

**China's Contested Past &
The World Heritage Centre:
Developing Pasts & Promises**

by

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Abstract

This paper investigates the cultural side of China's re-integration to the global economy, its admittance to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its ongoing re-structuring of its economy, via its integration into the World Heritage Centre (WHC) and the ongoing re-structuring of the ideological foundations of China's authorized heritage. Taking for granted the interwoven relationships between visions of development and the development of the past, my inquiry focuses on the WHC - with its globalizing development of an authorized "global heritage order" - and its relationship to China's "opening up" to capitalist-lead development models. The paper illustrates, by using the WHC site of Pingyao as a case example, how China's emerging national authorized approach to the past – articulated through the international WHC – displaces political alternatives found in China's cultural archive: supplanting the communist political foundations.

Keywords: Heritage Studies; World Heritage Centre; Tourism Studies; Global Heritage Order; China; Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

*To those who have had
to leave their home
when an uncanny heritage
was set on a throne.*

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List of Acronyms

OP	Operational Guidelines
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
PRC	People's Republic of China
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WHCL	World Heritage Centre List
WHS	World Heritage Site
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1.

Introduction

While the People's Republic of China's (PRC) reintegration to global capitalism via its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been hotly debated¹, its entry into the World Heritage Centre (WHC) has, following a trend where heritage is often overlooked as a force of globalisation, to the best of my knowledge yet to be read critically. Against this trend, this paper investigates the cultural side of China's reintegration to the global economy, its admittance to the WTO and its ongoing restructuring of its economy, via its integration into the WHC and the ongoing restructuring of the ideological foundations of China's authorized heritage discourse². Taking for granted the interwoven relationship between visions of development and the development of the past, my inquiry focuses on the WHC - with its ongoing globalizing of an authorized "global heritage order" - and its relationship to China's "opening up" to capitalist-lead development models. As none of the Chinese WHC sites celebrate China's communist revolutionary heritage, let alone narrate sites under what I will call a political "red frame", the paper illustrates how a strand of China's emerging national authorized approach to the past – articulated through the international WHC – displaces political alternatives found in China's cultural archive. That is, replacing the discursive communist frame of heritage, heritage understood as being a political site open to

¹ For a recent example among others, see Lin Chun, *China and Global Capitalism: Reflections on Marxism, History, and Contemporary Politics* (USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

² This paper will focus on authorized heritages and not, say, marginal or personal heritages (e.g.: family genealogies). For the purposes of this paper, "authorized heritage" will be defined as being "maps" of what is "important" from the past that are authorized by a powerful national/supra-national institution. In this sense, the paper is drawing from what the archaeologist Laurajane Smith has called "authorized heritage discourse", where these institutions are understood as being the most "powerful" players in organizing a given heritage archive and its public meaning. See Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (USA: Routledge, 2006).

critique, with an internationally framed “neutral” approach to the past that is indicative in both its form and content of the state of change in China’s development path. In short, the paper approaches the World Heritage Centre policy papers as embodying a political economic vision of a valorized cultural space that plays an important role in navigating China’s current path of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”.

In order to further this end, this paper will first provide a historical analysis of the WHC and its operational guidelines; second, provide a critical nominalist definition of heritage as cultural fact, opening up the alleged “neutrality” of heritage and its global spread to critique, and lastly through a horizontal analysis, locate the ongoing China-WHC dynamic in its process of re-organizing China’s political archive in both form and content by briefly looking at the WHC listed site of Pingyao.

The first section will provide a historical context for the creation of the WHC and analyze its Operational Guidelines (OP) from 1977-2013. Through a close reading of the OP, I show a policy shift from an original concern with preservation and presentation, a rather “archaeological perspective” with the simple wish for preservation taking priority, to a very pronounced concern with “managing” heritage sites *vis-à-vis* the demands of the heritage industry and global tourism. This is made evident in the OP’s changing definition of “Outstanding Universal Value” (OUV), an integral part of the WHC’s application process, that went through a tremendous shift from rather straightforward requirements for a site to be legible for “World Heritage” status to, in 1988, an inclusion of a “management mandate” as being one of the key requirements for a site to be considered as having OUV. Simply put: no “management mandate” = no OUV label for as site. Drawing from these shifts the WHC designation will be shown to baptise a site into the holy waters of the *global heritage order* by both associating the site into a worldwide valorized heritage, a *global scale* on the *global scale* as it interpolates alternative heritages found within a given country as being relatively non-global and therefore at some level less significant, while at the same time drawing the heritage site in question, via the WHC’s *management mandate*, into the global tourism economy.

In the second section, I provide a critical nominalist definition of heritage as cultural fact. That is, given the WHC’s own significant change in approach to heritage, I

argue against the assumption that “heritage” is a neutral fact, approached as operating outside of social relations. Here, against this mainstream approach to heritage, which locates heritage as being a neutral fact that operates outside of society, I locate heritage not in terms of the past but of the political present: as not only embodying the past but being fundamentally full of promise for the future. After formulating this operative framework in which to approach heritage as a site of politics, I apply this method in the last chapter to critically access the PRC-WHC dynamic as being, if anything, far from simply the “neutral” preservation and presentation of the incontestable “facts” of China’s heritage.

