherlands was dealt with during the first two decades after liberation. In this early post-war period, commemorations and memorial policy put an emphasis on the heroic efforts of the resistance movement and the Dutch army. The Netherlands was depicted as a small country invaded by its giant neighbor, and collaboration was portrayed as the appalling behavior of a small group that needed to be punished in order to purge society. Within this hegemonic view, there was little room for the persecution of the Jews, as this would put too much strain on the reconstruction of an inclusive and unified Dutch nation. One could argue that the memory of the Shoah was willfully forgotten or repressed. However, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, it would be too simplistic to argue there was one Dutch society that held one collective memory of the war, and that the persecution of the Jews was forgotten or repressed, only to be revealed in the 1960s by historical research. Rather, there was a hegemonic narrative, supported by historians, such as Abel Herzberg and Lou de Jong, by the memorial policy of the government, by commemorations and popular culture. Within this narrative, the persecution of the Jews *was* manifest, however framed within a nationalist memory discourse of unity and resistance.

Halbwachs' work has a lasting influence in the academic field, in particular the notion that individual memory is always socially shaped. Another important insight is his attention for the spatial dimension of memory formation: 'space is a reality that endures: since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in the mind, we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings.'[11] Here, memory is depicted as a process of actively recapturing the past in interaction with an external reality. Historian Pierre Nora further develops this idea in his seminal *Les Lieux de Mémoire*. Nora is much criticized for choosing the French nation as a frame for his work and his almost nostalgic approach to modernity and the end of what he calls memory-history.[12] However, his concept of *lieu de mémoire* is

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[10] Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, 4.
[11] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 140.
[12] Steven Englund, "The Ghost of Nation Past," *Journal of Modern History* 64, no. 2 (1992): 299–320; Richard L. Derderian, "Algeria as a Lieu de Mémoire: Ethnic Minority Memory and National Identity in Contemporary France," *Radical History Review* 83, no. Spring (2002): 28–43; Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vél' d'Hiv' in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (New York:

important, as it shifts our focus from a fixed collective memory to the appropriation of specific media of memory. For Nora, *lieux de mémoire* are not necessarily geographic places such as the Bastille, but also entail symbolic and cultural artifacts such as the French flag or Jeanne d'Arc. Literary scholar and editor of the English edition of *Les Lieux de Mémoire* Lawrence D. Kritzman, defines the *lieu de mémoire* as 'a polyreferential entity that can draw on a multiplicity of cultural myths that are appropriated for different ideological or political purposes'.[13] On the one hand, these *lieux* provide continuity with the past, on the other they are empty containers of meaning that can be appropriated at will. Nora stresses that the past is always already mediated. 'Our knowledge of the past is less a question of our empirical grip on the past than on our apprehension of the past as we represent it through the lens of the present.'[14] *Lieux de mémoire* are over-determined, which makes them susceptible to multiple interpretations. An example is Jeanne d'Arc, a well-known historic figure who is used by both left-wing and right-wing contemporary political parties in France. Where the left frames her as a critic of ecclesiastical power, right-wing parties frame her as an antagonist of foreign influences. Importantly, Nora does not propose to examine which view is correct and debunk the myth, but rather examines the processes of appropriation. He argues that a *lieu de mémoire* 'enables successive generations to mediate their cultural myths by inculcating them with their desires.'[15] They thrive only if they can adapt to new and unforeseen conditions. As such, they are not fixed referents, but rather vessels of an endless multitude of possible meanings. Nora departs from Halbwachs' claim that the past is preserved by our physical surroundings.

It is important to stress that Nora does not provide us with a method for analyzing actual sites of memory such as the Hollandsche Schouwburg as a concrete memorial museum, but only in as far as these have been appropriated and invested with meaning over time by different groups. For Nora, *lieux de mémoire* are not *realia* with an immediate actuality:

> *lieux de mémoire* have no referents in reality; rather, they are their own referents – pure signs. This is not to say that they are without content, physical presence, or history – on the contrary. But what makes them *lieux de mémoire* is precisely that which allows them to escape from history.[16]

Berghahn Books, 2005), 187–190; Van Frank van Vree, "Locale geschiedenis, lieux de mémoire en de dynamiek van de historische cultuur," *Stadsgeschiedenis* 3, no. 1 (2008): 67.

[13] Lawrence D. Kritzman, "Foreword. In Remembrance of Things French," in *Realms of Memory, Part I: Conflicts and Divisions*, by Pierre Nora, vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), x.

[14] Ibid., xii.

[15] Ibid., xiii.

[16] Pierre Nora, "General Introduction. Between Memory and History," in *Realms of Memory, Part I: Conflicts and Divisions*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 19.

The fact that the French flag can be studied as a *lieu de mémoire* clarifies how this approach does not focus on the thing itself, but rather on processes of appropriation. It is also the reason why Nora examines the most canonical historical sites related to the French nation-state, rather than those on the fringe of society. The *lieux* he examines could not be 'more banal or more extraordinary. The topics are obvious, the material is standard'.[17] *Because* they are well-known, they can function as vessels of multiple interpretations or references. His method is not akin to that of Renan, who argues that the historian can unmask the myths of the nation by focusing on the process of active forgetting. It is not about shedding light on important sites that have fallen into oblivion.

