



Are We “Ensnared in the System of Heritage” Because We Don’t Want to Escape?

Jeremy C. Wells, School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation, Roger Williams University, One Old Ferry Road, Bristol, RI 02809, USA
E-mail: jeremy@heritagestudies.org; jwells@rwu.edu

ABSTRACT

This paper explores why heritage practitioners continue to embrace the objective security of positivism, building on Sharon Veale’s (cited in Sullivan 2015:114) observation that we are “ensnared in the system of heritage, rather than in understanding and unravelling the social processes of its making.” Specifically, built heritage conservation/CRM practice is too standardized and motivated primarily by speed, efficiency, and compliance; the field is not innovative or flexible; and heritage/CRM practitioners and scholars do not engage with each other. The field needs to recognize that the regulatory environment is a fundamental barrier in bridging theory and practice and in integrating tangible and intangible approaches. Lastly, understanding heritage requires a transdisciplinary approach that is altogether absent in most aspects of theory and practice. Possible solutions to these issues will be offered, including the idea of reenvisioning the nature of “heritage conservation.”

Résumé: Le présent article explore les raisons qui expliquent pourquoi les spécialistes du patrimoine embrassent toujours l’objectivité rassurante du positivisme, en s’inspirant de l’observation de Sharon Veale (citée dans Sullivan 2015:114) affirmant que nous sommes «prisonniers du système patrimonial plutôt qu’acharnés à comprendre et décortiquer les processus sociaux qui lui ont donné naissance.» Plus précisément, les pratiques de conservation du patrimoine bâti et de gestion des ressources sont trop normalisées et principalement motivées par la vitesse, le rendement et la conformité; le travail sur le terrain n’est pas novateur ni flexible; et les spécialistes du patrimoine et de la gestion des ressources et savants ne communiquent pas entre eux. Les intervenants sur le terrain doivent reconnaître que le milieu réglementaire constitue un obstacle fondamental au rapprochement de la théorie et de la pratique, ainsi qu’à l’intégration d’approches tangibles et intangibles. La compréhension du patrimoine requiert enfin une approche transdisciplinaire, dont la théorie et la pratique

sont somme toute démunies. D'éventuelles solutions seront présentées, notamment l'idée de repenser la nature du concept de «conservation du patrimoine».

Resumen: El presente documento explora por qué los profesionales del patrimonio siguen adoptando la seguridad objetiva del positivismo, partiendo de la observación de Sharon Veale (citada en Sullivan 2015:114) de que estamos "atrapados en el sistema del patrimonio, en lugar de comprender y descifrar los procesos sociales de su creación." Específicamente, la práctica de la gestión de recursos culturales (CRM, por sus siglas en inglés)/conservación del patrimonio construida está demasiado estandarizada y motivada fundamentalmente por la velocidad, la eficiencia y el cumplimiento; el campo no es innovador ni flexible; y los profesionales y eruditos del patrimonio/CRM no se relacionan entre ellos. Es necesario que el campo reconozca que el entorno regulador es una barrera fundamental en el acercamiento de la teoría y la práctica y en la integración de enfoques tangibles e intangibles. Por último, la comprensión del patrimonio requiere un enfoque transdisciplinario que está totalmente ausente en la mayoría de los aspectos de la teoría y la práctica. Se ofrecerán posibles soluciones a estas cuestiones, incluida la idea de reimaginar la naturaleza de la "conservación del patrimonio".

KEY WORDS

Heritage conservation, Positivism, Statecraft, Regulations

Introduction

Through law, the state simplifies and controls the richness of cultural meanings and practices in the name of efficiency and in doing so, influences sociocultural practices (Scott 1998). Indeed, the state, through local, regional, federal, and international laws, rules, and regulations has long had a central role in redefining the public meanings of heritage. *Everyone* participates in this process to some degree as do state institutions. In orthodox heritage conservation practice, "heritage" is conceived as a fixed concept amenable to listing in registers in both tangible and intangible forms, but this definition denies a reality in which the meanings of heritage are inherently dynamic. The idea that heritage can exist in a pure, fixed state, removed from the influence of state actors, is fallacious as the best and damaging at worst because it ignores the fundamental impact that these actors, in implementing laws, regulations, and rules have had in contributing to the meanings of tangible and intangible heritage. It is impor-

tant to recognize that the state's experts actively control the creation and curation of these meanings and “sideline” or disregard the values of most stakeholders in a process described by Smith (2006) as the authorized heritage discourse (AHD).

