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## THE CONCEPT OF “PLACES OF MEMORY” BY PIERRE NORA: PRACTICES OF COMMEMORATION

The last 10-15 years, the research of the practice of memory and places of memory has become relevant among scientists of social sciences and humanities. The French anthropologist Pierre Nora first put the concept of “memory places” forward. This article attempted to analyze the concepts of “places of memory and memorable places” in the series of articles by P. Nora “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire” (Nora, 1999). Researching the problems of historical memory and space, the authors examine the genealogy of memory research development and its impact on the origin of the concept of “place of”.

Places of memory, according to P. Nora – “this is a place of spiritual and material unity that over time and by the will of people has become a symbolic element of the heritage of national memory or collective memory of people” (Nora, 1999: 26). Space plays a huge role in the creation of places of memory, that is, the territory where the monument is constructed, a memorial complex is built and a mazar is erected. The “cultural turn” that took place in the early 1970s in the social sciences allows to name it a cultural landscape.

Relationship problem between culture and space, the semantic characteristics of space organization – a complex system of interrelated components. In the humanitarian knowledge, relationship problem between culture and space has been studied mainly in linguistic or anthropological discourses that do not consider the phenomenon of the cultural landscape in its entirety. In given article, the authors analyzing the concepts of memory places, determine the role of the cultural landscape as the keeper of historical and cultural memory, as the emotional capital of a certain territory.

The article completed within the framework of a dissertation research on the topic “Cultural landscape: research problems”.

**Key words:** memory places, cultural landscape, commemoration, historical memory, identity, forgetfulness.

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### Пьер Нораның «естелік орындары» тұжырымдамасы: коммеморация тәжірибелері

Соңғы 10-15 жылда естелік тәжірибесі мен естелік орындарының зерттелуі әлеуметтік-гуманитарлық ғылымдар ғалымдары арасында өзекті мәселеге айналды. «Естелік орындары» ұғымын алғаш рет француз антропологы Пьер Нора ұсынған. Бұл мақалада П.Нораның Нора «Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire» (Nora, 1999) мақалалар топтамасындағы «естелік орындары мен еске алу орындары» ұғымын талдауға әрекет жасалды. Тарихи жады мен кеңістік мәселелерін зерттей отырып, авторлар жады зерттеуінің даму шежіресін және оның «естелік орны» ұғымына әсерін қарастырады.

Естелік орындары, П.Нораның пікірінше, «уақыт өте келе және адамдардың еркі бойынша ұлттық жады мұрасының немесе адамдардың ұжымдық жадысының символдық элементіне айналған рухани және материалдық бірлік орны» (Нора, 1999: 26). Естелік орындарын құруда кеңістіктің, яғни ескерткіш орнатылатын, мемориалдық кешен салынып, мазар бой көтеретін аумақтың рөлі зор. 1970 жылдардың басында қоғамдық ғылымдарда орын алған «мәдени бұрылыс» мұны мәдени ландшафт деп атауға мүмкіндік береді.

Мәдениет пен кеңістіктің арақатынасы, кеңістікті ұйымдастырудың мағыналық сипаттамалары мәселесі өзара байланысты компоненттердің күрделі жүйесі болып табылады. Гуманитарлық білімде мәдениет пен кеңістіктің арақатынасы мәселесі негізінен мәдени ландшафт құбылысын тұтас қарастырмайтын лингвистикалық немесе антропологиялық дискурстарда зерттелді. Бұл мақалада авторлар есте сақтау орындары ұғымдарын талдай отырып, мәдени ландшафттың тарихи-мәдени жадының сақтаушысы, белгілі бір аумақтың эмоционалды капиталы ретіндегі рөлін анықтайды.

Мақала «Мәдени ландшафт: зерттеу мәселелері» тақырыбындағы диссертациялық зерттеу аясында жазылған.

