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## Heritage Futures, Prefiguration and World Heritage

**Cornelius Holtorf**

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## Heritage Futures, Prefiguration and World Heritage

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### **Keywords**

cultural heritage, future history, future-making, heritage management, planning

### **Schlagwörter**

Kulturerbe, zukünftige Geschichte, Zukunftsgestaltung, Management von Kulturerbe, Planung

Heritage futures are about the roles of heritage in managing the relations between present and future societies, e.g. through anticipation and planning. This topic has only rarely been addressed in the heritage sector and its literature (Högberg et al. 2017), although this is now changing (see especially Harrison et al. forthcoming; Holtorf and Högberg forthcoming a). It is surprising that critical heritage studies and heritage management are only now beginning to take seriously the consequences for the future of temporal variation in interpreting and using heritage. By now it has become widely accepted that key concepts of heritage management and interpretation such as ownership, authenticity, use and value are culturally specific and variable in space. But it has not yet been fully understood that they are also variable over time, with important consequences for the possible impacts of heritage on future societies and thus how we might best manage heritage today for the benefit of future generations (Holtorf and Kono 2015).

Recently, the archaeological anthropologist Lewis Borck (2018) presented a very interesting discussion of heritage practices as future-making, addressing exactly these questions. From his perspective, archaeology is political practice and should always acknowledge its political nature. Studying patterns in the selection of World Heritage sites in North America and the Caribbean as a case-study, Borck argues that “archaeologists use the past in the present to construct a history for the production of the future” (2018: 232). He links his discussion not only to current work on the politics of collective memory in relation to history, archaeology and heritage but also to a body of social theory including George W. Wallis’ sociological notion of chronopolitics and Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s concept of chronotopes, originally developed in literary theory (Borck 2018: 234-235). Borck is particularly interested in discussing patterns of constructing future history.

Addressing the future holds generally many challenges, not the least in relation to its inherent uncertainty. The circumstance that the future is uncertain does not, however, mean that we need to be clairvoyants or prophets in order to engage with heritage futures. As Holtorf and May argue elsewhere (Harrison et al forthcoming: ch. 22), the uncertainty of the future allows for freedom and creativity and for broad participation and engagement. The lack of complete predetermination of what is going to happen next provides people with the opportunity to exploit favourable circumstances, while also demanding responsibility and inviting affection, love, and care for living beings as core values in making decisions.

There are various established ways of managing the uncertain future in the present. Among the most common ones are anticipation and planning. Planning is about making decisions that help to create conditions for achieving certain goals for the future. For example, urban planners develop cities so that they create favourable conditions for future communities of people to live and work in sustainable societies. Planning involves anticipation. Anticipation is about what we expect to happen that informs our decisions and actions in the present. Anticipatory behaviour thus “uses” the future in the process of deciding on specific action. For example, watching a weather forecast may make us decide to take gloves and a warm jacket when we go out (Poli 2017). Both planning and anticipation require us to imagine future conditions and take present-day decisions in relation to specific conditions we expect (but do not predict) to happen.

In a heritage context, this may mean that we plan directly and make decisions about listing or other forms of management and preservation today in the light of what we expect to occur in the future. For example, we may ask how heritage can benefit societies 30-50 years ahead which to some extent might be shaped by long-term mega-trends that are discernible today and relate to demographic patterns, climate change, the globalised economy, socio-cultural divisions or technological progress (Holtorf and Högberg 2014: 349-353). An alternative is to plan indirectly and create norms and practices that we expect to lead to favourable results irrespective of what exactly the future holds in store for us. This may mean that we stipulate that certain decisions are to be reviewed in regular intervals or that we insist on particular stakeholders’ participation in future management processes and decision-making (Holtorf and Högberg forthcoming b).

It is clear that the future depends to some extent on our own choices, and this is exactly why Lewis Borck’s discussion (2018) is significant. He asks how we are creating future history by making choices today and introduces the concept of prefiguration to the repertoire of tools for future-making in heritage management. Drawing among others on the work of Carl Boggs and on anarchist thinking, Borck explains that prefiguration assumes that the outcome of particular actions is prefigured in the practice that frames these actions. In other words, prefiguration asserts “that the means are *necessarily* reproduced into the ends” (2018: 232, original emphasis). Prefiguration is

a significant concept in political activism and political theory. According to the sociologist Darcy Leach (2013),

“The term prefigurative politics refers to a political orientation based on the premise that the ends a social movement achieves are fundamentally shaped by the means it employs, and that movements should therefore do their best to choose means that embody or ‘prefigure’ the kind of society they want to bring about.”