In the past couple of decades, with the rise of critical heritage studies, state actors (especially UNESCO) are increasingly characterized as antithetical to social justice, participatory democracy, and community empowerment. Conservation practice still marginalizes and ignores communities, which means that we will likely never get to the stage, as advocated by King (2009), where a community can simply proclaim that their heritage is important, which the state will then respect. This perspective relies on heritage conservation practice privileging what Scott (1998:311) refers to as *mētis*, or common sense. Because the state does not operate in this way, it is therefore complicit in denying common sense in the name of efficiency. In this paper, I offer the thesis that the very nature of the modern state, and its attendant laws/rules/regulations, is fundamentally incompatible with an emancipatory vision of heritage conservation offered by critical heritage studies theory. The perspective I offer here is mostly based on the conservation of built heritage and cultural landscapes in the USA, but many of the concepts I discuss apply to archeological and museum practices elsewhere, especially where they overlap with the regulatory environment, such as with environmental review and cultural resource management.

The System of Heritage

The nadir of the regulation of heritage in North America in the mid-twentieth century is concurrent with the rise of what Scott (1998:4) refers to as “high modernism” and the “uncritical, unskeptical” reliance on the “legitimacy of science and technology.” In an early critique, Tainter and Lucas (1983) describe the empiricist–positivist basis of heritage conservation law in which an argument for significance can only be built on objective phenomena directly observable by the senses. The essence of their critique is that cultural meanings, because of their non-tangible qualities, are not allowable in the laws, rules, and regulations that underpin a significant amount of built heritage and archeological conservation activity. This positivistic stance on heritage, as espoused by the state, is a consistent theme in much of the literature that critically analyzes this practice (eg., Aaroz 2011; Avrami et al. 2000; Cane 2009; Clark 2010; Domer 2009; Harrison 2013; Hudson and James 2007; Kaufman 2009; King 2009; Li and Hamin 2012; Logan 2012; Milholland 2010; Morgan et al. 2010; Muñiz and Hartig 2010; Muñoz Viñas 2005; Pendlebury 2009; Schofield 2009, 2014; Semes

2009; Silva and Chapagain 2013; Smith 2006; Smith and Waterton 2012; Sullivan 2015; Zancheti and Loretto 2012).

But this characterization paints an incomplete picture of how heritage conservation practice arose: the genesis of heritage laws has its basis in the meanings and values of the experts who influenced practice in the early- to mid-twentieth century. Classical architectural conservation theory was also based on the same empiricist–positivist paradigm in which only the physical, esthetic, and historical (factual) aspects of an object have meaning (Muñoz Viñas 2005). Writing during the rise of scientism and later, modernism, conservation theorists such as Boito (1884), Brandi (1977), Philippot (1976), and Carbonara (1976) believed their endeavor to be one of seeking and reifying an esthetic and historical “truth” that was an inherent characteristic of the historical object that was about to be conserved (Muñoz Viñas 2005). During this same period, influential preservation/conservation architects such as Peers (1917, 1931), Appleton (1919), Kimball (1935), Chandler (1944), Peterson (1951, 1976), Feiss (1956), Insall (1958), and Fitch (1990) adopted a scientific/archeological approach that sought the same objective, truth-seeking goals (Wells 2007; Wells and Stiefel 2014).