In the third section, drawing from the nominalist approach, I look at how the ongoing China-WHC dynamic re-organizes China’s political archive in both form and content. In other words, I argue that the expansion of the WHC’s global heritage order in China plays a political and economic role in changing the way in which what heritage is showcased and how it is accessed. In order to pursue this end I first, locate two major competing approaches to the past as found in China’s history: one representing a political approach to the past and heritage, what I call the “red frame”, and the other representing a non-political approach to the past and heritage, what I call the “neutral frame”.

I then show how the WHC acts as the international stamp of national projects that re-organizes China’s political archive in both form and content. In short, I will show how the PRC-WHC dynamic achieves this end by both displacing “red heritage” and implicating the very access to heritage into a “sustainable development” frame, which will be achieved by briefly looking at the WHC site of Pingyao as being a prime example of this process, where a local living heritage was sold to the cold grips of global vampire capitalism. In the last section of the paper, I will draw loosely from Benjamin in order to summarize the value of this critical approach to heritage as being a “tiger’s leap into the past” and not a “paper tiger”.

Chapter 2.

World Heritage Centre Policy: A Historical Analysis

Before showing how the PRC's authorized heritage is being re-articulated in both form and content via a horizontal analysis of the PRC-WHC dynamic, I will first provide a historical account of the WHC in order to open to critique the mainstream acceptance of the Centre's allegedly "universal" and "neutral" approach to heritage. This will, I hope, be made apparent given that the Centre's very own definition of "Outstanding Universal Value" (OUV) was not universal enough to have been able to operate without having been redefined through core changes in forty years. In order to further this end, I will first, briefly contextualize the 1972 Convention at the heart of the WHC; second, analyze the major shifts found in the WHC's "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" from 1977-2013; and lastly, provide a brief analysis of the WHC given these shifts and briefly locate the Centre's role in what has been called the *heritage-scape*³.

2.1. The 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

The "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" of 1972 was the brainchild of UNESCO⁴. With post-war international in full swing, UNESCO (1946) was one of many new institutions with an international scope of

³ Drawing from Arjun Appadurai's theory that globalization goes hand in hand with a set of amorphous –scapes, Di Giovane labels UNESCO's globally active World Heritage Centre social structure the *heritage-scape*. See Michael Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism* (USA: Lexington Books, 2009), 6.

⁴ See UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (France: UNESCO, 1977).

the time. It followed, for example, in the footsteps of the 1944 Bretton Woods United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, which established a series of organizations with global reaches such as the International Monetary Fund⁵. The guiding principle of UNESCO, as defined in its own constitution, is to “contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture” in order to further develop the respect for justice, law and human rights⁶. UNESCO’s heritage Convention must be understood as within this context.

The “World Heritage Convention” has been famously successful⁷. Today the Convention and its underlying definition of heritage, with its distinct set of official and internationally recognized approach to engaging the past, is *the* global authority of heritage⁸. While much can be said on the rich tapestry of the Convention, I will now turn to a very brief contextual outline of Convention for the purposes of this paper. In order to further this end, I will first, situate the Convention as being a part and parcel of modernity; second, show how it embodies an international response to World War negative nation state nationalism by promoting a transcultural identity via a valorization of world heritage; and lastly, briefly look at how the Convention’s wording not only sets the tone for the globalization of the idea of heritage as well as sets the stage for itself to become a globalizing force, which will provide the background for my analysis of the OG.

⁵ While the first international collaboration on the safeguarding of cultural heritage was first discussed at the Athens Conference on the restoration of historic buildings, organized by the International Museums Office, in 1931, its recommendations were not realized until well after the end of WWII. After the war, concerns about the impact of conflict on cultural heritage led to the development of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict – the so called “Hague Convention” of 1954. Here, not only were explicit connections made between national identity, cultural heritage and nation-building but also that the management of world heritage was an international concern. See Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (USA: Routledge, 2013), 56-57.

⁶ Amos Yoder, *The Evolution of the United Nations System* (USA: Taylor & Francis 1997), 175.

⁷ See Caren Irr, “World Heritage Sites and the Culture of the Commons,” in *Global Ordering: Institutions and Autonomy in a Changing World*, ed. Louis Pauly and William D. Coleman (Canada: UBC Press, 2008), 92.

