

# Introduction: Dissonant Heritage in a Cross-Border Perspective

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It basically is due to the critical perspective of the interdisciplinary ‘project’<sup>1</sup> of Cultural Studies—established at the University of Birmingham in 1964 as a progressive field of research in order to counter a curriculum that is primarily male, eurocentric and focused on high culture<sup>2</sup>—as well as its impactful ‘cultural turn,’ which has found its way into numerous disciplines, including History, that has shaped our current understanding of what the ‘past’ is or might be: How at all can we understand what is long gone? But also: How do historians, consciously or inadvertently, shape the discursive knowledge? And: What power structures and blind spots are implicit in these processes?

With the critical awareness that any engagement with the past as a complex process at the intersections of politics, society and culture must inevitably remain fragmentary and is only ever a (re-)construction from a specific and rather limited point of view, in recent decades, the fields of (Cultural) Memory Studies and (Cultural) Heritage Studies have developed distinct research areas and approaches that focus

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1 In Stuart Hall’s (1932–2014) definition of Cultural Studies as an always unfinished project (Hall, S. (1990). The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities. *October*, 53, 11–23, here 18f.).

2 Cf. Nesselhauf, J., & Weber, F. (2025). Einleitung: Perspektiven auf die Kulturwissenschaftlichen ‘Studies’. In J. Nesselhauf, & F. Weber (Eds.), *Handbuch Kulturwissenschaftliche ‘Studies’* (pp. 1–15). De Gruyter.

on what, in a broad sense, can be called ‘Cultural Heritage’—be it spaces,<sup>3</sup> artefacts,<sup>4</sup> texts<sup>5</sup> or images.<sup>6</sup>

This paradigmatic shift not only highlights the mediality and materiality of the past or the spaces and practices of remembering, but also draws attention to questions of memory and identity, for example regarding the distinctions between an official (‘streamlined’) and the many ‘unofficial’ forms of remembering/commemorating the past or regarding strategies of memorialization and deliberate forgetting/suppression. To continue Pierre Nora’s basic idea of *lieux de mémoire*:<sup>7</sup> There are not only “memorylands,”<sup>8</sup> but veritable “bloodlands,”<sup>9</sup> not only “memoryscapes,”<sup>10</sup> but downright “places of pain and shame,”<sup>11</sup> thus challenging the simplified understanding of the unambiguous logics of memory that creates meaning, order and identity.

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- 3 A pioneering initiative on *loci memoriae* was the three-part/seven-volume collection *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984–92) under the direction of Pierre Nora (1931–2025), which generated similar projects, including the three-volume publications *I Luoghi della Memoria* (1996–97, edited by Mario Isnenghi), *Europäische Erinnerungsorte* (2012, edited by Pim den Boer, Heinz Duchhardt, Georg Kreis and Wolfgang Schmale) and *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* (2001, edited by Étienne François and Hagen Schulze), a book on *Lieux de Mémoire et Identités Nationales* (1993, edited by Pim den Boer and Willem Frijhoff), or the five-volume collection *Deutsch-Polnische Erinnerungsorte* (2012–2015, edited by a team of historians from the two respective countries).
  - 4 Where Nora’s concept—even if *lieux de mémoire* do not refer solely to actual places, but also include objects and even traditions that ‘hold’ memory—sparked a genuine ‘spatial memory turn,’ the British Museum’s exhibition, podcast series and book project *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (2010) is responsible for a comparable ‘material memory turn.’ Triggering similar publications on *A History of Cycling in 100 Objects* (2017), *Der Erste Weltkrieg in 100 Objekten* (2014) or *Une Histoire de l’Immigration en 100 Objets* (2023), a special ‘authenticity’ is immanent to a single object that representatively ‘tells’ from and about the past.
  - 5 Any information fixed in writing (‘cultural memory’) or passed on orally (‘communicative memory’) is already characterized by narrative condensation and structuring, but at the same time depends on the underlying logics and sign systems of language (cf. Assmann, J. (1988). *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Kulturelle Identität*. In J. Assmann & T. Hölscher (Eds.), *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (pp. 9–19). Suhrkamp).
  - 6 For case studies in Visual Memory Studies, see, for example, Przyrembel, A., & Scheel, C. (2019). Einleitung: Erinnerungsorte als Konfliktgeschichte. In A. Przyrembel & C. Scheel (Eds.), *Europa und Erinnerung. Erinnerungsorte und Medien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (pp. 7–24). Transcript, here pp. 16–21.
  - 7 Cf. Nora, P. (1984). *Entre Mémoire et Histoire. La Problématique des Lieux*. In: P. Nora (Ed.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire. Tome I: La République* (pp. xv–xliv). Gallimard.
  - 8 Macdonald, S. (2013). *Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. Routledge.
  - 9 Snyder, T. (2012). *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. Basic Books.
  - 10 Phillips, K. R., & Reyes, G. M. (Eds.). (2011). *Global Memoryscapes. Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age*. University of Alabama Press.
  - 11 Logan, W., & Reeves, K. (Eds.). (2009). *Places of Pain and Shame. Dealing with ‘Difficult Heritage.’* Routledge.