In the context of heritage, prefiguration means that ways of decision-making and other practices of heritage management contribute to shaping its future outcomes. Consequently, in terms of creating heritage futures, it does not only matter *what* we decide today in relation to heritage but also *how* we reach these decisions. As Borck (2018: 232) argues, we need to pose the question, “what are current archaeological preservation practices prefiguring?” For example, one might say that by empowering specific groups of people to take responsibility for heritage or by adopting democratic principles in managing heritage today we prefigure particular future decision-making practices involving the same groups and principles. We can thus contribute to strengthening these groups’ positions and principles in future societies.

As an empirical case study, Borck applies these important ideas to the selection of cultural heritage sites for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. His main argument is that the decisions and underlying criteria (or indeed the lack of appropriate criteria) for preservation in this context will prefigure a particular shared future history. According to the data he presents and discusses, an unduly large proportion of 55 among the 61 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in North America and the Caribbean represent sites linked to vertically-organised societies associated with Western and colonial societies. According to Borck, in the future this is going to create a “hierarchical history” that will limit “our ability to imagine [...] alternative ways to organize collectively outside of top-down power structures”. Naturalizing “the hierarchical state delegitimizes horizontal power structures”, as they were practiced commonly in pre-colonial and indigenous societies, and thus “construct[s] a future history that underrepresents societies like these” (Borck 2018: 232-235). At face value, this is a valuable point to be made and a timely discussion to be had. Although it is important to consider the significance of prefiguration, I will argue in the following that regarding Borck’s case study more differentiation will be needed in order to prevent incomplete reasoning in the present from prefiguring future argumentation.

Borck is certainly correct about the frequencies of different kinds of societies associated with sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, but the fact is that the list does not aim to create a list of sites that is representative of all varieties of human societies or indeed of the totality of human history. The World Heritage Convention stipulates instead that there is a need to preserve those properties of the cultural and natural heritage that are considered to have “outstanding universal value” (UNESCO 1972). Each proposed site is evaluated on a case by case basis on its own merits and against a set of established criteria for outstanding universal value, not in relation to human history in its entirety or to other sites already on the list.

Moreover, I am not at all sure to what extent existing patterns among World Heritage Sites are actually going to influence very much how future generations will interpret their past, thus prefiguring future histories. There are many other and possibly more significant inspirations and sources for constructing future histories, ranging from educational curricula and mass media coverage to thriving intangible traditions and the reasoning of influencers or professional experts. The ability to imagine alternative ways of organizing societies, is much better advanced in other ways than by listed cultural sites that reveal their underlying social structures only through a fair amount of studying. It is far more effective for the imagination to become directly immersed and gain a sense of presence of alternatively structured societies. That is primarily not the realm of World Heritage Sites but of social experiences among living people and of simulated or virtual realities in the present as they are prevalent in time travel experiences, for example in gaming (see also Petersson and Holtorf 2017). In a recent topical study, although conducted in a very different field (van Gelder et al. 2019), it was found that “experiencing a scenario in VR can trigger stronger feelings of presence in the situation compared to its written equivalent, and also elicit more intense emotional experiences, resulting in a better approximation of real-world decision-making.” No doubt, immersive virtual experiences have a particularly strong potential of prefiguring social structures in which horizontal forms of power are adequately represented, going far beyond the significance in this context of a few designated heritage sites.

