Values and connections: toward holistic interpretation and the Ename Charter initiative

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The farther backward you can look the farther forward you are likely to see. Winston Churchill

Time extracts various values from a painter's work. When these values are exhausted the pictures are forgotten, and the more a picture has to give, the greater it is. Henri Matisse

[National parks and sites] are more than physical resources. They are the delicate strands of nature and culture that bond generation to generation. George B. Hartzog, Jr., Director, US National Park Service (1964-1973)

Heritage tourism, by definition, is collaboration between conservationists and commercial promoters. It is often an uneasy association because the motives of these respective groups are not always compatible, to put it mildly. While there is general recognition that heritage tourism can work to promote preservation of communities' historic and cultural resources, and also educate tourists and local residents about the resources, the resulting effects are not always viewed as beneficial, especially from those of us on the conservationist side of the fence. Nevertheless, because heritage tourism is a growth industry in almost every part of the world, the issues it conjures up - good and bad - must be addressed.

Richard A. Engelhardt, in his plenary session lecture at the 'Loving it to Death' Conference on Heritage Tourism, argues for a paradigm shift in the tourism industry in favor of heritage conservation. Heritage, he said, is under siege, not just by the ravages of time and neglect, but most directly by tourism. It is tourism's 'voracious capacity for growth that makes it such a danger to sustainable management of heritage, ironically, the very resource on which it depends. Often, where tourism is heavily promoted there are dramatic and disastrous effects on heritage values. Unless the tourism industry radically transforms itself from an agent of destruction and dilution to an agent of conservation and preservation of heritage values, there is no acceptable place for tourism in the future.'

In this paper, I argue that public interpretation, by delivering conservation, education, and stewardship messages, is probably the most important activity that occurs at a cultural or historic site. In the US National Park Service, interpretation is seen as instrumental in carrying out the agency mission of preserving America's cultural and natural heritage in that it instills a sense of public appreciation and resource stewardship. Interpretation is therefore a key component of the conservation side of the conservation/tourism partnership.

Values, heritage, and public stewardship

A discussion and articulation of the term 'value' is increasingly permeating public, private, and international discourses in heritage management. We hear about human vs. material values, tangibles and intangibles, moral values, and religious vs. secular values. In heritage tourism, there are overarching conservation and corporate values. In many of our discussions, the word 'value' is used interchangeably with other terms such as 'attribute', 'quality', and 'interest'. But the term 'value' is useful because it commonly connotes humanistic and emotional qualities. You could say that the term 'value' in this sense is values-loaded.

Values relate to tangibles and intangibles that define what is important to people. In all societies a sense of well-being is associated with the need to connect with and appreciate heritage values. An understanding of how and why the past affects both the present and the future contributes to people's sense of well-being. Heritage is a particular version or interpretation of the past that belongs to a person or group. Concepts of heritage play important roles in shaping group or community identities and political ideologies. Heritage attracts the attention of visitors to a location or site by providing a sense of place, a sense of purpose, and a sense of uniqueness for the community or group. Heritage can also provide education about the results of research. Heritage offers distinctive experiences, fascinations, and forms of entertainment that are out of the ordinary.

In heritage management, we articulate 'values' as attributes given to sites, objects, and resources, and associated intellectual and emotional connections that make them important and define their significance for a person, group, or community. Site managers should strive to identify and take these values into account in planning, physical treatments, and public interpretation efforts. In heritage tourism, we harness people's fascination and sense of connection to the past and turn it into a commodity. Those of us whose primary goals and interests are conservation should be determined that our values and standards in this scenario are not compromised or diminished.

In studying the places where people lived and the traces left behind, cultural historians strive to discover the fabric of everyday life in the past to apply this knowledge in seeking a greater understanding of the broader historical development of societies. We use traditional histories to sharpen our focus on the past, to help explain how we have arrived at the present and even to project the future. We believe that archaeology can provide insights into historical processes that written records by themselves cannot. Interpretations in archaeology attempt to deal with the unintended, the subconscious, the worldview, and mind-sets of individuals (i.e., their humanistic values) as reflected in the sites, features, and artifacts left behind. Operating in postcolonial contexts, we attempt to illuminate the
undocumented details and context of cultural history beyond diluted and incomplete recordings of what one prominent historical archeologist, James Deetz, has described as 'a minority of deviant, wealthy, white males'. To many of us, the most important outcome of these studies is to democratize history, i.e., the democratization of heritage values. Under the big umbrella of heritage, we include industrial sites, historic houses, battlefields, cultural landscapes, historic and cultural corridors, historic districts, sacred indigenous sites, and places of memory and conscience of the recent past. Our own values affect this process and represent attempts to present, protect, and understand the past in modern contexts (Jameson 2005; US/ICOMOS 2004).

