

Affective heritage revisited

Repatriation or restitution are increasingly mediated by museums and heritage sites. Additionally, 'heritage' is being called on to facilitate peacebuilding, wellbeing and truth-telling. Drawing on recent work interviewing visitors to Australian World Heritage sites about reconciliation and peacebuilding, this presentation revisits the links between heritage and affect. Assumptions that heritage leads rationally and naturally to peacebuilding underpins international policy and fails to engage with the relationship between cognition and affect. Indeed, the emotional repertoires of heritage have often been neglected or dismissed as being simply mawkish nostalgia or overblown nationalism. The failure of academia, policy makers and the political left to adequately understand affective commemorative practices in which the past is brought to the present to sustain a range of activities, including the legitimization of consensus national narratives and collective remembering and forgetting, has had significant consequences for the ongoing naturalisation of colonial legacies and the rise of right-wing populism.

We need to urgently revisit the relationship between heritage and affect. I offer a consideration of the affective qualities of heritage that argues for the varied expression, intensity and valence of the emotional qualities of engaging with the past as heritage and which, in turn, have a range of ideological consequences. The talk will outline how different expressions of heritage as 'affective practice' (drawing here on the work of Margaret Wetherell) can facilitate and reinforce indifference and the closing down of imaginative empathy and compassion. Conversely, how affective heritage practices can facilitate imagination and compassion or assert enabling self-esteem and solidarity will be discussed. To understand the emotional repertoires of heritage requires a considered rethinking not simply of the interrelationship of heritage and affect, but also how we understand and engage with both the expression of different emotions such as nostalgia, belonging and wellbeing and the intensity, interactions or valence of their expression.

Laurajane Smith is Director of the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, the Australian National University. She is also a fellow of the Society for the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. In 2010-12, she worked to establish the Association of Critical Heritage Studies; she is editor of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* and is co-general editor with Dr Gönül Bozoğlu of Routledge's *Key Issues in Cultural Heritage*. Her books include *Uses of Heritage* (2006) and *Emotional Heritage* (2021) and she has edited numerous collections most notably *Intangible Heritage* (2009) and *Safeguarding Intangible Heritage* (2019), both with Natsuko Akagawa, and *Emotion, Affective Practices, and the Past in the Present* (2018, with Margret Wetherell and Gary Campbell) and *Heritage, Labour and the Working Class* (2011, with Paul A. Shackel and Gary Campbell).