**Түйін сөздер:** естелік орындары, мәдени ландшафт, еске алу, тарихи жады, мәдени жады, тұлға, ұмыту.

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### Концепция «мест памяти» Пьера Нора: практики коммеморации

Последние 10-15 лет исследование практики памяти и мест памяти стала актуальной среди ученых социальных и гуманитарных наук. Концепцию «мест памяти» первым выдвинул французский ученый-антрополог Пьер Нора. В данной статье сделана попытка проанализировать концепции «мест памяти и памятных мест» в серии статей П.Нора «Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire» (Nora, 1999). Исследуя проблемы исторической памяти и пространства, авторы рассматривают генеалогию развития исследования памяти и ее влияние на зарождение концепции «места памяти».

Места памяти, по мнению П. Нора – «это место единства духовного и материального, которое со временем и по воле людей стало символическим элементом наследия национальной памяти или коллективной памяти людей» (Нора, 1999: 26). В создании мест памяти огромную роль играет пространство, то есть территория, где установлен памятник, сооружен мемориальный комплекс и возведен мазар. «Культурный поворот», произошедший в начале 1970-х годов в социальных науках, позволяет это называть культурным ландшафтом.

Проблема взаимоотношения культуры и пространства, семантических характеристик организации пространства представляют собой сложную систему взаимосвязанных компонентов. В гуманитарном знании проблема взаимоотношения культуры и пространства исследовались преимущественно в лингвистическом или антропологическом дискурсах, не рассматривающих явление культурного ландшафта в его целостности. В данной статье авторы, анализируя концепции мест памяти, определяют роль культурного ландшафта как хранителя исторической и культурной памяти, как эмоционального капитала определенной территории.

Статья выполнено в рамках диссертационного исследования по теме «Культурный ландшафт: проблемы исследований»

**Ключевые слова:** места памяти, культурный ландшафт, коммеморация, историческая память, культурная память, идентичность, забвение.

### Introduction

January events in Almaty instinctively resemble the events of December 16, 1986. The same city, the same Independence Square, the same bloody landscape and the destruction have become a tragic memory in the history of Kazakh society. This event will undoubtedly remain a part of the collective memory. In addition, there are many events in the public consciousness; there is a reassessment of events and history. Current events destroyed the usual foundations of the history conception. The history becomes incapable for a single comprehensive explanation of reality.

The colossal human losses of the First World War demonstrated the contradictory qualities of scientific discoveries: science was supposed to bring humanity victory over the death, but in reality, it served to create weapons of mass destruction.

Experts on historical sources of medieval Europe, such as Langlois Ch.-V., Señobos Ch. looked for a way out of the crisis in the history development using texts: selection of documents, their classification, and criticism of sources (Langlois, Señobos, 1898: 275). Langlois and Señobos, in an effort to obtain “authentic historical knowledge”, increasingly relied on facts and subjectively characterized historical sources. Following them, neo-Kantian contemporaries G. Cohen

(Cohen, 1912) and H. Rickert (Rickert, 1908) reassess “scientism” of historical knowledge, contrasting “rightful” natural science and “exceptional” history. Accurately, if representatives of exact sciences are interested in facts and supporting laws, then historians highlight facts on the bases of exclusivity, importance and cultural significance.

Thus, under the influence of the neo-Kantians, the history was “released” from the necessity to imitate the positivistic – “real sciences”.

As Pierre Nora noticed: “We live in the era of the world memory celebration” (Nora, 2005: 40). State programs aimed to revive the history and culture “Cultural Heritage” (Cultural Heritage, 2004, 2007, 2009), “Rukhani zhangyru” (Rukhani zhangyru, 2017), “Tugan Zher” project (Tugan Zher project, 2018), “Sacred Kazakhstan” (Sacred Geography of Kazakhstan, 2018) have done a lot of work in search and creation of places of memory. The creation of places of memory and the construction of national identity is a complex process, as well as scientists have to compare the opinion of the academic and non-academic environment, collective and political opinion. At one time, France and other countries also experienced this process. However, the concept of “places of memory” or “memorable places” by Pierre Nora helped scientists correctly to understand the function and role of memory places.

