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Heritage and Practices of Public Formation
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Reduced to its simplest of terms, heritage refers to the contemporary activities through which the past comes to matter in the present. In this respect, when most of us write or speak about heritage, we are referring to a social framework of institutions and practices that select, conserve and present material and intangible traces of the past. Within such activities, judgments are made as to which particular aspects of the past are worthy of preservation and are of potential significance for social memory. All this is no doubt well understood. Institutions of heritage and the practices they organize are attempts to embody, through landscape, artifact, text, and performance, something of the story and spirit of a social entity, whether defined as an all embracing notion of humankind or delimited as a particular nation, region, religion, or ethno-cultural group.

Furthermore, it has become commonplace to acknowledge that how and what gets named as essential to the story and spirit of any social entity must always be understood as regulated (and potentially contested) within the power relations that constitute what counts as heritage. Such acknowledgement inevitably brings to the fore the concerns: "*whose* heritage is being referred to?" and "*who* is defining it for *whom*?" These are clearly extremely important questions in that they help us resist an all too facile, reductive nationalism which suppresses acknowledgment of the multicultural complexity of contemporary nation states within our era of hyper-globalization. They also can help us resist attempts to construct leveling notions of a universal heritage that fail to acknowledge not only the very real differences as to the substance and meanings of past and present lives, but the terms on which such differences have been constituted. On such terms heritage practices are practices of recognition and proprietorship. They are practices ultimately assessed in relation to who it is that may or may not recognize themselves as those addressed by them. That is, who it is that may experience a felt sense of belonging to the story and spirit of the social entity being re-articulated through the activity of heritage.[1] The question of whose heritage is being represented ends up constituting heritage as a form of property relation, as signaling that a particular set of stories, songs, artifacts or texts belong to somebody. This opens concerns regarding the rights and responsibilities of proprietorship. Thus one's answer to the question who has the right to do what with "my heritage," will not only be based on one's own life experience but as well, on one's inscription as a member of a bounded sociality that defines itself in part through the (at times, contested) discourse as to what is to be included in its "common heritage."

On these terms, the frameworks that regulate heritage organizations and practices may be understood to operate as, what Deleuze and Guattari called, "social machines" for parsing people into distinct entities and articulating distinctive sets of identifications and desires.[2] The operation of these social technologies define much of contemporary cosmopolitan existence: people live contiguously, but within differing pasts and temporal sensibilities. As Ernst Bloch put it, "Not all people exist in the same

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[1] Hall, Stuart. "Whose Heritage? Un-settling 'The Heritage,' Re-imagining the Post-Nation" in Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo (Eds.) The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race, New York: Routledge, 2005. pp 23-35.

[2] Patton, Paul. *Deleluze and the Political*, New York: Routledge, 2000. pp.88-96.

Now. They do so only externally, through the fact that they can be seen today. But they are thereby not yet living at the same time with others. Instead they carry earlier elements with them."[3] Critical contemporary notions of working toward more inclusive and just societies demand recognition of the diverse ways people live in relation to differing sets of cultural and historical memories. But how might inter-relations among those living these differences be possible? As Hannah Arendt passionately argued, "to live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it." Hence for Arendt, the public world, like every in-between, is a world that relates and separates people at the same time. Differently put, the public realm is that space which gathers us together and yet prevents us from becoming one. What deeply concerned Arendt were those societies where "the world between people has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and separate them." In this respect, she offered the following analogy: "The situation [of which I write] resembles a spiritualistic séance where a number of people gathered around a table, might suddenly, through some magic trick, see the table vanish from their midst, so that two persons sitting opposite each other were no longer separated but also would be entirely unrelated to each other by anything tangible." On such terms, Arendt asks, how are we to live together? It is to this challenge that our special issue of the IJHS is addressed. While heritage practices are most often understood as solidifying identities and articulating (and often celebrating) differences, in this issue we are more centrally concerned with what contributions heritage practices might make to the formation of a public realm within which difference and relation are mobilized together in order to confront the complexities and uncertainties of human life in diverse communities.

