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## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Lieux de mémoire – A European transfer story

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### Introduction

If an imaginary European History Academy had to choose the word of the last 20 years in historiography, then undoubtedly *lieux de mémoire* – realms of memory, or *Erinnerungsorte* in German – would be on the short list. The writings of Pierre Nora on *lieux de mémoire* have successfully created a meta-concept able to unite the growing studies on memory. Rarely has a notion coined by one person spread so rapidly through the Western academic world. But the homonym of the translations can be treacherous, hiding a heterogeneity of meanings. The following chapter tries to answer three questions. In which intellectual context did the original *lieux de mémoire* emerge? What was the discursive subtext of the whole enterprise? And how was the theoretical frame translated into practice? In a second step, I will try to trace the European success of the concept by analysing how the French paradigm of *lieux de mémoire* was introduced into other national historiographic traditions.

### French spaces

The *lieux de mémoire* project developed during an academic course organized by Pierre Nora in the late 1970s at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. Nora, the initiator, was at that moment already a

well-established historian and publicist. His starting point was a pessimistic one: 'the rapid disappearance of our national memory seemed to call for a list of these places'.<sup>1</sup> Collective memory seemed to have ceased to exist at the beginning of the 1980s. Nora's initial purpose was thus to establish an inventory of a fading memory. Ten years later, after the *bicentenaire* of the French revolution and the debates about the Vichy regime, Nora complained that French society was saturated by too much memory. The wish to chart national history/national memory was accompanied by a desire for a history of the 'second degree'. Such a history was not so much interested in examining reality itself as in how this reality was remembered. The project should however not be qualified as postmodernist, since Pierre Nora maintained a strict distinction between (subjective) memory and (objective) history.

The original *lieux de mémoire* project emerged from within the framework of French national historiography. In his introduction of 1984, Pierre Nora spoke of 'our national memory' ('notre mémoire nationale'), not of the 'French national memory', illustrating the historian's proximity to the subject of his analysis.<sup>2</sup> The subdivision of the books – *La République*, *La Nation*, *Les France* – further 'nationalised' the whole undertaking. This configuration, which structured the whole project, seemed rather difficult to export to other historiographies. It is interesting to note that no other country has tried to bind its narrative to a similarly rigid structure. Moreover, the vast majority of the participating historians in the writing of the *Lieux de mémoire* were of French nationality. The whole undertaking was evidently written for a French readership (and) in a French context.

The constructivist approach towards the nation which shaped the project was at that time a common paradigm within French historiography (Le Goff, Furet, Joutard). What is astonishing is the almost complete absence of any theoretical background besides the work of Maurice Halbwachs.<sup>3</sup> Maurice Halbwachs had published in the interwar period on the social construction of memory, taking issue with Sigmund Freud and Henri Bergson, who explained memory on an individual level. The French sociologist stressed the importance of the collective frames in which memory is organized and is expressed.

The seven-volume *Les lieux de mémoire* constitutes a heterogeneous collection of articles on different (im)material places of memory. Indeed, and this is probably one of the more attractive aspects of the project, Pierre Nora defined the *lieux de mémoire* as identity projection screens that could be a place like the Eiffel Tower, a book like *Le tour de France par deux enfants* or a more abstract concept such as *Le génie français* or *Le local*. All three elements, at different levels, played an important role in the definition of French identity. Nora defines *lieux de mémoire* on three levels: a material one, a functional one and a symbolic one. But despite this rather loose and open definition, the more than 130 articles more often provide a specialist's view on a given subject rather than inscribing it into this broader theoretical framework.

The influence of international historiography on the French project was rather limited. Classics on nationalism such as Anthony Smith's

*The Ethnic Revival* or Karl Deutsch's *Nationalism and Social Communication* were not mentioned, neither was the influential work of Aby Warburg, a cultural theorist from the interwar period.<sup>4</sup> When reading the 132 articles, the absence of a common methodological background is very obvious. Nevertheless, the *Lieux de mémoire* were very well received by national newspapers and academic journals alike. Almost 100,000 copies were sold, and Pierre Nora was made a member of the Académie française.