Representatives of the “Annals” school played a special role in the search for the establishment of representativeness and continuity of history, subsequently researching the relationship of the next concepts as space, cultural landscape, significant places, identity and memory (Blucher, 2004). A follower of the methods of the “Annals” school, the French scientist Pierre Nora, transforming the relationship between history and memory in the 80s, creates his own concept of “place of memory”, thereby reconstructing the past through the prism of spatial research (Nora, 1999: 38). Analysis of the concept of memory by French scientist P. Nora is relevant to develop the commemorative practice in the cultural landscape of Kazakhstan.

### **Justification of topic choice, purposes and objectives**

The research question of the article is to study the meaning of the concept of “memory places” in the construction of the symbolic capital of space as a socio-cultural sphere. At the same time, the concept of “places of memory” updates against the background of the “Sacred Kazakhstan” special project, widely discussed in expert circles and “Rukhani Zhangyru” Program, which subsequently transformed into the ideological plane of the state’s strategic tasks. A consistent review of the scientific works of the French historian Pierre Nora allows us to consider various interpretations of topical issues: “What criteria determine places as “memorable places?”, “Who identifies this kind of places and how is it scaled among the population?”, “How is commemorative politics built and what is its impact on nation-building or national identity?”. Due to that, it is advisable to identify the significance of “places of memory” for its further integration into the ideological doctrines of Kazakhstan authorities.

Taking into account the above, the purpose of the research is to analyze the historical memory and space built based on the analysis of scientific papers, Pierre Nora and his reasoning on the issue “places of memory”.

To achieve the purpose, the following tasks were set: 1) to identify the relationship and dividing boundaries between history and memory; 2) determine the significance of “places of memory” in the identity preservation; 3) to give an analysis of the commemorative practices of the state from the proposed examples of Pierre Nora reflected in his research papers.

### **Research methodology**

The methodological basis of the article is interdisciplinary research methods – hermeneutic, axiological and modern widely used techniques in socio-cultural spheres as interpretive and representative.

### **Results and discussion**

The historical direction of the 20<sup>th</sup> century puts the value of human life and his thought above the events of political history. Under the influence of graduates of the Higher School, such as Maurice Halbwachs, Mark Blok, Lucien Febvre and Charles Blondel, a “new historical science” is arising within the walls of the University of Strasbourg (Andreyeva, 2003). The research thought of intellectuals about current events in the world of the history leads to the foundation of a historical journal called “Annals of Economic and Social History” (Trubnikova, 2010). In subsequent cases, the members of the editorial staff of this journal and its authors called the “Annals school” or just “Annals”. One of the founders of this school, Lucien Febvre, in his research papers notes that ... “A historian who refuses to comprehend this or that human fact, a historian who preaches the blind and unconditional submission to these facts, as if they were not fabricated by himself, they were not chosen in advance in all meanings of the word (and he cannot but choose them), this historian can only be considered an apprentice, even if he is excellent. But he does not deserve the title of historian” (Febvre, 1991: 68).

Febvre’s chain-consistent statements about the role of the historian and his vocation in the scientific environment leads to the idea of history transformation into a social science included in the cultural context. The new recipe for the history reproduction renounces the positivistic approach, where the experience of human experience becomes above *the establishment* of facts and event situations.

The founders of the “Annals school” were practical historians. First, they created their questions and research tasks before starting to search for materials. Representatives of this school were inclined to use methods of related sciences, such as sociology, economics, archeology, geography.

The genealogy of the development of the “Annals” traditionally divided into four generations due to the diversity of the research focus and strategies of the school representatives. If representatives of

the three previous generations viewed the history through the prism of human consciousness and its experiences experienced in a certain period, then scientists of the fourth generation begin to take the history as a “social space”.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the social space is a system of mass communications, a place where several “fields” (economic, social, and political) connect, it means about an informational flow of facts (Bourdieu, 2007: 45). Further, the French historian Pierre Nora, explaining the history as a “representation of human experience”, but at the same time as an incomplete reconstruction of what no longer exists (Nora, 1999: 20), develops this theory in the narrow sense of the “social field”.

