Presentation
The Polysemy and Mutability of Heritage

Heritage is no longer simply the art of integrating what remains of history into the present day.[1] It has become a massive global phenomenon in which a multitude of political, economic, touristic, and ideological issues intersect. Heritage has limitless reach and application, integrating material as much as immaterial realities. A good berometer of this trend is the increase in requests to have sites inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, which has led to the organisation imposing limits: only 45 new sites can be added each year and states that are part of the World Heritage Convention can submit a maximum of two requests per year.[2] The 1990s saw a 'patrimonial explosion'[3], which coincided with a 'veritable discursive explosion'[4] and a 'fever for authenticity'.[5] The increased attention paid to heritage has emerged from different and often contradictory sources including but not limited to: a need for reference points in response to the homogenising effects of globalisation;[6] the development of collapsology theories against a backdrop of history's 'teleology pessimism';[7] the strengthening of minority identities;[8] an awareness of a slower temporality (reflecting the rise of

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1 Octave Debary, *La fin du Creusot ou L'art d'héberger les restes*, Paris, éditions du CTHS, Series 'Le regard de l'ethnologue', 2002.

2 The World Heritage List has recently passed the symbolic threshold of 1200 sites.

3 Pierre Nora, 'The Era of Commemoration' in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, vol. 3, ed. by Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 630.

4 'There has been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of identity, at the same moment as it has been subjected to a searching critique.' Stuart Hall, 'Who needs "identity"?', in Stuart Hall, Paul du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London, Sage, 1996, p. 1.

5 Gilles Lipovetsky, *Le sacre de l'authenticité,* Paris, Gallimard, 2021, p. 9.

6 Eric Hobsbawn, 'The Cult of Identity Politics', in *New Left Review*, n° 217, 1996

7 Perrine Simon-Nahum, *Les déraisons modernes*, Paris, éditions de l'Observatoire, 2021, p. 94.

8 Decolonisation, resistance to globalisation, global migration and culture shocks, phenomena of communitisation, identitarian movements.

ecology);[9] and the development of world-wide travel and tourism as an economic manna.[10]

As heritage became an increasing social reality from the 1980–90s onwards, it was established as legitimate subject of research in the humanities and social sciences, as Pierre Nora's seminal *Lieux de mémoire* shows.[11] The rise in studies on heritage and collective memory is in line with what is called the 'cultural turn' and the discipline of Cultural History, which addresses 'the dimension of the symbolic and its interpretations'.[12] In the future, it will be necessary to look back at this movement and examine whether the approaches in the humanities and social sciences were influenced by the era of 'total heritage'.[13] Were researchers able to resist the memorial and identity-based pressures of contemporary society? How did their work manage to avoid being governed by 'the tyranny of memory'[14], 'the unreserved lauding of memory'[15] and 'of the inversion of the historical into the commemorative'?[16]

'Total heritage' has resulted in a weakening of the boundaries between individual and collective memory, often defined as an affective and spontaneous reality within identity-based logics, and history, which is an aca-

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9   It would be interesting to analyse the concomitance between two major phenomena: the emergence of an awareness of heritage with the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), now the World Heritage Convention, and the birth of an ecological consciousness with the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the first 'Earth Summit'.

10   The threshold of a billion tourist was surpassed in 2013.

11   Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* comprises 7 parts published by Gallimard across 3 volumes: *La République* (1984), *La Nation* (1986) and *Les France* (1992). The work was published in English in 3 volumes by Columbia University Press as *Realms of Memory*: *The Construction of the French Past* (edited by Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, and translated by Arthur Goldhammer): *Conflicts and Divisions* (1996); *Traditions* (1997); *Symbols* (1998). When the original French version is used as the basis for translations in this book, the citations refer to the 3-volume 1997 republication. The following translations of 'lieux de mémoire' are available: 'places of memory', 'sites of memory' or 'realms of memory'.

12   According to Hervé Mazurel in his forward to the French edition of Peter Burke's *Qu'est-ce que l'histoire culturelle*, trans. by Christophe Jaquet, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2022, p. 11.