⁸ See Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 39

2.1.1. Convention as Part and Parcel of Modernity: Embodying the new value of Heritage

The Convention can be understood as being a part and parcel of the discourse of modernity. Heritage, after all, has not been universally valorized the same manner in which it is today. In brief, our current “heritage mania” is a particular expression of our contemporary engagement with the past and has never been a universal value across history. The rising interest in the nature of time and the question of heritage can be understood as being a response to part of the “experience of modernity”, a period captivated by the question of time⁹. As Berman shows, the very experience of the “question of time” itself draws from and responds to a fundamental sense of the rapid changes that industrialism has brought about¹⁰. At the christening of this universalizing and globalizing concept of *modernity*, the discourse interpolated and subordinated various “times” to a single temporal scheme of “progress”, “modernization” and “development”¹¹.

This “conceptual legacy” of modernity underlies our modern approach to the concept of heritage. The concept, after all, is informed by modernity’s relationship to time, where “risk” plays a role in the ordering, classifying and categorizing of what can be considered to be heritage and what is not¹². In other words, heritage is understood in terms of its precariousness and uncertainty that pervades what has been called our “risk society”¹³. In this way, the 1972 Convention can be understood as responding to both the “threat” of the spread of industrialism as well as the rise of the concern of the precarious state of heritage that this threat engendered. The Convention, after all, starts by responding to these very issues by claiming that:

“[...] cultural heritage and [...] natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by

⁹ See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

¹⁰ For the classic example of modernity’s experience of time and change, see Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts Into Air: the Experience of Modernity* (USA: Viking Penguin, 1988).

¹¹ Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (USA: Verso, 1995), 21.

¹² Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 13.

¹³ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 3.

changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction”.¹⁴

Here we see an acknowledgement of modernity’s historiography, that is its perceived breaking with continuity embodied in the cognition of “traditional causes of decay” which are aggravated by new social and economic arrangements. After all it was as a response to the “magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them”¹⁵ that the Convention was, according to its own rhetoric, created. In short, far from embodying a tradition of valuing the ‘great heritage’ of humanity, the valorization of heritage the Convention canonizes is, however ironically, historical.

2.1.2. Convention as response to World War Nationalism: Towards Transnational Cultural Identity

The Convention can also be approached as a response to what has been called World War negative nationalism¹⁶. Against negative nationalism, the Convention fosters a transnational cultural identity. Here, following Anderson’s work on “imagined communities”¹⁷, the promotion of a transcultural habitus¹⁸ located in the *heritage-scape* is embodied in the materiality of the heritage sites themselves¹⁹. Here, this global place-making endeavour is understood as fostering “peace in the minds of men” through the re-appropriation of national monuments to formulate a transnational “worldwide imagined community”²⁰. In other words, UNESCO’s goal of creating world peace includes a fundamental “reworking of the international geopolitical system” that is accomplished not through “physical conquest” but rather through a “reordering of the individuals’ sense of

¹⁴ UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1.

¹⁵ UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1.

¹⁶ See John Ralston Saul, *The Collapse of Globalism and the Reinvention of the World* (Canada: Penguin Canada, 2009). It is also interesting to note that the Convention was launched the same year as the 1972 Summer Olympic Munich Massacre in Germany where people of a particular nationality were targeted.

¹⁷ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (USA: Verso, 1995).

¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (USA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

¹⁹ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 13.

²⁰ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 33.

place the world over”²¹. In short, it can be interpreted as a response to a world that has been said to be obsessed with national pride and nationalism carrying on the “banner of countless parties”²².

This is well in line with the UNESCO’s project of “building peace in the minds of men” globally. Pursuing a goal of reading heritage transculturally as being “human heritage”, the convention embodies a shift towards understanding heritage and culture as an antidote to war²³. In this case a specific strand of heritage is not only understood as being articulated as being a global concern, as belonging outside the discrete domain of a particular sovereign nation, but also as establishing a global order of a hierarchy of heritage – an integral part of what I call a *global heritage order*. This is achieved by interpolating non-world heritage sites within a nation as being of lesser importance vis-à-vis the “world heritage” located within a given nation. Moreover, the WHC furthers UNESCO’s end by, as previously mentioned, locating heritage outside the discursive boundaries of any particular nation by promoting a transnational/transcultural approach that would conceivably reduce the negative nationalism experienced during the World Wars. This is achieved by weakening the bonds of national heritage and identity by interpolating national sanctioned heritage in a supra-discourse of transcultural heritage for humanity. This is embodied in the very term “world heritage” which, first and foremost, transcends national heritages and their claims to discrete cultural boundaries. In the very words of the convention it can be read quite simply as promoting, on the one hand, the valuation of heritage and its recognition as an important component to nation building and on the other hand, in a manner that goes against nation-state centered traditional nationalism that plagued the world in the two great wars. In other words, the Convention can be seen as attempting to communicate and foster a trans-cultural “imagined community”.

Following Anderson’s work on communication and the nation where the sense of “imagined community” is brought about by simply reading a newspaper, WHC’s can be

²¹ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 33.

²² Timothy Brennan, “The National longing for form,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (USA: Routledge, 1990), 44.