But, in the USA, while preservation architects influenced the laws/rules/regulations of built heritage conservation, historians and architectural historians were largely responsible for their creation, especially at the federal level (Sprinkle 2014). Lee (1950) played a particularly significant role, analyzing mid-century European practice and adopting it to an American context while W. Brown Morton, III (Morton and Hume, 1979) was the lead author for the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (36 CFR Part 68), which is arguably one of the most influential built heritage conservation rules at the federal level. These historians, and many others, of the National Park Service, being a product of their time, emphasized a positivistic view of history with singular timelines, broad patterns of meaning, causation, and, most importantly, scientific objectivity, especially with how significance is established in the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register is defined in federal law as 36 CFR Part 60, and its use is required in mandated environmental review processes. For instance, the instructions for preparing a National Register nomination (National Park Service 1997) imply a correlation between the number of facts associated with a property and its historical significance and direct the preparer to emphasize “broad patterns of history.” Properties are considered to be more significant if it can be objectively established that events at a particular site *caused* broad social and cultural changes. The nomination’s emphasis on criterion “B” (association with people) encourages a view of history where the few, the powerful, and wealthy white men, feature prominently in significance arguments. A Foucauldian (c.f. Foucault

1972) perspective of history where the vast, nameless mass of humanity makes “history” is not welcome, nor understood in the context of the National Register (Green 1998). Certainly these characteristics are entirely congruent with the definition and practice of historical positivism (Dunning 1914; Erdmann et al. 2005) that many historians in the postmodern period have long left behind, yet this paradigm is still dominant in how history is understood in the context of heritage conservation.

Positivism also pervades the decision-making process for interventions on historic buildings and places. The federally mandated process for built heritage conservation, which has been widely adopted and legally required by state and local levels of government, is based on what Salvador Muñoz Viñas (2005:91, 92) defines as a “truth enforcement operation” based on the goal to “reveal and preserve an object’s true nature or true condition [which] means that the entire conservation process is bound by [the] ethical imperative of not lying.” Avoiding a “false sense of history” appears in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (NPS 1995) and features prominently in the guidance offered by the National Park Service in how the Standards ought to be interpreted (Weeks and Jandl 1996). Avoiding “false histories” when reifying the true nature in which a building should exist is a old idea, with origins in the debates of monument restoration in the late nineteenth century (eg., “The Restoration” 1885) and appears to have first been codified in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964). The idea of a “false history,” however, is itself fallacious as Muñoz Viñas (2005:93) explains because “Objects cannot exist in a state of falsehood, nor can they have a false nature. If they really exist, they are inherently real.” The “false sense of history” argument is, in reality, an argument based on the desired state in which an object should exist and has little to do with truth. But, this concept makes decisions in the interventions of buildings appear to be more objective than they actually are and, hence, easier to mandate by the state.

Evidence for the genesis of positivistic preservation practice can be found in abundance in mid-twentieth century conservation literature and heavily influenced the creation of the first rules and regulations at the state and local level requiring owners to retain the authenticity of their properties. Fiske Kimball (1935), who echoed Camillo Boito’s (1884) principles for conservation, was one of the first American architects that advocated for the need to avoid any hint of subjectivity in practice by maligning the use of the “imagination” and upholding a “valid” scientific approach, which could restore the one and only “original reality” of a building through “substantial accuracy and perfection.” This kind of scientism was a consistent thread throughout early conservation practice; Feiss (1964:138, 145) described the ubiquitous presence of inaccurately preserved or reproduction historical buildings in the mid-twentieth century as a “false dis-

ease” and those who perpetuated it as lacking rational thought and succumbing to “foolish sentimentalism.” As Semes (2009) argues, the positivistic aspects of preservation in this era arose as a way to protect the purity of modernism by clearly delineating a dichotomy between acceptable historicized design and the complete rejection of the past: It was acceptable to preserve the past, but unacceptable to bring it into the present. This perspective, however, is still prevalent today because many of the laws, first established in the 1960s and 1970s, to protect built heritage survive in essentially unchanged form in the local ordinances, state statutes, and federal laws of the USA (Wells and Lixinski 2016), including the mandate to avoid a “false sense of history” (Weeks and Jandl 1996).

While not necessarily intentional, this positivistic, rationalistic perspective of the architectural conservators, preservation architects, historians, and architectural historians made it easier for the state to implement the regulation of heritage and the control of its meanings. First and foremost, the laws of heritage conservation at the federal level, namely those dealing with environmental compliance that have existed in the USA since the mid-1970s (eg., 36 CFR Part 800, 36 CFR Part 60, 36 CFR Part 68), require that the valid meanings of heritage must be based on the values of experts, namely historians. While the law (36 CFR Part 800) requires “consultation” with stakeholders, the experts who control this process only need consider wider meanings from the public if these meanings are congruent with these expert values (c.f. King 2009).