Despite the unmitigated French character of this undertaking, the concept of the *lieux de mémoire* became one of the major export products of recent French historiography. Yet the historian who had developed the terminology took a rather ambiguous view of the internationalization of the *lieux de mémoire*. In an article from 1993, entitled 'La notion de "lieu de mémoire", est-elle exportable?', he expressed his scepticism. Several elements he adjudged to be problematic. First of all, the word *lieu de mémoire* itself, taken from Cicero's *locus memoriae*, could not be translated into English, German or Spanish, according to Pierre Nora. Secondly, Nora was convinced that the undertaking had been born in a specifically French context: the evolution from history to memory, and the triumph of the latter. In no other country, he believed, had the role played by historians been so important in the nation-building process. Finally, the structure of the undertaking was genuinely French. In no other country, would the tripartite distinction – *La République*, *La Nation*, *Les France* – make any sense.<sup>5</sup> Even if Pierre Nora's opposition weakened in the following years, his scepticism remained. In 1994, he pleaded for a comparative history of memory and concluded that 'en matière de mémoire, il n'y a pas d'"exception française"' ('in terms of memory, there is no "French exception"'). Yet only a few pages further on, he speaks of a 'surdétermination mémorielle' ('overdetermination by memory') specific to the French model.<sup>6</sup> By 2001, his opposition had further weakened: the differences between Germany and France he no longer considered to be of a conceptual nature, but rather related to the contents.<sup>7</sup>

Several developments prove the international success of the *Lieux de mémoire*: translations into other languages, the presence of the seven volumes in all major European national libraries and the transfer of the concept into other national historiographic discourses, for instance. Although the original *Lieux de mémoire* were never translated in their entirety, there are partial translations in English and German. In most Western European national libraries, it is possible to find the seven French volumes. But, with the exception of Poland and Serbia, no national library in the former Eastern bloc countries has acquired the original *Lieux de mémoire*. Despite the importance of social memories for the reconstruction of Eastern European societies, to which many French historians pointed at a very early stage,<sup>8</sup> it was only recently that Pierre Nora's ideas entered historiographical discourse on Eastern Europe, be it at conferences,<sup>9</sup> or in academic journals.<sup>10</sup>

The English edition, which regroups 46 of the original 132 articles in three volumes, was published by an academic publisher in the United States (Columbia University Press) 4 years after the last volume had been printed

in France. *Realms of Memory* were co-edited by Lawrence Kritzman, a specialist of French cultural history. His role as a French-American mediator had already been important prior to this translation: in 1990, he had been made *chevalier* by the French government,<sup>11</sup> and the research centre that is directed by Kritzman is partly financed by the French government.<sup>12</sup> Even if the French version had received some reviews in the Anglophone press, it was only through the translation that it became accessible to a wider readership. The English version was reorganized around three themes: *Conflict and Divisions*, *Traditions and Symbols*. While the newspaper reviews were largely positive, the major historical journals proved to be rather critical. The opinion expressed by Hue-Tam Ho Tai in the *American Historical Review* may be considered representative: 'the contents and conflicts that are so amply documented in the collection are not about France per se but about the nature of its national identity. . . . This is a France that is indivisible';<sup>13</sup> thus regionalism is absent, as are the colonies, gender, etc. Finally, only the masculine *France profonde* is present in the *Realms of Memory*. The same could be said about the original *Lieux de mémoire*. As far as the availability of the English translation in European libraries is concerned, the situation is similar to that of the original *Lieux de mémoire*: it can be found in most of the Western European national libraries, but only in very few of the Central and Eastern European national libraries.