Despite Nora's well-wrought argument, his concept *lieu de mémoire* has been subjected to inflation. In his last contribution to the volume, Nora acknowledges that his concept has ended up as a *lieu de mémoire* itself, a pure sign that has been appropriated by others and no longer holds the very specific meaning he had once intended. 'No sooner was the expression *lieu de mémoire* coined than what was forged as a tool for maintaining critical distance became the instrument of commemoration par excellence.'[18] An example of this conceptual inflation is the Dutch version of the *lieu de mémoire* project, which mainly focuses on historical narratives of geographic sites, some of which had been forgotten and were supposed to have been saved from oblivion by this project, rather than studying the internal dynamics of *lieux de mémoire* .[19] In spite of the fact that the term *lieu de mémoire* has lost its critical edge, Nora continues to influence the field of memory studies. His insight that the past is mediated through cultural artifacts that are actively invested with meaning in the present has incited an important shift within memory studies towards the study of cultural memory. However, the term itself is not a guiding concept for this study, since the physical site is central. To mark this difference, we use the term 'site of memory', not as a literal translation of *lieu de mémoire*, but to refer to specific sites where the past is mediated, such as memorial museums. If a part of this past has occurred at this site, we speak of *in situ* sites of memory.

For both Halbwachs and Nora, memory is related to the transfer of specific narratives of the past. Where Halbwachs only incidentally pays attention to

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[17] Ibid., 20.
[18] Pierre Nora, "The Era of Commemoration," in *Realms of Memory, Part III: Symbols*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 609.
[19] Henk Wesseling, ed., *Plaatsen van herinnering*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2005). Most entries seem to have interpreted Nora's concept as the recovering of forgotten sites without focusing on their inherent dynamics, see Joep Leerssen, "Een virtuele 'tour des Pays-Bas'. Nederlandse plaatsen van herinnering," *Ons Erfdeel* 49, no. 5 (2006): 776; Van Vree, "Locale geschiedenis, lieux de mémoire en de dynamiek van de historische cultuur," 66–67.

mediation, Nora specifically mentions that *lieux de mémoire* mediate cultural myths. Both thinkers influenced the conception of cultural memory studies which investigate cultural artifacts that embody a specific account of the past. Memory scholars Jan and Aleida Assmann distinguish two types of memory that are not directly related to individual memory: communicative and cultural memory. Communicative memory is passed on by oral transmission and can move between three or four generations. It is lived and embodied memory communicated in vernacular language. Cultural memory, on the other hand, is mediated by texts, icons and rituals, in a formalized language, and can in theory travel over several millennia.[20] Though it is important to take the mode of transmission into account, this typology evokes a binary opposition between unmediated and direct face-to-face contact versus indirect and detached cultural transmission.

Literary scholar Ann Rigney argues that it 'makes more sense to take mediated, vicarious recollection as our model [...] rather than stick to some ideal form of face-to-face communication in which participants are deemed to share experience in some direct, unmediated way.'[21] According to her, cultural media do not preserve and transfer the past, but rather generate 'shared memories through processes of selection, convergence, recursivity and transfer.'[22] She criticizes the view of 'memory as something that is fully formed in the past (it was once "all there" in the plenitude of experience, as it were) and as something that is subsequently a matter of preserving and keeping alive.'[23] Memory is not a thing but an active process in the present and we should pay attention to the intricate processes of mediation.

Cultural memory studies examine the way cultural artifacts mediate the past. The premise is that memory is a performative act, 'as much a matter of acting out a relationship to the past from a particular point in the present as it is a matter of presenting and retrieving earlier stories.'[24] Historian Jay Winter stresses how this process can be charged with affect.

> The performative act rehearses and recharges the emotion which gave the initial memory or story imbedded in it its sticking power, its resistance to

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[20] Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1992), 48–56; Aleida Assmann, "Re-Framing Memory. Between Individual and Collective Forms of Constructing the Past," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, ed. Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 35–50; Erll and Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 117.
[21] Ann Rigney, "Plenitude, Scarcity and the Circulation of Cultural Memory," *Journal of European Studies* 35, no. 1 (2005): 15 original emphasis.
[22] Ibid., 11.
[23] Ibid., 12.
[24] Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2009), 2.