13   François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Seuil, 'Points-Histoire', 2012, p. 243.

14   Pierre Nora, 'The Era of Commemoration', *op.cit*, p. 637.

15   Tzvetan Todorov, *Les Abus de la mémoire*, Paris, Arléa, 1995, p. 13.

16   Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2001, p. 91

demic discipline with a required objectivity, regulated methods, and an ethos. This blurring can be observed in a 1993 French law on listed heritage buildings, which states 'Our heritage is the memory of our history and the symbol of our national identity'.[17] Such declarations raise the question of whether the triad of heritage-memory-history should be devoted to celebrating national identity.[18] Does heritage 'make history', or at the very least recount it, memorialise it, and ensure its presence in everyday life? If that were to be the case, it would mean forgetting the fact that the history of historians,[19] with its foundations in a critical and detached search for knowledge, is very clearly distinguished from 'heritage' and from 'memory'. Heritage, however, is of interest to historians since it cannot be considered outside of the (complex) relationship that it establishes to the past and thus to history and its memory.[20]

This past does not exist in and of itself: 'patrimonialisation',[21] the process of creating heritage, selects, valorises, and transforms elements from history at a given time (the moment of patrimonialisation). Above all, it is a testament to that moment and the contemporary needs of a society or of a community. Heritage becomes heritage creation through the shift from the 'exceptional' object to be preserved to the strategies and processes of recognition, which involve institutions (groups, states, European institutions, UNESCO). The result is that, contrary to popular opinion, heritage is anything but a stable and unchanging reality, a sanctuary or refuge. As part of history, heritage evolves according to political and geopolitical contexts and new ways of thinking. It is subject to continual re-readings and challenges that can even bring about its destruction.

The traditional concept of heritage has expanded well beyond notions of protection, restoration, and conservation to become a mirror of contem-

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17 Cited in François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité, op.cit.,* p. 205.

18 Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire* does not address, for example, the memory of slavery. The memory of victims was a less significant concern in the 1980s and 1990s.

19 The German language distinguishes between history that is written (Geschichte) and history as an analysis of the history that is written (Historie).

20 Sébastien Ledoux, « La mémoire, mauvais objet de l'historien? », *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, vol. 133, no. 1, 2017, p. 113–128.

21 A term invented by Nora. In this book, I'll use the terms 'patrimonialisation' and 'heritagisation' interchangeably. According to the Collins dictionary, 'A country's patrimony is its land, buildings, and works of art'. Olivier Givre, Madina Regnault, « Du patrimoine comme objet à la patrimonialisation comme processus ». In *Patrimonialisations croisées*, ed. by Olivier Givre et Madina Regnault. Lyon, Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2015. https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pul.22815.

porary societies and a geopolitical issue. Through its designations ('World Heritage List', 'Memory of the World Register'), UNESCO is an excellent lens through which to assess how states can turn both heritage and the organisation itself into instruments for political and geopolitical ends. The significant challenges that UNESCO's universalist and cultural mission has faced attest to the symbolic importance that heritage occupies in the world today. The phenomenon of 'monumental hatred,'[22] which goes against UNESCO's core mission[23], dramatically emerged at the turn of the twenty-first century.[24] Examples include the attacks on heritage sites during the Yugoslav Wars and the world-wide shock provoked by the destruction of the Timbuktu mausoleums (Mali) and the Monumental Arch of Palmyra (Syria).

Whilst UNESCO still maintains that heritage is a source of 'resilience', the reality is that it divides societies as much as it unites them. It can even lead to geopolitical conflicts. In 2011, the announcement that Palestine was becoming a UNESCO member caused a diplomatic crisis: the United States, along with Israel and Canada, decided to suspend their financial contribution to the organisation (representing 22 % of its budget), thereby endangering UNESCO's role and prestigious status. The inscription of Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town on UNESCO'S World Heritage List in Danger in 2017 led the American government to transfer its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and then, on 6 December 2017, recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.[25] Other cases that reveal the geopolitical importance of cultural heritage include the toppling of statues as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement, started in the United States in 2013, which reflects a desire to re-examine existing heritage monuments in public spaces. Similarly, a movement emerging from countries that were formerly colonies aims

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22 François Chaslin, *Une haine monumentale, essais sur la destruction des villes en Ex-Yougoslavie,* Paris, Descartes & Cie, 1997.

23 Following the Hebron affair in 2017 described below, the Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova deplored this radical challenge to heritage, which was viewed as a form of attack against universalism: 'Universality is critical to UNESCO's mission to strengthen international peace and security in the face of hatred and violence, to defend human rights and dignity'. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/statement-irina-bokova-director-general-unesco-occasion-withdrawal-united-states-america-unesco

24 Robert Belot, 'Heritage abuse and geopolitical disorder at the dawn of the third millennium', *Ethnologies*, vol. 39, n°1, 2018, p. 27–49.

25 Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, declared 'Unesco has become a theatre of absurd. Instead of preserving history, it distorts it'.

to recover stolen artefacts. European museums have been confronted with such requests since the start of the 2000s.[26] We will explore the question: Did European countries steal non-European heritage?