## 1. The ‘Dissonance’ in Dissonant Heritage

In this way, Cultural Studies can also re(de)fine the concept of *mémoire collective*—for instance by going beyond institutions such as the family, religious groups<sup>12</sup> or the ‘nation’ (*nations-mémoires*)<sup>13</sup> to a rather transnational memory. As an example, in recent decades, questions have arisen about the particular forms and functions of a pan-European memory: In this notion, ‘Europe’ (not without problems, as it has different geographical definitions) appears as a memory community that can look back on common (cultural, religious, political) roots, whose impact can still be felt (in)directly in the present and might even influence future-oriented actions.<sup>14</sup>

Put simply: Radical paradigm shifts such as the Enlightenment as a liberation from dogmatic belief towards an “emergence from a self-imposed immaturity,”<sup>15</sup> drastic events such as the French Revolution in 1789 with a first declaration of fundamental human and civil rights (*Déclaration des droits de l’Homme et du citoyen de 1789*), coinciding literary periods such as Romanticism or Realism, but also, for example, Europe’s ‘roots’ in Greek and Roman antiquity or the Christian Middle Ages as well as the influence of the Gutenberg printing press with regard to the exchange of ideas and knowledge are likely to constitute the lowest common denominator among the most diverse cultures from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean, from the Atlantic to the Urals. And quite often, from these shared experiences of the past, common values are derived and a commitment to peace is established—from the pamphlet *Europa* (1799) by Novalis (1772–1801) to the *Treaty on European Union* (2007), whose preamble emphasizes that the participating countries are

[...] resolved to mark a new stage in the process of European integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities, drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law [as well as] con-

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- 12 Both of which are the main examples in Halbwachs, M. (1925). *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire*. Félix Alcan.
- 13 Cf. François, É. (2008). Auf der Suche nach Europäischen Erinnerungsorten. In H. König & J. Schmidt & M. Sicking (Eds.), *Europas Gedächtnis. Das Neue Europa Zwischen Nationalen Erinnerungen und Gemeinsamer Identität* (pp. 85–103). Transcript, here p. 90.
- 14 Cf. Erll, A. (2017). *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen. Eine Einführung*. J.B. Metzler, 130f.
- 15 “Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit.” (Kant, I. (1784). Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, 4(12), 481–484, here 481).

firming their attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law.<sup>16</sup>

However, more recent approaches have pointed out that this idealistic idea of a (to a certain extent: teleological) line of civilizational progress should not only be limited to the 'positive' moments of European history: Models such as seven circles of European memory<sup>17</sup> or "four lessons from history"<sup>18</sup> thus include (or even: highlight) wars and forced displacement, the systematic mass murder in the Holocaust/Shoah or the state crimes committed under Colonialism, Fascism/National Socialism and Stalinism/Communism as crucial constituents of today's Europe.<sup>19</sup>

Similar to issues of regional and minority languages or the preservation of specific local traditions, the culture of remembrance, which has so far been primarily national in character, too does represent a challenge for the EU and its motto *in varietate concordia*/united in diversity: Versailles,<sup>20</sup> Nürnberg/Nuremberg<sup>21</sup> or Oświęcim/Auschwitz,<sup>22</sup> for instance, may each be(come) paradigmatic places of a pan-European remembrance, but in each case the historical interconnections across the continent are quite different—and the more the (when considered separately) national attributions deviate, the more complicated an actual transnational dimension of such sites of a 'shared memory' becomes.<sup>23</sup> In short: The joint (re)appraisal of a shared past can thus initiate moments of (re)conciliation across national borders, but at the same time also reopen old wounds.