Stewardship can be defined as a long-term commitment to protecting and managing cultural values and their associated physical and nonphysical aspects and integrity. In the U.S. National Park Service and elsewhere, as 'experts' and resource specialists at parks and sites, we see ourselves as the everyday stewards of our national treasures, tasked to preserve these values and their associated environments for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, that they be left unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Our public interpretation programs seek to create opportunities for audiences to form intellectual and emotional connections to the meanings and significance of the historical and archeological records and sites and the peoples who created them.

**Heritage and tourism**

Heritage management in the West is increasingly focused on preservation (especially resource integrity), on public interpretation issues, and on developing analytical and technological competencies. Because of the increasingly diverse and multicultural nature of audiences, training programs are shifting in emphasis from an academic to an increasingly applied focus. Professional or formal training of local staff is necessary to ensure that high standards are maintained and are, for many regions, internationally portable. The challenge is to ensure that high standards of skill and competency are accepted, welcomed, and valued at local and community levels (US/ICOMOS 2004).

In many developing countries, heritage management is emerging as a critical component of national economies to promote tourism and to structure development initiatives. Development schemes focus on sustainable concepts that encourage both the preservation of resources and the recognition of socio-economic values of local people. And, hopefully, these schemes involve participative decision-making and learning processes attuned to the culture and traditions (i.e. values) of the people affected (US/ICOMOS 2004).

It has been said that tourists are alienated people seeking authenticity as a form of fulfillment (MacCannell 1973). At heritage sites, authenticity is offered through presentation of information and by experts along with physical and sensory trappings such as exhibits, 3-D reconstruction, audio-visual sounds, smells, and special effects. The terms ‘authenticity’ and ‘integrity’ are often linked in meaning in that the latter can mean unspoiled or unadulterated authentic materials. ‘Authenticity’ and ‘integrity’ as terms can be seen as representing the values of preservationists, such as archaeologists and architectural historians.

Globalization is changing our world in ways that we are just beginning to understand. Heritage tourism, with its ties to the currents of rapidly evolving global economies, is causing increasing needs and demands for cross-cultural and international communication and interdisciplinary training. Emphasis is on transferable skills such as the application of interdisciplinary approaches, writing for both academic and non-academic audiences, oral presentation, and experience with multimedia packages.

We should keep in mind that one effect of globalization is that prescriptions for authenticity, integrity, and most concepts associated with modern and standardized definitions of historic preservation originated in Western systems of classification and ranking, that is, the notion that heritage is an inclusive possession of all humanity belonging to no one individual. Concepts such as ‘world heritage site’, ‘national park’, and other forms of commemoration developed within Western philosophical traditions. Who is in charge at heritage sites? They are usually Western or Western-trained. In the U.S., for the most part, they are found in government and museums. What values in society do they reflect?

It is important for those of us who manage, study, and present the past to be aware of how the past is understood within the context of socio-economic and political agendas and how that influences what is taught, and how it is valued, protected, authenticated, and used. We must understand the philosophical, political, and economic forces that affect how sites and parks are managed. We know that archaeological resources, as well as the built environment, are being affected. Dwindling budgets and reductions in personnel are exacerbating the problem. Political currents are threatening to weaken long-standing principles, standards, and commitments to public stewardship. Heritage tourism pressures have become important elements of interpretive messages at parks, historic sites, and museums.