Within this context, it is legitimate to ask whether heritage appears as 'just a province of history',[27] on the same level as memory? Or if it is progressively establishing itself as a competitor to the history of historians and even, in certain cases, as a denier or forger of history, or at the very least as having an influence on historians? Is heritage the memory of history or, in fact, a mirror of geopolitical issues? Under the pressures of social and international demands, heritage would become the main provider of the past's presence in the present, no longer on the peripheries but at the centre of our relationship to history. Even when there are interactions and overlap between the approach of historians and the memory-heritage approach, the outcomes are not the same. The dynamic of heritage draws on 'collective' memory and the symbolic narrative that a group tells itself for reasons of identification, rehabilitation, cohesion, and perpetuation: 'imagined communities'[28] creating 'founding imaginaries'[29]. Whether material or immaterial, heritage is only created, appropriated, and valorised by a group for its value as a historical witness and for identity-based purposes. This dynamic is thus instrumental, legitimate, and normative. In other words, it is moral and political. Its result is an over-legalisation of the past[30] and 'memory laws'[31], which transform memory into an instance of 'truth' by making the state or the justice system the guarantor of a historic 'norm'.

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26 Elwin Sarr, Bénédicte Savoy, « Restituer le patrimoine africain : vers une nouvelle éthique relationnelle ». Report delivered President Emmanuel Macron on 23 November 2018.

27 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, *op.cit*, p. 385.

28 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 1983.

29 Vincent Descombes, *Les embarras de l'identité*, Paris, Gallimard, 2013, p. 250.

30 Henry Rousso and Éric Conan, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, Paris, Fayard, 1994.

31 To date, there are four such laws in France: the law of 13 July 1990 aimed to crack down on all acts of racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia and made denying the holocaust a crime; the law of 29 January 2021 recognised the 1915 Armenian genocide; the law of 21 May 2002 recognised the slave trade and slavery as a crime against humanity; the law of 23 February 2005 addressed colonialism. See: https://www.vie -publique.fr/eclairage/18617-lois-memorielles-la-loi-le-politique-et-lhistoire

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The legal recognition of 'rights relating to cultural heritage'[32] and of the 'duty of memory' (which often goes hand in hand with 'the rhetoric of denunciation')[33] confirms the existence of this phenomenon: the progressive hegemonisation of the couple heritage/memory. The historian Pierre Laborie examines the notion of what he calls 'memorially correct' and casts doubt on the 'legitimacy of a reading of the past established as the norm and upheld as the only right and possible memory'.[34] In some cases, the relationship between history and memory can even lead to collectives and communities with interests in memorialisation confronting and questioning the work of historians. During a high-profile legal case in France following the publication of Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau's *Les Traites négrières* (2003) on the trans-Saharan slave trade,[35] a group of historians issued a reminder of how historians approach their work:[36] history is not 'a religion', history is 'not morality', history is not a 'slave to present times', history is not 'a legal subject'; and, finally, 'history is not memory'.[37] And yet, memory, including heritage, has become a subject of history.

The effects of this confusion can be analysed from a case study on the internationally renowned Franco-Swiss architect and urban planner Le Corbusier.[38] A leading figure in the modern architecture movement, Le Corbusier was the subject of a grassroots memory war campaign, of the

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32 Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005) https://rm.coe.int/1680083746

33 Sébastien Ledoux, *Le devoir de mémoire. Une formule et son histoire*, Paris, CNRS éditions (Biblis), 2016–2021, p. 129.

34 Pierre Laborie, *Le chagrin et le venin. La France sous l'Occupation, mémoire et idées reçues*, Paris, Bayard, p. 2011, p. 11, p. 39.

35 Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau was accused of putting into historical perspective and downplaying the transatlantic slave trade (which primarily concerned European traders), and denying its genocidal nature. Deemed to be 'racist' and 'revisionist', Pétré-Grenouilleau was subject to legal action in 2005 brought about by a collective from French overseas departments. In an article published on 12 June 2005, the historian denied that the slave trade constituted a crime against humanity, contrary to the law of 23 May 2001 which recognised it as such. In February 2006, the collective withdrew their complaint.

36 Following the complaint against Pétré-Grenouilleau, historians reacted strongly against what they saw as a violation of their freedom. They published an appeal on 13 December 2005 entitled « Liberté pour l'histoire » [Freedom for history].

37 « Liberté pour l'histoire », *Libération*, 13 décembre 2005.