> erasure or oblivion. Hence affect is always inscribed in performative acts in general and in the performance of memory in particular.[25]

Cultural theorist Mieke Bal emphasizes that this process does not only relate to the present, but also to our desires for the future.[26] If we look more closely at commemorations we will find that stories about past events are reiterated and rituals are performed that foster an affective bond with the past, such as songs, prayers and collective silences. At the same time, the past is adapted to accommodate current events and attitudes. This is an indispensable characteristic of commemorations: they need to relate to the socio-cultural environment of individuals in order to remain relevant and alive; and at the same time provide hope for a better future. They both mirror and co-produce societal changes and developments. When they fail to do so, they are doomed to become obsolete.[27]

Visiting a site of memory is a performative experience that cannot be reproduced just anywhere. That does not mean that such sites are unmediated. Rather, the opposite is true: for without specific media, this would not be a site of memory at all. Literary scholars Astrid Erll and Rigney argue that it is essential to look at the medial processes that are involved. '[I]t is then through the inter-medial reiteration of the story across different platform in the public arena (print, image, internet, commemorative rituals) that the topic takes root in the community.'[28] Different technologies afford different modes of storytelling. Erll and Rigney use the concept remediation introduced by media scholars Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin to investigate how the introduction of new media influences the way a story is told. Remediation implies that new media always follow the logic of prior media forms. According to Bolter and Grusin, media have continually been 'commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other, and this process is integral to media. Media need each other in order to function as media at all.'[29] At the core of this process is the paradoxical double logic of remediation. 'Our culture wants to multiply its media and erase all traces of mediation; ideally it wants to erase its

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[25] Jay Winter, "The Performance of the Past. Memory, History, Identity," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, ed. Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 12.

[26] According to Bal, cultural memory is 'an activity occurring in the present, in which the past is continuously modified and redescribed even as it continues to shape the future.' Mieke Bal, Jonathan V Crewe, and Leo Spitzer, *Acts of Memory. Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), vii.

[27] Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 105–40; Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994).

[28] Erll and Rigney, *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, 2–3.

[29] J. D. Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 55.

media in the very act of multiplying them'.[30] New media claim to provide a more immediate access to reality, but at the same time do so by adding a new layer of mediation, which leads to a form of hypermediacy. These insights are helpful when we investigate sites of memory. Media try to be invisible in their attempt to provide access to the past. However, the past is always mediated, also at *in situ* sites of memory. By focusing on the interaction of media, we can trace a historical development. 'Virtually every site of memory can boast its genealogy of remediation, which is usually tied to the history of media evolution.'[31] It is important not to take a teleological stance when we frame the development of sites in such a way that the development of new media replaces older ones. Instead, we must look at the interaction, assemblage and coexistence of various media strategies.

Memory studies addresses the different ways in which the past is made present. There is no preformed collective memory of a historical period such as World War II, which is subsequently remembered, forgotten or repressed by a stable community. Rather, the past is appropriated and invested with desires from the present and for the future. Cultural artifacts mediate the past in a continuous process of reiteration and transformation in an effort to bring the past ever closer. The past is made present, but at the same time the gap between past and present continues to grow. One of the challenges for curators, writers, artists and other producers of books, movies, museums and artworks that deal with the past is to find the balance between immediacy and hypermediacy.

The focus on the performance and remediation of cultural memory stresses that the past is always mediated and actively performed in the present. However, such a presentist outlook might not do justice to the historical development and complex character of sites of memory. Furthermore, it is important to take into account that such sites do not present one discrete medium, but rather comprise a multitude of media, spaces and technologies that are held together by the implied authenticity of the historic site. To better understand these issues, we will turn to the fields of critical heritage and museum studies.

2. Remnants of the Past: Heritage and the Museum

Where cultural memory studies investigates all kinds of artifacts that mediate the past, heritage studies focuses on those remnants of the past that are selected to construct or support a particular narrative of that past. This process is implicated in a politics of identity because it demarcates what seemingly has always already

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[30] Ibid., 5.
[31] Erll and Rigney, *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, 5.

been recognized as an important part of society. Especially when these remnants are physical, they can be instrumentalized as societal foundations in order to naturalize a certain account of the past. This is the reason why authenticity is deemed so important: when heritage is authentic, it can be used as proof that certain historical events have taken place. However, authenticity at sites of memory is a problematic notion, as we will see throughout this dissertation. Authenticity is either actively preserved and mediated, for instance with the help of a reconstruction or a simple sign that points out the authenticity; or performed and imagined by visitors, who actively look for traces of the past in their search for a meaningful connection to a particular site. The term heritage suggests that these objects, traditions and other cultural phenomena are handed down to us and that we are merely custodians. This suggestion attempts to depoliticize heritage by presenting it as a natural phenomenon. It turns a blind eye to the fact that heritage is produced in the present and is often involved in a political debate about past and present.

Critical heritage studies therefore assume that heritage is not about custodianship, but rather about the active production of a narrative of the past. Heritage is not a fixed set of objects and traditions that need to be preserved, but rather an open and intangible process in the present. This resembles the presentist and constructivist perspective of cultural memory studies which argues that cultural artifacts actively produce rather than pass on an already fully formed account of the past. Though this critical approach enables us to investigate how the past is used in the present, the focus on heritage as a process in the present can lead to a disregard for its historical development and could treat physical artifacts as passive containers that can be filled with any meaning whatsoever. It is therefore important to study both the material and technological development of *in situ* memorial museums.