In Germany, Pierre Nora's ideas were translated even before all the volumes of the *Lieux de mémoire* had been published. In 1990, the small but well-known Wagenbach publishing house edited a short book with three articles and a new preface by Pierre Nora. Eight years later, one of the major paperback publishers in Germany, the Fischer Verlag, republished this version,<sup>14</sup> and most of the larger German libraries hold a copy of this book. It was only in 2005 that 16 articles from the *Lieux de mémoire* were translated into German. While the original French *Lieux de mémoire* are frequently cited in German works, it is evident that most authors mainly used the abridged translation from 1990. In a book anticipating the German *Erinnerungsorte*, Editor Constanze Carcenac-Lecomte refers in the first footnote of her introduction to the *Lieux de mémoire*. On the following pages, however, there is only one single reference to the original edition, but 23 to the translation.<sup>15</sup> In general, the only articles from the *Lieux de mémoire* that seemed to have been read – not only in Germany – are those written by Pierre Nora himself.

## European spaces

In addition to the impact of these translations, Nora's topography of French collective memory inspired numerous similar undertakings in several European countries. In Italy and Germany, two large projects were launched that deserve a closer look.<sup>16</sup>

Even if the Italian undertaking is on a somewhat smaller scale than the *lieux de mémoire* – 'only' three volumes and 60 authors – it follows the French example very closely. At the end of the first volume, the editor, Mario Isnenghi, clearly refers to the influence of Pierre Nora, writing that 'la prima . . . dalle stimolazioni venute dal grande progetto portato a termine de Pierre Nora a dai suoi collaboratori inventando e divulgando anche il concetto dei "lieux de mémoire"' ('the first motivation . . . came from the great project realized by Pierre Nora and his colleagues who invented and disseminated the concept of the *lieux de mémoire*').<sup>17</sup> Two key sources of methodological inspiration can be traced back to Pierre Nora's introduction: Maurice Halbwachs and the duo Hobsbawm/Ranger. Neither the editor nor the authors – with the exception of Marco Fincardi, who had studied at Pierre Nora's home institution, the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* – had any direct link with France or French historiography. But the Italian historical sciences are generally very French-oriented. Moreover, several authors, in contrast to their German colleagues, referred directly to the *Lieux de mémoire* in their articles, illustrating the widespread diffusion of the book in Italy. The *Luoghi della memoria* were relatively well reviewed by the academics,<sup>18</sup> but were not a great success for the publisher: there was no second edition, and no paperback version. The publication of the *Luoghi della memoria* was however overshadowed by a conflict between Isnenghi and Nora. Pierre Nora himself had plans to launch a collection of Italian *lieux de mémoire*, which he had to abandon once the Isnenghi project was published.<sup>19</sup> This clash revealed two things. On the one hand, the term *lieux de mémoire* quickly developed a market value for publishers. On the other hand, this raised the issue of who actually holds the 'copyright' for the concept. Pierre Nora did not just want others to acknowledge their indebtedness to his work: he wanted to enforce a certain right of supervision over any similar project. This seems a rather unusual wish, but surprisingly, several of the other project coordinators involved Pierre Nora directly in their work as it was progressing.

Apart from the French *lieux de mémoire*, the German edition was without any doubt the biggest and commercially most successful undertaking. As was the case with the French project, the project was launched through an academic course. This was co-organized by Hagen Schulze, former director of the German Historical Institute in London and a specialist on the German nation-building process, and Étienne François. François, professor at the University of Paris I, had been director of a French-German research centre in Berlin, the *Centre Marc Bloch*, and was the director of the *Frankreichzentrum* at the Technical University in Berlin at the time when the *Erinnerungsorte* were published. His personal contacts with the French and Parisian academic field as well as his access to institutional resources proved to be an ideal background for the transfer of the French concept to a German context. Several preliminary conferences were thus organized at the *Centre Marc Bloch*, confronting German social scientists with the concept of the *lieux de mémoire*.<sup>20</sup>

