



Cultural Base

Social Platform
on Cultural Heritage
and European Identities

Synthetic Report on Cultural Memory

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Jasper Chalcraft & Gerard Delanty

info@culturalbase.eu
www.culturalbase.eu

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1. Introduction

Most of us working on cultural heritage encounter a sense of déjà vu when questions of heritage and identity emerge yet again in the title of a project, research agenda, book, or television series. This is also the case with the premise underlying the Cultural Base project, but this déjà vu reflects the underlying importance and validity of these issues, rather than the failure of previous efforts to understand them. For example, over 20 years ago, back in 1994, Ashworth and Larkham (2013 [1994]) noted how national identities still remained bound to shared understandings of the national past, something that was re-emergent following the end of the Cold War. For the contributors to their edited volume, there was broad agreement that,

“Europe at the end of the twentieth century is faced with a choice of repeating the example of the nineteenth century as a fragmented and warring set of nations and regions powered by religious heritages, or of moving into the twenty-first century with a new identity based upon a common and distinctive European heritage.” (Ashworth and Larkham 2013, 3)

Back then too the emphasis on ‘dissonant’ heritage was already part of the academic critique of heritage, and the dangers of Europe ignoring its own complicated pasts (as Chalcraft and Delanty’s paper presented at the first CB Workshop highlighted) were also explicitly mentioned:

“Europe’s long history of war, pogrom and persecution between nations, classes, races and religions has left its own legacies, which markedly contradict any theme of harmonious unity.” (Ashworth and Larkham 2013, 4)



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Today, we can perhaps be more explicit about the broad shift that is needed to work towards something like 'harmonious unity', towards building/instilling (or perhaps, at the least, just expressing) a shared European identity. The dangers of ignoring cultural memory's misuse as a political and symbolic resource were made painfully evident, yet again, in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. They remain so even more today, with the spectres of intolerance and narrow-minded nationalisms re-materialising as a reaction to the migration crisis and recent acts of mass violence.

A series of broad questions about the role of heritage in society, and of its role in identity creation, underlies all of the papers that were presented at the first Cultural Base Workshop, held in Barcelona between the 30th of September and 02nd of October, and whose main points are summarised here. But this project is also directed at creating tangible directions for the future, and we require a theoretical toolkit to help facilitate this. In the face of today's difficult and belligerent contexts, where assertions of identity have become increasingly reactive, segmentary and divisive, opportunities for building shared political communities and an inclusive civil society are fragile. For reasons of pragmatism, we advocate a flexible approach that combines multidirectionality, hybridity and entanglement. Memories are multidirectional, they frame one another, and that multidirectionality demonstrates how entangled pasts are. Focusing on the entangled nature of heritage draws us to consider relationships, transfers and interactions, and this helps us recognise and study the degree to which hybridity becomes a part of identity-making in contemporary Europe. Hybrid cultures and identities are less dependent on cultural anchors, and thus one of the aims of a transnational approach to heritage is to identify hidden forms of hybridity, and in so doing to shift the moorings of cultural discourse in more critical, reflective and cosmopolitan directions.



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This is perhaps more complicated than it sounds, and the theoretical toolkit can broadly be summarised in Rosi Braidotti's idea of 'becoming minoritarian'. What those who still hold the EU's founding ethos-slogan of 'unity in diversity' are hoping for is a realistic cosmopolitan option, an ideological framework fit for a continent. Our toolkit is but one way of thinking through these issues, and we do not pretend that these tools will not need sharpening, even in the immediate future. We also risk, of course, the critiques thrown at any universalistic perspective: Eurocentrism, blindness to the political projects of non-Western societies, etc. But non-intervention is not without its own consequences, and so we believe that investigating the topics proposed below is better than just hoping that cultural memory will organically organise itself in ways that favour social cohesion.

The consortium's work on the *cultural* memory axis leading up to and including the first Workshop is encapsulated in the four papers presented at the Workshop (some short versions available on www.culturalbase.eu or direct from the authors), and this paper then draws also from the debates and discussions that followed each session.

It is worth reiterating a deliberate strategy of the project design, which was for the main academic partners to produce papers that brought forth arguments and provoked discussion; we aimed at writing papers that were deliberately polemical rather than normative or consensus-seeking. This seems to have worked as stakeholders did seem to engage and question the ideas and examples of these papers. Unfortunately, and despite our best intentions, most academic partners (ourselves included) produced papers that were too long for stakeholders to read in their entirety. However, we all also produced shorter (c.3000 word) versions for precisely this reason. So everyone had the option of reading a long and or a short



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version. Informal conversations with Workshop participants made it nonetheless evident that few stakeholders had managed to read through all of the papers, and thus the debates that emerged sometimes worked through arguments and examples that were already discussed in the papers themselves. Realistically though, there are few easy ways to overcome the need for deep analysis, and we hope to fully explore the depth of these issues through future outputs and a deeper engagement with Stakeholders planned prior to and during the May 2016 Major Stakeholder Conference.

This *Synthetic Report* begins by identifying the key aspects of cultural memory with regard to the work already undertaken (the four papers). It then runs through the four proposed topics, as well as identifying a further four. We hope that where there are areas of mutual relevance and relevance between the 'cultural memory' topics and those of the other axes, we will be able to work on them together. Such an approach will add further critical depth and complexity to the topics, the valency of each extending well beyond each topic's individual title.

2. Summary of the papers and debates

The Workshop divided the Cultural Memory axis into two themes: 'Memory and Heritage' and 'Memory and Identities'. The first began with the paper by Jasper Chalcraft and Gerard Delanty *Can Heritage be Transnationalised? The implications of transnationalism for memory and heritage in Europe and beyond*, followed by Augusto Santos Silva's *Cultural Heritage and Democratic Development: a view from Portugal*.



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Under 'Memory and Identities' Dominique Poulout explored *Is the invention of memories necessary to identities?*, and Ramón Máiz *Culture, Identity and Politics* (the shorter version of Máiz's paper was kindly abridged and translated from the Spanish by Aurea Mota, and read in the author's absence by Jasper Chalcraft. The author was unable to attend or translate his paper). These four papers cover a number of disciplinary approaches, from anthropology, sociology, history and political science. We offer a brief summary of each here.