**Trends in archaeological interpretation**

For many of us trained and employed in archeological pursuits, our ‘value sets’ if you will, are changing and evolving, albeit uneasily in some circles, from traditional definitions - i.e. historic, archeological, scientific - to incorporate intangibles such as aesthetic, artistic, and spiritual, and other values stemming from introspection. This involves an expansion and broadening of the content of ‘archaeological knowledge’ to be more inclusive and accepting and less authoritative, that is to say, a broadening of the meaning of ‘expert’. One important development is the emergence of the interpretive narrative approach in archaeological interpretation, where archeologists actively participate in structuring a compelling story, instead of just presenting sets of derived data. The narrative is used as a vehicle for understanding and communicating, a sharing as well as an imparting of archeological values within the interpretation process.

This trend will have profound ramifications for definitions of significance in heritage management deliberations and what is ultimately classified, conserved, and maintained. It will change the role we play and the values we present in historic preservation and education. It will affect our strategies for conducting research and the public interpretation of that research. The challenge for archaeologists, cultural historians, and other resource stewards is to educate ourselves on the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to deal with these developments. Paramount for educators and interpreters is to
ensure that our audiences connect with and understand cultural heritage values, those tangibles and intangibles that define what is important to people.

We strive in these endeavors to develop more holistic interpretations, in which the values of sustainable environment and heritage are inextricably linked. We have recognized that multidisciplinary and inclusive approaches are the most effective. The sites we deal with are no longer limited to great iconic monuments and places, but now include millions of places of importance to sectors of society that were once invisible or intentionally ignored. These sites can play an important role in fostering peaceful multi-cultural societies, maintaining communal or ethnic identities, and serving as the indispensable theater in which the ancient traditions that make each culture a unique treasure are performed periodically, even daily. The values of these previously ignored and heretofore low priority sites and features are often not readily obvious in the material fabric or surrounding geography, but they must be identified and require a narrative for the fullness of their meaning to be properly conveyed to locals, site visitors, and the public at large. This is accomplished through processes of public interpretation and education (US/ICOMOS 2004).

Interpretation as a key component in heritage stewardship strategies and training

The U.S. National Park Service (NPS) has been a leader in North America in developing interdisciplinary and more holistic approaches to public interpretation of heritage. The agency regards interpretation as a distinct profession encompassing a philosophical framework that combines the essence of the past with the dynamism of the present to shape the future.

The Interpretive Development Program (IDP)

The Interpretive Development Program, conceived by NPS in the mid-1990s, encourages the stewardship of park resources by facilitating meaningful, memorable visitor experiences. The program is based on the philosophy that people will care for what they first care about. This is accomplished by aiming for the highest standards of professionalism in interpretation. It provides for mission-based training and development curriculum, field-developed national standards for interpretive effectiveness, a peer review certification program, and developmental tools and resources. It is designed to foster accountability and professionalism in interpretation, facilitate meaningful and memorable experiences for visitors, result in a higher level of public stewardship for park resources, and facilitate learner-driven skill development (NPS 2005).

Before the 1990s, training for new NPS interpreters included a detailed introduction to significant names, dates, and references to important books. Often this introduction was coupled with an exercise in writing a personal definition of interpretation. The current approach incorporates many important aspects of the former with a strengthened sense of individual responsibility. Professional interpreters are expected to search for understanding of the process of interpretation, its roots, its purpose in fostering resource stewardship, and the direction that they will take both as individuals and as professionals. They must also be able to articulate the outcomes of interpretation so they can make personal choices in approach and establish the relevance of interpretation for managers making resource decisions. The interpreter needs a clear understanding that interpretation moves beyond a recitation of scientific data, historical chronologies, and descriptions. For the NPS, the ultimate role of interpretation is to support conservation by facilitating public recognition and support of resource stewardship (NPS 2005).

The NPS interpretation formula is expressed as ‘(KR + KA) x AT = IO’ (Knowledge of the Resource + Knowledge of the Audience x Appropriate Techniques = Interpretive Opportunities). The interpretive equation applies to all interpretive activities. It is important to keep the equation elements in balance. Interpretation in this scheme embraces a discussion of multiple points of view incorporating related human values, conflicts, ideas, tragedies, achievements, ambiguities, and triumphs. The ultimate goal of interpretation, then, is to facilitate opportunities for visitors to forge linkages with resource meanings and thereby develop a stewardship ethic. The credo is ‘Interpretation is a seed, not a tree’ (NPS 2005).