There is possibly another important point to be made. Borck comments (2018: 235) that a significant misrepresentation in world heritage and a consequent delegitimation of horizontal power structures naturalises the state while

necessarily marginalizing or erasing egalitarian, non-state, pre-colonial and thus in particular the many creative forms of Indigenous management of power. Making this argument, he evokes themes of the politics of representation and possibly of contemporary identity politics. Indeed, representing more frequently the social structures of indigenous societies may prefigure a world of strengthened decolonialisation and with a higher appreciation of cultural diversity. But at the same time there is also a risk that the idea of world heritage (and indeed of heritage more generally) is reduced to primarily representing ancient social and political systems. When the fact that a society was “horizontally organised” subsumes most other historical and political significance of its heritage and by extension may even become the main characteristic of living indigenous communities, some additional issues are at stake. Essentialising aspects of social and cultural communities risks promoting varieties of tribalism that may advance the idea of shared cultural distinction and group-specific values at the expense of civil liberties connected to universal human rights, including the notion of human equality irrespective of any collective affiliation. As the author Amin Maalouf (2012: 101-102) pointed out in a discussion of the need to belong and the resulting violence that is conducted in the name of identity, “we are all infinitely closer to our contemporaries than to our ancestors.” In other words, even if some regions’ histories feature many examples of horizontally organized societies with strong egalitarian principles, the living descendants of these societies live lives that in many ways are much closer to other present-day communities than to specific ancestral ways of life, including their social and political systems. The wider implications of this argument are still somewhat unclear. The risk of essentialising archaeological sites and heritage in relation to particular present-day societies (and possible consequences to be expected in the light of prefiguration) will, clearly, require much more discussion in the future. This applies in particular to the question to what extent new approaches to archaeological interpretation and archaeological heritage management will be able to provide viable alternatives to how they operate today in contemporary society and, if so, what this may mean for future archaeological practice (see also Holtorf 2017; Maran 2019).

Finally, although the World Heritage Convention has run into a number of challenging problems that include consequences of a history of Eurocentrism, it is important to consider that the Convention is nevertheless often referred to as the “flagship” of UNESCO (Rudolf and Buckley 2016). The World Heritage Convention is in fact the most successful among all UNESCO Conventions. The World Heritage List is enthusiastically appreciated by very many people in all parts of the world, and the sites it contains enjoy widespread global interest and enormous media attention. Arguably, this Convention has come the furthest in addressing the purpose of the organization “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture” and in the spirit of human rights (UNESCO 1945: Article 1(1)). The World Heritage Convention has been signed and ratified by a current total of 193 states, which is more than the equivalent number for any other UNESCO Convention. Decisions about selection for inclusion in the World Heritage List are made during well attended annual meetings of the World Heritage Committee which consists of 21 elected representatives of the Convention’s many States Parties (UNESCO 1972). In other words, the practices of the Convention are to a very high degree, and on a global scale, accessible, inclusive, and democratic, collectively fostering peace and security in the world. If practices such as those associated with the World Heritage Convention can prefigure future co-existence of people and nations, we have every reason for being hopeful for the future development of humanity.

The World Heritage Convention and the World Heritage List face considerable and widely known challenges. At the same time, their currency underlines the global significance of heritage in managing the relations between present and future societies. There is a clear need for the heritage sector and critical heritage studies to address heritage futures more frequently and more thoroughly – whether in relation to the work of UNESCO or indeed beyond. My views of the significance of the case study recently presented by Lewis Borck are different from his. But I fully agree that the notion of prefiguration, of which he reminds us, will make an important contribution to these future debates.

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## Heritage Time, the Next Zeitgeist. A Response to Cornelius Holtorf's "Heritage Futures, Prefiguration and World Heritage"

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## Heritage Time, the Next Zeitgeist. A Response to Cornelius Holtorf's "Heritage Futures, Prefiguration and World Heritage"