16 Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union. In *Official Journal of the European Union* 59.C202 (2016), pp. 13–45, here p. 13.

17 Cf. Leggewie, C., & Lang, A. (2011). *Der Kampf um die Europäische Erinnerung. Ein Schlachtfeld Wird Besichtigt*. C.H.Beck.

18 Assmann, A. (2018). *Der Europäische Traum. Vier Lehren aus der Geschichte*. C.H.Beck.

19 Cf. König, H. (2008). Statt einer Einleitung: Europas Gedächtnis. Sondierungen in einem Unübersichtlichen Gelände. In H. König & J. Schmidt & M. Sicking (Eds.), *Europas Gedächtnis. Das Neue Europa Zwischen Nationalen Erinnerungen und Gemeinsamer Identität* (pp. 9–37). Transcript, here pp. 20–23.

20 On Versailles as a "place of implicitly shared European remembrance," (authors' translation), cf. François. *Auf der Suche nach Europäischen Erinnerungsorten*, 92.

21 Cf. Macdonald, S. (2009). *Difficult Heritage. Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*. Routledge.

22 The 2017 EU novel *Die Hauptstadt* ("The Capital") by Austrian author Robert Menasse (1954–) imagines a speech by Walter Hallstein (1901–1982), the first President of the European Commission, to declare Auschwitz the capital of Europe.

23 Of course, conflicts can also be assumed within a national context itself, if there are divergent perspectives from different social, political, religious, etc. protagonists or if there are disputes between an 'official' discourse (e.g.: state, nation, UNESCO) and other approaches, and so on.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the veritable ‘heritage boom’ of the 1980s and 1990s,<sup>24</sup> when national as well as pan-European sites of memory were increasingly explored, has also led to much more critical perspectives: Taking up the Cultural Studies’ approach of analyzing power imbalances and asymmetries in/of social contexts, and transferring it to historiography and the forms and functions of remembrance (Whose *lieux de mémoire* are being studied? Who ‘tells’ which stories of which past in what way?), the fields of Cultural Memory Studies and Cultural Heritage Studies are interested in

[...] historical and current conflicts of ownership, patrimony, and cultural heritage. Again, this is a matter of narratives, and these are usually shaped by the dynamics of present-day attitudes, beliefs, and convictions. ‘Putting the past to use’ can take various forms: affirming or reaffirming collective identities, evoking or enforcing national identities; attributing meaning, dignity, nobility, and also commercial or market value; strengthening regional or ethnic affiliations and traditions in a competitive, non-inclusive way; controlling, shaping, and defining present and future concepts of collective identity.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the long-overdue de-centering of a Eurocentric view on the past, for instance related to the cultural practice of collecting,<sup>26</sup> the inclusion of previously marginalized voices<sup>27</sup> as well as questions of ownership and restitution<sup>28</sup> all concern overlapping, even contradictory layers of meaning that turn ‘Cultural Heritage’ into ‘problematic heritage.’ Here, and besides terms such as ‘uncomfortable,’<sup>29</sup> ‘inconve-

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- 24 Cf. Samida, S. (2025). Heritage Studies. In J. Nesselhauf & F. Weber (Eds.), *Handbuch Kulturwissenschaftliche ‘Studies’* (pp. 267–284). De Gruyter, here p. 269.
- 25 Fuhrmeister, C. (2021). Nazi Architecture and the Concept of Dissonant Heritage (‘dissonantes Erbe’). In J. Purchla & Ž. Komar (Eds.), *Dissonant Heritage? The Architecture of the Third Reich in Poland* (pp. 17–23). International Cultural Centre, here p. 20.
- 26 Cf. Downey, A. (Ed.). (2015). *Dissonant Archives. Contemporary Visual Culture and Contested Narratives in the Middle East*. Ibraaz.
- 27 Cf. Gutman, Y., & Wüstenberg, J. (2023). Introduction: The Activist Turn in Memory Studies. In Y. Gutman & J. Wüstenberg (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism* (pp. 5–15). Routledge.
- 28 Cf. Sarr, F., & Savoy, B. (2018). *Rapport sur la Restitution du Patrimoine Culturel Africain. Vers une Nouvelle Éthique Relationnelle*. Seuil.
- 29 Huse, N. (1989). Unbequeme Denkmale. Uncomfortable Monuments. Patrimoine Encombrant. In G. Mörsch & R. Strobel (Eds.), *Die Denkmalpflege als Plage und Frage* (pp. 96–101). Deutscher Kunstverlag.