During 1997-2000, I led an interdisciplinary task group that created a training module within IDP that strengthens the relationships between archaeology and public interpretation. The goal of the training is to make public archaeological presentation and interpretation more accurate and effective. The course of study calls for archaeologists, interpreters, educators, and others to be trained together in the skills and abilities (shared competencies) needed to carry out a successful interpretation program. It stems from a National Park Service-wide push to improve training and development of its employees and to promote better methods for interpreting archaeological resources. Courses and workshops are designed to improve interdisciplinary communication for a team approach to developing and carrying out effective public interpretation programs and projects. They utilize the universal standards and principals of public interpretation developed and promoted by the US National Park Service and are designed for cross-cultural and international relevancy. Interpreters and educators gain knowledge of archaeology for developing presentations and media about archaeological resources. Archaeologists gain the foundation of knowledge and skills in interpretation necessary to develop interpretive presentations and media about cultural resources. All groups gain knowledge and skills through increased dialogue and interactions between archaeologists and interpreters for joint development of effective interpretation of archaeology (Jameson 2004; SEAC 2005a; Little 2004).

Figure 1 An interdisciplinary focus group discusses the park archaeology education program at Old Dorchester State Park, South Carolina, in 2004 during an “Effective Interpretation of Archaeological Resources” Module 440 workshop. (Photo courtesy National Park Service)
Two major goals of courses and workshops are to create opportunities for audiences to (1) learn about archaeological interpretations and how they are made, and (2) to ascribe their own meanings (values) to archaeological resources, helping to increase public understanding and concern for preservation and protection of archaeological values. The target audience for training workshops typically includes interpreters, park guides, education specialists, museum specialists, site managers, and archaeologists. The module is being applied at training courses and workshops at national park sites throughout the United States.

**Interpretation as a mechanism for resource sustainability**

Much of the established principles for interpretation in the United States and internationally stem from the writing and philosophy of Freeman Tilden (Tilden 1957). Tilden defined interpretation as an educational activity that aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects by firsthand experience and illustrative media, rather than to simply communicate factual information. Freeman's six principles emphasized relevance to the experience of the audience and interpretation as a teachable art form. According to Tilden, the chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation, and must address itself to the whole person rather than any phase. Tilden advocated what we would describe today as a 'layered' approach to interpretation that takes into account the perspectives of a variety of audiences differentiated by age, socio-cultural background, and other factors.

Later advocates have built on the foundations of Tilden and applied post-modern theoretical approaches such as systems theory, which utilizes concepts such as 'paradigm', or philosophical framework. Jon Kohl (2003), for example, defines interpretation in terms of a 'paradigm or deeply embedded set of beliefs that together form a story or worldview'. To Kohl, each culture has a story that explains its people's creation, significance, and destiny. This set of beliefs directs how they relate to resources. Kohl advocates expanding the scope and ultimate goal of interpretation beyond conservation goals toward an integration of 'deep stories' that 'carry it across the divide to conservation in the short-term and sustainability of natural and cultural resources in the long'. For interpreters, he says, these changes will first be felt in conservation, a sector of sustainable resource management, and then later for sustainability issues in general.

Kohl believes that effective interpretation in the future will involve a paradigm shift that re-writes the worldview script by interpreting new ideas and meanings in order to move society toward sustainability. The interpretation profession, he says, is the field closest to the theatre stage, closer than filmmakers, educators, clergy, or even actors. It 'belongs to a broader family of persuasive communication tools such as rhetoric, social marketing, and environmental education'. Interpreters in the future, he says, will be communication strategists targeting leverage points in society to help move its worldview toward sustainability. They will expand their focus beyond site-specific resource protection to the larger system of information and beliefs that affect how civilization treats natural and cultural entities. They will no longer, he contends, refer to other species as 'resources' for humans.