***Can Heritage be Transnationalised? The implications of transnationalism for memory and heritage in Europe and beyond.* Paper by Jasper CHALCRAFT and Gerard DELANTY**

In asking the question 'Can Heritage be Transnationalised?' Chalcraft and Delanty attempt to tackle a broader ethical and political question: what is heritage for? In the context of European identity, and given the number of examples the authors use from Europe's dark past, the authors are also asking whether Europe has a collective *Vergangenheitsbewältigungswille*, a collective desire to face-down its dark pasts. Examples like slavery, partially hidden genocides (Armenian, Roma peoples), and others suggest that this is memory work that Europe needs to undertake more systematically and not only on a national level.

The authors do not however go into detail as to how exactly EU policy and cultural actions might be used to further these aims, but they note that despite some of the problems inherent to 'heritage' it may nevertheless offer a useful normative stance on memory. In short, **heritage offers contemporary societies a way to critically evaluate their own past and**



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public memory. In an era of increasing culturalism and identity politics, societies need critical tools to help them respond to the ambivalent and often problematic legacies of the past.

In order to frame what the transnational means, the paper shows how Michael Rothberg's (2009) idea of 'multidirectional memory' forms one of three tools in a theoretical model that can help untangle the significances of transnational and transnationalising heritages.

The paper discusses how heritage is being transnationalised, and gives examples ranging from the work of Swedish NGO Cultural Heritage Without Borders to the cultural productions of digital diaspora (the Eritrean Martyrs Memorial). In its final consideration of European heritage the paper asks whether Europe has a collective *Vergangenheitsbewältigungswille*, and whether celebrating European heritage is possible without being Eurocentric. In its very brief consideration of European actions on heritage, it concludes that (thus far) they have failed to help facilitate the tough memory work that Europe needs if it is to re-civilise itself.

One critique of this paper, made in person and via email by a museum professional (STH8) was that it is just too general and superficial. She argued that a closer look at some of the actual on-going work in museums and memory institutions would reveal that in reality, all of these issues are in fact being addressed. A brief consideration of recent 'blockbuster' exhibitions like the British Museum's 2012 *Haj: journey to the heart of Islam* (de Bellaigue 2012) does show that museums are – at least with their temporary exhibits and travelling shows – are working hard to distance themselves from Eurocentrism and a sheltered idea of the past. This criticism is valid, but – especially in light of the recent entrenchment of anti-immigrant rhetoric from some European states, and certainly from populist



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political parties and media – the argument still seems to hold. What is needed is a much more sustained and widely supported critique of national self-representations that are self-congratulatory representations of the past, which affirm majority identity above others. In other words, the fantastic work that many museum professionals, broadcasters and educators have been doing over the last few years has not been enough to prevent narrowly conceived ideas of national belonging and European identity from dominating at the first test of stress. Against the criticism of generality, it should also be noted that the paper sought to provide a theoretical approach to thinking about heritage and memory through a transnational lens – it did not aim to say that concrete practices do not exist.

Other stakeholders were less concerned with the possible generality of the paper. For example STH5, previously of the Council of Europe, felt that there was a good mix of academic with concrete examples and that regarding the relative value of transnational versus nation values we should not be afraid about appearing neutral. His view was that a normative stance is required to have social impact, and in the past 'diversity' [within the 'unity in diversity' slogan/ethos] has basically just become extreme relativism. Instead, he believes there is in fact a common corpus of beliefs and views, and that there can be no Europe without a shared core of heritage. Whilst this statement appears to support Chalcraft and Delanty's thesis regarding the potential of focusing on transnational heritage, he also described how whilst national heritage is too small, so too is the transnational, because it is rootless. The example he gave was work he was involved with on helping Cyprus deal with its division through education on a *national* history for the island. He did not take this observation further, but the logical implication is that nationalisms need to be harnessed rather than simply rebuffed and



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abandoned. Perhaps only certain kinds of *rooted* transnational themes might usefully come together to help develop a European identity.

Cultural Heritage and Democratic Development: a view from Portugal. **Paper by Augusto Santos SILVA**

Santos Silva's paper presented the interesting case of Portugal, one of the few European countries that has willingly faced down (at least some aspects of) its dark and difficult past (rather like the German *Vergangenheitsbewältigungswille*). The key historical moment here was the fall of Salazar's regime and the questions a country needs to ask of itself when a regime falls. At the same time then – much like Germany's infamous *Historikerstreit*, the *querelle* over German history (Leaman 1988) – this was also a question over Portuguese democracy, and how to develop a social consensus on the past for society at large to move forward.

The case is particularly interesting, because, in his final analysis, Silva shows how the myths of the Salazar regime (the dictator himself drawing on historic symbolism to represent himself as the Henry the Navigator of the 20th century), have now been replaced by fresh myths. For contemporary Portugal, this is the country's role as leading the world's first 'globalization' in the 15th century, and a rewriting of the 'Discoveries' as conceptually and ethically distinct from later colonialism. We might ask then whether collective mass identities always rely on such myths, on convenient representations that still invoke pride. Using the example of the Portuguese language as heritage, Silva himself asks whether transnationalising heritage might help highlight the problems with the new consensual view of the Portuguese past, and to help in avoid the re-ideologising of heritage.



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Silva's paper thus also brings us to an interesting point regarding how a society forces itself to push its historical self-knowledge in a positive direction (albeit, as he carefully describes, with risks): just as Germany struggled to deal with the legacy of National Socialism (and this let us note in the particularly skewmorphic context of the Cold War), and Portugal with its dictatorship, it could be argued that Europe too must take a collective responsibility for the burdens of history.

***Is the invention of memories necessary to identities?* Paper by Dominique POULOT**

Beyond the phrasing of the question itself, Poulot's paper draws the reader's attention to whether identity itself is still useful. Making use of a number of seminal texts on heritage and the cultural industries, it addresses questions that remain current long after their authors first asked them; for example, Walter Benjamin's

"There is no document of civilization that is not also a document of barbarity".