One might think that heritage practices, particularly those animated through stories and storytelling, would be a form of communications *par excellence* for bringing particular narratives, symbols and performances into a sphere where they can be seen, heard, and given recognition by the multicultural state and its citizenry. Yet this is no guarantee of a public realm. [4] Stories and storytelling does not turn into the "in-between" of public connectedness just by being on display. There is little question that any social democracy must include a framework for connectedness which recognizes the fact of human plurality and hence the realities of lived specificity, difference and disagreement. However, such a framework must include forms of communication that enable learning about and from the lives of others in ways that initiate the transformative actions necessary for living in a changing, increasingly inter-dependent society. As forms of communication, heritage practices are clearly implicated in enduring questions regarding the viable substance of social life, questions which include the problem of human connection across historically structured differences of time and place. Thus our concern for what forms of expression of heritage might contribute to the initiation or renewal of public connectedness that, as Arendt stressed, relate and separate us at same time. Might heritage practices yet be a way of putting forward the intimacies of particular cultural experiences through which diverse people could come together to remake their inter-related world? What heritage practices might function not only to conserve social forms but help to negotiate new ones? In asking these questions, our consideration of particular heritage practices will center on how one might draw on the power of the past to shape the future in ways that are yet to be defined. [5]

In this issue of the IJHS, we are precisely concerned with those moments wherein heritage practices break from the preservation of social forms with distinct traditions and correspondingly hold the potential for bringing new social relations and forms into existence. The essays in this volume are

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[3] Bloch, Ernst "Nonsynchronism and Dialectics," *New German Critique* 11 (1977): 22-38.

[4] Bauman, Zygmunt. *In Search of Politics*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. See in particular pp. 1-8.

[5] Harrison, Rodney, Fairclough, Graham, Jameson Jnr , John H., and Schofield, John. "Introduction: Heritage, Memory, and Modernity," in The Heritage Reader, New York: Routledge, 2008.pp.1-12.

not simply concerned with those practices in which heritage is constituted as a property a relation but as well, they are concerned with enacted moments wherein heritage practices constitute an "event," a turning point in or break with existing patterns of lived social relations that hold the promise of bringing something new into the world. Within such heritage "events" there is a movement of becoming whose full actualization is not immanent to itself and therefore can not be defined in advance of its realization. As we will see in the articles included in this issue, such "events" most often appear as social performances that carry the possibility of new social interactions, new insights as to peoples' relation to each other, and perhaps most importantly, new forms of social solidarities – that is, new "publics." Such publics are not merely reflective of pre-given social forms, but rather are constitutive of sociality itself. The very possibility of a public becomes a mode for generating new social forms.[6] Hence, heritage practices can present an arena of social participation whose participants are not restricted on the basis of pre-existing notions of identity. Such practices can not only offer meanings and affect that help consolidate exiting social solidarities, but they also offer the possibility of new connections among diverse people, connections essential for the continual renewal of democratic life and the attainment of environmental sustainability in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. In this respect, a public is inherently a site of learning; it is inherently pedagogical in its very activity of formation.

Drawing from Arendt, Michael Warner notes that "the public that Arendt values so much is the scene of world making and self-disclosure; it is therefore to be distinguished both from the prevailing system of politics and from an universalist notion of rational debate. It is a political scene, necessarily local because the self and the shared world disclosed through it emerge in interaction with others." (59). In emphasizing the notion of a public as "world making," Warner is not only enlarging the significance of the stylistics of public discourse (underscoring the importance the poietic function of language and corporeal expressivity) but bringing to the fore the very idea of poiesis, understood as a creative doing; as action that carries the potential of something new, emergent, and not already predicted by a pre-existing form.

Craig Calhoun is helpful in understanding the importance of Warner's notion of a public for questions of democracy. In the following quote, he draws a picture of the limits of heritage practices conceived within a politics of recognition.

> An external account of peoplehood is apt to rely on identity (cultural similarity) and/or interest (and, implicitly or explicitly, a social contract). Identity and/or interest can then be invoked to explain why people accept shared institutions and, indeed, accept each other. . .the emphasis is on passive preconditions, not projects; on adaptation to external necessity, not creative pursuit of an attractive solidarity. The implication is that the persons in question are already formed as either similar or different in cultural terms; as either having or lacking common interests. (154-155).