nient,<sup>30</sup> 'difficult',<sup>31</sup> 'disputed',<sup>32</sup> 'estranged',<sup>33</sup> 'unpleasant',<sup>34</sup> 'painful'/'shameful',<sup>35</sup> 'awkward',<sup>36</sup> 'contested'<sup>37</sup> or 'controversial',<sup>38</sup> the notion of Dissonant Heritage has become specifically popular and fruitful, explicitly acknowledging "that the past is, more often than not, a history of conflicts, pain, problems, losses."<sup>39</sup>

Initially defined as a general "discordance or a lack of agreement and consistency,"<sup>40</sup> the concept of Dissonant Heritage hence expands the previous research by underlining the high degree of conflictuality in negotiation processes between individual heritage communities<sup>41</sup>—but also raises the question of whether every Cultural Heritage and every form of remembrance has fundamentally contradictory dimensions and therefore has to be considered 'dissonant': "[Dissonance] is inevitable in some form or other in a system where selection is unavoidable. At its simplest, all heritage is someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's."<sup>42</sup>

It thus seems that Cultural Heritage consequently tends to become conflictual when opposing meanings, simplified interpretations and unilateral attributions

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- 30 Zimmermann, F. (1995). Pflege eines Lästigen Erbes? Zur Rolle der Denkmalpflege im Umgang mit den Bauten des Nationalsozialismus in München. In I. Lauterbach & J. Rosefeldt (Eds.), *Bürokratie und Kult. Das Parteizentrum der NSDAP am Königsplatz in München. Geschichte und Rezeption* (pp. 195–204). Deutscher Kunstverlag.
- 31 Belmonte, C. (Ed.). (2023). *A Difficult Heritage. The Afterlives of Fascist-Era Art and Architecture*. SilvanaEditoriale.
- 32 Corni, G. (2002). Umstrittene 'Lieux de Mémoire' in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert. *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte*, 3, 93–100.
- 33 Wohlleben, M. (Ed.). (2009). *Fremd, Vertraut oder Anders? Beiträge zu einem Denkmaltheorietischen Diskurs*. Deutscher Kunstverlag.
- 34 Epplée, N. (2023). *Die Unbequeme Vergangenheit. Vom Umgang mit Staatsverbrechen in Russland und Anderswo*. Suhrkamp.
- 35 Logan & Reeves (Eds.). *Places of Pain and Shame*.
- 36 Scheurmann, I. (2010). Mehr Substanz. Bemerkungen zum Geschichtsbild der Modernen Denkmalpflege, oder: Warum sind Baudenkmale Unbequem? In H.-R. Meier & I. Scheurmann (Eds.), *DENKmalWERTE. Beiträge zur Theorie und Aktualität der Denkmalpflege* (pp. 59–74). Deutscher Kunstverlag.
- 37 Pallaver, G. (Ed.). (2013). *Umstrittene Denkmäler. Der Umgang mit der Vergangenheit*. Raetia.
- 38 Assmann, A. (2022). (In)Visible Monuments. What Makes Monuments Controversial? In: U. Capdepón & S. Dornhof (Eds.), *Contested Urban Spaces. Monuments, Traces, and Decentered Memories* (pp. 23–44). Palgrave Macmillan.
- 39 Fuhrmeister. Nazi Architecture and the Concept of Dissonant Heritage, 20.
- 40 Tunbridge, J.E., & Ashworth, G.J. (1996). *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*. J. Wiley, 20.
- 41 Cf. Gravari-Barbas, M., & Veschambre, V. (2004). Patrimoine. Derrière l'Idée de Consensus, les Enjeux d'Appropriation de l'Espace et des Conflits. In P. Melé & C. Larrue & M. Rosemberg (Eds.), *Conflits et Territoires* (pp. 67–82). Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais; Kofler Engl, W. (2020). Was Tun, Wie Umgehen mit dem 'Dissonanten Kulturerbe?' *Architectura*, 50(1–2), 86–93.
- 42 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 21.