²³ Irr, *World Heritage Sites and the Culture of the Commons*, 88.

understood as promoting a transcultural imagined community through its various publications, educational programs and satellite heritage sites the world over. While for Anderson, the reader becomes aware of the countless Others replicating this very action and thus, fosters a sense of “mass ceremony,” which root the community to a sense of everyday life²⁴, The Convention articulates a “mass ceremony” both inside and outside the strict boundaries of a single nation state while interpolating heritage sites around the world as partaking – or not – in a highly valorized discourse of “world heritage”. Here, for example, rather than locating heritage in terms of a discrete “Chinese” heritage that is *Other* or at discrete odds with “Korean” heritage, the Convention transcends national approaches through a transcendental reading where neither heritage is essentially Chinese or Korean, but rather belongs to everyone. In other words, it provides a means of communication that articulates a global *communitas*. In short, the Centre’s “mass ceremony”, here articulated through its various media outlets and narration at the actual sites in question, is one that promotes trans-national imagined community.

2.1.3. The Big Bang of the “World Heritage Order”: Globalizing the Valorization of Heritage

As I have already shown, the Convention is by definition global in articulating the wish to protect world heritage. Here, world heritage is understood as sites belonging to the WHL. This global apparatus that has constituted to the understanding of what Di Giovine has been called the *heritage-scape*²⁵ as being an active force in globalization. Extending on anthropologists Arjun Appadurai’s theory of *-scapes* as applied to globalization, Michael Giovine discusses UNESCO’s WHC’s in terms of the *heritage-scape*²⁶, which is understood as having a “real social structure which creates real material effects on globally distributed population in accordance with UNESCO’s long term goals”²⁷.

²⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35-36.

²⁵ See Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*.

²⁶ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 6.

²⁷ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 6.

Within the *heritage-scape*, the Convention is a foundational text in what I call the *global heritage order* as it goes about not only globalizing its valorization of heritage but also setting in motion its global institutional framework to oversee valorized sites. That is, the *heritage-scape* is not merely an amorphous site that is difficult to define because there is a definite major player - the WHC and its bureaucracy - that articulates a specific approach to heritage. While I will discuss this later with regards to the OP manuals, this is also evident in the Conventions very language. Consider, for an example among many, how heritage is approached as being for “each nation and the international community amongst their most important and priceless possessions”, and because of this “irreplaceability” any loss is a tragedy of epic proportions²⁸. While allegedly “respecting the sovereignty of the States on whose territory the cultural heritage is situated”, signatories “to this Convention recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate”²⁹. In other words, while the inclusion of a property to the World Heritage List (WHL) requires the consent of the State concerned, its management becomes, in theory, the business of the international community as a whole that is articulated through the voices of the WHC. That said, however, the Convention does not go into any details with regards to the manner in which such highly valorized heritage is to be governed or managed at the national or international level. Rather, the Convention provides a Spartan outline of *what is world heritage* rather than *what to do with it*.

While the Convention set some basic parameters, in the years to come the WHC would come out with a standardized approach to what to do with, as well as what is, heritage. Since the founding of the Convention there were many fundamental changes in the approach to heritage³⁰. As I will show, the OP blurs the distinction between what is and how should world heritages sites be managed. The coming of the Convention appeared at a time where popular interest in the past begun to accelerate and when the

²⁸ UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1.

²⁹ UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 6.

³⁰ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 67.

world tourist economy was in the process of restructuring³¹. As others have already argued, 1972 was the turning point for a “sea-change in cultural as well as in political-economic practices”³². That is, the very time that the formulation of an international treaty on heritage was formulated, much like the owl of Minerva that “begins its flight only with the falling of dusks”³³, things were already changing in a different direction.

In short, the Convention can be interpreted as embodying a set of long-standing concerns over heritage that was to change, quite considerably, in the years to come. That is, while the convention provided a general outline of how to proceed, the committee created and updated its “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention” (OP) many times since. That is, the convention can be said to embody the ideals and solve the problems prior to its arrival, before the Western 1980’s heritage boom³⁴ and its globalization over the 1990’s and early 2000’s³⁵. I will now turn to a historical analysis of the Operation Guidelines to show the nature of some of these changes.

2.2. Operational Guidelines (1977-2013): From Safeguarding Heritage to Spectacular Consumption

While the Convention outlines the major goals of the WHC – it was, after all, the reason for its creation – it does not provide much in terms of a guideline on how to pursue these ends. While the convention has never been changed, the OG, which provide such a map of conduct, has been updated periodically since its first iteration in 1977. Through a historical analysis of WHC’s Operational Guidelines (1977-2013) I will show a clear shift in policy focus. This shift is from an approach to heritage in terms of a rather simple goal of safeguarding of material culture, a rather Spartan approach to save

³¹ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 67.

³² David Harvey, *The Conditions of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), vii.

³³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. by T.M. Knox (United States: Oxford University Press, [1821] 2008), 16.

³⁴ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), xv.

³⁵ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, xii.

and showcasing sites, to an approach to heritage in terms of the management and tourism with regards to “sustainable-development”.