The past has always been used to create a firm foundation for the present. One way of utilizing the past is through the production of heritage. Robert Shannan Peckham argues that heritage was instrumental in the rise of the nation-state and as such ‘signifies the politicization of culture and the mobilization of cultural forms for ideological ends.’[32] According to historian David Lowenthal, we ‘need a stable past to validate tradition, to confirm our own identity, and to make sense of the present.’[33] He is highly critical of some of the underlying assumptions of such a stable past. It seems to suggest antecedence and thus a temporal continuity of

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[32] Robert Shannan Peckham, *Rethinking Heritage: Cultures and Politics in Europe* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 2.

[33] David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 263.

culture and history. This can be instrumental in discussions about historical and political entitlement. Cultural artifacts play an important role in this process because they ostensibly provide a direct access to the past. Secondly, by keeping the past at bay and turning it into a foreign country, it can no longer threaten us. Furthermore, a stable past offers a sense of continuity that allows us to organize our personal identity.

Because there is so much at stake, heritage often leads to conflict over the recognition of historical events and is often tied to an identity politics of inclusion and exclusion. Lowenthal rightfully claims that 'heritage by its very nature excites partisan extremes. Ready recourse to patrimony fills many vital needs. But it also glamorizes narrow nationalism.'[34] Social scientists J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth likewise argue that conflict is central to heritage. 'At its simplest, all heritage is someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's'.[35] They argue that heritage leads to disinheritance and the marginalization of the historical experiences of others. Sociologist Michael Landzelius takes this to its radical consequence by claiming that the creation and display of heritage often follows a 'politics of institutionalized amnesia, nonrepresentation, and nondisplay.'[36]

The naturalization of heritage is an attempt to de-politicize this phenomenon. In line with this more traditional conception, heritage is presented as a stable selection of authentic artifacts and sites that offers direct and unmediated access to the past. The discourse of authenticity prohibits any alteration of heritage, since this would diminish its authentic status. However, these are erroneous assumptions. Peckham states that in order for heritage to become authentic, it needs to be taken out of its dynamic context and reintegrated into a static environment. Moreover, authenticity is actively performed and imagined by the visitor. This is especially the case when we take sites of memory into consideration. Here, the entire environment is potentially authentic: the expectation of authenticity leads to a hypersensitive mode of perception where any detail can be interpreted as an original trace of the past.

Another important problem of this more traditional view is the idea that our heritage is already fully formed and handed down to us. In reality, it is a product of socio-historical, legal, cultural and economic forces. Brian Graham, G. J. Ashworth and J. E. Tunbridge argue that 'heritage is that part of the past which we

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[34] David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xiv. See further Rob van der Laarse, ed., *Bezeten van vroeger: erfgoed, identiteit en musealisering* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005).

[35] J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: Wiley, 1996), 21.

[36] Michael Landzelius, "Commemorative Dis (re) Membering: Erasing Heritage, Spatializing Disinheritance," *Environment and Planning D* 21, no. 2 (2003): 196.

select in the present of contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political or social'.[37] Though this perspective is a bit too reductive – for instance, who is this collective 'we'? – it does emphasize that heritage is constructed rather than passively inherited. This premise has incited critical heritage studies to reject heritage as the preservation of a given set of artifacts and instead focus on the intangible and performative nature of heritage.[38]

Laurajane Smith claims that there is a discourse that maintains a culturally homogeneous community by naturalizing the practice of heritage preservation and the production of knowledge and expertise. 'At the same time, the "work" that "heritage" "does" as a social and cultural practice is obscured, as a result of the naturalizing effects of what I call the "authorized heritage discourse"'.[39] According to Smith, this discourse privileges the heritage expert and monumental, celebratory sites of heritage that are aesthetically pleasing. The public is framed as passive and empty vessels that consume what they are presented with, and should be educated in order to function as good citizens. Smith presents an alternative vision, heritage as a cultural process that at its core is intangible and 'engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present, and the sites themselves are cultural tools that can facilitate, but are not necessarily vital for, this process.'[40] According to her, heritage is something that remains to be performed by an active public.

The critique on the conception of heritage as a fixed set of artifacts is very important, because it opens up the field to alternative narratives of the past. As such, heritage is no longer a political tool of exclusion, but may also become an instrument of recognition and plurality. However, by focusing on heritage as a process in the present, we might easily disregard the historicity and materiality of historical objects. David Harvey claims that if we do that, 'the only referent that matters is the present, which some have seen as representing a defeat of history and a closing off of any meaningful relationship with the past'.[41] By tracing the material development of sites of memory, we can achieve a better understanding of the interplay between elements that have remained unaltered and those that have been modified or added over time. Furthermore, by investigating how the ideal

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[37] B. J Graham, G. J Ashworth, and J. E Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage. Power, Culture, and Economy* (London: Arnold, 2000), 17.

[38] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Theorizing Heritage," *Ethnomusicology* 39, no. 3 (1995): 367–80; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production," *Museum International* 56, no. 1 (2004): 52–65; Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006); Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[39] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 11.

[40] Ibid., 44.