For instance, a Native American group may believe that a certain mountain is sacred because of its association with a creation myth. Individuals in this culture may believe that a spirit is physically resident in the mountain. Using these values directly in a National Register nomination will fail because it cannot be factually, scientifically proven that a spirit exists in the mountain, nor can facts be used to establish the veracity of the creation myth. In response to these limitations, Patricia Parker and Thomas King (1990) wrote National Register Bulletin 38 (NRB 38), titled “Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties.” Rather than using a culture’s values directly for a significance argument, this document advocates for a kind of translation of non-Western values into acceptable, objective Western values. Instead of focusing on whether or not a spirit actually lives in the mountain, a National Register nomination should explain how this culture has practiced certain activities in context with the mountain, which can be based on oral history as well as written documents. The argument, then, becomes something like “this Native American group has practiced ceremonies for many centuries in context with this mountain.” It may even be expanded into discussions about the artifacts used in ceremonies and particular behaviors. This technique is, to use an anthropological term, an *etic* or external perspective on cultural practices.

In other words, think of yourself as the scientist objectively looking at the practices of a Native American group from a distance; what are the facts associated with this practice? The goal is to record these facts and then render them into a narrative of significance.

This *etic* perspective on culture, unfortunately, is not capable of recording or understanding the actual values that a culture has for a place, as has long been established in ethnographic theory (c.f. Geertz 1973). The insider's perspective of a member of a cultural group, or the *emic* perspective, cannot directly be used to define historical significance in National Register nominations, even with the guidance of NRB 38. While this sidestep approach in NRB 38 creatively addresses positivistic biases inherent in the nomination process, it is a compromised method that reinforces the scientific, art historical values that has dominated heritage conservation practice for more than a century. Some cultural groups find this Western hegemonic practice to be insulting to their belief system (Milholland 2010); indeed, the co-author of NRB 38, King (2009), now advises that traditional cultural groups should never accede to actually listing their property on the National Register, as doing so opens them to the possibility of the property being declared to be ineligible, which would then render them powerless. It is far more preferable to remain in the limbo of National Register eligibility (prior to the nomination being written and submitted), and therefore retain the ability to negotiate a better outcome with the experts.

To be sure, the theme here is one of simplification, objectification, and efficiency: the state creates and perpetuates heritage conservation systems that are akin to what Scott (1998:354) refers to as a "sensory deprivation tank" in their goal to create "thin, simplified ... formal order" by being "repetitive, stable, and predicable" in the name of efficiency (351, 354). This system, however, cannot adapt to changing contexts, meanings, or stakeholders. And, by focusing on process exclusive of outcome, the state sends the message that the bureaucracy of conservation is more important than the act of conservation. Thus, a state regulatory system is inherently "vulnerable to disturbances outside its narrow parameters" because it is incapable of using common sense and practical knowledge (ibid., 351, 311). And this vulnerability provides heritage scholars and practitioners ample space for critique.

Critiques of the System

As one would logically expect, the outcome of a positivistic system will miss much of the thick meanings associated with heritage, including people's feelings and emotional attachments associated with the existing (eg., "historic") environment. People's emotional experiences of historic places, in particular, have been neglected in the literature, but appear to be funda-

mental to how people value these environments (Wells and Baldwin 2012; Smith and Campbell 2015; Watson 2015). Indeed, in its interpretation of historic places, the National Park Service ignores the propensity of the average person to “indulge in an emotional communion with landscape scenery,” instead focusing on objective facts (Carr 2005:173). Randy Mason (2003:64) observes that “the heart of historic preservation lies in the ... emotional connections we make between memory and environment,” yet these essential characteristics are dismissed by heritage experts as “irrational” and “sentimental, nostalgic” nonsense (Hobson 2004:258). On the other hand, no one appears to be making an argument that a purely subjective approach is required, but rather a balance between the positivism of orthodox practice and a more nuanced understanding of people’s “emotional response to historic and cultural landscapes” is required (Alanen and Melnick 2000:18).