While a requirement to outline management plans was part of the original OP, the role and scope of management has expanded exponentially between the original 1977 version and the latest 2013 iteration. Arguably, the original text was leaning towards, in large part, simply preserving world heritage sites, but from the 80’s onwards there is a pronounced recognition that admittance to the WHCL leads to a rise in tourism, the rise of the heritage industry, as well with a general concern with what I call a “management mandate”.

I will now turn to an analysis of the shifts in the OP from 1977 to 2013, framing my narrative with special focus on the “Outstanding Universal Value” (OUV) requirement for being admitted to, and remaining on, the World Heritage Centre List (WHCL). My historical analysis shows the ever-expanding language of management and development replacing the relatively simple language of preservation, which ends up being implicated within the very definition of OUV itself. This reaches a momentous climax in the 1987-1988 OP shift when the language of management is explicitly tied, for the first time, to the WHC’s very own definition of “Outstanding Universal Value”.

2.2.1. Management as OUV: 1970’s-1980’s

In the early 1977 OP, the “universal” component of OUV is interpreted rather simply as referring to a property that is highly representative of the culture of which it forms part³⁶. This definition is expanded in the later 1977 OP³⁷, where OUV will be recognized when a site, or “property”, is found to have one or more of the following traits:

- (i) represent a unique artistic or aesthetic achievement, a masterpiece of the creative genius; or

³⁶ UNESCO, Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee (France: World Heritage Centre, 1977), 7.

³⁷ UNESCO, Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee (France: World Heritage Centre, 1977b), 7.

(ii) have exerted considerable influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on subsequent developments in architecture, monumental sculpture, garden and landscape design, related arts, or human settlements; or

(iii) be unique, extremely rare, or of great antiquity; or

(iv) be among the most characteristic examples of a type of structure, the type representing an important cultural, social, artistic, scientific, technological or industrial development; or

(v) be a characteristic example of a significant traditional style of architecture, method of construction, or human settlement, that is fragile by nature or has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural or economic change; or

(vi) be most importantly associated with ideas or beliefs, with events or with persons, of outstanding historical important or significance;

As I will show, while other attributes will be added as prerequisites for receiving OUV status, this section of “common sense” traits for being considered as world heritage would be relatively untouched. From this rather open and straightforward definition of what constitutes OUV one can get a sense of the type of sites expected to make it on the list. While there have been criticisms levied against this set of definitions there is a lot here that can be said to represent the “common sense” understanding of what is the nature of a valued heritage. However this definition was not to last long.

While this part of the definition remained the same until the most recent OG’s, a pivotal shift occurred with the arrival of the 1988 OG with regards to the interpretation of what constituted OUV. The 1988 OG is the *annus mirabilis* for the encroachment of management and the more active and productive role of the WHC in terms of governing global heritage. Whereas in the 1977 OP application process where there is a requirement in locating the “State of preservation/conservation”, that is provide a rather descriptive outline of the “means for preservation/conservation” - legal, technical, administrative, financial, etc. – in the 1988 OP the description shifts to prescription and to a more demanding format³⁸. Here, while a site has to meet “one or more”

³⁸ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1988).

requirements to be considered as having OUV status, as already showcased above, in the 1988 OP, it must *also* meet the prescriptive management requirements. In the words of the OP it must have one of the above features *and*:

ii) have adequate legal and/or contractual and/or traditional protection and management mechanisms to ensure the conservation of the nominated cultural properties or cultural landscapes. The existence of protective legislation at the national, provincial or municipal level and/or a well-established contractual or traditional protection as well as of adequate management and/or planning 6 control mechanisms is therefore essential and, as is clearly indicated in the following paragraph, must be stated clearly on the nomination form. Assurances of the effective implementation of these laws and/or contractual and/or traditional protection as well as of these management mechanisms are also expected. Furthermore, in order to preserve the integrity of cultural sites, particularly those open to large numbers of visitors, the State Party concerned should be able to provide evidence of suitable administrative arrangements to cover the management of the property, its conservation and its accessibility to the public.³⁹

This new definition of OUV requires a site to have met one or more of a set requirement *as well as* have a management mandate in place. As a site requires *both* for being considered as having OUV, a site will also be required to have *both* guidelines met in order to be considered for WHS status. This new definition of OUV is more open to critique compared with the now relatively earlier common sense approach to “Outstanding Universal Value”. In plain language, the new definition of the OUV include, not only the old requirements for being outstanding “culturally” but also a new requirement to have an active management mandate. This is not simply expressed in terms of general WHC application process but expressed in terms of one of a *core value of the very definition of OUV*. Within the very application itself, without meeting the call to management a site *would not be considered to have OUV and therefore would not be eligible for nomination to the WHCL*. Here we see a clear and distinct shift from the Convention’s rather Spartan preservation goals for heritage sites of OUV, to a more prescriptive approach where the “managing” of sites for tourists is itself interpreted as being a *fundamental definition* for a site to be considered OUV. While this specific shift

³⁹ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1988), 24.b.ii

occurred in the very heart of the valorization of heritage - the OUV - other parts of the documents begin to shift to the language of management over the years to come.