[41] David Harvey, "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents. Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, no. 4 (2001): 324–325.

visitor has been inscribed in the script of the design, and how actual visitors created new practices that are subsequently incorporated into this design, we may trace the role of visitors in this process.

In order to investigate the interaction between the material site and the visitor, it is constructive to now turn our attention to museum studies. The museum exhibition can be conceived as a mass-medium that tries to regulate the conduct of its visitors by making them move through a space in a certain manor. By ordering artifacts in a specific way, a narrative is created that visitors need to relate to spatially. However, by looking at the museum exhibition as a mass-medium that produces a spatial narrative, we might lose track of two important factors: the material historicity of the museum and the active performance of the visitor itself.

The nineteenth-century museum has often been associated with the increased importance of scientific objectivity, rationality and evolutionary progress of its time. Relatively new sciences such as paleontology and geology made the past visible by placing physical remnants in a coherent narrative. This firmly grounded the present in the past through the prism of evolutionary progress. As a result 'new objects of knowledge were ushered forth into the sphere of scientific visibility.'[42] The museum provided an important space for the public display of these objects. Museum researcher Tony Bennett warns us that we should not reduce the museum to an objective and neutral instrument that, in the name of evolutionary progress, enlists the visitor as progressive and willing subjects. 'This view devalues the effects of the museum's own specific materiality and the organization of its practices.'[43] A museum is not an ahistorical white cube and its material history influences the way it displays its content and interacts with its visitors.

One way to study how a museum organizes the practices of the visitor is to look at its script, the set of implied instructions that are inscribed in the physical layout of a museum that addresses the ideal visitor. Media scholar Julia Noordegraaf investigates the general historical development of the museum script and argues it had a seminal role in the development of the museum throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth century, the museum was both a mass medium and a place for knowledge production for a select group of people. Objects were hung on the wall or encased in transparent vitrines; which simultaneously made them visible while separating them from the public, allowing for large groups of people to pass through the exhibitions. Noordegraaf describes the rise of a new type of museum during the first half of the 20th century under the

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[42] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 178.
[43] Ibid., 179.

influence of new democratic principles. New display principles were introduced and objects were more often shown in isolation. This allowed visitors to appreciate individual artworks and enabled identification with their creators. The museum became a place of quiet contemplation and its architecture should not interfere with observing the artworks. The consequence was an easily understandable floor plan and labels that provided just enough information for initial appreciation.

In the second half of the twentieth century, this ideal of the transparent museum grew more pressing and the mediating role of the exhibition and the museum was made invisible as much as possible through the introduction of functionalist architecture. 'In the transparent, post-war museum, all elements of the script were placed in the service of a direct, unmediated experience of the art works on display.'[44] Not only the museum, but also the visitor was idealized as a disembodied eye that had no physical presence or influence and had to be guided by an invisible script, which was criticized in the late twentieth century, when 'the mediating role of the script of presentation was made visible again.'[45] The rise of the spectacular museum, such as the creations of Frank Gehry or the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind, and the so-called experience museum are exponents of this development. The former emphasizes the architecture of the museum and the latter does not transfer knowledge by displaying objects in the context of a traditional (art-)historical narrative or in isolation, but rather 'in action', allowing visitors to almost automatically understand them. 'As in the theatre, the story is told with the help of props and décor. Consequently, the amount of written information is greatly reduced. Instead, the qualities of the objects are suggested by the setting in which they are staged.'[46] Noordegraaf further argues that in the experience museum, authentic objects and props are no longer fundamentally opposed and new media technologies are employed to meet the expectations and tap into the daily lives of visitors.

By looking at the general historical development of how museums address their visitors, we get a sense of how the ideal visitor has been envisioned and inscribed in the material layout of museum exhibitions. However, the original museum script does not determine the behavior of actual visitors who might not understand or choose to disregard this set of instructions. It is therefore essential that we also look at the visiting practices. Bennett suggests that we should 'view the narrative machinery of the museum as providing a context for a performance that [is] simultaneously bodily and mental (and in ways which question the terms of

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[44] Julia Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display: Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Visual Culture* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2004), 149.
[45] Ibid., 197.
[46] Ibid., 219.

such a duality)'.[47] Noordegraaf stresses that the script of museums is constantly modified in reaction to the behavior of visitors, and therefore is coproduced by curators and visitors.

The museum exhibition is not a neutral medium that is constructed *ex novo*, but rather a palimpsest embedded within the physical layout of the museum. The *in situ* memorial museum is a special type of museum since it essentially exhibits its own history. It therefore must be physically inserted into its narrative. It is unproductive to identify this type of museum as a discrete and identifiable medium. It is more instructive to understand the *in situ* memorial museum as a fragmented spatial configuration of multiple media, technologies, scripts and artifacts. By doing so, we can see how various scripts have been introduced over time and can compete with each other, accounting for the material historicity of this site type. This allows us to understand how the visitor transforms small fragments and details of the building into indexical markers that provide a connection to the past that is imagined and affective rather than presented as part of a coherent narrative.

