

Rivers of Meaning and Bridges of Context: Cross-cultural Narratives of Heritage

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Cultural Heritage in Europe

A 3D title card for 'The Big Picture'. The text 'THE BIG PICTURE' is rendered in large, white, blocky, three-dimensional letters with black outlines, set against a background of a globe. The globe shows the continents of North and South America. The text is arranged in two lines: 'THE' on the top line and 'BIG PICTURE' on the bottom line. The letters are slightly offset to create a sense of depth and perspective.

THE
BIG PICTURE



Continued 'production' of cultural heritage

On-going Re-evaluations of Heritage

From the monumental and the public to the intimate and the personal –
memory and nostalgia important



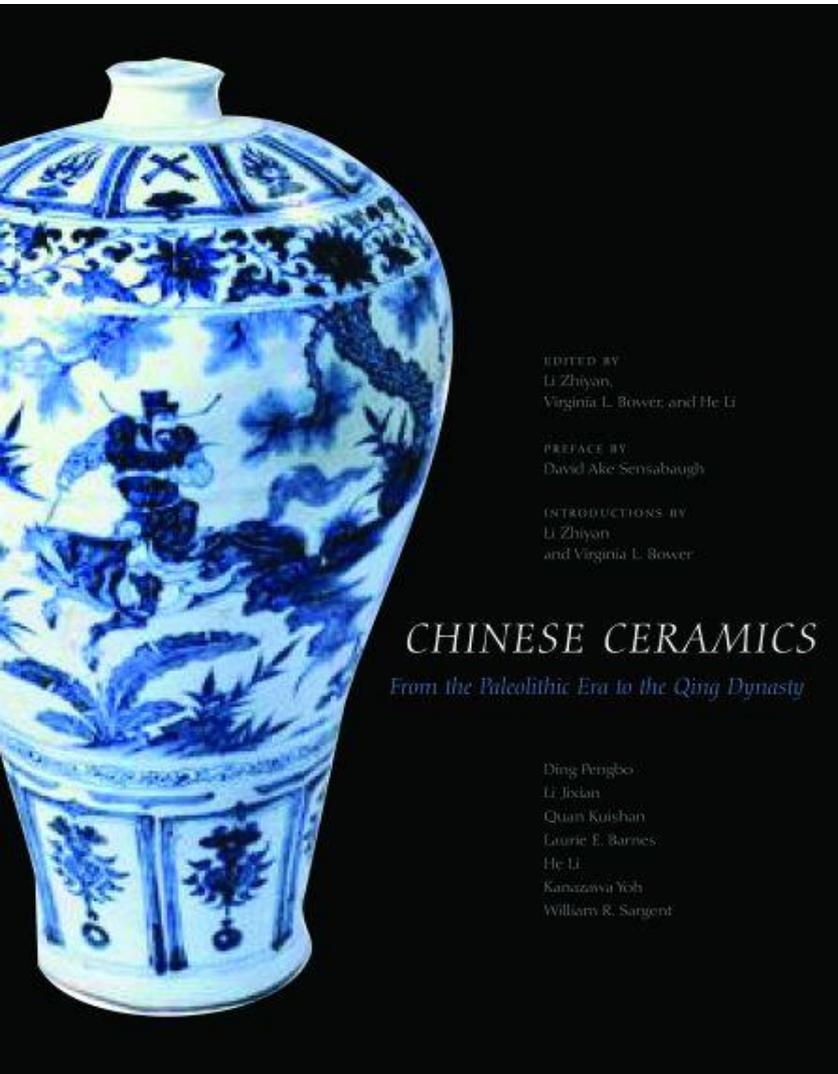
On-going Re-evaluations of Heritage

From 'officially' designated to popularly consumed



On-going Re-evaluations of Heritage

From the tangible to the intangible – static objects to moveable inherited practices



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CHINESE CERAMICS

From the Paleolithic Era to the Qing Dynasty

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Increasing Pressure on Resources





Rapidly
Changing
Audiences
For
(Some)
Heritage

“Think like a wise man,
but communicate in the
language of the people”

W.B. Yeats

A blurred photograph of a large crowd of people walking in front of a classical building with white columns. The text is overlaid on the image.