*The Ename Charter initiative*

The ICOMOS Ename Charter on Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Sites, drafted under the auspices of ICOMOS International and sponsored by Flemish governmental authorities, seeks to establish scientific, ethical, and public guidelines for the public interpretation of cultural heritage. Its aim is to 'define the basic objectives and principles of site interpretation in relation to authenticity, intellectual integrity, social responsibility, and respect for cultural significance and context'. It recognizes that the interpretation of cultural heritage sites can be contentious and should acknowledge conflicting perspectives. The need for the charter stems from the recognition that the existing and extensive international charters, declarations, and guidelines that address conservation and restoration of the physical fabric of historic sites and places do not adequately define standards for interpretive and presentation treatments. With the steadily increasing investment by regional governments, municipalities, tourist authorities, private firms, and international organizations in expensive and technologically advanced presentation systems as a spur to tourist development, the need for the charter was clear (Ename Center 2005).

The main premise of the Draft Ename Charter on Interpretation is that 'interpretation of the meaning of sites is an integral part of the conservation process' (Ename Center 2005). Precursors of the Ename Charter were a number of important international charters, declarations, and guidelines, including the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), the Burra Charter (1999), and the International Charter on Cultural Tourism (1999), that make some reference to interpretation. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) was composed by a consortium of representatives from the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs, UNESCO, ICCROM, and ICOMOS. It stated that conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage, and that an understanding of these values depends, in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values can be understood as credible or truthful (ICOMOS 2004a). The Burra Charter, initiated in Burra, Australia, provided a roadmap for conservation and management best practices, recognizing the tangibles and intangibles of cultural heritage inclusive of indigenous cultural heritage. A key objective of the International Cultural Tourism Charter was to facilitate and encourage the tourism industry to promote and manage tourism in ways that respect and enhance the heritage and living cultures of host communities. All of these previous charters had emphasized the fundamental role of sensitive and effective interpretation in heritage conservation (ICOMOS 2004b).

The Ename Charter on Interpretation is internationally significant in the history of heritage management in that it addresses the purpose and principles of public interpretation, probably the most important activity that occurs at a historic site, by delivering the conservation, education, and stewardship messages that represent the transcendent humanistic values of the resource. Having gone through several drafts and revisions, the latest draft (dated 21 July 2008) continues to be scrutinized by the international community of interpretation experts. The main body of the charter is a set of basic principles for interpretation that provide an outline of professional and ethical standards. The principles place emphasis on the essential roles of public communication and education in heritage preservation and are presented under the following basic headings: Access and Understanding; Information Sources; Context and Setting; Authenticity; Sustainability; Inclusiveness; and Research, Education, and Training. On the surface, the principles are generally
commonsensical in terms of conditions and prescriptions for effective public interpretation. Just how the principles are articulated, however, will determine how well they are received in international circles and whether they will be considered desirable, practical, and feasible. In countries with fragile or questionable human rights histories or poorly developed infrastructure, practical applications could be problematic.

In the current draft, Principle 1: Access and Understanding, states that appreciation of cultural heritage is a universal right, with effective, sustainable interpretation involving a wide range of communities and stakeholders. Subheadings address the importance of communicating values and increasing public awareness, establishing emotional and intellectual connections, recognizing multiple perspectives, virtues of off-site versus on-site interpretations, appropriateness of topics and language diversity, and disability access.

Principle 2: Information Sources states that interpretation must be based on evidence gathered through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions. Subheadings address the need to show a range of meanings through multidisciplinary study. Reconstructions should be well researched, referenced, and achieved.

Comment: In my view, subheading 2.3, which states that all elements in an interpretation program should be presented in a form appropriate for local standards and resources, has the potential to be problematic in that ‘appropriateness’ of resources may be politically and socially contentious in a given community or area; a protocol and procedures for reconciliation need to be presented.

Principle 3: Context and Setting logically follows by emphasizing the importance of well-researched documentation and stating that the presentations should reflect all cultural components and contexts at a site, including contemporary and cross-cultural significance and relevance.

Principle 4: Authenticity references the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) and stresses the importance of respect for local residents. Subheadings reiterate the need for respect and documentation of local and traditional customs, respect for the dignity and participation of local residents and associated communities, and maintenance of the physical integrity of materials. Reconstructions for the purpose of interpretation alone are undesirable if they permanently change the ‘character’ of a site.

In Principle 5: Sustainability the Charter states that interpretive planning must be sensitive to its natural and cultural environments in that social, financial, and environmental sustainability are long-term goals. Comment: Subheading 5.3 states that the interpretive infrastructure at a site should be well designed, soundly constructed, safe, and ‘responsibly’ (emphasis mine) maintained. As is common throughout the Principles, more details are needed in this section to address circumstantial scenarios, i.e. to define what constitutes ‘responsible’ behavior.