There is therefore a significant cross-over with the paper by Chalcraft and Delanty, but Poulot explores the fraught difficulties and potentials of heritage vis-à-vis identity more explicitly. He asks about the price our identities will pay if we can invent a common memory. This is a key point that emerges in one of our proposed research themes (transnational memory).

Inventing a common memory will have to overcome the different narrative thrusts of different European nations. However, as Poulot shows, this is not



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easily resolved given how there are national fixations on particular periods, for the French increasingly this is the two World Wars, with Britain stuck in its Industrial Revolution and Empire.

This brings us to a key technology of memory and identity. Poulot's reminder that museums are 'provocateurs of memory', 'clinic[s] for acts of memory' (p.11), highlights their transformative potential, and his observation on how ethnographic museums are used in Eastern and Central Europe as "a kind of emblematic use of the past" reveals the different ways that similar categories of material culture are instrumentalised between European countries. It is perhaps illustrative for us that specific types of heritage have different valencies in different parts of Europe.

A particularly useful part of Poulot's paper, and another that adds a national example to some of the concerns of Chalcraft and Delanty, is his discussion of the four French 'memorial laws' relating to the Holocaust, Slave Trade, Colonization, and Armenian Genocide (p.12). The legal arbitration of memory, and a society's official view on it, was much debated in France, and this is an issue that might well prove relevant to one of the proposed topics 'Negotiating Heritage Rights'. These laws, and the debates in the French education system that Poulot describes, highlight a key problematic for the role of heritage in France (and, by extension, to Europe): through school and extra-curricula education, should heritage help create critical reflective citizens (the skills of intellectual criticism), or rather should they be focused on instilling a collective cultural memory? Poulot notes that this apparent dichotomy is linked to the idea of French exceptionalism, or the *spécificité* of French universalism.



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Possibly related to this is his mention of Mieke Bal's potentially contentious view on 'blackface', namely that Europe needs to maintain its difficult cultural elements, despite the offence they cause. If it does then perhaps – somewhat echoing other papers in this axis – Europe will be, as Poulot describes for France, a place where identity is built on 'pessimistic feelings' (p.14), struggling to deal with the paradoxes of being both universalistic and recognising the particular.

Critiques of Poulot's paper were positive, though P7 noted how the uncertainties of European history meant that no historian would move away from national histories. The dilemma though is that no EU identity is possible without such a narrative. They are effectively arguing then that national histories are anchors of identity in ways that EU narratives can never be. In this way they return to the education debate Poulot discusses, whether history and heritage should teach critical thinking or instill a shared cultural memory. Partner 15 highlighted how narratives are not the exclusive property of institutions, often belonging also to individuals, and this individualist aspect of heritage – and thus also of identity construction – is something that deserves attention. One of the ASTH (no.2) reinforced the idea that multi-perspective history is necessary, but emphasised that we need to ask what kinds of narratives of history should be discouraged. This does indeed seem like a practical step, but one that is fraught with ethical risks in a Europe where freedom of speech and thought are still core values. Hate speech is obviously worth discouraging, but what about (for example) mild local and regional patriotisms?



Culture, Identity and Politics

This paper by Ramon Máiz investigates what the contemporary understanding of culture and multiculturalism means for Europe. Máiz analyses some political, societal and cultural transformations that came with European Romanticism and Postmodern critics for the establishment of a new democratic normative theory. In brief, this democratic approach sees the conflictive and dynamic dimensions of culture as essential aspects of identity, which can then be analysed as a process of political building.

The main contribution of the paper is to address the issue of multiculturalism as a semiotic cultural practice, in which 'identity, sociability and meaning' are a constitutive part of culture, understood as a 'web of signification' that gives life to any form of human individual and collective life. This aspect is very much forgotten in the political science field in which 'culture' is still analysed as 'political culture' – that is an understanding of culture as the aggregation of individual predispositions – or in a conception of multiculturalism as an approach that moves around the extremes between very holistic approaches or very individualistic ones.

Because of the author's absence there was little direct discussion of this paper.

3. Issues brought up in the First Workshop

The Workshop ran three parallel sessions for each of the three axes, and this meant that the initial Cultural Memory sessions didn't quite achieve the critical mass of stakeholders that might have given us a broader range of opinions on the content. The reasons why this might have been the case



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are unclear, but despite long being a subject of academic enquiry, 'cultural memory' is possibly more generic and has a less immediate policy relevance than 'creativity' and 'inclusion'. Nevertheless, the audience brought forth a number of interesting observations and some important critiques from ten stakeholders (not including comments from academic stakeholders and partners).

The key issues that emerged in the first Workshop's sessions on Cultural Memory are more or less covered by the proposed Thematic Areas (discussed below), but there were other significant themes that emerged too, including:

- European identity as a political project: if a common civilization existed, it would not be enough. Which cultural and symbolic actions have favoured the idea of Europe as a political project? Which ideas have been successful?¹
- Unity in diversity was something that emerged as of interest to a few stakeholders, one of whom (STH2) noted that it is also used as form of exclusion (and was also discussed by partners and academic stakeholders).
- Representivity: the consortium itself, and the stakeholders present in Barcelona, are predominantly white: where are the minority views and perspectives?

¹ These questions were put forward by academic stakeholder ASTH1.



4. New Thematic Areas

During the Barcelona Workshop four possible new research topics on cultural memory were identified:

- (1) Working with difficult heritage;
- (2) Potential of transnational memory;
- (3) Contextualising narratives;
- (4) Negotiating heritage rights.

The decision-making that led to the choice of these four considered both the topics and themes that emerged in the papers discussed above, but also the comments and concerns of stakeholders which were voiced in the debates. Following their presentation, some further informal discussion between this report's authors and stakeholders took place which will be discussed at the end of the section. Further reflection brought in another topic – The Instrumentalisation of Heritage to displace (3), so that Contextualising narratives became a reserve choice (5), but one which might be rehabilitated following further discussion.