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### **Keywords**

Heritage ethics, Time, Governance

### **Schlagwörter**

Ethik des Kulturerbes, Zeit, Governance

Cornelius Holtorf raises an important issue that lingers unresolved in the study of heritage and preservation – the lack of examination of temporal variation that is mobilized in heritage discourse and practice and, in particular, a neglect of future-oriented projections. But the examination of temporality and its variations has been extensively featured in the academic literature that supports the growth of heritage studies. Time has been discussed as a formative element of heritage discourse (e.g., Lowenthal 1975; Harvey 2001), recognized as underpinning various rhetorical devices in the lexicon for heritage preservation (see essays in Lafrenz-Samuels and Rico 2015), and acknowledged as a factor affecting styles of conservation (e.g., Price 2000). Moreover, the study of temporalities has been critical to anthropological training in heritage studies: for example, Gavin Lucas argues in support of a study of practices of temporalizing, such as the examination of preservation strategies that take heritage resources “out of the flow of time” (2005, 130), while Andreas Huyssen (1995) and Eviatar Zerubavel (2003) place temporal framing center-stage for the study of heritage as a practice of past mastering. However, the study of temporalities in heritage preservation debates and practices confronts the seemingly unreconcilable tension between a past-looking discourse and various forward-looking practices: conservation standards to manage future change; policy that anticipates the effects of natural and human-made disasters; and other safeguarding traditions that focus on the betterment of future society, such as *waqf* endowments (Sabri 2015). Therefore, I agree that a formal and critical study of ‘heritage time’ in the context of futurity, as it has already begun (Zetterstrom-Sharp 2015; Stainforth and Graham 2017), is an exciting chapter in the growth of heritage studies.

What I am less optimistic about, however, is the ability of contemporary heritage preservation instruments and institutional approaches to address the needs of an ethical and socially just approach that challenges existing heritage temporalities. Here, I would like to challenge the idea that uncertainty offers the possibility of empowerment. First, we need to problematize the dichotomy between a *certain* heritage past/present and an *uncertain* heritage future that is used to draw the contours of that opportunity. On the one hand, to use a past or present heritage value to anchor certainty is to de-politicize processes of heritage-making that authorized such a value; to assume that heritage and preservation experts have found a way to redress practices of marginalization and (re)ascribe heritage value; or both. On the other hand, methodologically, there has not been a convincing way for the field to de-privilege the expert voice in favor of marginalized ones. Summoning the stakeholder/local/marginal voice in an uncertain future confronts the very same obstacles and expert channels as it does in the present. While uncertainty has provided, at times, a small window for redirection of heritage value for the purposes of re-drawing narratives and authorities (for example, Zimmerman 2007; Rico 2016), we have to recognize that this action does not unfold on a blank canvas and must navigate pre-existing values and hierarchies. I look forward to learning what a heritage futures oriented or derived framework proposes to do about this challenge.

Holtorf examines the possibilities of this framework in the sphere of World Heritage, which, incidentally, contains and replicates much of the perennial problem of examining time as a problematic component in global heritage governance. I would argue that the obscuring of temporal frameworks of heritage value is precisely the mechanism through which this form of governance discourages – not allows – creativity, broad participation, and engagement. It does this in two ways: one, it mobilizes the idea of ‘uniqueness’ as a way to hierarchize heritage sites in accordance with its ordering practices. For example, criteria iii for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) in the Operational Guidelines (UNESCO 2019) imposes an assessment of OUV against the assemblage of already-nominated sites. The use of past inscriptions as a constituent part of new assessments of value establishes rigid scales that leave little room for alternative engagements. The second, but related, way in which value is dissociated from its temporal framework may appear to be more superficial, yet has profound implications for the limited flexibility that can be brought to the World Heritage List: other than being stamped with a start-date in the year of nomination and inscription into the List, heritage value appears to be perpetual after its inscription, unable to be re-examined or challenged except for extreme and rare cases of de-commissioning. These prefigurative practices of preservation that Borck warns about (Borck 2018: 232-235, referenced in Holtorf’s piece), leave no mechanism for recognizing significant shifts in ideas of heritage value, processes of assessment, and agencies that have marked the field of heritage studies in the last few decades.

There are certainly vast challenges for the productive implementation of prefiguration in heritage debates, some of which Holtorf and I agree on. But a heritage futures framework has to align with contemporary heritage ethics debates if it is to advance the study of heritage and the politics of time.