38 Robert Belot, *Le Corbusier fasciste? Dénigrement et mésusage de l'histoire*, Paris, Hermann, 2021. Many of the activities for the DYCLAM+ Masters programme took place in the former school at the Unité d'Habitation built by Le Corbusier as part of the creation of the new urban area Firminy-Vert. I received invaluable support

type that is widely-reported in the media and is freed from the constraints that govern the slow work of historians. An attempt was made to block the inscription of a series of his buildings on the World Heritage List to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of his death in 2015. The proposed serial inscription of Le Corbusier's works was met with accusations of the architect being a 'fascist', a Vichy 'collaborator', and even a 'Nazi sympathiser'. This case presents a blurring of the boundaries that separate opinion from knowledge, denigration from criticism, judgement from analysis. As the then-French Culture Minister André Malraux's eulogy to his 'old master' on 3 September 1965 attested, there has long been contention towards Le Corbusier, which even existed in his own lifetime. Today, Le Corbusier is attacked for his role under the Vichy regime (1940–1944) following the defeat of France. UNESCO, supported by historians, resisted this denunciation campaign, which is in line with the worldwide trend of deposing 'heroes' but may ultimately be to the detriment of history. Since 17 July 2016, 17 buildings or sites designed by Le Corbusier have been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The duty of the historian and anthropologist of memory[39] is to attempt to show the outcomes of the mechanisms of heritage. As part of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters programme DYCLAM+ (2017–24), I organised classes, seminars, and lectures with external speakers for my students during which heritage was examined through three key questions: 1) how is heritage created? This initial question allowed for a reading of the social, political, and geopolitical processes through which an event, a historical figure, an idea, a community, or a phenomenon is honoured, all the while attempting to identify the transformations that are visible in the 'items' chosen to create heritage from. These choices can evolve according to geopolitical changes (for example, world wars or the end of the Cold War) as well as the evolving socio-ethical paradigms that have come to establish our relationship to the past on a 'victim-memorial regime'.[40] In the West, celebrating the figure of the national hero has given way to resituating the

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from Jean-Louis Cohen, who was professor at the Collège de France and a prominent architectural historian, and greatly benefitted from his advice.

39 The history of memory has developed precisely within this movement obsessed with heritage.

40 Johann Michel, *Gouverner les mémoires. Les politiques mémorielles en France*, Paris, PUF, 2010, p. 69.

victim, the defeated, the outsiders of memory and history.[41] For example, in 2017, a monument dedicated to the victims of homophobia was inaugurated in Lisbon. National memory appears in competition with the rising power of 'contemporary victim identity'.[42] The emergence of the values 'resilience', 'empathy',[43] and equity have allowed for the consideration of memories of suffering and heritages of dispossession.[44] 2) How did the forms, techniques, and functions of heritage evolve between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries? From stone monuments to artificial intelligence, from tangible to intangible forms of heritage, society's relationship to heritage has undergone major transformations. When exploring this question, it is apt to distinguish between monuments that were conceived as such and 'involuntary'[45] sites of heritage, those that later became monuments (e.g. ruins). This question is addressed through the case study of the inscription of the Genbaku Dome in Hiroshima on the World Heritage List in 1996. These transformations have an impact upon the very meaning of the word and the concept of 'heritage,'[46] as well as its usages and social impact. 3) In which ways can societies intervene and respond to the inscription of heritage narratives in public spaces and collective memory? As a group, we sought to understand anti-heritage behaviours of individuals and collective hostile to the conservation of heritage sites that bear witness to a history that is no longer or not yet compatible with the expectations of contemporary society. My students and I worked on a socio-political phenomenon that has not yet been documented and perhaps represents an exception

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41 Paul Ricœur mentions 'the claim of our contemporaries to place themselves in the position of victim, to assume the status of victim' that 'engenders an exorbitant privilege, which places everyone else in the position of owing a debt'. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting, op.cit*, p. 86.

42 Esther Benbassa, « La concurrence des victimes », in Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine Lemaire, Nicolas Bancel (eds), *Culture coloniale en France. De la Révolution française à nos jours*, Paris, CNRS éditions, 2008, p. 587. See also Iannis Roder, *Sortir de l'ère victimaire. Pour une nouvelle approche de la Shoah et des crimes de masse*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2020.

43 Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Resilience: Reimagining Existence on a Rewilding Earth*, St. Martin's Press, 2022.

44 Didier Fassin, « La souffrance du monde. Considérations anthropologiques sur les politiques contemporaines de la compassion », *L'Évolution psychiatrique*, October-December 2002; *La raison humanitaire. Une histoire morale du temps présent*, Paris, Hautes Études-Gallimard-Seuil, 2011.

45 Françoise Choay, *L'Allégorie du patrimoine*, Paris, Seuil, 1992–1999, p. 14–15.

46 Tim Winter, 'Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19/ 2013, p. 532–545.

in France: the refusal to erect memorials in the Loire department in the aftermath of the Great War. The results of this research are outlined our essay. Whilst this episode from history might seem incredible today, it offers insight into the influence of and paradoxes within the region's pacifist and trade unionist movement that developed in the armoury industry. Heritage is increasingly presented as a tool destined to create connections, consensus, and 'resilience', yet, in this example, dissensus produced instances of conflict.