In reality, following further discussion and work after the Barcelona Conference, not least in order to make a clear decision on which 4 Thematic Areas should be taken forward, the academic partners (JC, GD, and DP) further revised the titles of each TA and their possible content. Note that summaries of the 4 Thematic Areas that were eventually agreed upon – 1. *Entangled Heritage*; 2. *Uses of Heritage*; 3. *Negotiating Heritage Rights*; 4. *Valuing Heritage as Learning and Entertaining Resources* – can be **found at the end of**



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this document in the Appendix.² We have left the original formulations (no.s 1-5, and including the subsection 'Other Possible Thematic Areas') from the Synthetic Report here below as a record of the thought processes which underlie the evolution of the Thematic Areas into their current form. Whilst this is potentially confusing, it more honestly reflects the complexities of trying to hone down a huge area to just four TAs when no clear consensus emerged from the first Workshop.

(1) Working with Difficult Heritage

All partners recognised that heritage is – by the very nature of its making – 'difficult', 'dissonant' and under tension. What is less clear is how academics and practitioners should deal with this difficulty. Academic perspectives have found it easy to critique heritage for its hegemonic, Eurocentric, racist, elite-serving aspects, but even subaltern and grass-roots heritage is also potentially problematic. Many academics (one of the current authors included) have too easily lauded all grassroots heritage-making efforts as inherently positive expressions of self-determination, and all top-down efforts as structurally doomed to fail and silence the past. This said, there is a substantial evidence-base to suggest that heritage representations, and heritage development, has tended to favour elites.

It is not clear whether useful policy guidelines can be developed for this topic, but it is worth exploring. For example, taking the Portuguese example discussed so clearly by Augusto Santos Silva, we see a necessary shift in Portuguese collective understandings of the colonial past taking place

² This Appendix reproduces the Thematic Area Summaries provided in a separate document circulated to all partners on the 08th of January 2016.



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through policy and memory institutions working in harmony, yet the result has become a new 'authorised heritage discourse', a new hegemonic way of looking at the past that masks Portugal's actual status in the Lusophone world. This echoes Poulot's point that we need to be wary of ever trying to *fix* heritage. It is a process, and this is perhaps especially important to recognise where heritage is particularly contested. Whether generic policies can be developed that would have wide applicability beyond specific contexts is another open question. Further investigation of this topic will also relate to Topic (4) on heritage rights.

(2) Transnational Memory

This topic was explored in Chalcraft and Delanty's paper, however, given the cross-over with the other papers (in particular with questions Poulot asks in his), it is worth further investigation. For example, Poulot asks what our identities risk in pursuing common memories, and this is an issue pertinent to all European states, not just those dealing with a more apparent and immediate multiculturalist agenda. This particular topic is thus also of cognate interest to the axis on Cultural Inclusion, and might be co-investigated with partners from the EU.

It is a topic which divided opinion from stakeholders however. There are clearly different understandings of what commonality means. One position, articulated by Nikos Papastergiadis and Gerard Delanty and Jasper Chalcraft is that common ground today in contexts of complexity and pluralisation can only consist of zones of intersection. This requires a rethinking of the notion of unity and the idea of a shared culture.



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It is vital that this proposed theme in particular be investigated taking into account the broad critique made by STH8 that Chalcraft & Delanty's paper was overgeneralised, that the premise is essentially wrong when compared to the reality of what is going on in contemporary museums. We don't fully agree (for reasons given above), but believe the potential or otherwise of the theme needs further investigation. We might add that our own cosmo-optimism (a belief that cosmopolitanism is both possible, and will improve society) may find an echo in the way some practitioners perceive their work and the projects with which they, personally, are involved. The problem may be that all of us need to keep the entirety of cultural production and representation in mind. In other words, positive museum representations and memorialisations need to be balanced against the popular discourse out there, in the press, in the stereotypes and portrayals in film, music, YouTube. Speaking more specifically about the art world, Nestor Garcia Canclini makes a point that can be applied as equally to heritage:

“International exhibitions and museums, art magazines, and the art market are organized according to aesthetics of metropolitan origin, and whenever they deal with artists from the periphery, they almost always expect a folklorish marginality. The ‘strange’ Latin American experiences tend to be normalized by recourse to the stereotypes of the Mexican, Andean, or Caribbean or to magic realism. **Twenty or thirty years of multicultural relativism and postmodern deconstructions of Western metanarratives have done little to extend recognition to the various conceptualizations of body and color, images of nature and society from societies excluded from metropolitan canons.** Free trade and supranational integration agreements (NAFTA, Mercosur, etc.) have done very little to open up the bottlenecks of museum policies, of diplomatic



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exchanges, or the training of professionals to include different and challenging viewpoints.” (Canclini 2014, 121-22; emphasis added)

One useful corrective to our own possible overgeneralisation will be for us to explore some specific examples. Beyond the representations of particular museums and memory institutions, we should also track the transnationalism of professionals themselves; that is, the work of individual curators and heritage professionals. For example, we note that the Museum of London’s Director of Programmes David Spence consulted on Qatar’s groundbreaking new Museum of Slavery (opened in preview at the beginning of November 2015).

Emirati museum and cultural projects like Abu Dhabi’s Saadiyat Island Cultural District have frequently come in for criticism as a performed simulacra of democratic culture, drawing on the transnational cultural capital and symbolism of ‘starchitects’ and culture brands like the Louvre and Guggenheim (Grodach 2008; Ponzini 2011). However, Qatar’s new project apparently puts the cat amongst the pigeons by creating a permanent exhibition that deals not only with the region’s historic slavery (in 1905, 17% of the Qatari population were Africans), but directly relates it to the contemporary *kafala* system which effectively enslaves the huge majority of ‘guest workers’ building Qatar’s World Cup infrastructure (Hall 2015). It does so by detailing local, regional and global aspects of the trade and its social reality in the Gulf, giving documentary detail (manumission documents) and the story of official abolition in 1952, as well as indicting global labour exploitation. This is multidirectional memory in action, in a new museum in a part of the world not known for expressing dissonance, or for dealing with contentious issues head-on. If there are other bold self-critical narratives emerging in memory institutions, we need to seek out and



study more of them, and to understand the processes of intellectual exchange and commissioning which help give birth to them.