Emotion is often interpreted through the phenomenon of place attachment, which, according to Low and Altman (1992:5), is an “interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place.” Place attachment research is a central concept in environmental psychology and environment/behavior research with applied outcomes in architectural and urban design and planning (Demsky and Mack 2008; Zeisel 2006). This body of literature supports the contention that the design of a building, place, or landscape impacts the degree and character of a person’s emotional attachment to a particular environment (Brown, Perkins, and Brown 2003; Gifford 2002; Giuliani 2003; Manzo 2003, 2005; Manzo and Perkins 2006; Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston 2003). Research in tourism and recreation studies supports similar findings in that the physical, social, and cultural characteristics of a place have an impact on emotional attachment as well (Blake 2002; Bricker and Kerstetter 2000; Kyle et al. 2003a, b, 2004; Moore and Graefe 1994; Stedman et al. 2004; Vaske and Kobrin 2001; Walker and Ryan 2008; Williams and Patterson 1999). Similar research that addresses some aspect of the historic environment (including archeological aspects) is largely absent; but the few studies that do exist in this area, which tend to focus on urban contexts or monuments, provide evidence that the historic environment may have unique qualities that are associated or correlated to certain types of place attachment (Wells and Baldwin 2012; Breglia 2006; French 1999; Lewicka 2008; Low 1992; Ram et al. 2016; Shamsuddin and Ujang 2008).

Other critiques of orthodox practice focus on the deep meanings that certain places have for cultural groups, especially minority or disadvantaged populations (Wells et al. 2016; Dennis 2006; Hayden 1995; Kaufman 2009). Common themes in this literature is that orthodox practice, which traditionally has focused on the grand, monumental buildings and places associated with rich, white men, has, as a result, ignored the ordinary places of people

from a broader socioeconomic and cultural background. This process of marginalizing groups that have long received such treatment has resulted in discussions that reframe conservation practice in terms of social justice and community empowerment (Wells 2015; Logan 2012).

Building on this theme of marginalization is a growing literature focusing on critiquing “cultural resource management” (CRM) practice in the USA and Canada. Since the first environmental review laws were established in the 1970s, CRM has grown into an industry in which the majority of archeologists and built heritage conservators find their employment. While the stated goals of CRM laws are to protect cultural heritage, there is evidence that CRM work often fails to be performed in the public interest or to further human appreciation or understanding of cultural heritage; instead, as Hutchins and La Salle (2015) argue, CRM laws legitimize the destruction of heritage under the guise of state protection and have spawned an industry driven primarily by profit rather than more altruistic, societal values. Mills et al. (2008) reinforce the motivation of efficiency and profit in CRM by observing that “most consultations [with stakeholders] do not involve real listening or significant project modification”—instead, this is a “check the box” process that favors development projects. In addition to echoing these critiques, King (2009) describes the fundamental corruption in a system that requires developers to pay consultants for environmental review compliance reports. CRM professionals who consistently support the protection of cultural heritage and block development may find themselves inherently unemployable. Clients (and, sometimes, state entities) pressure practitioners to make findings that support the position of the developer and therefore sanction the destruction of cultural heritage. Because of these characteristics, Hutchins and La Salle (2015:717) refer to CRM practice as “disaster capitalism” because it conveniently results in the removal of “heritage from the landscape, making way for economic development.”

Much of these critiques can be summarized by Paulette Wallace’s and Kristal Buckley’s (2015:47) explanation that the rampant positivism in preservation/conservation practice short-circuits the critical thinking process of practitioners, resulting in these experts being “disconnected” from laypeople and other professionals. Moreover, Wallace and Buckley claim experts have become “disassociated from their academic peers” (*ibid.*), with the latter having moved on to pluralistic ideas and constructivist paradigms most saliently expressed through the critical heritage studies movement. More specifically, Wallace and Buckley (2015:52) make the following observations of built heritage conservation practice:

- The field is too standardized, codified, and motivated toward speed, efficiency, and compliance.