The German *Erinnerungsorte* placed themselves in a rather a-critical genealogical relation to the initial French project, as is illustrated by Pierre Nora writing the afterword. Whereas Nora is acknowledged as one of their major inspirations from page one already, François and Schulze do not openly refer in their methodological introduction to any of the critical reviews the *Lieux de mémoire* had triggered. On the other hand, and contrary to the French model, the editors try to elaborate a broader theoretical background. They discuss quite extensively the work of the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs, stressing the importance of collective frames in organizing memory. The French historian Henry Rousso and the German cultural scientist Aleida Assmann constitute the two other major reference points. Rousso pointed out the important tension between memory and oblivion, an oblivion that allows for the existence of memory. Assmann provided the tools to deal with the opposition between history and memory. For Assmann, history leads a double life: as science and as memory. Both do not necessarily compete, nor are they contradictory: rather they are two different ways by which to link the past to the present.<sup>21</sup> In trying to open up the concept, *Erinnerungsorte* offered a far more eclectic approach, including articles, for instance, on the *Bundesliga* (the German Premier League), the *Schreibergarten* (allotment garden), but also on Goethe and the Berlin Wall.

The reception of the *Erinnerungsorte* was however quite critical; the result was seen as too essayistic, too 'museal' (antiquated), as too arbitrary in terms of the selection made – and as not popular enough. Even if the German contributions attempt to underline the discontinuity of national history, some observers still condemn what they see as a too homogeneous presentation of German history in the *Erinnerungsorte* volumes.<sup>22</sup>

A comparative analysis of the French and the German undertakings reveals much that is significant. Both projects are more or less of the same scale. Both projects clearly had national ambitions, and this is certainly how they were understood in academic circles. Both projects tried to address the scientific community and the larger educated public (*Bildungsbürgertum*). But contrary to the French project, which was clearly part of a larger project of nation building, the German *Erinnerungsorte* was not so much defined by a sense of the continuity of history.<sup>23</sup> A comparison of the authors, even if the samples are rather small, produces some interesting hypotheses concerning the historiographical fields in both countries. For some aspects, figures relating to the somewhat smaller Italian project are included in the comparison.

The first difference is gender-related. While female authors made up 12 per cent of those involved in the *Lieux de mémoire* project, every fifth author of the *Erinnerungsorte* contributions was a woman. More important is the dissimilarity concerning the citizenship of the authors. In the French undertaking, the participation of foreign historians was limited: the non-French authors came from five countries (United States, Israel, Italy, Poland,

Switzerland, Germany) and represented 8 per cent of all authors. François and Schulze asked twice as many foreigners, hailing from four countries (France, Great Britain, Israel and Poland). Four-fifths of the foreign historians in the *Erinnerungsorte* project originate from France, which shows the importance of the personal links – Étienne François – and institutional networks – Centre Marc Bloch and *Frankreichzentrum/TU Berlin* – within the context of which the German project was conceived. The German undertaking was also clearly placed within a broader European framework, not only due to the international composition of the authors, but also because the scope of the articles often stretched beyond the German borders. But this framework is nonetheless characterized by the old French-German axis which defined (Western) Europe in the 1950s and the 1960s, but which no longer defines Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The complete absence of any foreign involvement in the *Luoghi della memoria* project seems to indicate a certain sealing off of national Italian historiography from foreign participation – despite the numerous foreign historical institutes in Rome.

The German *Erinnerungsorte* project was not only more open to foreign authors, but it was also informed by a greater methodological openness. One third of the authors were non-historians; in the French case, this percentage was lower at 25 per cent, and in the Italian case, it was under 20 per cent. In Germany, most of the non-historians came from literary studies, in France they were mostly philosophers and art historians. François Audigier, the only historian who has hitherto tried to write the history of the *lieux de mémoire*, was therefore perhaps a little bit hasty when declaring that the French project was characterized by its multidisciplinary and openness to foreign historians.<sup>24</sup>

The biggest difference between the French and German enterprises evidently relates to the importance of the political capital of the country. The *Lieux de mémoire* were not only a predominantly male undertaking, but also a Parisian one. Two thirds of the authors were working in Paris, 20 per cent of them based at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. In Germany and Italy, the reverse is the case. The *Luoghi della memoria* seemed to be a project of the universities of Northern Italy and united many historians specializing in Italian fascism. In Germany, even if both editors came from Berlin, most of the authors did not. Finally, the German project was realized by a younger group of historians than the French one.