(3) The Instrumentalisation of Heritage

Much 'difficult heritage' attests to the ideological use of the past, and the defacing of the Memorial to the Roma and Sinti peoples in Berlin this October with swastikas and the words "Gas them" (Chan 2015) stands as a reminder of the dangers inherent in heritage making processes. Explicitly ideological uses of heritage merit further investigation as they pose a serious policy challenge, especially with regard to religious tolerance and questions of exclusion. Reuse and appropriation of religious buildings is a good example, Orthodox Churches in Northern Cyprus being a good example, and this remains a very live issue from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Kosovo (Consantinou *et al.* 2012; Walasek 2015).

A further instrumentalisation is the illegal use of heritage: this extends from looted antiquities, to state-sanctioned or state-tolerated development and gentrification. Sometimes, as is the case with Bulgaria's Yailata Archaeological Reserve, where EU structural funds are currently being used by a kind of Bulgarian heritage-mafia to destroy both archaeological heritage and the natural environment (Stoyanov 2015), these 'developments' override national and international heritage protections and so reveal the inadequacies of our legal frameworks.

Somewhat surprisingly given the on going sale of Syrian and Iraqi antiquities in Europe, illegal heritage was not discussed in the first Workshop, but the authors of this paper believe it is nonetheless important. It is possible that it was ignored because none of the stakeholders present



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were archaeologists, and the aspects and problems outlined below are not part of their working lives.³ Archaeologists – through Cultural Resource Management, consultancies, impact assessments, as well as education and advocacy – are probably the academic group with the longest running history of engagement with heritage and heritage management, but also the group that has been most often criticised by heritage scholars (e.g. Smith 2007). The archaeological literature has often focused on the illicit trade in antiquities, and the mobility of heritage itself within illegal (or morally questionable) networks.

This is not a fringe topic, but it is a very tricky one, with some very serious implications. Not least, investigating this further might implicate the EU, UNESCO and other international bodies in a culture of complicity that has ensured that such activities have continued since UNESCO's first attempt to tackle the issue in the 1970s. Exploring this topic is not only current (the ongoing sale of Assyrian blood antiquities looted by ISIS in London, Brussels and Munich), but it also would draw the team's attention to the broader difficulties of addressing recognised problems through the soft law instruments of policy documents, conventions and agreements (see Belfiore 2009). This is something that is worth tackling head-on, given that the Social Platform's outputs will be the kinds of documents which have – thus far – failed to protect cultural heritage from illegal exploitation. Obviously, the implications of illegal heritage on identities, memory and

³ There is only one trained archaeologist in the project team, MG, and it is recommended that the roll-out of stakeholders also include stakeholders from this vital constituency, professionals often at the coal-face of heritage making, and also on the receiving end where conflict arises. Archaeology is also vital though, because as Smith has argued (2007, 161), it has very been much used as a tool of 'governmentality', framing and administering the past through policy and the actions of government departments and agencies.



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inclusion are far-reaching. Related questions are whether cultural heritage and criminality help constitute counter-narratives, or strengthen exclusionary ones? We assume that illegal removal, sale and use of heritage works to undermine a cosmopolitan orientation, but we need to be frank about the provenance of the objects filling many of Europe's major museums. On this note, illegal heritage also draws us into the digital domain, a space where objects are sold and traded, but also one where the British Museum, in partnership with the Google Cultural Institute, can make available objects both purchased and looted in the colonial era for a global audience (see the Digital Divide subsection below). Also worth watching will be the fruits of the Director of the Louvre Jean-Louis Martinez's 50-point plan (announced in mid-November 2015) to help conserve the world's heritage by offering objects in conflict zones 'asylum', and bolstering the training opportunities for archaeologists and others in these areas (Harris 2015).

(4) Negotiating Heritage Rights

This is potentially a huge topic, and it is one of interest to all three axes of the project. Reasons why it fits under the 'cultural memory' axis are related to the attention that Chalcraft, Delanty, Poulot and Silva all argue that European states should be giving towards their dark and difficult pasts. For example, this issue was apparent in 2015 with the European Court of Human Rights decision regarding the Armenian Genocide, something that some individual nation states (e.g. the UK) failed to address for political reasons. The phrasing 'Negotiating Heritage rights' is important too, as it indicates that this topic is already a contested terrain that – especially



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where policy will be concerned – requires careful work to account for claims and rebuttals at multiple levels.

Even though ‘cultural creativity’ appears to be closely correlated, because of intellectual property issues, in fact the clearest cross-over may be with the ‘cultural inclusion’ axis: there are strong arguments to be made (ethically, in particular) for a ‘right to culture’ extending also to heritage and the ability for groups to represent their own culture. This has a history that extends back into debates about the repatriation and reburial of artefacts and bodies that was initially of particular relevance for indigenous groups trying to get into museums, now though the human rights ‘strategy’ is beginning to be used to other kinds of groups. Museum professionals have helped enable this, in particular in contexts where co-curation has become a favoured methodology.

There is already a growing literature on this aspect of cultural heritage (e.g. Silverman & Ruggles 2007; Hodder 2010)⁴. Deeper investigation of this topic might concentrate on mapping the contours of ‘heritage rights’ with regard to European heritage and identity: for example, which groups use a ‘rights’ discourse to attempt greater self-representation within heritage-making processes? Are there emergent areas of expertise (e.g. geographically), and do these rely on national legal frameworks or international recognition? Given that every diaspora community or individual migrant “has a cultural heritage both in the homeland and created anew in the host country” (Orser 2007, 93), how should rights over these different heritages be decided?

⁴ Many relevant technical resources are also easily accessible, for example UNESCO’s Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws at: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/>



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The transnational element of this is potentially highly emotive even generations later, as Orser (2007) demonstrates for Ballykilcline, a small Irish 'townland' whose 'Lost Children' from the Americas (evicted from Ballykilcline in 1847-8) still consider themselves part of that community, and try to assert it through questioning how the current Republic of Ireland represents and manages the lost townland. In this way, and given what all the authors writing under this axis have said about European heritage being transnational, a narrowly conceived and territorially-bound idea of European heritage is impossible. This single Irish example demonstrates that issues around the contemporary uses of the past are not just about a right to represent, but have a strong ethical dimension, something that gains very widespread significance when we consider Europe's histories of slavery and colonialism. In sum then, further investigation on how diaspora and migrant communities configure themselves through heritage-making processes may also tell us how European identity itself is negotiated.