Principle 6: Inclusiveness addresses economic, social, and cultural equity for program planning, design, modification, and presentation, with emphasis on involvement and participation of all stakeholders, in all phases, and especially the local or host community. Subheading 6.7 addresses the accountability of intellectual property and traditional cultural rights as relevant to the interpretation process and inclusiveness.

The final major heading, Principle 7, Research, Evaluation, and Training, describes the evolving and non-static nature of effective heritage interpretation and the importance of on-site, as well as multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, training of site staff and international exchange of information.

The US/ICOMOS Charleston Declaration

International dialogue and reaction spurred by the Enname Charter initiative led ICOMOS in the spring of 2004 to expand global discussions using the Enname Charter as a stimulus to guide and inform the process. In early May 2005, in recognition of high public interest and the effects of mass tourism, the connections to current heritage management practices, and technological advancements, US/ICOMOS held a conference in Charleston, South Carolina to better articulate a consensus on internationally applicable public interpretation principles. The main outcome of the conference was the Charleston Declaration on Heritage Interpretation, issued on 7 May 2005. This document reiterated the importance and purpose of establishing a set of internationally relevant principles for interpretation and called for further international dialogue. The Declaration pointed out that additional clarifications were needed before the adoption of a doctrinal document on interpretation at the ICOMOS General Assembly in Quebec in 2008. Based on the proceedings of the conference, it proposed that clarifications on the meanings of the terms ‘Presentation’ and ‘Interpretation’ were needed and offered the following definitions:

‘Presentation’ denotes the carefully planned arrangement of information and physical access to a cultural heritage site, usually by scholars, design firms, and heritage professionals. As such, it is largely a one-way mode of communication. ‘Interpretation’, on the other hand, denotes the totality of activity, reflection, research, and creativity stimulated by a cultural heritage site. The input and involvement of visitors, local and associated community groups, and other stakeholders of various ages and educational backgrounds is essential to interpretation and the transformation of cultural heritage sites from static monuments into places and sources of learning and reflection about the past, as well as valuable resources for sustainable community development and intercultural and intergenerational dialogue (ICOMOS 2005).

In addition, the Declaration recognized that more scrutiny is needed on four major issues:

1. Defining mechanisms for incorporating stakeholder perceptions and values;
2. Providing guidance for interpretation of religious and sacred sites, places of contested significance, and sites of conscience or ‘painful memory’;
3. Defining the concept and role of ‘authenticity’;
4. How the categorization of heritage sites and the circumstances that surround them affect opposition or support among cultures and communities as well as the level of interpretation.

Summary and conclusions

‘Heritage tourism’, the central theme of the Port Arthur conference, connotes the presence and convergence of overarching conservation and corporate values. In heritage management, we articulate ‘values’ as attributes given to sites,
objects, and resources, and associated intellectual and emotional connections that make them important and define their significance for a person, group, or community. Site managers strive to identify and take these values into account in planning, physical treatments, and public interpretation efforts.

The NPS Interpretive Development Program (IDP) fosters conservation and stewardship of resource values by facilitating meaningful, memorable visitor experiences. Based on a philosophy that people care for what they first care about, the program provides for mission-based training and development standards and provides a peer review process. The interpretation formula embraces multiple perspectives with the ultimate goal of providing opportunities for visitors to forge compelling linkages or stories and take on an active stewardship ethic. IDP attempts to define the art and skill of interpretation and effective interpretation techniques and modes of delivery. The techniques and modes used are tailored to the backgrounds and identities of target audiences and communities and as well as other constituent stakeholders. Besides the core training modules, IDP cross-training curriculum now includes the Module 440 that addresses public interpretation standards for archaeology. Courses and workshops are designed to improve interdisciplinary communication for a team approach to developing and carrying out effective public interpretation programs and projects.

The ICOMOS Ename Charter on Interpretation and the ICOMOS Charleston Declaration are important documents in that they attempt to address international standards of public interpretation through the delivery of conservation, education, and stewardship messages that relate to humanistic and cultural heritage values. Foremost in the charter is a set of principles for interpretation that emphasize the essential roles of public communication and education in heritage preservation. Just how these principles are finally articulated will determine how well they are received, and how successfully they are applied, in the international arena.