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## The Consecration of World Heritage Sites – Practice and Critique

**Hilmar Schäfer**

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## The Consecration of World Heritage Sites – Practice and Critique

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### **Keywords**

consecration, ethnography, UNESCO, World Heritage

### **Schlagwörter**

Ethnografie, Konsekration, UNESCO, Welterbe

In their work on heritage futures, Cornelius Holtorf and other colleagues go beyond situating archaeology, preservation, heritage and the discourses and practices connected with them in *contemporary societies* as critical heritage studies have rightly done. Instead, they reflect on the implications of archaeology and heritage for *future societies*. In his contribution, Holtorf engages with a recent study by Lewis Borck (2018) on heritage practices as future-making, which examines cultural heritage sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List for the regions of North America and the Caribbean. Borck draws on the notion of prefiguration – a very valuable analytic term in Holtorf’s view – in order to describe how “archaeologists use the past in the present to construct a history for the production of the future” (Borck 2018: 232). He is concerned with the choice of sites included in the World Heritage List and thus with current archaeological preservation practices prefiguring – and distorting – the future look back into the past. He claims that with 55 out of 61 listed World Heritage Sites representing vertically-organized societies, the visible traces of Western and colonial societies are highly overrepresented in the regions of North America and the Caribbean. Thus, he worries that this distortion is creating “a hierarchical history [which will limit, HS] our ability to imagine, both implicitly and explicitly, alternative ways to organize collectively outside of top-down power structures” (Borck 2018: 234). While Holtorf is sympathetic to Borck’s approach of drawing on the notion of prefiguration, he calls for more differentiation in this particular case.

Borck’s observation is highly valuable for criticizing the general global misrepresentation of sites included in the World Heritage List. This fact has already been addressed for a long time both inside the UNESCO system itself, with general reflections on Eurocentrism and the imbalance of the World Heritage List (UNESCO 1994), and with the Nara process (Larsen 1995) and critical heritage studies (e.g. Byrne 1991; Kowalski 2011). I would follow Holtorf’s argument that Borck wrongly singles out the contribution of World Heritage listings when it comes to prefiguring history in the future and agree that “there are many other and possibly more significant inspirations and sources for constructing future histories, ranging from educational curricula and mass media coverage to thriving intangible traditions and the reasoning of influencers or professional experts” (Holtorf *infra*: 3). Examining UNESCO World Heritage Sites in an isolated way thus does not make for the best-suited case study to support the claims Borck wants to make. If World Heritage Sites are studied to account for these research questions, it should always be in context with these other cultural practices and discourses that also have an effect on the politics of memory. One of these contexts is an aspect that both Borck and Holtorf are missing: UNESCO World Heritage listings are unparalleled in their effect of orienting global tourism. In an international economy of attention, with nation-states competing globally for their share in the tourist industry, the states use heritage as a resource in their struggles to be noticed globally as attractive destinations for tourism (English 2005; Bandelj and Wherry 2011). With 1.7 trillion US-dollars’ worth of total international tourism exports, as the World Tourism Organization states in a report from 2019 (UNWTO 2019), tourism is a major force in the global economy. If and to what extent World Heritage Sites have an impact on shaping global heritage futures cannot be answered without looking at the dimensions and directions of global tourist flows. In this respect, the contribution of World Heritage Sites to heritage futures becomes evident.

In connection with this, there is another point that both Borck and Holtorf seem to miss or at least underestimate: the importance of heritage interpretation. The mere listing of a site in itself, as distorting as it may be in terms of global representation, does not say anything about its impact on its visitors. Instead, we should also take a close look at how the heritage values of each site are interpreted and communicated. One of the reasons why Western and colonial sites are nominated is that they can serve as sites of remembrance and also as sites for the critique and open discussion of the hierarchical political structures they represent. It is not the site in itself or the mere choice of its inclusion on the World Heritage List that matters, but the way it is embedded in practices of interpretation that makes a difference for the shape of heritage futures.

Holtorf’s view on the UNESCO system seems too vindicating in the end when he writes that “the practices of the [World Heritage, HS] Convention are to a very high degree, and on a global scale, accessible, inclusive, and democratic, collectively fostering peace and security in the world” (Holtorf *infra*: 4). While I agree that the Convention is exceptional both in its global acceptance as a means for protecting cultural and natural heritage and also in international exchange and the understanding for cultural diversity it surely has created, this all-too-positive account misses many points where the UNESCO system currently is flawed or has been from the start. We need a more differentiated look at the consecration practices of World Heritage that should be grounded in sound ethnographic work (Brumann and Berliner 2016; Schäfer 2016, forthcoming; Brumann 2017; Meskell 2018).