The dissimilar nature of these editorial projects reveals much about the historiographical fields in both countries and about the place of the project in the context of both national historiographies. As the above analysis shows, the French project was more of a national undertaking, written by male, well-established historians, whereas the *Erinnerungsorte* project, while not existing at the margins of the guild, clearly could not (pretend to) speak for the majority of German historians. It seems as if the comparison between the *Lieux de mémoire* and the *Erinnerungsorte* projects provides further proof of Pierre Nora's assertion that in France, historians have played a



made two important contributions that are too rarely taken into account: on the one hand, he introduced a kind of scale (according to the number of people who can relate to a *lieu*) by distinguishing between 'le lieu de souvenir, le lieu d'identité [et] le lieu de mémoire' (realm of remembrance, realm of identity and realm of memory). On the other hand, he also made some pertinent remarks about those events, persons, places that had never become or no longer were *lieux de mémoire*.<sup>29</sup> Both perspectives had been overlooked in Nora's *lieux de mémoire*, whose vision was clouded by the national approach and who did not take enough account of the variations in scale.

At the same time, however, his project is clearly being utilized by the local political elite of the *région*. In France, these administrative units have gained a greater importance since decentralization started in the 1980s and *conseillers régionaux* (regional councillors) were elected directly by their constituencies. Numerous regions have been engaged in a process well known to the historians of nineteenth-century nation-building, namely desperately looking to history to legitimate their existence.<sup>30</sup>

In Austria, a transnational approach was chosen, a transnationality resting on a common history, namely that of Habsburg rule. The avowed aim was to take a first step towards a European history of national constructions,<sup>31</sup> a project Pierre Nora had always regarded with great scepticism. One of the three editors of the Austrian project was Jacques Le Rider, a French specialist on the Habsburg monarchy. Similarly to the German *Erinnerungsorte*, the Austrian *Orte des Gedächtnisses* project refers to Pierre Nora etymologically, but on a methodological level, they rely more on German scholars such as Aleida and Jan Assmann. In the Austrian project, the contributions are not limited to one specific *lieu de mémoire*, but are focused more on a long process of nation building. One of their core aims is to analyse how 'transnational' persons/elements were renationalized and instrumentalized to invent national identity. Austria and Vienna appear in this approach as a meeting point of different identities: this is a perspective that breaks with a national perspective, but that seems at the same time to participate in shaping a new metaphor for this region as the 'heart' of the new, enlarged Europe. In parallel to this transnational project, the University of Vienna has launched a specifically Austrian project on realms of memory that tries to integrate results from empirical evidence gathered by the social sciences, such as representative polls.

Other *lieux de mémoire* have been written for countries that no longer exist, such as the GDR,<sup>32</sup> and countries that seem doomed to disappear, such as Belgium.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, it is interesting that the Belgian project was the last one to be launched by the six EU founding members. In 2011, the European Institute in Mainz (Germany) launched a multi-volume work on European *lieux de mémoire*. Up to now, however, the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula have proven quite resistant to the concept.<sup>34</sup>

more fundamental role in the construction of the nation's master narrative than in other countries.

In addition to these two larger projects, numerous smaller ventures dealing with the construction of national identities referred to Pierre Nora. The only exception to this is the *Dansk Identitetshistorie*, published between 1991 and 1992 in Denmark.<sup>25</sup> It is not the intention of this chapter to present a complete overview of these smaller projects, but consideration of some of them will reveal how the *lieux de mémoire* circulated in the European world of ideas.