Pierre Nora is the ancestor of the Annals school tradition, the president of the Association for the Freedom of History and the author of the concept of “Places of Memory”. At the initiative of Nora, a large-scale historical research project called “Places of Memory” carried out from 1984 to 1992. The results of the project published in the form of a monumental edition of seven volumes, where 130 scientists participated in its writing (Semyonov, 2011). The definition of the concept “places of memory” gradually began to acquire a broader meaning and actively discussed in academic communities. The project had a specific goal: “... to get the memory back under the control of historians in conditions when the past becomes an unpredictable past” and thereby “get the French themselves back” (Nora, 1999: 14). The French national consciousness belonged to historians, and their vision, in turn, has always been in the hands of the state. The history could dispose of national memory, could change from time to time, and become an invisible projection of the past. Mostly, the interpretation of history based on the subjective view of a historian or a state leader who had free access to “transform” history course. During the “era of doubt”, the team of “new historians” began to search for the “real” history in memory. The continuity of memory was a guarantee of authenticity. From Nora’s point of view, “the sense of continuity finds its refuge in places of memory” (Nora, 1999: 17).

In order to understand deeply the meaning of “places of memory”, the freedom fighter of history, Pierre Nora, clearly distinguishes the concepts of “history” and “memory”. The history, in the author’s concept, is not attached to anything except time; it is connected with the secular, universal, objective, simultaneously belongs to everyone and no one. Memory is the exact opposite of the history. The

properties of memory relate to sensory cognition, memories of the past placed in a sacred place; it is open to the dialectic of memorization and amnesia. As Pierre Nora notes, “memory is life, therefore it is in the process of constant evolution, and at the same time it is rooted in the concrete, in space, gesture, image and object” (Nora, 1999: 20).

Nora calls the last decades the era of the “world celebration of memory”, it updated for two reasons of the memory heyday.

The first reason of the memory heyday is associated with the independence of individual ethnic groups and the internal decolonization of former empires. The change in the traditional attitude to the past took place in various forms, from criticism of official versions of the history to the rapid development of memorial events. The past wave of memories in the countries of Latin America, South Africa, the European Commonwealth, the past Soviet Union marked by the start of the search for the national identity, internal identity and memory (Nora, 2005: 40). Also in France, the revolutions that began in 1789 led to the transformation of the historical vector, which influenced the perception of the past. The revolutionary model of time caused the process of “accelerating history”, where the intense changes that occurred after the “oil crisis” began to push the receding past faster and faster. The “acceleration of history” has made a revolution in the organization of memory. Firstly, actions related to the feeling of memory loss lead to excessive accumulation of all elements of memory tools, such as museums, archives, memorials, etc. Secondly, the gap between historical and temporal continuity has influenced the recognition of memory as a connecting category. At the next stage, the link between the present and memory became a guarantee of the future and a promise of continuity (Nora, 2005: 41).

The second reason of the memory heyday is the “history democratization” of minorities who strove to reclaim their own past in order to establish a genuine identity. The so-called memory of minorities appears in three types of decolonization: *worldwide decolonization* (the recognition of the sovereignty of states, ex-protectorates and colonies of empires); *internal decolonization* (the recognition of the peculiarities of sexual, social, religious and regional minorities by the majority, acquisition of open rights to cultivate their identity); *ideological decolonization* (the liberation from the external ideology and access to long-standing traditional ethnic memory).

Thus, the memory heyday of minorities acted as the revenge for the “insulted history”. Many ethnic

minorities were pushed out the historical arena and expelled from their homeland. More often, this happened with the Jewish community, where they did not have the right to history, but it had a strong memory capital. If the memory did not guarantee truth, it guaranteed the faithfulness (Nora, 2005). The Jewish community did not have its own land, history and universal recognition. However, the memory of the Jews was able to preserve and pass traditional values to their future, to take all the necessity from the past to build a high-quality future. The present has imposed on memory the duty of succession of the past and the future.