3. *The Spatial and Performative Character of Urban Memory*

This section explores the intricate relations between memory and space, which has been a recurring topic within the field of memory studies. The stabilizing quality of space has often been employed to stratify certain accounts of the past, similar to sites of heritage and cultural artifacts. However, space is also actively constructed, both by architects and city planners as well as by its users, as argued by philosophers such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault. Space is always part of a larger network and is constantly used by city dwellers in old and new ways. Historical events leave only fragmented traces that need to be contextualized by either architectural or artistic interventions. It is important to take the construction of space into account, because it allows us to understand why memory and heritage have the ability to spatially proliferate, as will be demonstrated in chapter 5.

The relationship between space and memory dates back to a long tradition of mnemonic strategies. Historian Frances Yates demonstrates how Medieval and Renaissance orators envisioned imaginary spaces in order to memorize speeches.[48] An essential element of this technique was the sequential ordering of spaces, for instance rooms in a building, where every room held a cue to a specific part of a speech. People would reuse the same imaginary space for different speeches. For

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[47] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 179.
[48] Frances Amelia Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

them, the imaginary space was a tool that enabled the memorialization of a predetermined narrative, and had little to do with the transmission of memory in an actual space. However, it does point to several crucial notions of spatial memory: the role of imagination; the active performance of the person who is doing the remembering; and the fact that one space can both hold different memories at once and simultaneously provide a sequential narrative. Philosopher Edward Casey argues that memory needs places in order to endure.

> It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported.[49]

Nora acknowledges this. 'Memory fastens upon sites, whereas history fastens upon events.'[50] Memory scholar Jan Assmann argues that communities try to stabilize their shared identities by localizing them. 'Any group that wants to consolidate itself will make an effort to find and establish a base for itself [...]. Memory needs places and tends towards spatialization.'[51] Dolores Hayden argues that such places of memory have a dual function: 'places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present.'[52] Space seems to be the adversary of time: where our memory fades in time, we might battle this amnesia by connecting it to concrete spaces. A paradoxical logic underlies this idea: we may use spaces to stabilize our memory; but we need to construct or alter these spaces in order to do so. The constructed nature of sites of memory refutes the idea that these places somehow provide immediate access to a fixed and stable past, even if their material nature suggests a self-evident permanence.[53]

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[49] Edward S Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 186–187.
[50] Nora, "General Introduction. Between Memory and History," 18.
[51] Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 25.
[52] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 46.
[53] Laurajane Smith points out that in the Western tradition, the material basis of heritage is often emphasized in order to naturalize a specific account of the past. See Smith, *Uses of Heritage*. M. Christine Boyer terms sites that support national myths rhetorical topoi that are 'civic compositions that teach us about our national heritage and our public responsibilities and assume that the urban landscape itself is the emblematic embodiment of power and memory.' M. C. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 321.

The assumed stabilizing quality of space offers both an opportunity and a risk. It can bring certain pasts to the forefront, but at the same time leave other pasts unexposed. Absence is thus at the basis of every presence, a dialectical relationship that is always unsettled and potentially unsettling.[54] Urban space in particular has been connected to the production and materialization of modern memory, since this particular space seems to provide something of a public realm that abounds with traces of the past.[55] Walter Benjamin introduces the literary figure of the wandering flâneur for whom every city-street can offer a 'vertiginous experience' and where 'far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the present moment'.[56] For Benjamin, the flâneur symbolizes the individual who was able to counter modernity's urban condition of constant flux, stimulus and change by finding fragments and discovering marginal places that allowed a form of remembering that was not necessarily born out of personal experience. The constant shifts of attention, inherent to urban life, provide the possibility of a critical awareness of the intermingling of present and the past.[57]

For Halbwachs, the city is an important place for the construction of collective and individual identities.[58] According to him, all memory is socially constructed around some concept of space, since spatial imagery provides a much-needed stability that puts us in contact with the past. He turns to the city of London to demonstrate his argument, describing how during his first visit to London he seems to remember most of the landmarks through the mediation of Charles Dickens and others.

> Many impressions during my first visit to London – St. Paul's, Mansion House, the Strand, or the Inns of Court – reminded me of Dickens' novels

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[54] Architect Peter Eisenman, designer of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, uses the notion of presence in absence in his work. He is criticized for his too facile and anti-humanist position by John MacArthur: 'Eisenman's play on absence contests the canon only to restate it and claim its authority. His is not so much a deconstruction of presence as an appropriation of the rhetoric of absence.' John Macarthur, "Experiencing Absence: Eisenman and Derrida, Benjamin and Schwitters," in *Knowledge And/or/of Experience*, ed. John Macarthur (Brisbane: Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1993), 107.

[55] Art historian Mark Crinson describes the city as a 'collective spatiality', a realm that is not purely private but rather shared with others. See Mark Crinson, *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City* (London: Routledge, 2005), xiii.

[56] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1999), 262; Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 419.

[57] Uta Staiger, Henriette Steiner, and Andrew Webber, *Memory Culture and the Contemporary City: Building Sites* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4. The flâneur, whose modern reincarnation is the city dweller, is characterized by mobility and creative imagination, and is a highly privileged and male subject. For a critique on the male character of the flâneur, see Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flaneuse. Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2, no. 3 (1985): 37–46.