Here and elsewhere, the OP begins to require states to reorganize its approach to sites it wishes to get the valorized WHS status. In cases such as this, we can begin to see how the WHC is to be understood in terms of a semi-autonomous international institution that transcends the sovereignty of nation states through a set of demands in a “give and take” relationship. Nation states, on the one hand, can get their heritage accredited and internationally valorized as a tourist destination, but on the other hand, they have to standardize their laws to meet with the WHC’s approach to managing heritage.

2.2.2. Heritage Rush Hour: 1990’s

While a more prescriptive definition of management continues to creep into the policy document in various areas in the preceding years, it is as early as 1994 that a marked shift can be detected from the “risk” of losing heritage to reassessing the meaning of heritage given the abundance of site applications to the WHC. As early as 1994 one can see a small disclaimer against the onslaught of WHC site applications:

*(vii) In view of the difficulty in handling the large numbers of cultural nominations now being received, however, the Committee invites States Parties to consider whether their cultural heritage is already well represented on the List and if so to slow down voluntarily their rate of submission of further nominations. This would help in making it possible for the List to become more universally representative [...].*⁴⁰

Here there is a realization that heritage is no longer threatened in the same manner as it was during the war or the “heights of modernity” at least, that is, within the “West”. Here, the global valuation of heritage has become “mainstream”. This disclaimer also came from the realization that the allegedly global WHL was filled with sites coming mostly from Western developed countries. A product, perhaps, of the nascent realization

⁴⁰ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1994), 6.vii.

that WHC status guarantees a site's value as a tourist destination⁴¹. Later in the section, there is also a marked hope to include countries not yet represented to make their applications. In other words, there is no longer any need to "sell" the idea of heritage to many nations as the idea has by 1994 caught on within the "West". Here we see a major shift in not only appealing to countries that are already represented to slow down, but also appealing to countries not yet represented to apply. Following the WHC institutional logic, with heritage near "maximized" in developed countries it was time to expand the *heritage-scape* to places where WHC's take on heritage has yet to have taken root. In other words, further globalizing it's valorization of heritage as well as its approach to management – as I have shown embodied in their very definition of OUV.

Between the 1996⁴² and 1997⁴³ OP, there is also a remarkable change in terms of the "Format and content of nominations". In 1996, parts of the applications still used the language of requiring a simple "outline" of the state of preservation/conservation with promises/requirements for management still being located in sub-sections⁴⁴:

- (d) State of preservation/conservation
- Diagnosis
- Agent responsible for preservation/conservation
- History of preservation/conservation
- Measures for preservation/conservation (including management plans or proposals for such plans)
- Development plans for the region

In just one year however, this "outline" requirement not only expanded, but also changed to a more prescriptive focus on "management conservation" that really comes to the forefront in 1997⁴⁵. In this rendition, there was a re-structuring of the categories of the application with management shifting from being a sub-section of the application

⁴¹ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 80.

⁴² UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1996)

⁴³ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1997)

⁴⁴ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1996), 64.d.

⁴⁵ See UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1997), 64.4 & 64.5.

process to a section on its own. Here, tourism is explicitly located as being a core component of the development plan. In this rendition, applications must provide an outline of:⁴⁶

4. Management

- a. Ownership
- b. Legal status
- c. Protective measures and means of implementing them
- d. Agency/agencies with management authority
- e. Level at which management is exercised (e.g., on site, regionally) and name and address of responsible person for contact purposes
- f. Agreed plans related to property (e.g., regional, local plan, conservation plan, tourism development plan)
- g. Sources and levels of finance
- h. Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques
- i. Visitor facilities and statistics
- j. Site management plan and statement of objectives (copy to be annexed)
- k. Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)

5. Factors Affecting the Site

- a. Development Pressures (e.g., encroachment, adaptation, agriculture, mining)
- b. Environmental Pressures (e.g., pollution, climate change)
- c. Natural disasters and preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)
- d. Visitor/tourism pressures
- e. Number of inhabitants within site, buffer zone
- f. Other

Here an apparent normalization of “visitor facilities” and “visitor pressure”, or in plain words, the management of the *heritage industry* and *tourism* begin to appear as core component to the WHCL praxis. Here the WHC can be understood as being an apparatus for the spread of the global valorization of heritage as well as WHC sanctioned approach to its management, which are beginning to be formulated as imperatives from the Centre. This move towards “heritage industry” makes itself felt in other parts of the OP in the years to come.

⁴⁶ Underlining mine. UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 1997), 64.4 & 64.5.