The first country in which the *lieux de mémoire* were adapted, were the Netherlands. One of the Dutch editors of the *Lieux de mémoire et identités nationales*,<sup>26</sup> Pim den Boer, wrote his thesis on nineteenth-century French historians: this methodological and geographic proximity on the part of one of the initiators explains the rapid transfer. In the end, however, the book had little in common with the French *Lieux de mémoire* besides the title. It is an edition of papers presented at the *Institut Néerlandais* in Paris in 1991 on the construction and invention of the French and Dutch nations. Half of the participants were French historians who had participated in the *Lieux de mémoire* project, including Pierre Nora himself, while the other half were Dutch historians. Their articles provide not so much an analysis of one specific *lieu de mémoire* as a general overview, as is demonstrated by Nicolas van Sas' article on 'La nation néerlandaise au dix-neuvième siècle: mythes et représentations'. Nevertheless, the book testifies to the attractive character of the spatial metaphor at a very early stage.

If the Dutch, the Italian and the German projects remained confined to a national framework similar to the one developed by Pierre Nora, there have recently been several undertakings that tried to 'downgrade' the *Lieux de mémoire* to subnational levels or 'upgrade' them to a supranational one.

In several French regions, there have been attempts to write regional *Lieux de mémoire*. A search of *Opale*, the catalogue of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, shows that the concept seems to have been particularly 'successful' in the Lorraine, where four books have been published in the last 20 years with *Lieux de mémoire* in their title.<sup>27</sup> The same publications also illustrate the speed with which the word was transferred from an academic to a wider, more popular context. Indeed, only one of the four books has a clear academic ambition, the three other are popular or touristic in character. In the last volume of the *Lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora shows himself overwhelmed by this 'success' and seems distressed by the popularization of the concept, which, however, had been facilitated by the nostalgic character with which Nora himself had invested the project.<sup>28</sup> The academic *Mémoire et lieux de mémoire en Lorraine*, edited by two professors of the University of Nancy, is interesting in several regards. First, it demonstrates that smaller social groups can have their own *lieux de mémoire* and that they can construct their identity in similar ways. Secondly, one of the editors, Philippe Martin,

- (3) From passive reception to active appropriation.

The usage of the French concept varied greatly in Western Europe. The arguments in circulation and the interpretations within different national contexts were very heterogeneous in character. In Italy, one can speak of a one-to-one transference. There was no methodological transformation of the original *Lieux de mémoire*: Maurice Halbwachs and Eric Hobsbawm remained the only methodological reference points. In Germany, however, there was a partial transformation, reflecting a wider theoretical investment. The French concept was enriched by the scholarly discussions conducted at that time in Germany. Other countries just used the 'magic words' *lieux de mémoire*, following only very loosely the method proposed by Pierre Nora.

- (4) The importance of personal vectors.

Without wanting to fall into the trap of writing a mechanistic history in which developments are attributed to individuals, it is interesting to observe that in almost every national publication, one finds among the editors a French historian or an academic with links to France. The spread of the *lieux de mémoire* was and still is facilitated by these people and institutions who act as mediators between the French culture and the rest of world. The *Lieux de mémoire* benefited from a particular well-developed French cultural network. This is particularly obvious in the case of the English translation by Kritzman or of the role played by Étienne François and the *Centre Marc Bloch* in the German case. A final example is the recently published version of the Dutch *Lieux de mémoire*, edited by Henri Wesseling, a Dutch historian who has worked on France and whose books have been translated into French.<sup>37</sup>

- (5) The importance of the national *habitus* of the respective historical guild.