- The field needs to be more innovative and flexible; heritage practitioners should have the freedom to improve practice based on their experiences.
- Heritage practitioners and scholars need to engage each other to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Critical heritage studies scholars need to engage practitioners in their work and practitioners need to make a greater effort to be aware of the theoretical work in their field.

Nothing that Wallace and Buckley are advocating is new, but what is novel is the way that their three points are concisely integrated. Of note is that they are both practitioners and not academics, which is also an unusual perspective for this kind of critique.

Because of the prevalence of the AHD and positivism in practice coupled with a “group think” mentality and a reluctance to critically analyze the values of experts, many critics of practice believe that it is improbable that the situation is likely to change any time soon (Cane 2009:164; Hobson 2004:7; Smith 2006:154). To be sure, the desire of the state to have systems of heritage that “appear simple and conflict-free” and lack common sense (Smith and Waterton 2012) are not conducive to fostering an environment of debate. Even if such a discourse was feasible, how can one logically debate a system based on tautologies, telic maxims, and doctrine defined on post hoc performances (Wells 2007)? And, even if everyone agreed to a more pluralistic system of heritage, practitioners, who are trained to ossify rather than understand meanings (Mason 2003), would lack the tools to actualize the change. The conclusion therefore becomes unavoidable: those who control the system of heritage do not want change because it introduces uncertainty, complexity, and would destroy existing ways people make their living.

Why We May not Want to Escape

Helen Lardner (cited in Sullivan 2015:113), a member of the Australian Heritage Council, provides perhaps one of the most succinct reasons why the existing system of heritage has survived for so long: It is “easier to conserve the object than understand the emotions [the object instills].” The logical conclusion, therefore, is that practitioners regularly take a kind of shortcut by avoiding people’s emotional connection to place. As social scientists—especially psychologists and phenomenologists—know, understanding place attachment is a messy, time-consuming task. The state’s simplified regulatory system, which drives the majority of practice, conveniently rejects these emotional meanings, while making grand statements

that such conservation activities are in the public good. While this approach made sense in an earlier era of authoritarian, rationalistic planning, today this positivistic approach is a failure on many levels. Surely, we can do better, considering what we've learned over the past 50 years about how people interact with, perceive, and value place? Or, maybe not.

Indeed, maybe we really do not want to escape from the objective security of positivism; such a paradigm offers a level of assuredness that post-modern approaches cannot match. Heritage conservation practitioners are, as Sharon Veale (cited in Sullivan 2015:114) describes, "ensnared in the system of heritage, rather than in understanding and unravelling the social processes of its making." But, by adopting this perspective, heritage conservation practitioners are forced to make an "argument for heritage [that] is largely self-referential" (ibid.). In other words, we do what we do because we have done what we have done before; conservation doctrine is therefore defined by past practice and not scientific principles (c.f. Muñoz Viñas 2005). Simply put, too many actors do not want change because it would introduce uncertainty and invert a system that privileges process over outcomes. Moreover, change has the potential to upend the CRM world and historic preservation practice, and thereby impact people's livelihoods. History has shown that when capital and hegemony mix, practices continue long after such activities are proven to be unethical and socially untenable.

Yet, it is undeniable that the system of heritage *is* rife with such unethical characteristics. Instead of operating in the public good, heritage conservation practitioners have become, as Neil Silberman (2016:440) charges, "an instrument of top-down social engineering on a global scale." In other words, rather than protecting heritage, practitioners are engaged in changing its meanings through simplification, objectification, and suppression (Breglia 2006; Handler 2003; Jones 2009; Pichler 2012:40; Smith 2006) while "underestim[ing] the public's intelligence" in their zeal to quickly "finish their professional jobs" (Domer 2009:107). To be sure, the system of heritage makes it easier for developers to buy objective, simplified heritage values that streamline the destruction of cultural heritage (King 2009:26). While it would be easy to blame practitioners for the failings of this system, this characterization would not be fair as the issue lies at the heart of the high modern state's propensity to foster systems that are unfunctional, static, and homogenous while emphasizing predictability, repetition, standardization, and efficiency (Scott 1998).