I will give only three examples of why and where the World Heritage Convention is currently flawed. First of all, it is – due to the lack of other established international legal structures – a treaty between nation-states. Thus, while the system is democratic in the sense that state members to the Convention get to vote on the members of the World Heritage Committee and those members in turn get to vote on all issues of nomination and preservation pertaining to the Convention, it is a representative body of *governments* and not of the *people* living in the nation-states. There is little voice for the opposition in the World Heritage system. This becomes visible when tensions arise between governments and local communities, e.g., when the positions of indigenous people or other local stakeholders are disregarded for the sake of inscribing sites. As much as UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre are trying to increase community involvement, their power reaches its limits when it comes to the interests of nation-states and thus national governments (Kalaycioglu 2020).

Second, the Convention has seen a lot of “politicization” in recent years (without implying that it hasn’t also been political before). Sadly, although it is still true that negotiations are mostly guided by what is emphatically called “the UNESCO spirit” amongst participants and what can actually be experienced in ethnographic observations at the committee meetings, world heritage nominations are increasingly prone to be instrumentalized for political purposes. This has become evident, for example, in all recent decisions regarding sites that form part of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which have seen great diplomatic upheaval and the eventual departure of Israel from UNESCO. Another example are tensions between the Republic of Korea and Japan about acknowledging the role of Korean (and also Chinese) forced laborers at the Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution. These sites could only be inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2015 after a huge, high-level diplomatic effort, yet the tensions remain on-going.

And third, there has also been a shift in the composition of the national delegations to the World Heritage Committee. As Bernd von Droste, the former director of the World Heritage Centre has observed, in the more recent development of the Convention since 2006 heritage experts in the delegations have increasingly been replaced with diplomats. Thus, Droste concludes that the composition of the World Heritage Committee “reflects elections of a diplomatic rather than technical character, which leads one to suspect that its work may be ruled by political trade-offs rather than by professional judgement” (Droste 2011: 38). I can confirm from ethnographic study of the Committee sessions that the role of experts’ opinions differs heavily from delegation to delegation. In consequence, the decisions about which sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List are only in part guided by heritage professionals.

These three reasons again raise the question of whether UNESCO World Heritage designations are the best case in point for Borck if he wants to criticize *archaeological* preservation decisions. They show the deep entanglement of archaeological, heritage, economic and political issues in the processes of consecrating World Heritage Sites. Accordingly, the contribution of World Heritage to the formation of future histories is a complex matter.

If we want to understand this complexity, we need to take a close look at what actually happens in the processes of designating, nominating, evaluating, interpreting, and deciding about World Heritage Sites. This is why I would call for an interdisciplinary approach in understanding World Heritage that brings together experts with backgrounds in archaeology, heritage management and interpretation, political science, ethnography, sociology and others.

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## Seeds to Trees: Connecting the Means and Ends in Heritage Management. A Reply to Holtorf

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## Seeds to Trees: Connecting the Means and Ends in Heritage Management. A Reply to Holtorf

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### **Keywords**

Anarchism, Prefiguration, Archaeological Politics, Heritage Management

### **Schlagwörter**

Anarchismus, Präfiguration, archäologische Politik, Management von Kulturerbe

First I'd like to offer a sincere thank you to Cornelius Holtorf. It is rare in the academy to be able to continue a conversation with your peers post-publication. My article to which Holtorf is responding starts with a simple question: are heritage management decisions constructing a biased future history, particularly in regards to past political economies? Because of a tight word count, I limited my analysis to UNESCO World Heritage sites in North America and the Caribbean. Within this limitation, the answer is a clear yes. These sites are not representative of the wide diversity of past political economies (Borck 2019). When we create a past through our archaeological politics that allows only one effective political practice to be glorified, it becomes increasingly difficult for folks to see practical alternatives to strategies that rely on inequality and the hierarchical state.

Reading Holtorf's response, it is clear that while we have strong disagreements about the meaning of the research I published, we both are in equally strong agreement about the need for heritage management and the power of the archaeological past to create positive changes in the present and the future. We both are adamant that heritage be mobilized for beneficial outcomes, both for descendant communities whose heritage is being protected, as well as for the global community who looks to the past for lessons and for imaginative guidance. I think this is an incredible starting place and I hope this leads to longer and more sustained conversations, if not between us then at least between others with similar differences.