As the comparison between the *lieux de mémoire*, the *Erinnerungsorte* and the *Lughi della memoria* has demonstrated, national habits still played an important role. Even if these undertakings shared numerous similarities, there were quite significant differences in the composition of the participating authors. The geographic distribution shows the central role played by Paris in the field of French historiography, which is but one of the numerous elements that demonstrate the strong centralization of French intellectual life despite the decentralization introduced since the 1960s. The fact that the French team of authors was primarily composed of older men, was less interdisciplinary and included fewer foreigners are factors that support, in my view, the hypothesis that the *lieux de mémoire*, as a critical analytical tool, still operates within the long genealogy of French history writing, starting with Ernest Lavisse and ending with Marc Ferro's *Histoire de France*.<sup>38</sup> This difference is also visible in the way both works have been received by their peers: in France, the reception has been relatively positive across the board, while in Germany the reception has been more ambiguous and critical.

## Hypothetical spaces

First coined in a quintessentially French context at the beginning of the 1980s, the *lieux de mémoire* have become within 25 years one of the most successful export concepts of French historiography. A first general analysis leads us to the following remarks and hypotheses:

- (1) The success of the 'image' of *lieu de mémoire*.

While there are evidently problems translating the French term *lieu de mémoire* into other languages, one cannot deny that the metaphor 'invented' by Pierre Nora has functioned effectively in a wider European context. Even if the approach is not always comparable to the *lieux de mémoire*, as in the Dutch or Austrian case, the editors choose to maintain this term in their title. The apparent methodological openness of the concept explains the numerous national and local adaptations the idea was submitted to. Presenting national history as a labyrinth, as Aleida Assmann has called the French *lieux de mémoire*, rather than under the rubric of totality was in line with a larger European movement that was looking for new ways of writing national histories.<sup>35</sup> The resurgence of nationalism after 1989 made a critical approach all the more necessary. Only recently has the concept begun to extend beyond issues of spatially defined national identities and been applied to language or to political parties.

- (2) The limited expansion of the concept.<sup>36</sup>

Without any doubt, the *lieux de mémoire* concept swiftly crossed the borders of French historiography, but originally the scope of the transference remained relatively limited. Indeed, despite the fact that the Berlin Wall had fallen 3 years before the last volume of the *Lieux de mémoire* was published, the concept did not cross this old political frontier quickly. Most of the national libraries of the former Eastern bloc countries hold neither the French nor the English version. For 20 years, the concept was not implemented systematically in the former communist republics. An exception to this general thesis are countries which used to belong to the Habsburg monarchy. They did not develop their own realms of memory, but were 'colonised' by Austrian historians. It is thus revealing that there is only one Romanian historian involved in the transnational Central-Europe project. Only recently did a German-Polish project see the light of day, with German and Polish historians working together on German-Polish realms of memory. The history of the transfer of the concept demonstrates that the 50-year division of Europe into two parts still poses an obstacle to processes of globalization and cultural interpenetration. On the other hand, it is interesting that all six founding countries of the European Community have their realms of memory projects, perhaps an indication of the academic interdependence that has developed in the last decades.

(6) A one-way transfer until recently.

Only one of the other projects has been translated into French or English, while none received a larger coverage in academic journals in other countries.<sup>39</sup> The German school of memory studies around Jan and Aleida Assmann, which played an important role in the German and Austrian undertakings, has had little impact in Italy or France. In his new introduction to the paperback edition of the *Lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora does not refer to the discussions that were already taking place at that moment in the Netherlands or in Germany.<sup>40</sup> This is a final example of the lasting impermeability of intellectual frontiers, something I did not anticipate when I began analysing the apparent success story of the Europeanization of the French *Lieux de mémoire*.

(7) The difficulty in not acting as identity creator.