overlap; when, as the word dissonance itself—in contrast to the ‘harmonic’ consonance (and, in some cases, the ‘repetitive’ assonance)—already indicates, fundamental inconsistencies arise. In this way, the concept of Dissonant Heritage also challenges any monocausal understanding of linear succession or a definitive ‘either-or,’ and instead makes new ways of thinking necessary: Which palimpsest-like layers actually make up the *lieux de mémoire*?<sup>43</sup> Which heterogeneous narratives are co-present side-by-side,<sup>44</sup> and which different actors (‘heritage communities’) are involved at what time, influencing the discursive knowledge?<sup>45</sup>

## 2. Dissonant Heritage in Border Regions

Given that “Dissonant Heritage is a particular problem in Central Europe, where in the twentieth century political borders shifted faster than cultural ones,” we can assume that “conflicts of memory, non-memory, and the issue of dissonant and unwanted heritage”<sup>46</sup> are all the more intensifying in border regions.<sup>47</sup> As previous case studies, for instance on the Baltic States<sup>48</sup> as well as cities such as Belfast,<sup>49</sup> Bozen/

43 See, for instance, Daniela Koleva’s following case study on the infamous Monument to the Soviet Army (Паметник на Съветската армия) in Sofia, Bulgaria, or the article on the eventful history of the Silos in Trieste, Italy, by Roberta Altin and Tullia Catalan in this very book.

44 For a theoretical introduction to the concept of co-presence/s, also see the following article on Dissonance and Reconciliation in the case study of the ‘Hauteurs de Spicheren’ as well as the Saarbrücken ‘Ehrental’ by Jonas Nesselhauf.

45 See, for instance, the following case study on Silenced Memories, Suppressed Hybrid Ethnic Identities, and Parallel Worlds on the Slovenian-Italian Border by Katja Hrobat Virloget.

46 Purchla, J. (2021). The Architecture of the Third Reich in Poland. Dissonant Heritage? In J. Purchla & Ž. Komar (Eds.), *Dissonant Heritage? The Architecture of the Third Reich in Poland* (pp. 7–16). International Cultural Centre, here p. 9.

47 Cf. Van Huis, I., & Kaasik-Krogerus, S., & Lähdesmäki, T., & Passerini, L. (2019). Introduction: Europe, Heritage and Memory. Dissonant Encounters and Explorations. In T. Lähdesmäki et al. (Eds.), *Dissonant Heritages and Memories in Contemporary Europe* (pp. 1–20). Palgrave Macmillan, here pp. 6f.

48 Cf. Petruilis, V. (2014). The Dissonant Soviet Legacy. Four Discourses from the Baltic States. In A. Bartetzky & J. Haspel (Eds.), *Von der Ablehnung zur Aneignung? From Rejection to Appropriation? Das Architektonische Erbe des Sozialismus in Mittel- und Osteuropa. The Architectural Heritage of Socialism in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 115–126). Böhlau.

49 Cf. Bertram, H. (2022). Difficult Heritage in Belfast. Umnutzung und Wiederinwertsetzung Zwischen Historischer Symbolik und Neuanfang. *Forum Stadt*, 49(1), 74–84.

Bolzano<sup>50</sup> or Kraków/Cracow<sup>51</sup> have indicated, border regions seem particularly apt to study sites of Dissonant Heritage, given their spatial and cultural condensation of different, if not radically divergent *lieux de mémoire* and their ways of managing a shared history of conflict, alienation and reconciliation.