[58] Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. For a critical review of his work, see Gedi and Elam, "Collective Memory - What Is It?"; Echterhoff and Saar, *Kontexte und Kulturen des Erinnerns: Maurice Halbwachs und das Paradigma des kollektiven Gedächtnisses*. See chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of Halbwachs' work.

> read in childhood, so I took my walk with Dickens. [...] I can [...] recognize in myself many ideas and ways of thinking that could not have originated with me.[59]

Both Benjamin and Halbwachs argue that in the city, ideas and memories emerge that are not entirely individual, but are rather formed in contact with the urban environment, in streets, districts and neighborhoods. The city does not hold a fixed and readable collective memory, but rather provides a concrete and somewhat stable place where individuals can produce individual experiences that somehow connect to past, present and future experiences of others.

The Italian architect Aldo Rossi is greatly influenced by Halbwachs' ideas and argues that a city is not the product of a blueprint design, but rather of the historical events that took place there. He therefore rejects the modernist architectural agenda that sees the city as a tabula rasa, and rather envisions the city as the unique result of its own past.

> For Rossi, the city is a theater of human events. This theater is no longer just a representation; it is a reality. It absorbs events and feelings, and every new event contains within it a memory of the past and a potential memory of the future. Thus, while the locus is a site which can accommodate a series of events, it also in itself *constitutes* an event.[60]

Rossi touches upon an important characteristic of space that was already recognized by Benjamin, namely that one site can accommodate different events. Benjamin terms this 'the colportage phenomenon of space', where one space refers to different historic events and in which the flâneur 'experiences an uncanny thickening and layering of phenomena, an effect of superimposition, in which remembered events or habitations show through the present time and place.'[61] In a similar vein, Foucault argues that we are 'in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition [...].'[62] According to him, every culture has heterotopias, concrete sites that are symbolically connected to other relevant cultural sites and can represent, contest of invert those. Examples are the cemetery, where state, religious and individual relations come together, and the theater that can hold an infinite number of other (imaginary) spaces.

These notions of simultaneity, colportage and the city as theater underscore how sites of memory can be appropriated by city dwellers to construct a narrative of the present and the past. The question is then, how much of this is

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[59] Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 23–24. For a critical discussion of Halbwachs' theory, see chapter 1.
[60] Peter Eisenman, "Editor's Introduction," in *The Architecture of the City*, by Aldo Rossi (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), 7, original emphasis.
[61] Howard Eiland, "Superimposition in Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project," *Telos*, no. 138 (2007): 122.
[62] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (1984): 22.

performed by the visitor and how much is inherent to the site itself. Memory scholar James Young stresses that the meaning of a monument is always related to a larger, topographical network, be it urban, regional or global, that provides some contextual frame. A site of memory according to Young is:

> one node among others in a topographical matrix that orients the rememberer and creates meaning in both the land and our recollections. For like narrative, which automatically locates events in linear sequence, the memorial also brings events into some cognitive order. In this sense, any memorial marker in the landscape, no matter how alien to its surroundings, is still perceived in the midst of its geography, in some relation to other landmarks nearby.[63]

The traces of the past are fragments that are only brought together in the eyes of the beholder and this network is not fixed, but actively produced by the 'rememberer'. Literary scholar Andreas Huyssen argues that we read and write cities and buildings as palimpsests full of traces of past events. In spite of Freud's remark that the same space cannot hold two different contents, an 'urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place: memories of what there was before, imagined alternatives to what there is. The strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasure, losses, and heterotopias.'[64] The city is not a fixed text that can be read straightforwardly, but rather something that we actively write while simultaneously preserving older traces.

The idea that memory is the active process of reconstructing the past; rather than a passive and neutral retrieval of stable historical narratives, also holds true for space. It is not a static sign that refers to a fixed and readable past, but rather a dynamic network in which people can perform the past. There is a difference between the intended and actual use of spaces. Certeau distinguishes space from place to indicate this difference. Where a place is the designed and intentional function of, say, a city park, this park only becomes a space when it is actively used. In his terms, a space is an actualized place, a relationship that may be compared to an isolated word on paper versus a spoken word. In 'speaking' the city, individuals are able to appropriate places and insert ambiguity, allowing for a slippage of meaning. 'In contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a "proper." In short, *space is a practiced place*. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by

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[63] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 7.
[64] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 7.

walkers.'[65] Where the city planner tries to define the practices of the city dweller and for instance prevent illegal practices such as walking on grass by placing fences or other borders, inhabitants can ignore these rules.