(5) Contextualising Narratives

This topic was proposed at the first Workshop, and aimed to encompass some of the practical concerns of stakeholders as to how divergent views might be worked with in practice. This topic therefore focuses on the education side of heritage, on which there has been much excellent work done already (e.g. on community museums, co-curation, etc.). It remains a crucial topic as the practical ways in which different narratives can be contextualised in memory institutions (from museums to memorials) demonstrates how theoretical concepts work in practice. For example, we can see clear national differences; many of these emerge from how the dominant theoretical cores of disciplines like Museum Studies meet the



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hiring and commissioning practices of national heritage administrations. Multiple narratives abound in Liverpool's International Museum of Slavery⁵, versus France's overly aestheticized – and criticised (Price 2007) – Musée du Quai Branly.

A practical way of investigating this would be to start with a study of how major memory institutions in Europe approach this in their permanent exhibits. This comparison alone deserves a whole separate project, but we could then usefully compare our brief survey to the strategies and uses of narratives made in temporary exhibits. It seems that quite often the most innovative work happens in temporary and travelling exhibitions, not least because the need for innovation and engagement is often a commercial sensitivity (and a 'USP' for the exhibition itself). Further attention might then also be given to the degree to which narratives that are successfully 'contextualised' in these professionally curated spaces are challenged by community-created and individual narratives. In other words, how successful are nuanced and sensitive narratives of the past in reaching beyond their (all too often) limited audiences and into wider society? What is the impact of a temporary exhibit on changing social perspectives more broadly, and in enabling citizens to critically contextualise the heritages represented around them?

Other Possible Thematic Areas

The Workshop provided a good space to open up discussion and begin to think through the different possible topics. However, the final sessions were

⁵ See though Simine 2012 for an interesting critique of the use of the 'empathetic unsettlement' of visitors attempted by the Liverpool museum's designers through the use of large scale video.



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in the control of academic partners as chairs, and beyond the debates and discussions around the various new topics we proposed, it is not clear whether different academic partners, practitioners and stakeholders all agree on where the focus should be. Working from the useful Synthetic Report of the Workshop, some key ideas and criticisms were noted. Nevertheless, consensus is both unknown and unlikely.

Further to face-to-face conversation, some stakeholders identified a few problems with the choice of these four topics. A further critique is that these issues need empirical research (without which they are hard to substantiate, and risk remaining overly general and superficial). This is a very valid point, and it is hoped that the policy briefs and influence of the Cultural Base project will help to directly contribute to the funding calls which will enable other teams of researchers to empirically investigate these issues.

The Workshop brought up many possible points of contention, just as there are different theoretical perspectives on the social role and potential of heritage. We therefore mention just four more: commercialization, digital divide, education and Unity in Diversity.

Commodification/commercialisation:

This important theme emerged in the discussion following the final summary. It was though not without some disagreement between Workshop participants. For example, whilst SHT13 drew everyone's attention to the need to consider the strong economic aspects of heritage, and how we deal with them, P8 was more explicit in asking how we deal with the commercialisation of sites of pain like Auschwitz-Birkenau. A



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contrasting view was presented by ASTH5, and he noted how – in Germany at least – there is not a prevailing commercialisation of heritage, it is in fact something explicitly avoided by curators. This comparative aspect of commercialisation, it being more notable in some national contexts than others, is worth further investigation. If it is indeed the case that sites of pain are commercially exploited in Poland but not so in Germany we need to better understand both why this is, and what the impacts of this are on how understandings of the past become incorporated into narrative identities.

Often, academic criticism of the commercialisation of heritage has over-generalised, with some of us characterising it all as ‘Distory’ (Disney History), the production of clean and clear homogenised narratives of the past that eschew dealing with difficulty. It may also be that practitioners can point academics to examples of public-private partnerships that have produced more nuanced and sensitive representations of the past. Similarly, P7 pointed out that commercialisation can also be a form of inclusion, and in a way this is what Chalcraft and Delanty are arguing that *heritage* actually is, a more populist form of social memory than history. One we need to be wary of, as ‘making’ heritage can bring exclusion and can simplify the past, but it also creates genuine possibilities.

There is another side to this topic, one where those who actually make cultural heritage/memory policy in the EU might create financial opportunities for particular groups. If we follow the example of UNESCO we see variation in influence, a variation tied to financial support. For example, following the US, UK and Singapore’s withdrawal of UNESCO funding in the 1980s, Japan became the organisation’s major funder, and is subsequently seen as the major player in pushing UNESCO from a conservative view of heritage to one more open to intangible and non-European heritages (see



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Agakawa 2015: 2). In a topic dealing with commercialisation, we might also investigate this use of state-level patronage and cultural capital, and try to gauge its influence on the EU's heritage agenda. Notably, Tuuli Lähdesmäki's European Research Council funded new project *EUROHERIT: Legitimation of European cultural heritage and the dynamics of identity politics in the EU*⁶, will address and examine this and many related questions.

Digital Divide:

This was a topic specifically mentioned by some stakeholders (though not necessarily with the 'divide' added). One comment is worth reproducing to illustrate some of the issues on digitization and intellectual property nested within the topic:

“historical evidence that is not digitized runs the risk of disappearing yet the rate of digitization of primary sources, collections, archival documents is hugely uneven resulting in some stories being remembered but others just disappearing. Language is a major issue here - as heritage resources in minority languages that are not digitized will result not only in the resources potentially disappearing but the languages with it. Digitization also comes with major issues of commercialization, intellectual property rights etc.”

Quite rightly then she identifies this as a major issue, one that risks genuine exclusion through a kind of mechanisation of heritage-making whose quick methods of data gathering may actually work against the recognition and

⁶ <https://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/taiku/en/euroherit>



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curation of minority heritages. Even where projects explicitly involve co-curating heritage, these may be self-selecting publics: *outreach* doesn't go far enough.