Changing Heritage Audiences

Multi – Ethnic
Multi – Lingual
Multi – Cultural

Domestic Audiences
International Tourist Audiences

Urban Superdiversity + 'New' Significant Tourist Markets



Challenges for the Interpretation of Heritage

Why Interpret?

heighten public awareness

communicate meaning

facilitate understanding

safeguard values

encourage conservation

Some Observations, Reflections and Questions

- Interpretation - by what heritage sites want to tell rather than what the audience is listening to
- Mostly, the impact of interpretation is 'assumed'
- How do we 'know' that the interpretation of heritage has any impact at all?
- Does we really understand what 'new' audiences want?
- Most interpretation is 'narrow' in its message
- Are we missing opportunities to better engage with trans-national audiences in a more meaningful way?



Assumptions:









Engagement with
the object or
authentication
of the visit?





Museum as
'me-seum' –
temporarily sharing
of the 'curatorial
code', the acquisition
of status and the
constant re-making of
self

以鏡自照見其形容
以人自照見其吉凶
以鏡自照見其形容
以人自照見其吉凶

至誠通感

至誠通感

家勤則興人勤則健
能勤能健永不貧賤



[Context]
IS EVERYTHING

No Translation Necessary!

$$2 + 2 =$$



Translation Necessary!





What we see is determined
by what we know


WAYS OF SEEING
JOHN BERGER

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.
But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.

 <i>The dot</i>	 <i>The world</i>
 <i>The first</i>	 <i>The end</i>

The Surrealist painter Magritte commented on this always-present gap between words and seeing in a painting called *The Key of Dreams*.
The way we see things is affected by what we



**What we know
is determined
by what we
learn**

GENERATION WITH AN UNCLE

ABIDE!

END TOOLS
LOVE MOVE MENT
BE A CROSS-BEARER!



live love serve in this moment

SLAVERY
control
agantly
Let go
The will to love

Jesus
God is here

LOVE WINS
PEACE SEEDS
HERO

Jesus
BLESS



BE the CHURCH



FOOTSTEPS...







Learning from Heritage?