The consequence of the memory heyday was, first of all, the expansion of the mass memorial field, an abundance of events to reestablish historical consciousness, that proved the existence of multiple memory and the possible versions of the following past. Secondly, the new organization of memory has taken away from the historian the monopoly on the past interpretation. If earlier the historian had the right to establish facts and handle evidence, today he is not the only one who can apply the role of a judge over the history. According to Pierre Nora, a historian should share his role with a judge, a witness, the mass media and a legislator (Nora, 2005). In other words, the demand to the return of memory and the address such the focused attention to it during the “history emancipation” had a huge impact on the conscious identification of all minorities.

The basic tools of historical issues and symbolic objects use the address to memory. As Pierre Nora notes, places of memory are the remains where commemorative conscience from the historical past exist. All the tangible and intangible social heritage carries value mentioned about the past era. The nostalgic aspect in relation to memory places, symbolic memories of the sanctity of certain places – give the special reverence and sensory perception of the visible or invisible (Nora, 2010).

Nora’s chain of argument about “places of memory” seems interesting from the point of inherent integrity view. Is it possible to include all historical events, phenomena, geographical places, monuments, or communities of different social groups in the category of “places of memory”? The researcher emphasizes that “places of memory” include three main meanings – material and symbolic meaning, as well as functional content (Nora, 1999: 26). The author proves by example that an immaterial phenomenon, such as a minute of silence for example, can be a “place of memory”. A minute of silence is symbolic of a tragic event, while simultaneous-

ly sharing a temporary unity in material space and functionally fulfilling the mission memories of the past. One way or another, the interaction of historical sources and collective memory about a certain phenomenon or object forms a “place of memory”. If we turn to significant events like the revolution or the adoption of state-important documents, then they can be divided into two bases. On the one hand, events barely noticed and sometimes unknown when they happened and due to their retrospective significance, can become a triumphant opening. On the other hand, events that at one time were attached a great importance, called a “coup point” (Nora, 2005: 42). However, at present, they actually cannot perceive because of their formal significance in the historical space.

According to Nora’s definition, places of memory have two opposite elements in their symbolic meaning, as dominating and dominated places (Nora, 1999: 39). In the first case, these are triumphal and amazing places related to the national or administrative authority, and often used for solemn or official ceremonies. Visitors come to places like these against their will to give a formal honor to people or an event of the national importance. The second places – places of refuge, sanctuaries of “collective memory”, places that have the meaning of national heritage and silent pilgrimages. These places have a living memory in the hearts of individual communities and represent the greatest value in modern practices.

Thereby, in the perfect research paper “Problems of places of memory”, Pierre Nora clearly presents that he is not interested in the events of the past, but rather their representation. The place of memory for him is not only a physical, topographic place, but also all objects and phenomena that demonstrate symbolic meanings in the memory and perception of individual communities and minorities. The key purpose of similar places is to “stop time, block the work of oblivion” (Nora, 1999: 41).

The central thought of Pierre Nora is not so much about the history, but about how objects and things, events and phenomena enter into this history. In an accelerated time space, in a rapidly changing world, one can follow up a sharp line between the interpretation of the history and the newly retrieved memory. In this regard, representativeness that is more reliable, peoples and nations create various “memory institutions” in the form of archives, museums, libraries, data banks, and this is a mirror of their identity. The “identity crisis” experienced by many ethnic groups and the feverish search for an

answer to the question “Who are we?” during the decolonization periods involved them in new dangers. On the one hand, society loses its identity if the collective memory plants and cultivates through regular rituals and memorials’ creation to legitimize the state ideology. As an example – urban developments or the restoration of monuments, when the authorities influence the inhabitants of the city in order to get a pre-planned version of the past, which suits the city authorities on the positive side. On the other hand, the problem of identity connects with the abundance of traumatic events (Second World War, Holocaust, and GULAG) in the modern history and with the delay in recognizing their significance.