Future challenges

Formulating the definitions and principles for interpretation is important because of interpretation's pivotal role in effective heritage conservation and practical heritage tourism pursuits. The efforts and events surrounding the development and evolution of the Ename Charter are all-important in the development of internationally relevant standards and global dialogue on interpretation. The attempt and need to differentiate between 'presentation' and 'interpretation' stem from a realization that interpretation should represent the totality of meanings and experiences associated with a cultural heritage site beyond the literal messages delivered through the senses by media. Interpretation, therefore, includes a set of multidisciplinary activities that reflects socio-cultural and political contexts within the host community and geographic area. The interpretive message should invoke emotional and intellectual connections to meanings and significance of the resource for multiple audiences.

Although most of the Ename Charter principles are more or less commonsensical, I have suggested that subheading 2.3 of the Information Sources principle that states that all elements in an interpretation program should be presented in a form appropriate for local standards and resources, has the potential to be problematic in that 'appropriateness' of resources may be politically and socially contentious in a given community or area. To remedy this, ICOMOS should develop a protocol of procedures for reconciliation, when needed. Another comment relates to Principle 5: Sustainability. Subheading 5.3 states that the interpretive infrastructure at a site should be well designed, soundly constructed, safe, and 'responsibly' maintained. More details are needed in this section to address circumstantial scenarios, i.e., to define what constitutes 'responsible' behavior. Again, a protocol of procedures for reconciliation would be useful.

As reflected in the Charleston Declaration, debate on the concept and meaning of 'authenticity' is preeminent in today's international dialogue on heritage interpretation. Most discussions of authenticity point to the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) that stresses the importance of respect for the values of local residents and the need for thorough documentation of what is known from scientific and traditional sources and that is inherently verifiable and not an imitation. In the United States, broadening definitions of cultural heritage and the expanding recognition of a diversity of cultural values and dynamics of cultural sites and places has caused definitions of the authentic to be revised in recent years. A traditional focus on static, material authenticity is being replaced with more conditional definitions shaped by an acknowledgement of dynamic processes and associated cultural values, as well as physical features. Aspects of authenticity are related to use and function as well as tradition and technique. Also, the intangibles of spirit and feeling are beginning to be included in significance evaluations and models for interpretation.

Internationally, expanding recognitions of diversity and contexts within cultural heritage traditions are modifying perceptions, judgments, and definitions about cultural heritage values and credibility of information sources. Respect for diversity among and within cultures encourages an evaluation of heritage properties within the cultural contexts to which they belong. This has led to a realization that it is not possible to base judgments of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. Definitions of authenticity, therefore, can only go so far in defining overarching concepts and standards. Recognition of the importance of context and diversity contributes to the present-day understanding that authenticity must be tempered or guided by a local and community-based, inclusive, analysis. Any analysis model for authenticity should reflect and represent multiple perspectives on what is authentic or 'true' about a site or place and should provide a roadmap for practical solutions. The nature and qualifications of 'experts' on authenticity should reflect the diversity of cultural affiliations and values attributed to the site, which, in turn, should be periodically reviewed and reassessed.

We can hope these efforts will foster and encourage thoughtful interpretive planning for sites, museums, and parks that reflect collaboration, openness, and a democratization of history that respects the humanistic values and effective involvement of local and regional communities. In building effective interpretation programs, the challenge is to educate ourselves on the requisite knowledge and skills needed to deal with the issues. Using an interpretive narrative and more holistic approaches will help our audiences connect with the full range of heritage values appropriate to the site, feature, or artifact. Interpretive art can be a useful instrument in carrying and representing multiple messages and values in the conservation and public interpretation of cultural heritage.
In all these efforts, we should keep in mind, as Richard Engelhardt pointed out in the plenary session, that conservation commitments must come first in our conversations and associations with heritage management regimes and the heritage tourism industry. We propose, as the Ename Charter on Interpretation stresses, that interpretation of the meaning of sites is inherently important to the conservation process, and therefore plays a defining role in conservation/tourism interactions.

References


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