A similar discrepancy can be found at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. One could argue that the function of this site is to commemorate the victims of the Shoah. However, the open design and lack of stated meaning invites visitors to play around, jump from stone to stone and insert their own narratives. Here, the behavior of visitors and the meaning of the memorial are not predefined by the architect Peter Eisenman. 'The architect prefers that the pillars, though stone-like, remain underdetermined and open to many readings [...].'[66] Nor did he condemn playful and even potentially disrespectful practices such as jumping from stone to stone and graffiti-tagging. In spite of his wishes, the foundation responsible for the memorial has posted rules and hired guards to prevent such behavior and applied an anti-graffiti layer to the stelae.[67] Here we find a looping system: the unwanted behavior of visitors is counteracted by the managing party. The model of Certeau does not account for such a circular interaction. In contrast to Certeau, Lefebvre argues that spaces are simultaneously lived, conceived and perceived.[68] If we use Certeau's terms against himself, we could argue that there is no place before space. If you look at the example of a park, it is conceived of as a place for recreation, it plays an important part in our collective perception of what a healthy city should have, and in practice can be used for both recreation and criminal activities. Where for Certeau, the practice of (mis-)interpreting the city against the design of the city-planner and broader cultural schemes enable moments of resistance, for Lefebvre the three realms of lived, conceived and perceived space are interconnected.

Lefebvre's triadic structure has been criticized for being too reductive.[69] When we turn to *in situ* sites of memory, Lefebvre's triadic scheme indeed cannot account for the role of past events and the complex issues of mediation of cultural

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[65] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 117, original emphasis.
[66] James E. Young, "Germany's Holocaust Memorial Problem—and Mine," *The Public Historian* 24, no. 4 (2002): 79.
[67] Quentin Stevens, "Visitor Responses at Berlin's Holocaust Memorial: Contrary to Conventions, Expectations and Rules," *Public Art Dialogue* 2, no. 1 (2012): 34–59.
[68] "That the lived, conceived, and perceived realms should be interconnected, so that the 'subject', the individual member of a given social group, may move from one to another without confusion – so much is a logical necessity.' Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 40.
[69] Sociologist Edward Soja stresses that we should not stop at these three terms. 'The "third" term [...] is not sanctified in and of itself. The critique is not meant to stop at three, to construct a holy trinity, but to build further, to move on, to continuously expand the production of knowledge beyond what is presently known. Lefebvre organizes The Production of Space around just such a thirding of his own longstanding interest in the dialectic of the lived and the conceived, the "real" and the "imagined", the material world and our thoughts about it.' Edward W Soja, *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 61.

memory. However, his point that different imaginations and usages of spaces can coincide and intersect is indeed instructive. We should not focus merely on the intended and conceived function of memorial museums, but should also recognize that city dwellers appropriate such sites on their own terms. In the case of the Hollandsche Schouwburg, they may interpret it as former theater, a memorial, a museum, a beautiful building or a non-place.[70] The relationship between building and city dweller can be described in similar terms as the museum script, where the curator and visitor co-produced the exhibition. In the case of the building's role in the cityscape, there is a fundamental simultaneity of conceived, perceived and lived space; in the eyes of the curator, architect and visitor. Within this dynamic field, the memory of the building is co-produced by different actors, as will be described below.

In spite of the great diversity of opinions these thinkers bring to the surface, there are some points of agreement in their ideas of urban memory that are relevant for the study of *in situ* memorial museums: simultaneity; fragmented traces of the past; collective imaginaries and connectedness to other places. Space has both a dynamic and stable character that allows people to imagine a direct link to past events. The imagined simultaneity of past, present and future is an important characteristic of *in situ* sites that enables both individuals and institutions to bring these three together. The premise of chapter 5 is that this process of meaning production can easily spill over to neighboring structures of such sites, possibly undermining the initial intention of stabilizing and specifying a past event by coupling it to a specific location. The spatial proliferation of memory can either become a problem or offer an opportunity to bring the memory in contact with the public sphere and the urban dweller.

In situ memorial museums provide a spatial arrangement of artifacts, media and technologies that allow visitors to imagine how past events have taken place. As we have seen in this chapter, these sites present us with various complex issues. Though the past is actively mediated by these sites, they should not be understood as discrete media that are legible, but rather as spatial configurations that provide a context for visitors to perform a connection and understanding of the past. Sites of memory are not stable anchors of the past, but nodes in larger and every-changing networks. The dynamic nature of these sites does not mean we should disregard

[70] Merel de Kok examined the name recognition of the Hollandsche Schouwburg in 2011 and 2012. About 70% of Amsterdam inhabitants were familiar with the site, versus 40% of Dutchmen outside of Amsterdam and 5% of foreigners. Merel de Kok, "Een nadere kennismaking. Bevolkingsonderzoek en publieksonderzoek, september 2011 - februari 2012," Visitors survey (Amsterdam: Hollandsche Schouwburg & Joods Historisch Museum, February 29, 2012), 21–22. Many people I encountered had no idea what the history of this site was, and wondered what kind of theater it was.

their historical, institutional and material development. Why does a building such as the Hollandsche Schouwburg become a site of memory in the first place? How is this painful heritage framed in the hegemonic memory discourse? And how can we trace these developments in the current presentation of these sites? These issues are investigated in the following chapters before we turn our attention to the proliferation of spatial memory in the final chapter.