What Calhoun begins brings home is the stake practices of heritage have in setting the terms of new forms of social participation. Beyond practices of historical and/or cultural edification as well as self and social recognition, a new direction for understanding the place of heritage practices in a democratic society requires a consideration of their contribution to the formation of "attractive solidarities," grounded in forms of communication that address and engage a plurality of human experience. This requires animating listening, viewing and responding in ways that foster choice and imagination, particularly in regard to a shared future. In this sense, heritage institutions and practices would aspire to be part of the discourse through which there would be a reflexive formation of publics that might enhance the human capacity to create social forms prepared to confront contemporary situations, opening a genuine sense of futurity in circumstances where choice seems limited by what appears to be inexorable

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[6] Jessica Blaustein, "How Publics Matter," *American Quarterly,* Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004) © 2004 American Studies Association 171

social processes.

In quite various ways each of the articles in this issue explore heritage practices wherein diverse sets of people engage with various forms of both tangible and intangible heritage and in doing so begin to forge new relationships with each other that were not pre-existing. In their article "Autonomous Archives" Shaunna Moore and Susan Pell argue that practices enabling the formation, organization, and interpretation of independent community archives constitute "the archive" as a space for public formation. Their paper provides a theoretical elaboration of the notion that archives have the potential to act as constituting and relational spaces within which publics are able to form their identities and affect change in the world. Autonomous archives, as all archives, have the potential to become both places and practices where diverse viewpoints are represented, and individuals and groups with divergent interests meet in a common location (physical or virtual), make use of the same materials, and variously pursue competing and/or complementary interests and goals. To further understand the functions of documentary heritage within particular communities, Moore and Pell explore the archival practices of several emergent publics located in the downtown East Side of Vancouver, British Columbia. They argue that these practices present a framework for understanding the archive as a creative, world-making process that contributes to a shared knowledge of the past that has the power to transform modes of public engagement. Their focus is on the archive as an "an active aspiration, a tool for reworking desires and memories." Thus they emphasize that archival practice constitutes a rich discursive space within which diverse members of a community may transform their everyday lives and in the process develop moments of attractive solidarity which contribute to community cohesiveness and identity.

In "Can There be A Conciliatory Heritage?" Erica Lehrer considers the social interactions between Jewish tourists and ethnic Poles in the medieval Jewish quarter of Kazimierz. After World War II, Kazimierz was a largely vacant, rundown neighborhood in Krakow. However, in recent years it has been revived as a heritage site containing Jewish themed cafes and shops run by Poles. Consequent to the Holocaust, such attempts to preserve Jewish heritage in a Poland now largely devoid of Jews has often been considered an unsavory form of exploitative nostalgia. Lehrer argues for a different view. Grounded in an ethnographic analysis, Lehrer argues that Kazimierz is becoming more than a site for the projection and reception of *representations of* Jewish heritage. Rather, she sees this space as a unique *opening* in which Jews and Poles regularly cross paths, offering a rare opportunity for geographically dissociated groups to experience "the face-to-face encounter that has traditionally grounded the ethical." The result is a unique arena in which Jewish and Polish collective memories and national identities can be confronted, questioned, and expanded. Lehrer's analysis reveals that while a Polish urge to remember and reconcile with its Jewish heritage has been a prime mover in Kazimierz's development as a heritage site, individual Jewish quests to come to terms with Poland's broader Jewish heritage have played an integral complementary role. In her view, the result is an evolving Polish-Jewish heritage site, a "conciliatory" space that works against more conflictive notions of Poland's Jewish heritage that pit Jewishness and Polishness against one another. As Lehrer puts it : Heritage spaces are not just *lieux*, but *milieux de memoire*, where abstracted, homogenizing national stories are called into question through the daily telling and living of our unique and overlapping individual stories. As Lehrer argues, the possibility of new pluralistic publics may depend on nurturing spaces that draw estranged groups together to do the hard work of conciliatory heritage. The implications of Lehrer's work confirms our view that sites of physical and intangible heritage, while often employed for exclusivist or bigoted national imaginings, have the potential to become "sites of conscience." As she suggests, such sites facilitate interpersonal engagements and social risk-taking (telling/listening, expressing dissent, creating productive discomfort); the production of new social networks; reflexive learning; and identification experimentation.