In the next research essay entitled “Nation-Memory”, Pierre Nora considers four types of national memory (Nora, 1999: 51). The earliest type of memory originated during the feudal monarchy, during the period of self-determination and the state strengthening. In order to legitimize the antiquity of the origin of tribal communities, the “memory-king” (*mémoire-Roi*) acts as a guarantor of the national memory sanctity. The religious, symbolic, political and genealogical character of all places during the reign of the king crystallizes in memory under the sign of heritage and makes them a sacred meaning. For example, a reader leafing through the memoirs of political leaders of the past can find the territorial formations of powers, which establishes the first tradition of memories of the nation.

The second type of memory is the “memory-state” (*mémoire-État*) (Nora, 1999: 52). This is the memory absorbed in the image of its own representation, monumental and spectacular in its majesty. The image of the state expresses through the tradition of the governor coinage on medals, the modification of natural landscapes, court rituals, iconographic plots and scenes. The “memory-state” is not forcibly cultivated in people minds, but at the same time it is official and protective, reflects the political and artistic duality. The transition from “memory-king” to “memory-state” was clearly visible in funeral or laudatory speeches in relation to the great dead, where the authority of the state dominated over the individual.

The third type of memory is “memory-nation” (*mémoire-nation*), which is aware of itself as an integral nation, it was able to demonstrate itself during periods of great revolutions and subsequently establish itself in memories (Nora, 1999: 53). The nation is in search for the unity of geographical existence; it is studying and reviewing itself from different angles in different periods of the past. Museums,

research societies, numerous research institutes, archives and National Libraries act as tools for study and memory conservation. “Memory-nation” combines all the events of the past and admires the battle scenes, both peacefully and military, in the paintings of historical museums. Revolts, tragic pain from the loss of compatriots and inhuman social system – all these relics of the past in the outlines of the “memory-nation” are identified with national identity.

The fourth type of memory is the “memory-citizen” (*mémoire-citoyen*), the successor to the “memory-nation”, acting as a tool for the social and civil of the nation strengthening (Nora, 1999: 54). “Memory-citizen” is characterized by masses and democracy; often expressed in educational monuments, visualized in city statues, reflected in street names, verbalized in parliamentary sessions (Nora, 1999: 55). This memory made a synthesis between the society and the state, trying them on under the sign of the nation.

Retrospective analysis by Pierre Nora proved that the process of self-identification of the nation passed through the awareness of all four types of memory. They are currently making sense thanks to the fact that in the modern type of memory, called “memory-heritage”, they were able to generate and recreate new values.

Therefore, what did France inherit from the four types of memory? This can be described as “... the growth of interest in the forbidden to the national feeling and to the free return of episodes – the most painful for the collective consciousness” (Nora, 1999: 56). Only “memory-heritage” could take the responsibility to comprehend its true extent. The decline of France after First World War was an example of “the discovery of France and the nation without nationalism”. The great power, the former “historical laboratory of all European experiments” was not able to defend its position from the shock of the 20th century. The traditional identification of the nation with the state led to the birth of mentality served as the internal decolonization of ethnic groups in the country. Only “memory-heritage” gave the nation the ability to adequately analyzing all the tragic moments in the history.

Nora’s direct line of reasoning about types of memory and their relationship in the acquisition of the national identity leads to the question: “How to write the history of France?” in the midst of oblivion. Three volumes of “France” were supposed to answer the question “What is a place of remembrance?” and “How is it different from other places?” in the project “Places of Remembrance”.

However, during the revision of historical events, various metamorphoses have formed around the concept of “place of memory”, which explained its meaning, properties and purpose in the future. Historical plots acquired three-part structure and consistency in their interactions: primarily, non-material ones – “heritage”, “historiography”, “landscape”; then the material – “territory”, “state”, and at the end of the ideal – “glory” and “words”. It was necessary to identify and choose the plots that were filled with sensitivity in terms of perception by the majority and surprise for the history when completing the register of “places of memory”. Each plot from the historical scene belongs to a certain category of “places of memory” – a social model, a definition in time and space, a figure-emblem, a high position (Nora, 1999: 70).