2.2.3. Management Goes Underground: 2000's:

Between the 2002 and 2005 there was the emergence of an increasingly large Annex section of the OP as many forms begin to emerge in increasingly standardized methods. In 2005, the traditional section “Criteria for the inclusion of cultural properties in the World Heritage List”, where I had earlier shown the changing definitions of the OUV, is shifted into its own Annex: “Format for the nomination of properties for inscription on the WHL”⁴⁷. Here, the nomination for inscription is further standardized. In other parts of the OP, there was also a quantitative emergence of the language of “stakeholders”:

*States Parties are encouraged to prepare their Tentative Lists with the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, NGOs and other interested parties and partners*⁴⁸

As I have already shown how the definition itself of the OUV had shifted to include a management mandate, here one can see how this very process – articulating the legal means at the national level in which to articulate such a management space – is now suggested by the OP to include non-governmental agencies at the decision making table. While the language is of an “opening up” it can also be interpreted as devaluing the nation state’s ability to legislate its own regulations. That is, the WHC now not only demands that there be a “management mandate”, as I have already shown, but also that the process of creating such a mandate involves “members of the community” from outside of the government in question.

Another major shift occurred between the 2002 and 2005 OP, where there is an incredible emergence in the language of “management systems” that is infused with the language of “stakeholders”. Here, a management systems section includes how:

⁴⁷ See UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 2005), Annex 5.

⁴⁸ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 2005), 64.

108. Each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which should specify how the outstanding universal value of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means.

[...]

111. In recognizing the diversity mentioned above, common elements of an effective management system could include:

- a) a thorough shared understanding of the property by all stakeholders;
- b) a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback;
- c) the involvement of partners and stakeholders;
- d) the allocation of necessary resources;
- e) capacity-building; and
- f) an accountable, transparent description of how the management system functions.

The language of “participation” of stakeholders is in the noticeable increase while the nature of who these “partners and stakeholders” are to be is never mentioned directly. Given that the heritages of OUV are allegedly “world heritage” this definition brings *all of us* in as stakeholders of world heritage. However, while we all may be interpolated within this discourse we are nonetheless not all invited to the table.

In the OP’s attached Annex on the “Format for the nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage list” from the 2008 to 2011 also saw a major encroachment in terms of the spread of the language of tourism. In the 2008 Annex⁴⁹, under “Visitor/tourism pressures”, an application is required to describe “the ‘carrying capacity’” of the property and indicate its ability to absorb the “current or likely number of visitors without adverse effects”⁵⁰. Here, tourism is not only framed as being a pressure to the site, but is understood, given the use of the language of “carrying capacity”, to be one of the explicit purposes of the site. While this changes a little in the 2011 Annex, where the same section is transformed into a description of “Responsible visitation at

⁴⁹ UNESCO, Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee (France: World Heritage Centre, 2008), Annex 5, 4.iv.

⁵⁰ UNESCO, Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee (France: World Heritage Centre, 2008), Annex 5, 4.iv.

World Heritage sites”⁵¹, the underlying assumptions remain. In other words, tourism is re-framed in terms of “responsible” *sustainable development*. That is, governments must now under Annex 5 4.iv:

Provide the status of visitation to the property (notably available baseline data; patterns of use, including concentrations of activity in parts of the property; and activities planned in the future)

Describe projected levels of visitation due to inscription or other factors.

Define the carrying-capacity of the property and how its management could be enhanced to meet the current or expected visitor numbers and related development pressure without adverse effects.

Consider possible forms of deterioration of the property due to visitor pressure and behavior including those affecting its intangible attributes.⁵²

Here and elsewhere nation states with a WHS must now actively approach their heritage in the WHC’s frame of as a site for global tourism.

2.3. Conclusions: Interpreting the “Global Heritage Order”

As we are now prepared to accept, the WHC’s approach to “heritage” is a “gateway drug” to a particular approach to the sites management, a fact which is embodied in its very definition of OUV. That is, while a WHS appears on the “front stage” of global heritage through a status conferred by the WHC, it also operates on the “back stage” of management mandates demanded by the WHC.

WHC’s and its “vast international bureaucracy that decides what World Heritage is and exercises a huge influence over its management”⁵³ may be put in another way as in Lowenthal’s words, under “the aegis of national patrimony looms a multinational

⁵¹ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 2011), Annex 5, 4.iv.

⁵² UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee* (France: World Heritage Centre, 2011), Annex 5, 4.iv.

⁵³ Ian Donnachie, “World Heritage,” in *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*, ed. Rodney Harrison (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 44-51.

enterprise”⁵⁴. The WHC has become a global reach that is extended by an array of NGOs which are politically independent of government “but sometimes funded by them”⁵⁵. This enterprise however does not exist in a vacuum. Drawing from Schiller’s analysis of various social institutions, the WHC has been shaped to “respond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system”⁵⁶.