In a somewhat similar vein, in her paper "In Remembering for the Future in Northern Ireland," Margo Shea also addresses the question of how to move past practices of social memory that block the transformation toward a less divided, post-conflict public culture. Shea argues that for close to forty

years, the Northern Irish conflict was expressed through violence and the cultural forms that supported or acquiesced to violence. The emergent challenge for Northern Ireland is for citizens to develop an arsenal of tools for open and civil engagements with deep differences not only as what is to be remembered but as well, what contemporary significance should be assigned to these memories. Shea argues that though an inclusive remembering seems desirable, substituting a painful and controversial history for a more palatable version will not build a peaceful society. Rather she makes the case that before a shared historical consciousness can emerge in Northern Ireland citizens must first begin to listen to each other speaking of differing memories of past events, even if it is difficult. In this regard, Shea presents a discussion of two different practices of memory work that are contributing to the process of conflict transformation by creating new forms of public life in Northern Ireland. The challenge of post-conflict heritage practices in Northern Ireland lies in interpreting past events openly and critically without laying blame or playing a zero-sum memory game that discounts others' perspectives in order to validate one's own. Remembering divided histories together both demands and develops a set of civic skills necessary for an engaged public. Shea argues that though imperfect and at times deeply troubled, the practices she discusses are forging a new tradition in memory work that transcends the long history of dual narratives and begins to make space for broader, more complicated engagements with the past. By creating spaces for a diverse set of narratives to be spoken and heard together, the memory work Shea describes is contributing to the formation of a robust "collected," public memory that promises to be a first step toward reshaping the social fabric of post-conflict society Northern Ireland.

In "Dealing with Difference: Heritage, Commensurability, and Public Formation in Northern New Mexico," Thomas Guthrie challenges any facile notion that heritage practices might constitute new public formations that magically resolve incommensurable differences among diverse participants. Guthrie's argument is drawn from a comparative analysis of engagements with three heritage sites located in New Mexico: the Cross of the Martyrs historical monument in Sante Fe, the Misión-Convento -a museum and cultural center in the city of Española, and the Poeh Museum designed and operated by the Tewa Pueblo. Considering the tensions between sacralization of history and the secularization of religion as well as radically different notions of historical time articulated within these sites, Guthrie cogently draws a picture of the incompatible cultural logics embodied within and between each heritage setting. In arguing that these sites present perspectives that are mutually exclusive, Guthrie makes the case that they demonstrate forms of difference that a liberal multicultural conception of heritage cannot accommodate without a reductive trivializing of that which is held in common. In arguing this, Guthrie makes the point that these contradictions destabilize the concept of "heritage" as an innocuous and apolitical object suitable for public recognition and the formation of social cohesion. While skeptical of retention of "heritage" as an analytical category that can embrace a post-nation decolonization of public history, we would argue that Guthrie's work provides a clear indication of the need for a re-conceptualization of heritage practices as those that can productively contain the agonism inherent in the making of democratic social formations.

In "Revived, Remixed, Retold, Upgraded?: The Heritage of the York Cycle of Mystery Plays" Mike Tyler provides a comparative historical discussion of a community-based performance that traces its roots back to the fourteenth century. The York Mystery Plays are form of religious drama revolving around the presentation of scriptural narrative through a series of scenes or 'pageants.' The ongoing tradition of presenting these scenes, first scripted in medieval England, occupies a complex and problematic place within the cultural landscape of the city of York. As Tyler argues, the continuing tradition of the performance of the Mystery Plays introduces a participative element to the essentially inert historical urban landscape. At their inception, the Mystery Plays were performed not by professional players, but by members of the trade and craft communities of the city. As a vehicle for the central tenets of the Christian faith and as a visible celebration of civic unity and pride, they relied on shared participation, drawing together those who act and those who watch into a single community.