In reviewing multivalent “places of memory”, it is necessary to take into account other representations that seem “total” at first glance. Nora concludes that “...places of memory exist only in manner of speaking: the historian is in a position to “commemorate” this place” (Nora, 1999: 72). Topos referring themselves to “places of memory” must declare themselves something different, something that would not be possible to express them without it.

The formula of “places of memory” is not set up to give proper and the additional attention, spiritual meaning to those memorials that are only memorials, they remain so throughout its existence. In addition, this concept does not accept all objects, places and events worthy of the preservation and declare itself “guardians of potential victims” during the period of barbarous destruction. For Pierre Nora, the “place of memory” is not purely physical, visible and tangible topoi. If the researcher considered signing a material object as a “place of memory” based on the symbolic meaning of the object and memory as its content turned out to be important.

The place of memory had two positions of reality: the first of them – sensual and tangible, more or less material, inscribed in space, time, language, tradition; the second one is symbolic – the bearer of history. The concept of “place of memory” carries the above-mentioned realities, and “something in common” always arises between them. Moreover, the role of the historian is to recognize, to analyze “something in common”, to reveal its mechanisms, to determine its different levels, to distinguish sedimentary rocks and currents in it, “to express the inexpressible” (Nora, 1999: 79). The purpose of the historian’s research is not to identify a given place

with anyone or anything, but to reveal “something special” that makes it a memory for others. Consideration of a monument as a “place of memory” is not limited to describe its history, but to find some facts or information. The “place of memory” pretends to be a meaningful unity of a material or immaterial order, for that the will of people or the work of time has turned into a symbolic element of the memory heritage in a certain community.

The concept of “places of memory” by method and title suggests a kind of history directed against commemorations, but in the course of its implementation, commemorations have captured them. According to Pierre Nora, his idea of “places of memory” led the entire community of historians to appeal to commemorative principles. In his essay “The Age of Commemoration”, he gives various examples from historical plots when “places of memory” turn into phenomena of commemoration and various types of celebration.

The concepts of “place of memory” and “commemoration” are synchronous and often interchangeable, as far as modern commemorations transformed into “places of memory”, and “Places of memory” are full of commemorations. Extreme types of the commemorative memory experience divide many great events, as in the case of the bicentenary of the French Revolution. In the first case, the celebration occurs unintentionally and involuntarily, not controlled by the state and bear witness about the difficulty that called “act by avoiding celebration”. In the second, it is a consciously chosen celebration that cannot be avoided and there is a difficulty “to celebrate consciously” in this regard (Nora, 1999: 97).

However, the bicentenary does not need to be accepted as a real commemoration, this event is the only great national commemoration, without any “embellishment”. The bicentenary of the Revolution celebrates from year to year on a big way. For example, a centenary acts as a prototype, which should be equal. However, the further the event moves away from the present, the more the historical plot itself becomes a set of tensions and contradictions. You can ask questions: “Why is this happening?” and “Can the Great Events so important to the national memory be forgotten?”. The answer to the last question is in the “collective memory”. A tragic event as a Revolution at the level of perception of “collective memory” faced with ambivalent feelings. This is the awareness of the distance in relation to the event and the desire to overcome it, the fragmentation of feelings between rigid conservation and the desire for

an open future, between loyalty to the meaning of the event and the way it adapts to the present (Nora, 1999: 98).

As evidence for the above, Pierre Nora gives an example concerning the practice of commemoration, where the role of a historical event that is a thousand years old and the semantic meaning of an event that is two hundred years old contradict each other. According to the researcher, the celebration of the millennium of the Capetians is the anti-bicentenary of the Revolution. All the major transformations of the social and political system of France acquired after the great Revolution, become meaningless in the context of the celebration of the millennium of the Capetians, an absolute monarchy that led to unimaginable losses during the Crusades.