Even if the *lieux de mémoire* projects inspired by Nora's writings claim to adopt a critical approach towards the legitimating role of the historians of the nineteenth century, they all had to face the reproach that they were doing precisely what they were trying to deconstruct. Neither the more eclectic German method nor the regional approach adopted in Lorraine nor the transnational Austrian perspective can prevent the potential creation of new identities and profess merely to deconstruct older ones.<sup>41</sup>

## Notes

- 1 'la disparition rapide de notre mémoire nationale m'avait semblé appeler un inventaire des lieux'.
- 2 Pierre Nora, 'Présentation', in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. I (Paris, 1984), p. 15.
- 3 An exception is Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), which is mentioned in Pierre Nora, 'Présentation', in P. Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. III (Paris, 1984), p. 3043.
- 4 See Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge, 1981) and Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, 1983).
- 5 Pierre Nora, 'La notion de 'lieu de mémoire est-elle exportable', in Pim den Boer, Willem Frijhoff (eds), *Lieux de mémoire et identités nationales* (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 3–10.
- 6 Pierre Nora, 'La loi de la mémoire', *Le débat* 78 (1994), 188 and 190.
- 7 Pierre Nora, 'Nachwort', in Étienne François, Hagen Schulze (eds), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol. 3 (Munich, 2001), pp. 681–6.
- 8 Alain Brossat, Sonia Combe, Jean-Yves Potel and Jean-Charles Szurek, *A l'Est, la mémoire retrouvée* (Paris, 1996).
- 9 'Die baltischen Städte Riga und Tartu als Erinnerungsorte' ('The Baltic Cities Riga and Tartu as Realms of Memory'), held on 28 and 29 June 2006.

- 10 See *Tabula* (a Hungarian ethnographic journal) 7:2 (2004), or *Neprikosnovenny Zapas. Debata o politike i kulture* (a Russian literature journal) 2005, pp. 2–3, which was a special number dedicated to the memory of the Second World War and included an article by Pierre Nora.
- 11 In 2000, Lawrence Kritzman was awarded the Order of National Merit, the second highest civilian award accorded by France.
- 12 <http://www.thedartmouth.com/article.php?aid=1995013101050> (accessed 21 February 2006).
- 13 Hue-Tam Ho Tai, 'Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory', *American Historical Review* 106:3 (2001), 906–22, here p. 910.
- 14 Pierre Nora, *Zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis* (Berlin, 1990); Pierre Nora, *Zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt a.M., 1998).
- 15 Constanze Carcenac-Lecomte, 'Pierre Nora und ein deutsches Pilotprojekt', in Constanze Carcenac-Lecomte (ed.), *Steinbruch. Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* (Frankfurt a.M., 2000), pp. 13–26.
- 16 A Dutch undertaking, the first volume of which has recently been published, has not been taken into account here. In the absence of the other volumes, it is impossible to provide a substantial analysis.
- 17 Mario Isnenghi, 'Conclusion', in Mario Isnenghi (ed.), *I luoghi della memoria – Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, vol. 1 (Roma, 1996), p. 559.
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- 20 Étienne François (ed.), *Lieux de mémoire – Erinnerungsorte. D'un modèle français à un projet allemand* (Berlin, 1996); Rudolf Speth, Edgar Wolfrum (eds), *Politische Mythen und Geschichtspolitik* (Berlin, 1996).
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- 28 See Legg, 'Contesting and Surviving Memory'.
- 29 Philippe Martin, 'Jalons pour une approche des lieux de mémoire en Lorraine', in Martin and Roth (eds), *Mémoire & lieux de mémoire en Lorraine*, pp. 29–44.
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- 34 See however Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London, 1996–98).
- 35 Aleida Assmann, 'Im Zwischenraum zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis: Bemerkungen zu Pierre Nora's "Lieux de mémoire"', in François (ed.), *Lieux de mémoire*, p. 22.
- 36 On the difficulties of creating a European memory space see Étienne François, 'Ist eine gesamteuropäische Erinnerungskultur vorstellbar?', in Bernd Henningsen, Hendriette Klicmann-Geisinger and Stefan Troebst (eds), *Transnationale Erinnerungsorte: Nord- und südeuropäische Perspektiven* (Berlin, 2009), pp. 13–30.
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## Further reading

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