Abandoned at the time of the Reformation, after World War II the tradition was revived in modern during the 1951 Festival of Britain. Although the religious significance of the plays has diminished, this has been matched by the increasing significance of the plays as a vehicle for constituting a community constructed around the concept of a shared cultural history. In his discussion of the 1951 production and a more recent radical, youth oriented version in 2008, Tyler explores the very different temporal spaces and hence quite different ways in which the plays have been produced. Each production becomes a substantially different vehicle through which performers and audience co-participate in defining the significance of a historical legacy for themselves and their communities.

In "Hon-oring the Past: Play-Publics and Gender at Baltimore's HonFest" Mary Rizzo considers the implications of the performance of participants in an urban street festival. Held annually since 1994, HonFest is annual event during which participants dress up and through mediated cultural memories, adopt the unique speech mannerisms of women from Hampden, one of Baltimore's the post-War World II white, working class neighborhoods. Participants view such performances a way of honoring the memories of women in their families who lived in Baltimore for generations. Rizzo is particularly interested in the brief, playful interactions between these participants and the many people who come to the street festival. These interactions include behaviors such as joking, sharing memories, dancing, posing for and taking photos, etc. She argues that these exchanges are the media through which groups of strangers form "play-publics." Based in locally meaningful idioms, play-publics participants engage in embodied and discursive play that offers a critique of the commercialized impersonality of urban life. Rizzo argues that these play-publics subvert the urban atomization of interpersonal relations as well as the intent of the HonFest to promote tourism and consumption. Differently understood, the HonFest becomes as space/time within which participants make intelligible certain behaviors that disrupt the normative public spaces of the postindustrial city. On such terms, the material authenticity of these heritage performances is less important than the affective form of interactions they initiate. The importance of these interactions lies in the possible revitalization of a desire for forms of human interaction that have disappeared from many city streets.

Cristina Garduño Freeman also explores the performative production of social significance of heritage but this time through the participation in the social media website Flickr. A popular medium for the sharing of digital photographs, Flickr functions as more than an on-line photo album. In her paper, "Photosharing on Flickr: Intangible Heritage and Emergent publics," Garduño Freeman argues that Flickr provides a public space for visual and textual conversation which involve both personal expression and collective identification. As internet based, digital photosharing is made visible and public, those with access to Flickr are in a position to form new dynamic social formations with people outside of their usual social networks. Garduño Freeman's interests are those moments on Flickr when the posting and viewing of photographs operate as a communicative currency for personal expression and conversations between participants. More specifically, she is interested in such conversations when they engage heritage sites and hence debate and inform the meaning of these sites for the participants. Her research suggests that Flickr functions as a medium that enables practices informing the production of a public world. Through these practices people are able to performatively explore their relation to material forms in ways that make evident their collective commonalities and differences. Garduño Freeman illustrates the generative potential of this particular use of social media by considering a group on Flickr that has defined its participation through the posting of images of the Sydney Opera House, a structure that has been designated a world heritage site. While much attention has been given to the historical and architectural value the Sydney Opera House less attention has been devoted to the relationship that people and communities have with the building. In her paper Garduño Freeman explores the socio-visual interactions of the "Sydney Opera House" group in order to understand the way these photographic contributions operate as a visual discourse that articulates members' sense of belonging and identity. Thus in seeing photographs posted to Flickr as visual messages sd shared moments of experience that

connect participants to a group and each other, Garduño Freeman illustrates how digital social media might be studied as a site of formation of new publics.

As indicated by this synoptic compendium of the diverse texts chosen for this special issue, the authors of the articles that follow have all highlighted the importance of heritage practices that initate performative aspects of human action. That is, they all emphasize heritage practices that provoke and enable actions that accomplish things through their enactment. The idea that a public can be a forum for world making seems to suggest the importance of distinguishing between notions of the performative and representational character of heritage discourses and practices. To borrow an idea broached by Erica Lehrer, in each of the above papers, the focus is on heritage as a *mileux de memorire*, not simply as a *lieux*. Whle such practices may not always create new social formations, it is when heritage offers the possibiltiies of building of relations between strangers who might only share loose attachments (if any at all) that the past opens the present to futurity. The point here is not to simply affirm the importance of empheral practices over and against the fixity of text and material but rather to consider the importance of heritage spaces as either material or virtual environments for re-constituting the vitality of public life.

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