The contradictions in the practices of commemoration do not run out of it. If we consider the celebration of the bicentenary of the Revolution, we can discover the true beginnings of “society-theatre”. The significance of the revolution blended two different dimensions: self-illumination and self-historicization (Nora 1999: 100). The event is, for itself, its own event. At the same time, the history is going to make for the history an event that it was not in fact. In this case, it is only the generation thanks to its plurality, attaches a certain significance to the same date, and makes them come alive. If the celebration of the centenary of the Revolution was dictated “from above”, the intensity of its repetition depended on the generational continuity. The surviving feelings of the generations set the rhythm, force the duties to commemorate other demands. It makes it in a different scale and a different breath. The tragic plots of history take on a convulsive breath, a breath of participants, witnesses and victims. It is evidenced by the annual honors to veterans of the Second World War, the state and national honoring of unforgettable names.

The temporal distance of events from the present has stopped the procession of the classical “state-nation” model, when it acts as the true cause of public actions, the great organizer and manager of “collective memory”. Instead of the “nation-state” came a new generation. Today the presence of the State is hidden everywhere; it recommends and presumes rather than prescribes certain laws on commemorative practices. In events of national importance, the State most often uses words such as “motivate”, “harmonize”, “coordinate”, “promote” (Nora, 1999: 106). The classical model planned the unity of the history; it formed from the list of the “chosen ones”. However, victim voices of the Revolution represented the multiplicity of the history and the solemn

commemoration of the bicentenary received “real” share of commemoration.

The generational choice of commemorations completed the “era of statue mania”, stopped the duplication of annual republic-wide actions attempted to keep the identity of rituals and processions, but indifferent to the opinions of individuals or groups. Instead of that, respect has left to the choice of generations. Collective identity and the spirit of commemoration are now self-assured not in educational institutions and squares, but on television and in museums, in theatre, music and folklore. Whereas commemorative events often held in school benches, literary circles and theatrical productions, at present they are in the center of national importance discussions. Now no scientist, writer, artist had a chance to escape the radar of the commemoration (Nora, 1999: 111). In the period from 1984 to 1992, more than 1.000 different actions and initiatives held to celebrate the memorable dates of outstanding personalities. The names of many forgotten figures have “come to life” thanks to commemorative celebrations. In addition, the level of significance of these events and the celebration scale set by the local people. For example, the four hundredth anniversary of the death of the French writer Michel de Montaigne was celebrated so pompously in his hometown of Bordeaux, which was not typical for his two hundredth or three hundredth anniversaries (Semenov, 2011). This phenomenon was clearly visible in the artistic sphere.

### Conclusion and decisions

Returning to the problematic issues of the research article based on the results of researching the papers of Pierre Nora, the following conclusions formulated:

Firstly, the phenomenon of commemoration originated in the 60s of the last century, gave a new impetus to the development of landscape onomastics honoring to great personalities. The criterion of commemoration practice approved by society: the celebration of a memorable date carried out to the extent that it meets the principle of sensory perception in relation to the event.

Secondly, collective memory has divided significant places into dominant and dominant ones, thereby scaling the symbolic significance of the second at the level of uncontrollability by the state. In other words, the places of memory acquired extreme emotionality depending on the representation of the lived collective experience.



Thirdly, the process of commemoration allowed us to take a fresh look at the familiar space full of historical facts forgotten or purposefully distorted by the authorities. Places of memory began to fulfill the searching function for the national identity, as the decolonization process led to the blooming of collective memory among ethnic minorities.

Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that the victory of the current memorial model over history has attracted a new problem: an unpredictable attitude to the past. The past has lost its coercive character. In this regard, the significance of the past manifested not in what it imposes on us, what we impose on it. From that moment, there is a delu-

sion to the past messages, since the present recreates the image of the past via the tools of commemoration. The present reserves the freedom of choice: to act within the planned date or to obey the old foundations, but in any case, the present has the properties to transform the importance of the event. The history offers, the present disposes.

An example for this phenomenon can be the following: the memorials that did not have any object occurred to be the most successful. The memorials, perceived from the history and politics' point of view as the most empty and unnecessary, but from the memory of peoples' point of view – the most necessary.

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