These three heuristic questions mirror a more general, longstanding reflection in my research on the complex relationships that are continually woven between history (the history of historians), social memory, and heritage. These relationships sometimes highlight the logics of instrumentalisation (political, ideological, as much as economic) because they touch upon issues of identity and power. From this perspective, Vladimir Putin's justification for the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 through reference to historical heritage presents an illustrative contemporary example. The arguments he has presented in public primarily point to Ukraine's politics of 'de-patrimonialisation' or 'de-heritagisation', the undoing of heritage, through its dismantling of Soviet era monuments following independence.[47] Ukraine is not its only target: Russia intends to pursue justice against the European leaders accused of 'insulting History' (Baltic countries and Poland). Culture is also a battlefield. UNESCO's vocation is thus questioned. On the entry gate to UNESCO headquarters in Paris, a large sign presents the organisation's mission:

'UNESCO World Heritage. A source of resilience, humanity and innovation'

One of the first tangible public reactions in Europe relating to Ukrainian heritage was an outdoor exhibition at the Palais-Royal in Paris, which could be viewed from 16 April 2022 onwards, just two months after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Entitled 'Ukraine éternelle' (Eternal Ukraine), the

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47 Robert Belot, *Vladimir Poutine ou la falsification de l'Histoire comme arme de guerre*, Lausanne, Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, series 'Debates and Documents Collection', 2024. This work expands upon the classes I gave from the start of 2022 onwards and a conference organised by DYCLAM+ consortium at Babeş-Bolyai University in Romania (4 November 2023) on 'Revisiter les récits sur le patrimoine culturel dans les États candidats à l'UE dans le contexte de la guerre de la Russie contre l'Ukraine'. My paper was titled: 'Justifying War through History and Heritage: The Example of Russia's Aggression against Ukraine'.

exhibition was a collaboration between the Ukrainian Embassy in Paris, the Permanent Delegation of Ukraine to UNESCO, and the Centre des monuments nationaux. On the railings of the Palais-Royal gardens, a selection of large-scale photographs offered 'a voyage through little-known heritage sites in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, and Odessa, which are now under threat'. From my own visit, it was clear that the exhibition aimed to demonstrate, contrary to the theories of its invader, that Ukraine, with its own history, culture, and heritage, very much existed. The exhibition reveals one of heritage's fundamental functions as a marker of identity. The organisers specified that 'these images of monuments, witnesses to the Ukrainian nation's past and constituting its identity, allow for the public to see the diversity of Ukraine's heritage'.

This exhibition also points to the importance that societies attribute to the issue of heritage in the context of war and to the threat of diminishing or destroying the foundations of identity. The collection of sites represented (Saint-Sophia Cathedral, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, the Historic Centre of L'viv, and the Residence of Bukovinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans) are 'inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. The Cultural Landscape of Canyon in Kamenets-Podilsk and the Historic Centre of Odesa are inscribed on the Tentative List, which is an inventory of those properties which each State Party intends to consider for nomination'.[48] The exhibition sought to 'make the public aware of the dangers' to which cultural heritage is exposed, 'as a collateral victim and as a target' and to serve as a reminder of the protective role that UNESCO must play.[49] The exhibition's title (eternal Ukraine) is problematic in itself: it could be read as a sign of poetic affectation or a marker of empathy, but it also expresses an essentialist point of view both of the nation and of history that is incompatible with the historian's approach. It suggests heritage is a sort of sanctuary with the vocation of protecting and glorifying an identity considered genetically pure that predates history. The medievalist Marc Bloch encouraged historians to free themselves from 'the idol of origins',[50] whilst the philosopher

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48 The Historic Centre of Odesa was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2023.
49 The Grand Palais in Paris welcomed the immersive exhibition « Ukraine: une année de résilience, une culture de resistance » [Ukraine: A Year of Resilience, A Culture of Resistance] in February 2023. Organised by the Ukrainian and Canadian embassies in France, the exhibition has previously been displayed at the Toronto Ukrainian Festival in September 2022.
50 Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. by Peter Putnam, Knopf, 1953, p. 29

Paul Ricœur put forward the idea that reality is but a tale of reality, and that memory must be understood as a 'fiction' inventing a 'narrative identity'.[51]