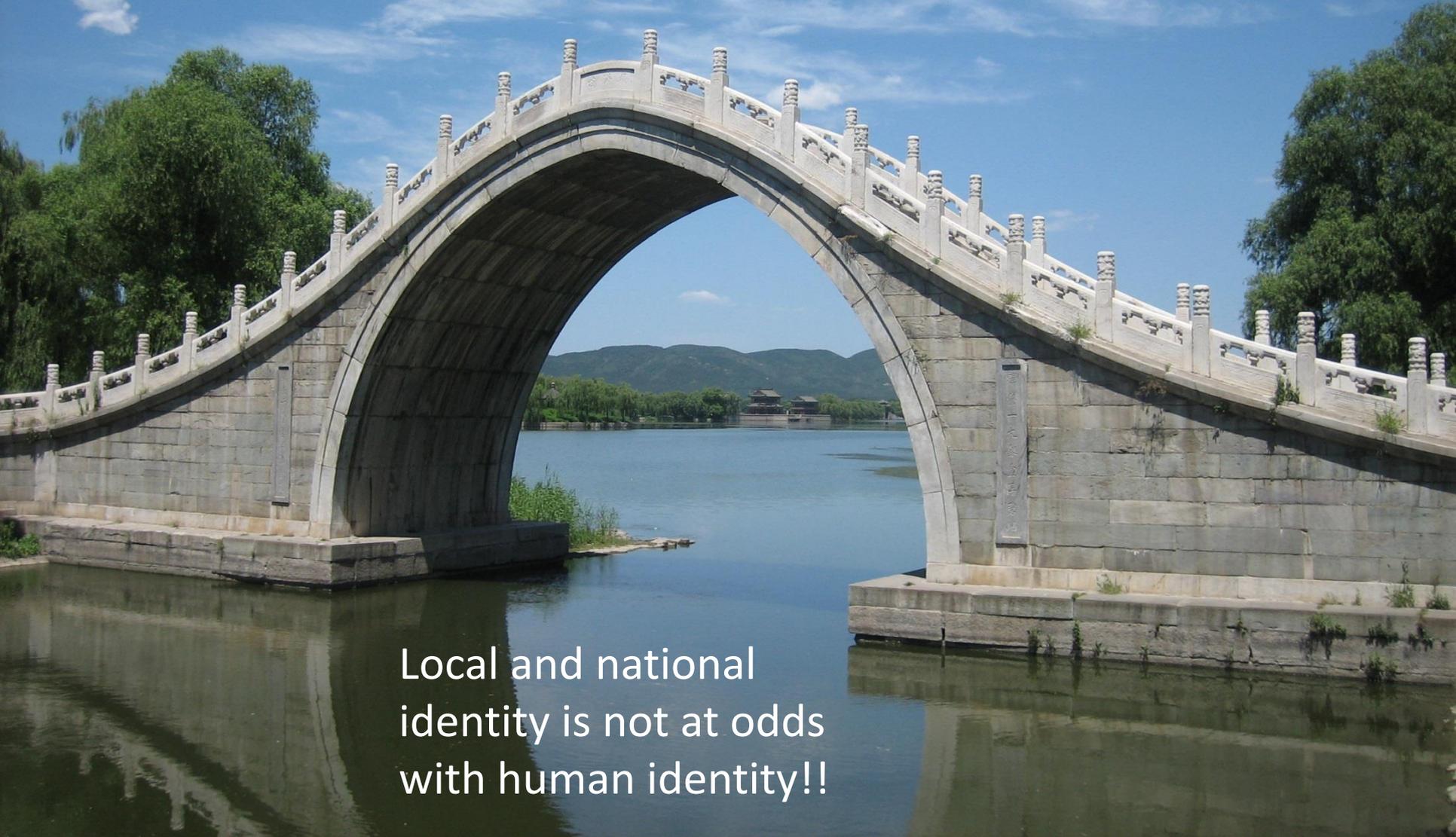


How can we connect through heritage?

**To join / connect cultures and
generations**



How to provide context, connection, perspective, relevance



Local and national
identity is not at odds
with human identity!!



Connecting Europe

Europe connects with the 'rest of the world - yesterday, today and tomorrow - through:

- Migration/immigration
- Colonialism and conquest – good and bad
- Trade routes
- Ideas / technologies
- Language
- Stories
- Popular culture

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Heritages of Migration:
Moving Stories,
Objects and 'Home'

Buenos Aires, Argentina
National Museum of
Immigration
6 – 9 April
2017



Some Concluding Thoughts

- Narratives that are aware of diversity / 'superdiversity', of cultural change and of translation issues
- Narratives that reach beyond the immediate to challenge and embrace change and seek to learn from the past
- Recognition that our encounters with heritage may have little to do with the significance that 'we' place on that heritage
- Use of (meta) narratives that transcend some cultural boundaries

Seven Basic Plots

- **Overcoming the Enemy**
- **Rags to Riches**
- **The Quest**
- **Voyage and Return**
- **Comedy**
- **Tragedy**
- **Rebirth**

'This is the most extraordinary, exhilarating book.' FAY WELDON

THE SEVEN BASIC PLOTS

Why we tell stories



CHRISTOPHER
BOOKER

B L O O M S B U R Y

A smooth, light-colored rock with the word "Imagination" written on it in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The rock is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the frame. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly sand or gravel, which is out of focus. In the lower center, there is a circular object, possibly a lens or a ring, also out of focus.

Imagination

Sometimes we
need more
imagination
and less
interpretation!

"I believe in intuition and inspiration. Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world."

Albert Einstein (1931)

Thank You