This premise was also the initial point for our 2023 international Summer School “Difficult Pasts in a Cross-Border Perspective: Challenges and Responses,” a cooperation between Saarland University’s working groups on Art History and Comparative Media Studies with students and researchers from both the UniGR<sup>52</sup> as well as the Transform4Europe<sup>53</sup> university alliances, that has since led to a series of thematically similar Summer Schools in Koper (Slovenia) in 2024<sup>54</sup> and Sofia (Bulgaria) in 2025.<sup>55</sup> Over the course of five days, the participants discussed relevant theoretical texts and methodological concepts, and conducted field research at various sites of Dissonant Heritage in and around the Saarbrücken area, in the city of Metz as well as at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Völklinger Hütte. And while the military cemeteries in Saarbrücken or the architectural alterations to the urban environment of Metz illustrate the turbulent history of this region between 1870 and 1945, the coming to terms with forced labor in the former ironworks or the redesign of a Gestapo camp just as well demonstrate the ongoing challenges of addressing the past in diverse and often problematic ways.

With the Summer School’s particular focus on current modes of addressing Dissonant Heritage in museum collections, architecture and memorials, another key

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- 50 Cf. Kofler Engl, W. (2013). Bozens Stadt des Faschistischen Ventennio. Einführung zum Stadtrundgang. In B. Franz & W. Kofler Engl (Eds.), *Umstrittene Denkmale. Monumenti Controversi. Der Umgang mit dem Erbe der Diktaturen. Come Gestire l'Eredità delle Dittature* (pp. 50–64). Verlag Jörg Mitzkat.
- 51 Cf. Purchla, J. (2020). The Architecture of the Third Reich in Cracow. A Dissonant Heritage? *Riha Journal*, 253, 1–41.
- 52 The Universität der Großregion/Université de la Grande Région ([www.uni-gr.eu/en](http://www.uni-gr.eu/en)) is a cross-border association of seven universities in the ‘Greater Region’ of Lorraine (France), Luxembourg, Wallonia (Belgium) as well as Rheinland-Pfalz and Saarland (Germany).
- 53 The T4EU alliance ([www.transform4europe.eu](http://www.transform4europe.eu)) consists of eleven European universities: Saarland University (Germany), University of Alicante (Spain), Estonian Academy of Arts (Estonia), Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Portugal), University of Primorska (Slovenia), Jean Monnet University (France), University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria), University of Trieste (Italy) and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) as well as the associated partner Mariupol State University (Ukraine).
- 54 The international Summer School “Heritage and Museums for Education and Research. Heritage living labs” took place at the Univerza na Primorskem in Koper between 9–13 September 2024.
- 55 The international Summer School will take place at the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski between 15–19 September 2025.

topic were questions of negotiating discordant and contested layers of meaning attributed to specific objects and sites: How much critical 'dissonance' is institutionally admitted when it comes to celebrating cultural 'treasures' for tourism and touristic valorization? To what extent is Dissonant Heritage exposed to (willful) neglect, thus contributing to a fading out of unsolicited pasts? In what sense can museology, heritage-management or artistic interventions help to promote different ways of acknowledging and dealing with Cultural Heritage in all its resonance and dissonance?

And finally, the Summer School's spatial 'limitation' to a European border region places the focus of the analysis on a peripheral zone that, however, is by no means only of peripheral importance: Just as the concept of Dissonant Heritage with its critical potential highlights the 'other' side of cultural memory—be it the conflictual nature of remembrance generally or uncomfortable places of atrocity in particular—, our focus explicitly shifts to a hybrid region that is around 600 kilometers (Berlin–Saarbrücken) respectively 300 kilometers (Paris–Metz) away from the nations' political centers. But it is precisely there, on the constantly redrawn outer borders, that for centuries battles have been fought that shaped and (re)defined the country as a whole, and it is right here, in the alleged 'periphery,' where the former hostilities are still condensed in the *lieux de mémoire* of military cemeteries or victory monuments, in the architectural remains of foreign occupation or in sites of fascist perpetration and oppression.

In the future, an important task of Heritage Studies will probably be to place a greater emphasis on the macro-historical cycles of extraction and thus reaching out to the cognate field of ecocriticism. Since the mid-19th century, with the rise of heavy industry, military conflicts among European nation-states have been inseparable from the competition for raw materials to fuel the carbon-ore complex. Alleged peripheries such as Lorraine, the Saar region, Wallonia, Wales or Silesia became (contested) centers of the Extractive Age.<sup>56</sup> Even after the deindustrialization and economic transformation that began in the late 20th century, the industrial centers that emerged there have remained *lieux de mémoire* of transnational labor migration. While former mines and steelworks have in some cases been designated as industrial heritage, the spoil heaps, toxic soils, and rising mine water constitute a cumbersome legacy that will not simply disappear even after extraction has ceased.