This book seeks to show that heritage, like the past, is a social 'construction'[52] that reveals more about the moment in which the act of heritage creation is undertaken, than about the history of what it relates to. Studies on the monuments in homage to the American Confederates show that these statues were often erected in two main waves long after the Civil War had ended: 1890–1930 and 1950–1960. These two waves correspond to periods of heightened racial tensions in American politics. This observation allows us to resituate the process of heritage in an ideological perspective to uncover, as the historian Jane Dailey writes, that in many cases, the purpose of these monuments was not to celebrate the past, but to promote 'white supremacy'.[53] To understand the reasons behind students' toppling of 'Silent Sam' (20 August 2018), a monument that immortalised a confederate soldier and became a symbol of the University of North Carolina, it is necessary to look back to the circumstances surrounding its inauguration. Financed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, this monument was inaugurated on 2 June 1913, long after the historical event it was supposed to commemorate. The inaugural speeches celebrated the sacred cause that the monument symbolised: the preservation of the 'Anglo Saxon race'.[54]

When Barack Obama visited Hiroshima on 26 May 2016 (the first American president to do so), he included the following statement in his speech: 'we have a shared responsibility to look directly into the eye of history'.[55] This phrase might be read as a reference to the way that the Hiroshima Memorial Museum downplays the history of Japan as a hegemonic persecutor

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51 'The fragile offshoot issuing from the union of history and fiction is the assignment to an individual or a community of a specific identity that we can call their narrative identity'. Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, trans. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauner, The University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 246.

52 Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008, p. 77.

53 Jane Dailey, 'Baltimore's Confederate monument was never about "history and culture"', *The Huffington Post*, 17 August 2017. On this question, see Olof Bortz, « Les historiens, le déboulonnage des monuments et l'histoire du racisme: États-Unis, Royaume-Uni et France, 2015–2020 », 27 June 2023. https://www.politika.io/fr/article/historiens-deboulonnage-monuments-lhistoire-du-racisme-etatsunis-royaumeuni-france-20152020

54 Robert J. Cook, *Civil War Memories: Contesting the Past in the United States since 1865*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017.

55 'Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Abe of Japan at Hiroshima Peace Memorial' https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/05/27/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-abe-japan-hiroshima-peace

in the first half of the twentieth history by focusing on the atomic bomb, thereby transforming the country into a victim. This process allowed for an exoneration of the crimes Japan committed (for example, against China) so that the country could reappear as an actor on the international stage in 1945. These circumstances raise the question of whether history was the real issue when creating heritage of Hiroshima. Is Hiroshima a 'lieu de mémoire' or 'lieu de dé-mémoire', heritage without memory, even heritage against history? The memory of Hiroshima is explored as a case study in this book.

As it is considered a touchstone of identity, the relationship to heritage is connected to the sacred and to myths. For the anthropologist, heritage is above all an illustration of society to study as it is. It then follows that heritage, given that it is part of history and claims to embody history, has its own history. What Charles Péguy called 'historical history' is related to the prosaic nature of the academic approach, which is presented as a permanent and contradictory rewriting of historical fact that fears any instrumentalisation because it is ruled by an ethos of knowledge. On the other hand, heritage is experienced and perceived as a promise and a guarantee of eternity, or at least of durability. It is also indebted to the evolution of ways of thinking and can be subjected to the test of time. To cite the title of Alain Resnais's and Chris Marker's 1953 documentary on colonialism that caused a scandal upon its release, 'statues also die'. Along similar lines, the phrase « Déboulonnons le récit officiel » [Unshackle the official narrative] was graffitied on a statue of Maréchal Joseph Gallieni in Paris on 16 June 2020. Gallieni was a high-profile figure during the First World War, but also an uncompromising actor of colonisation, notably in Madagascar.

This movement of questioning heritage is of particular concern for Europe's former colonial powers who imposed a narrative and constructed a heritage of monuments that, in general, ignored the perspectives of colonialised peoples and the realities of colonialism. For these reasons, statues of Leopold II in Belgium have been the subject of lively and recurring contestations by anti-colonialists, and in France, Jules Ferry, who carried out major education reforms, is an increasingly contested figure due to his politics of colonial expansion under the Third Republic. European countries have had to confront their 'contentious statues' following the re-examination of the history of slavery and of colonisation, which has

led to vandalism and destruction.[56] Across the world, a movement is developing that is reconsidering national heroes and deconditioning memory, including figures that one might believe to be beyond suspicion: Abraham Lincoln, Théodore Roosevelt, Victor Schoelcher, Churchill, and Gandhi. European museums are having to respond to the movement for repatriating stolen cultural artefacts. In 2021, France returned 26 works to Benin from the Quai Branly museum's collection. To mark the occasion, a short, week-long exhibition took place in October 2021 that students on the DYCLAM+ Masters programme were able to visit. In the United States, this issue focuses on 'equitable heritage'. The foreword to the exhibition 'Intangible Heritage and Human Experience: Revisiting African Arts' at the New Orleans Museum of Art, which I visited in April 2024, reflects this approach: 'Arts presents opportunities to reassess our pasts, critically engage with history, and create a more equitable heritage for future generations. We invite you to contribute to the interpretation of African arts and watch this space as it grows and changes to incorporate many perspectives.' Beyond the strict question of heritage, the returning of artworks is fraught with the more complex and sensitive issues of reparations of a past that is at odds with the dominant values of today.