When asking what and who is getting left behind, we should start by looking critically at the *RICHES* project, *Europeana Space*, and now the Google Cultural Institute's partnership with the British Museum and others. Beyond the actual material that may get lost, are we also losing the cultural idea of authoritative, deeply-researched curatorship? If we are, is this a bad thing? How do projects like Transnational Holocaust Memory⁷ (Leeds, UK) actually reconfigure understandings of cultural memory? Also, how does individual access to digital cultural resources relate to more broadly held cultural memories? For example, are there digital heritage memes, or digital heritage taste-makers whose activities help foster and curate a shared memory-identity?

There would also seem to be a need to overcome not only the researcher-practitioner divide (mentioned in our project's proposal, p.21), but also reaching out to and engaging diverse practitioners and communities. For example, how does one engage with possibly short-lived memory-making communities like the Eritrean 'Martyrs Memorial' discussed in Chalcraft and Delanty's paper?

⁷ <http://transnationalholocaustmemory.org/2015/08/17/virtual-holocaust-memory/>



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Education:

This topic was not explicitly opened-up at the Workshop, but it was mentioned in subsequent email communication. In fact, one stakeholder, a consultant working internationally with a number of museums, summarised the key questions:

“How are histories and heritage framed in the school system? At what age? How? History and heritage education is a major major issue in most countries (whether there is any? To what age is it mandatory? What are the children learning?). A comparison or analysis of heritage in different education systems would give a good sense as to the challenges relating to a Europe-wide conversation on these issues.”

These are very valid points, and the consortium might consider whether we also investigate this further. The topic is potentially enormous, ranging from school curricula, site interpretation, to popular mass media representations of heritage.

Unity in Diversity:

This was discussed in some detail in the Stakeholder session and there seemed to be some agreement. There were however sceptics. For example, many noted how the ‘unity’ aspect is used by those in power to silence other pasts, so favouring ‘unity’ or even exploring what might help constitute this at the European level, might be inherently problematic. Reconciling diversity, a multiplicity of historical viewpoints in this case, may be inherently incompatible with exploring a making of ‘Unity’. Chalcraft &



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Delanty's paper offered an alternative to this, Braidotti's 'becoming minoritarian', and this cultural humility might not be as immediately satisfying a goal for policy-makers, but it might be a more achievable step to a greater cosmopolitanism.

5. Conclusion

Cultural memory remains a problematic area. We are not confident that we have identified all the major themes, or that we could possibly cover them in a project of this scale. What we do believe though is that the five themes originally proposed here, the supplementary ones, and the four we eventually decided upon (found in the Appendix) all merit further investigation. Our reading of European society and its problems and potential right now, and the criticisms and suggestions offered by the stakeholders present at the first Workshop, suggests these are cogent issues for the immediate present, despite our palpable sense of déjà vu. We have deliberately chosen themes that are potentially very broad: whether we investigate them in narrow case-specific terms (e.g. European representations of the Armenian genocide; the promise and pitfalls of digital heritage in helping local communities self-represent), or as broad policy areas, they will only ever be a partial response to a large and shifting area of social life.

Nevertheless, whilst the European project struggles to define itself, we do well to remember the comment of one of the Workshop's stakeholders that from the outside, the rest of the world does in fact see a shared European identity or heritage. Whether it exists or not is not the point, rather it is the interplay between such identity-heritage and its impact on how citizens live



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together that matters. In emphasising the transnational then (in our papers, and in one of the new research themes), we recognise that Europe's future identity is as tied to this as its past has been.

We also continue to look out to the activities of others working on heritage, and – broadly speaking – the themes we have discussed here do seem to be reflected in the foci other academics are developing. For example, when we look to some of the emergent themes as they are currently formulated for the forthcoming 3rd Association of Critical Heritage Studies Conference, What Does Heritage Change (Montreal, 6-10 June 2016), we see a confirmation that the topics chosen above are – at the very least – of a broader academic interest.

Without detailing every single proposed panel for this biennial conference, we note that many of the themes we discuss are tabled for this event. For example, migration and diaspora are themes that emerge in two of the forthcoming panels: 'Changing places, changing people? Critical heritage(s) of diaspora, migration and belonging'; 'Are contemporary processes of migration changing the Authorised Heritage Discourse?'. The contrast between practitioner and academic perspectives will be explored in a panel organized by our colleague Dominique Poulot, 'The Activist Vs The Expert, Their Changing Roles (Heritage Changes People)'. Conflict too is another emergent theme, explored overtly in at least three panels: 'Heritage and Subversion in Contemporary Africa', 'Contested Pasts: Urban Heritage in Divided Cities', 'Borders of Heritage'. The heritage rights topic is also to be explored further in 'Heritage (as) justice: negotiating values, contesting properties'. And finally, 'Co-production in heritage: towards new imaginaries', suggests that issues of working together, bottom-up, and focusing on the potential of involving grassroots individuals and collectivities in heritage making offers real scope for change, a sentiment



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that was echoed in the first CulturalBase Workshop.

We also approach our own proposed themes with caution: policy frameworks are clearly important, but how they are interpreted on the ground, in diverse contexts (social, political, interpersonal) is difficult to predict. As Sharon Macdonald showed in her study of how the 'difficult heritage' of Nuremberg is represented in official narratives and those of tour guides,

“performed openness can involve displacements of its own. Attention to certain areas may deflect attention from areas of remaining silence and avoidance. So, in Nuremberg, there has undoubtedly been much acknowledged publicly that was not earlier. But equally, there remain areas of silence. And [...] the claim that difficult heritage *is* being publicly addressed can be entangled in the maintenance of such silences”. (Macdonald 2009, 189-900

In choosing four themes over others, we are wary that we are also creating silences, and when these are ultimately translated into policy briefs (one of the project's goals), we may also unwittingly be creating yet more silences.



Appendix

Thematic Area Summaries for Cultural Memory (24 Dec 2015)

[N.B. These were the four TAs decided on after this Synthetic Report was originally written.]