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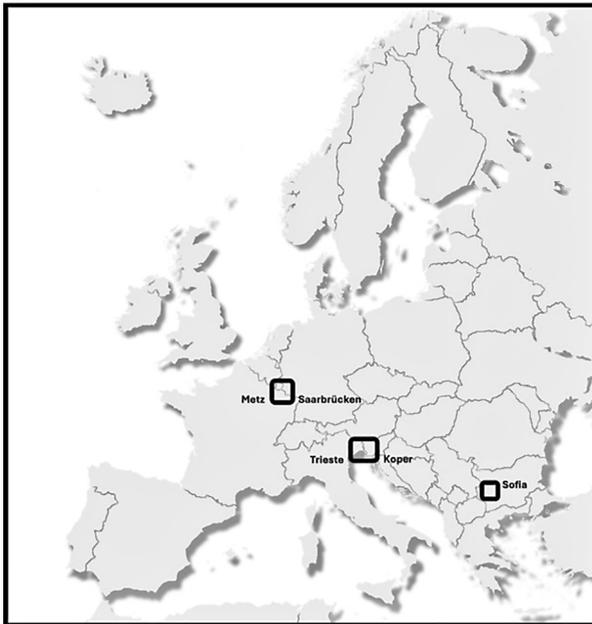
56 See Shapiro, J., & McNeish, J.-A. (Eds.). (2021). *Our Extractive Age. Expressions of Violence and Resistance*. Routledge.

### 3. Transnational and Interdisciplinary Approaches

This book picks up on many of the Summer School's key aspects, presenting case studies from various European border regions: Again, following the paradigmatic demand of the Birmingham School for a comprehensive de-centering (of discursive knowledge, hegemonic structures, etc.), the contributors from the fields of Cultural Studies, Art History, Media Studies and Ethnology/Anthropology aimed at crossing not only national but also disciplinary and media borders.

As examples, our focus will be on three European (border) regions—firstly, the complex intertwined history between Germany and France, using the example of the neighboring regions of Saarland and Lorraine; secondly, the challenges for today's cultural memory of a post-Soviet Bulgaria; and thirdly, the experiences of flight and forced displacement in the hybrid area between Italy and Slovenia, with a special focus on Trieste and Koper.

*Fig. 1: Mapping our Dissonant Heritage case studies*



In Pierre Nora's broad definition of *lieux des mémoire*—"[les] musées, archives, cimetières et collections, fêtes, anniversaires, traités, procès-verbaux, monuments, sanctuaires, associations, ce sont les buttes témoins d'un autre âge, des illusions

d'éternité<sup>57</sup>—, all of our contributions are interested in the material remains and immaterial traces of a dissonant, even conflictual past: Be it the industrial heritage in a region that is currently struggling with the difficulties of economic and social transformation (Gaëlle Crenn examines the cases of Uckange and Völklingen, Lucile Jean the vallée de la Fensch), be it the consequences of war and occupation, which have left their mark on both the rural landscape and the urban development (Jonas Nesselhauf and Joachim Rees focus on Saarbrücken and Metz as well as the *Hauteurs de Spicheren* in between, Daniela Koleva portrays the public debates on the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia), or be it the challenges of the architectural heritage with regard to a material-centered conservation practice (Neža Čebon Lipovec analyzes the Postwar Socialist Yugoslav Architecture, using the example of the Tomos skyscraper in Koper, Roberta Altin and Tullia Catalan explore the history of the Silos of Trieste). In addition, there are perspectives on the social effects of flight and forced displacement, both with regard to identity, culture or language (Katja Hrobat Virloget presents her ethnographic research on competitive victimhood discourses and mutual resentments on the Slovenian-Italian border) as well as to the (in)visibility of objects, as Alessandro Carrieri and Giuseppe Grimaldi illustrate in their case study using the examples of refugees deliberately dropping off their belongings before entering Italy as well as the cross-border trade phenomenon *jeansinari*.

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