How We Might Escape

For a regulatory system to accommodate the dynamic qualities of heritage meaning, the system itself must be dynamic and adaptable—including the

ability to function in unpredictable circumstances—with the primary outcome being *understanding* and *human flourishing*. The author (Wells and Lixinski 2016) has analyzed how such an “adaptive regulatory framework” might manifest and has come to the conclusion that it cannot currently be implemented for the following reasons: (1) law, as used in developed countries, has as its primary aim, the concept of justice when we instead need to be focusing on happiness as an outcome; (2) there is no precedent for dynamic regulatory frameworks, primarily due to limitations in how administrative law is implemented; and (3) we lack applied social science methods that practitioners can use to more readily understand and apply meanings from large numbers of stakeholders.

To date, while there is a growing consensus around the failings of the system of heritage, very little progress has been made on addressing the issues; many authors, in their critiques, fail to offer a pragmatic way forward. Most significantly, heritage practitioners and academics rarely engage each other with a common goal of improving the system of heritage. And, in higher education, there appears to be a growing divide between scholars who focus on traditional, fabric-based approaches to heritage and new, meaning-based approaches with the former most closely associated with traditional “historic preservation” and CRM programs and the latter with critical heritage studies. In order to address this issue, the field needs to focus on the following four areas:

1. There should be an increased opportunity for built heritage practitioners, fabric-focused academics, and meaning-focused academics to meet and discuss common issues. Conferences are the obvious tool for such collaboration, but they tend to focus only on tangible heritage *or* intangible heritage, address fabric *or* meanings, and are welcome to only practitioners *or* academics. It is therefore important to bridge all of these elements in an environment that encourages open discussion. An issue for many practitioners who work for governmental agencies is that they may be unable to speak freely for fear that critiquing their employer (ie., the systems of the state) could jeopardize their job. This problem needs to be clearly recognized and addressed.
2. There needs to be a recognition that the regulatory environment is a fundamental barrier in bridging theory and practice and in integrating tangible and intangible approaches. With this recognition should come an increased focus on ways to address this problem, including solutions that do not rely on the systems of the high modern state. For instance, proponents of “conservation social sciences” (from the field of environmental conservation) have recognized the limitations of rules and regulations to *force* people to behave in a certain way;

instead their objective is to use applied social science methods to change people's behavior with a focus on people's intrinsic motivators (Akerlof and Kennedy 2013; Stephenson and Mascia 2009; Stewart et al. 2013).

3. The conservation of heritage requires a transdisciplinary approach, which obviously requires people to think outside of the bounds of their discipline. Yet, conferences, publications, and research remain highly disciplinary and often cliquish with the same people only working with the same individuals under a common disciplinary umbrella (eg., anthropologists with anthropologists, architects with architects). Similarly, people in specific disciplines are often not aware of similar work in other disciplines. In sum, too few people are reaching out across the disciplinary aisle to engage disparate colleagues (and their literature) in order to address the same topic. Higher education, where students learn how to identify, protect, and treat heritage, is the obvious place to begin this work. This recommendation is especially relevant considering that, to date, there is no truly transdisciplinary program in CRM, archeology, historic preservation, or heritage conservation primarily because of the propensity of universities to house such programs in disciplinary silos such as schools/departments of architecture, anthropology, or history.
4. The best and most effective tools of inquiry—regardless of their parent discipline—should lead research questions and practice problems in heritage conservation of all forms. Today, this process is inverted: disciplines dictate the tools that are to be used, which means that potentially innovative and more effective approaches are often ignored. (For instance the architect is unaware of approaches in anthropology and the materials scientist is unaware of approaches in psychology.)

Escaping from the system of heritage therefore requires the freedom to approach problems using “out of the box” transdisciplinary thinking that can bridge different actors and areas of practice and research with the goal of achieving a balance between fabric and people. Common sense and practical skills and knowledge are therefore essential in this endeavor. We need to recognize that the state may not be part of this solution and instead focus on changing people's behavior because forcing people to do the “right” thing through law has, thus far, had limited success and resulted in hegemonic practices that sideline the values of most stakeholders. Ultimately, while the easiest position to take is one in support of the *status quo*, escaping from the existing system of heritage will be necessary for a future in which conservation promotes human flourishing and social justice while deprecating the wide-scale destruction of heritage.

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