These questions emerged when the European Union was developing programmes (notably as part of ERASMUS+) that aim to valorise 'European heritage'. The European Heritage Label was created in 2005 for this very purpose. The Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society framework, drawn up in the same year, mentions 'rights relating to cultural heritage' in its first article.[57] Yet the very idea of 'European heritage', an unavoidable topos of pro-European discourse since the 1950s, is not self-evident and requires examination. Indeed, the creation of the House of European History in Brussels in 2017 was met with criticism. When considering this question, it is worth remembering what Lucien Febvre, one of the twentieth century's leading historians, proposed in a class at the Collège de France in 1944 as a definition of what could be 'European civilisation' and what he called 'shared heritage'.

My own approach could be summarised with this apodictic formulation: it is necessary to study and write the history of heritage, which is an

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56 Jacqueline Lalouette, *Les statues de la discorde*, Passés/Composés-Humensis, 2021.

57 'The Parties to this Convention agree to: recognise that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. https://rm.coe.int/1680083746

attempt at creating heritage from History. This position leads to admitting that the narrative construction of heritage can also be a deconstruction (or a 'decanonisation'[58]) by a different discourse, which reflects a different moment in time, a different intellectual context, and a different relationship to history.[59] This book does not aim to produce a general theory on the act of heritage, rather it presents case studies in which I attempt to echo the three questions outlined at the beginning of this introduction. This historical-anthropological study on the development of creating heritage from historical fact also offers a reflection on the changes within the relationship of societies to the phenomena of heritage, memorialisation and commemoration.

The relevance of this work today is a reminder that the regime of heritage creation is the product of successive narratives that every society draws up at different times and according to evolving expectations and representations.[60] The hypothesis that sociologist Maurice Halbwachs proposed many years ago thus remains valid: 'collective memory is essentially a reconstruction that adapts the image of ancient facts to the beliefs and spiritual needs of the present.'[61] Heritage carries out an action on the past in the present and aims to instruct the future.[62] Some scholars have called this 'reversed filiation'.[63] Others have identified three dimensions of heritage: 1) retrospective (relationship to the past), 2) introspective (relationship to

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58 Yuliya Yurchuk, « Décanonisation du passé soviétique: abject, kitsch et mémoire en Ukraine », in S. Gensburger, Jenny Wüstenberg (eds.), *Dé-commémoration*, Paris, Fayard, 2023, p.128.

59 Bertrand Tillier, *La Disgrâce des statues; essai sur les conflits de mémoire, de la Révolution française à Black Lives Matter*, Paris, Payot, 2022.

60 Nathalie Heinich, *La fabrique du patrimoine : de la cathédrale à la petite cuillère*, Paris, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2009.

61 Maurice Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre Sainte, Étude de mémoire collective*, Paris, PUF, 1941.

62 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2006.

63 According to the ethnologist Jean Pouillon, « La tradition : transmission ou reconstruction ? », in Jean Pouillon, *Fétiches sans fétichisme*, Paris, Maspero, 1975, p. 155-173. This notion was taken up by Jean Davallon, *Le don du patrimoine. Une approche communicationnelle de la patrimonialisation*, Lavoisier, 2006, p. 155. Reversed (or inverted) filiation ('filiation inversée') means that it is the heir who choose their heritage and not the other way round. The regime of heritage does not fall under a linear, descending, and mechanical transmission, rather it rests upon the freedom to conserve, destroy, or reconstruct. That is why, contrary to popular opinion, heritage is a constantly evolving social reality and why it is in and of itself historical and can be historicised.

the present), 3) prospective (ultimate aim).[64] The form of history that heritage claims to embody and make eternal is itself subject to confrontation, revision, and interpretative conflicts linked to new and future sensibilities.