1. Entangled Heritage

Incorporating our previously suggested strands on 'Difficult Heritage' and 'Transnational Memory', this theme deals with heritages that are explicitly and unavoidably transnational (e.g. genocides, slave trade, colonial atrocities). Such memories are integral to the heritage of global diasporas, but they are not necessarily always global in that they are contextualised in particular locations (in the context of a city, a region, a nation etc). We are interested in seeing how both memory institutions and popular culture deal with such transnational memories, and we will assess this through examining explicit representations as well as the mechanisms through which some memories transnationalise (for example, through curators, travelling exhibitions, memes). Extending from Michael Rothberg's 'multidirectional memory' this thematic area is the most theoretically oriented of the four, and will also further develop the 'theoretical toolkit' developed by Chalcraft and Delanty in their paper. In this area we are not specifically looking at issues of heritage in relation to all kinds of borders or question the fact that much of heritage is circumscribed within national borders which set limits to the extent of transnational heritage. A pertinent issue is the way in which a given memory becomes modified as a result of



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entanglement with other memories, giving rise as a consequence to a new interpretation of what cultural heritage should be.

Key Question: What is the price our identities pay - or will pay - if we invent a common memory? Can there be anything specifically European about such transnational memories?

Question: How can we avoid new and more inclusive narratives from themselves becoming hegemonic?

2. Uses of Heritage

Originally named Instrumentalisation of Heritage, there are many possible aspects to this theme, which is concerned with how the past is used, and how cultural memory is configured by these uses. We see this as about different ways in which the past is valued by the present, be it for populist, elitist or commercial purposes. Examples are broad, and could cover new public museums, grassroots and guerrilla heritagisations, gentrification, as well as acts of desecration and strategic 'forgetting', such as the defacing of the Memorial to the Roma and Sinti peoples in Berlin this October with swastikas and the words "Gas them". What should scholars and practitioners make of negative uses of heritage, and those cases where heritage work has not created the kinds of societies implied in European and international legislation (e.g. in the European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World⁸)? An obvious example is how heritage was used during the Balkan Wars as a deliberate way to remap ethnicity and belonging, and then was used through symbolic reconstruction projects to help rebuild

⁸ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0242>



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society (Mostar Bridge, Sarajevo's National Library, Dubrovnik), something which current ethnicisation in the region suggests has had minimal impact. This theme therefore considers how heritage is used in Europe: for building identities at various scales, for cultural diplomacy, as a tool for local development, or in processes of gentrification and commodification of the past. Other uses the Thematic Area could touch on include illegal uses of heritage (e.g. the trade in Syrian antiquities), and when EU programmes and projects themselves make or encourage negative uses of heritage, with the recent case of Yailata in Bulgaria being a worrying example⁹.

Key Question: Can we ever define public uses of heritage in a politically and ethically neutral way?

Question: Is there a specifically European way to manage heritage for public use?

Question: Is Europe using heritage for the public good, or as a smokescreen for gentrification and the commodification of culture in general? What kind of experts and actors are supposed to manage the new European Memory and for what purpose ?

3. Negotiating Heritage Rights

Who 'owns' the past, and gets to represent it? There are multiple legal aspects to heritage, from the legalistic interpretation of the past

⁹ <http://www.world-archaeology.com/previous-posts/killing-with-kindness.htm>



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represented by France's four 'memorial laws' on the Holocaust, Slave Trade, Colonization and the Armenian Genocide¹⁰, to individually held rights to culture. Cultural politics and intellectual property are part of heritage practice. They have also increasingly been studied, and their impact on policy is an emergent field, with special relevance in a multicultural Europe which both shares its own citizens, but also incorporates numerous other nationalities and groups. Deeper investigation of this theme might concentrate on mapping the contours of 'heritage rights' with regard to European heritage and identity: for example, which groups use a 'rights' discourse to attempt greater self-representation within heritage-making processes? Are there emergent areas of expertise (e.g. geographically), and do these rely on national legal frameworks or international recognition? Of relevance also to this project's Cultural Inclusion axis, given that every diaspora community or individual migrant "has a cultural heritage both in the homeland and created anew in the host country" (Orser 2007, 93), how should rights over these different heritages be decided? This theme therefore offers a useful comparison between how the past is legally framed at (supra)national and individual levels. Contrasting how national and EU legislation differs from individual or group attempts to control representations of the past takes us to the centre of the difficulty with heritage. Is it just a lighter form of historicity, or a tool that enables the building of a new political community based on not only shared understandings of the past, but also one's role in *making and* disseminating those understandings? As this theme touches on cultural and intellectual

¹⁰ See p.12 of Dominique Poulot's paper *Is the invention of memories necessary to identities?* presented at the 2015 Barcelona Workshop.



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property, it also draws us into the debates around digital heritage, a topic addressed under the Cultural Creativity axis, but of significant relevance throughout the whole project.

Key Question: How significant is European policy and legislation in shaping heritage rights?

Question: Do 'heritage rights' risk fixing the past, and ownership, in ways that lead to greater conflict, and lesser sensitivity?

4. Valuing Heritage as Learning and Entertaining Resources

Originally named Contextualising Narratives and later Cultural Memory and Learning, this Thematic Area investigates how cultural memory is transmitted across generations in different European contexts. It deals with the question whether societies can learn and have fun through the interpretation of the past. In this respect a key initial question is whether heritage should be conceived as having an ethical dimension in which there is a commitment to public virtues, since it will naturally raise the question which values should be given prominence by the market or by the official institutions.

This thematic area could focus on a number of sub-areas, for example education. By contrasting national school syllabi with the representations extant in both major national museums and those circulating in popular cultures, as well as the work of community museums and co-curation projects, it examines how a collective consciousness of the past is materialised. Heritage is however differently conceived between different



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member states, and the role of the past given different importance, consequently we will investigate *which* material and immaterial culture is used to explore ideas of belonging, as well as the different strategies used. For example, how do cultural memories flow between memory institutions, school curricula and popular culture? Where co-curation and community-led models exist, how do they compare with more authoritative curated representations of the past, such as both school curricula and national museums? This Thematic Area lends itself to considering how key narratives are exhibited/represented in different member-states, for example, experiences of colonialism in the UK, Republic of Ireland and Portugal.

Key Question: Should heritage create critical reflective citizens or focus on instilling a collective cultural memory?

Question: Is heritage a good object and a useful means to promote a European memory in a new way and how to deal with it ?

Question: How successful are nuanced and sensitive narratives of the past in reaching beyond their (all too often) limited audiences and into wider society?



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