That being said, disagreements do abound. For the sake of brevity, I will focus on two. First, Holtorf's critique that this type of data-driven criticism of the actions made by a powerful governing body is resorting to what he has called identity politics. Second, I will discuss Holtorf's breakdown of UNESCO World Heritage Committee organization and their decision-making practices through the lens of anarchist and other anti-authoritarian perspectives' concern about the dangers of majority rule.

Briefly, Holtorf accuses me of reducing heritage "to primarily representing ancient social and political systems." It's an odd reversal to critique an article that demonstrated that the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's decisions were reducing the past by primarily preserving hierarchical social and political systems to argue that a critique of this practice is instead the reduction. My research question, of course, was whether there was equality in the representation of ancient politics as seen in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites program in North America and the Caribbean. There wasn't. While I wish the article could have gone further, this wasn't a comprehensive analysis, and suggesting otherwise simply moves the goal posts (Popper 2002 [1963]).

Further, Holtorf argues that by pointing out this implicit preservation bias towards hierarchical political economies I am essentializing and "promoting varieties of tribalism that may advance that idea of shared cultural distinction and group-specific values at the expense of civil liberties connected to universal human rights, including the notion of human equality irrespective of any collective affiliation." Holtorf leverages the supposed specter of identity politics to dismiss my critique of UNESCO World Heritage Sites practices in the Americas through the idea that identity politics lead to this "tribalism." To understand this critique, it is best to look at the origins of identity politics, which was first given voice in the 1970s by Black, queer, anarchistic feminists over the erasure of their concerns in the contemporary feminist and Black power movements (Combahee River Collective 1977). This was no minor statement either. In the same 1977 declaration where they defined identity politics, the women of the Combahee River Collective also laid the groundwork for intersectional feminism, which has revolutionized how scholars and activists analyze and understand the ways that identity and power intersect (Combahee River Collective 1977; see also Crenshaw 1989).

Importantly, identity politics are not about "creating divisions" and "essentializing" identity. Identity politics are about using lived experience to contest erasures happening *because of* the essentialization of identity; in this case white feminists and black male activists who focused solely on either gender or ethnic equality. Thus, identity politics was, and is, about trying to break down essentialisms and political divisions that already existed both within activist circles and society at large.

Holtorf's interpretation of the arguments in my article appears to arise because he leverages the liberal interpretation of identity politics that views radical criticisms of the liberal project as creating political schisms (i.e., Lilla 2018). Yet, as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) wrote in the *Stanford Law Review*, the aim of identity politics is the exact opposite of what liberal critics suggest. Glen Coulthard, the prominent Yellowknives Dene professor, has perhaps argued this most concisely in his groundbreaking book, *Red Skin, White Masks*, when he states that the

mobilization of identity within political practice should not be viewed as either “productive or repressive” prior to considering the context of the histories, economies, and actors. Once you do that, you can “distinguish between [identity] “discourses that naturalize oppression and discourses that naturalize resistance.” (Coulthard 2014: 103; citing Tobin 1994: 131).

This is an important point, I think, since my article highlights UNESCO’s skewed protection of the past in North America and the Caribbean, particularly in how they have created a past that essentializes hierarchical political organizations. Suggesting that a call to stop heritage management practices that *erase* difference is “essentializing” or “tribalizing” recalls Coulthard’s claim that we need to examine which identity discourse naturalizes oppression or resistance.

UNESCO was founded as a liberal enterprise aimed at creating mutual tolerance and internationalism (i.e., UNESCO 1945; Meskell 2018). But as the recent Indigenous movements aimed at contesting liberalism (such as the NoDAPL protests in the Dakotas) have demonstrated, the liberal state’s goal of cosmopolitanism is often used as a mask for oppressive political and economic strategies that try to erase difference. As Anne Phillips (1994: 78) noted,

“[t]he classically liberal treatment of difference allows for private spaces within which people can get on with their own chosen affairs and a public realm ordered around a set of minimum shared presumptions. But . . . the shared presumptions that control the public world have proved less than evenhanded in their treatment of different groups.”

Thus, liberalism, while interested in internationalism, often falls far short of representation for those who do not fit these “minimum shared presumptions.” In the Americas, this often means that Indigenous and Black political values and cultural views, among many others, are not represented.