This rule also applies to monument-based heritage, to sites of heritage that were originally conceived as heritage. I propose to show that commemorative monuments, contingent upon geopolitical contexts, are caught in this dialectic movement of permanent reinterpretation that results in the public forgetting the event that it commemorates. Subjected to cycles of representation, monuments are destined to be a 'semiological Golem,'[65] an 'unstoppable metaphor'.[66] 'Polysemy and mutability'[67] are the two defining characteristics of the three monuments that form the case study in this book: the Lion of Belfort (1880); the Statue of Liberty in New York (1886); and the Eiffel Tower (1889). Heritage's underlying paradox is that it reveals the present status of societies, their tensions and their divisions, their hopes and their fears, against a backdrop of a quest for identity[68] and issues of power.[69]

This book seeks to introduce some fundamental heuristic questions to students preparing for careers in the heritage industry and to teachers interested in the issue of heritage. Why do we remember? What do we remember? How do we remember? Why, in contrast, do we avoid remembering certain events? These questions and many more were discussed with my students on the national masters programmme Histoire-Civilisations-

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64 Stéphane Héritier, « Le patrimoine comme *chronogenèse*. Réflexions sur l'espace et le temps », *Annales de géographie*, vol. 689, no. 1, 2013, p. 3–23.

65 Philippe Roger, « L'édifice du sens », in *La Statue de la Liberté, l'exposition du centenaire*, Paris, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Sélection du Reader's Digest, 1986, p. 282.

66 Roland Barthes, *La Tour Eiffel*, Paris, Delpire, 1964. Text republished in: *Roland Barthes, Œuvres complètes*, vol. I: 1942–1965, edited and presented by Éric Marty, Paris, Seuil, 1993, p. 1400.

67 Here, I adapt the phrase of the historian Maurice Agulhon, who studied the Statue of Liberty and discussed 'the polysemy and mutability of symbols'. Maurice Agulhon, *Les métamorphoses de Marianne. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1914 à nos jours*, Paris, Flammarion, 2001, p. 9. Maurice Agulhon encouraged me to work on the sculptor Auguste Bartholdi.

68 Julien Bondaz, Cyril Isnar, Anaïs Lebon, « Au-delà du consensus patrimonial. Résistants et usages contestataires du patrimoine », *Civilisations. Revue internationale d'anthropologie et de sciences humaines*, 61–1, 2012, p. 9–22.

69 Julie Deschepper, « Notion en débat: patrimoine », *Géoconfluences. Ressources de géographie pour les enseignants*, March 2021; online: http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/informations-scientifiques/a-la-une/notion-a-la-une/patrimoine

Patrimoine [History, Civilisations, Heritage][70] and on the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters degree DYCLAM+ (Dynamics of Cultural Landscape, Heritage, Memory and Conflictualities).[71] Our discussions took the form of courses,[72] seminars, and conferences organised by the consortium of universities, which brought together specialists from different disciplines.[73]

This book's case studies are presented as a reflection of the current theoretical trends which view heritage not as existing in and of itself as an immanent and unchangeable given that only needs to be uncovered or presented; but rather as dependent upon the process of heritage creation, which, in turn, depends on a complex and evolving eco-system.[74] Within this eco-system, I have decided to highlight one parameter that appears as a determining factor and which constitutes the unifying thread of this book, presented here as a double question: What is the role of heritage in international relations and specifically in contexts of geopolitical rupture (decolonisation, wars, conflicts)? How can heritage be an actor and a geopolitical indicator to study as such?[75]

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70   This Master's programme, which I was the director of from 2018 to 2023, is led by the Université Jean Monnet de Saint-Étienne (France) in partnership with the Université Lyon 2, the École nationale des Travaux publics de l'État, and the École nationale supérieure des sciences de l'information et des bibliothèques (ENSSIB).

71   The DYCLAM+ master's programme is financed by the European Commission and brings together a consortium of 4 university partners who deliver teaching and training in research methodologies: Université Jean Monnet de Saint-Etienne (France) is the Academic coordinator and the Administrative manager (I am pleased to express my gratitude to Allison Ceresa Genet), alongside the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar (Portugal), Babeș-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), and the University of Naples Federico II (Italy). This video offers an overview of the DYCLAM+ programme:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/14hp4-E2qng1EJ9HxXU2L9gpzCsE59rjm/view?usp=drive_link

72   My teaching courses were often based on my own studies, research, and fieldwork. Some chapters in this book draw on my previous publications, which, as indicated, I have updated.

73   For example, « L'Europe face à la revendication de la restitution des biens culturels mal acquis », seminar organised by Université Jean Monnet and the DYCLAM+ Consortium, Saint-Étienne, 29 January 2021. file:///Users/br78662h/Downloads/Dyclam-s%C3%A9minaire-29%20janvier%202020.pdf

74   Lucie K. Morisset, *Des régimes d'authenticité: Essai sur la mémoire patrimoniale,* Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009, p. 18.

75   Unless otherwise stated, translations are by Robert Belot and Stacie Allan.