This complicated relationship between indigeneity and liberal state management leads to my final point. Holtorf summarizes some of the decision-making practices that underlie the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and help to create the World Heritage List. As he notes, the “World Heritage Convention has been signed and ratified by a current total of 193 states” and that the sites included on the List are decided by the World Heritage Committee consisting of “21 elected representatives of the Convention’s many State Parties” (see also UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1972). This in fact may get at the crux of the argument I was making in my article. While there is local involvement during portions of this process, the representatives deciding on inclusion are in fact state representatives. Current nation-states, some founded on principles of liberalism and others on a wide sweep of less republican ideals, are generally hierarchical institutions; either through authoritarian political practices, capitalism, centuries of colonialism, or, most realistically, a mix of the three. Regardless, apart from a few states that have some consensus-based decision-making practices (as in the majority Indigenous Nunavut province in Canada (e.g., O’Brien 2003) or in Holtorf’s own Sweden (Lewin 1998)), most states work on a more simple majority rule. This also means, then, that having a representative for a state with an Indigenous population does not mean that the interests of that population are represented at UNESCO. Mexico’s representative, particularly in a majority rule process, will represent not a consensus view of the past that incorporates all voices, but a majority view. Thus, the voices of, for example, the Maya, the Rarámuri, or the united Indigenous voices within the Zapatista movement are regularly excluded.

UNESCO seems to recognize this, and it may be why they added Community (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007) to their previous four strategic objectives for the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2002). Yet UNESCO rules of procedure follow majority-rule processes for the state representatives (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2015). This type of state-based, majority-rule decision-making is something the self-declared anarchist Mahatma Gandhi, one of the more famous advocates for non-majority decision-making processes, strove against (Woodcock 1962: 21), in part owing to Gandhi’s friendship with and close reading of Tolstoy’s anarchist manual, *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (Weber 2004). Gandhi’s formulation of these and other principles of inclusivity and anti-authoritarianism, would then influence Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States’ Civil Rights movement (King 2005: 231).

In particular, Gandhi argued that means and ends were inseparable (i.e. prefiguration) and that the parliamentary and Western democratic processes were “merely embodiments of slavery” (Gandhi 1997: 38) and “a superstition and an ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority” (Gandhi 1997: 92), respectively. Gandhi

fought hard to have decisions made through connected community consensus practices (Gandhi and Tolstoy 1987: 189). What's more, instead of serving their communities, majority-rule state representatives from Indigenous nations often replicate the interests and ideology of the colonizing agency (Coulthard 2014; Estes 2019). Majority-rule creates essentialism, particularly when a liberal view of society erases, or privatizes, differences that don't fit the "minimum shared presumptions."

One powerful step towards inhibiting this process whereby states have power and its citizens do not would be for a heritage committee to work directly with citizens in a consensus process that bypasses the state entirely. In fact, as advocates of prefiguration would see it, this is the only way for the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to achieve their fifth "C," Community. If the means create the ends, then Indigenous representatives with equal power to the state representatives would go a long way towards fulfilling this strategy. This is a complex approach in international politics but probably highlights one of the massive ironies of what archaeologists claim are complex societies. Representative decision-making systems are less complex than inclusive ones.

As Holtorf mentions, the inscription of sites is based on their merits, but this is a process that I called out as problematic in my original article (Borck 2019: 235). Inscribing site by site on the list creates an emergent structure, one that the data indicates is biased. UNESCO appears to be aware of this. They updated their Operational Guidelines two times in the 2000s to try to create a more representative list (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2002, 2007; see also Meskell 2018). While UNESCO appears to be aware of the problem to some degree, they seem to be struggling to overcome some of their more Eurocentric, or at least Western, ideologies.

Which, in the end, brings us back to my original thesis that means and ends are tied to one another (i.e. prefiguration). While I disagree with some of the ways that Holtorf characterizes my research, I do appreciate that he is listening as well as advocating so strongly for heritage and the future that heritage decisions are creating. As the goal for UNESCO is to create a world of peace, and since "[t]rue peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice" (King 1997: 207–208), and state representation and majority rule create unjust representation, this is an opportune moment to re-envision UNESCO World Heritage Committee practices to make this happen. I look forward to seeing the results.

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