While nation-states voluntarily “offer up” a property for designation⁵⁷, they also offer themselves to a particular approach to heritage that has become the global norm. As Yúdice argues, this “expedient version of culture” is so integral to the economy that it has become the foundation of a new episteme⁵⁸. A site that joins the WHCL become integrated into a global tourist infrastructure” which “may include ticket counters and gift shops, museums or galleries, published maps and guidebooks” ect..⁵⁹

As I have shown, things have come a long way since 1972. On June 22nd, 2014, the World Heritage List has swelled over 1000 sites. While it may have first required effort to globalize the idea of heritage, the World Heritage is now a well established global brand⁶⁰, guaranteeing a sites distinction and value as a tourist destination⁶¹. The growing appreciation of cultural manifestations and collective legacies is an identifiable global trend and has resulted in the rise of heritage processes where cultural visibility is

⁵⁴ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (USA : Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.

⁵⁵ Donnachie, *World Heritage*, 115.

⁵⁶ Herbert Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976).

⁵⁷ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 411.

⁵⁸ See Irr, *World Heritage Sites and the Culture of the Commons*, 85.

⁵⁹ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 71.

⁶⁰ See Long and Labadi, 2010 and Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 89. Consider too how in the 1999 Annex 3: It states that: Parties to the Convention should take all possible measures to prevent the use of the Emblem in their respective countries by any group or for any purpose not explicitly recognized by the Committee. States Parties are encouraged to make full use of national legislation including Trade Mark Laws.

⁶¹ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 80.

enacted through various practices, politics and displays⁶². Moreover, the World Heritage Emblem has become an important marketing tool for promoting tourism⁶³.

However one wishes to approach WHC sites, be it through the lens of an experience economy, a dream society, or spectacular consumption, the swelling interest in heritage is in full swing. Moreover, as I have shown in the OP's trend towards global heritage consumption, the "heritage industry"⁶⁴ and UNESCO's stamp on it has taken to accelerated growth. This is embodied in UNESCO's recently published Manual on Managing World Heritage that takes for granted and builds upon these shifts I have located in the OP.

As I have outlined through a historical analysis, the OP points to a particular approach to the valorization and management of heritage, which goes hand in hand according to the WHC. Expanding on what Herbert Schiller calls the "monopolization of culture" via Western advertising and information⁶⁵, the WHC has lead, with its global institutional scope and rhetoric, to the *monopolization* and *monetization* of "universal world heritage". Nations seeking World Heritage status for a site, wishing to reap the social capital for their country at the world stage⁶⁶, as well as the capital that the tourism industry brings to the economy, requires signing up to the "WHC approach". Here, the organizations ability to "speak to the present and the future about a common world-historical past" is intertwined with a particular management approach⁶⁷.

Not only does the WHCL interpolate other national sites as *not being world heritage*, it actively manages WHC sites that wish to join its prestigious ranks into submitting to its management mandate. Here, "not only its temples and museums are elevated in valor, but implicitly, so are its restaurants and hotels, hostels, and brothels,

⁶² Marta Anico, "Representing identities at local municipal museums: Cultural forums or identity bunkers?", in *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World*, ed. Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta (Great Britain: Routledge, 2009), 63-75.

⁶³ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 89.

⁶⁴ Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

⁶⁵ See Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*.

⁶⁶ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 37.

⁶⁷ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 38.

bazaars and shops”⁶⁸. In short, with a world heritage designation comes a change in the general landscape of the area.

I will now turn to briefly show how the WHC can be understood as globalizing its approach to the heritage industry, as well as constituting a major actor in what I call the “world heritage order”.

2.3.1. Globalizing the Heritage Industry: Managing Heritage Production

When a nation wishes for one of its sites to be designated as World Heritage, the States Party in question must ratify the Convention, prepare a tentative national list of its heritage - a heritage archive if you will - and, more broadly and most importantly, sign up to the WHC’s “approach” to heritage⁶⁹ that I have already outlined. Once a site is listed, it would be expected to be managed in ways consistent with the Convention and the WHC’s changing OP, and as a universal heritage, be exhibited for international tourists in some way⁷⁰. On the one hand, while states continue to be the dominant agents tasked with responsibilities under the international regime of the convention, states are also subject to neoliberal pressures to decentralize control over their own cultural institutions⁷¹. Here, following the work of Caren Irr⁷², while the WHC still speaks in its qualitative foundational language of “the common heritage of all mankind” it has quantitatively shifted to an administrative resource-management approach to heritage.

This is even more important for World Heritage properties where the identification of OUV implies even broader management obligations and global ownership. In other words, on the one hand “world heritage” is perceived as the “collective property of

⁶⁸ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 296.

⁶⁹ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 89.

⁷⁰ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 89-92.

⁷¹ Rosemary Coombe, "Managing Cultural Heritage as Neoliberal Governmentality," In *Heritage Regimes and the State*, ed, Regina Bendix, Aditya Eggert, Arnkia Peselmann and Sven Meßling (Gottingen: Gottingen University Press, 2012), 375-389.

⁷² Irr, *World Heritage Sites and the Culture of the Commons*, 86.

mankind as a whole,” it also involves an international element in its very management⁷³. In short, built in within the WHC system, rhetoric aside, is a deep commitment to global tourism and the commodification of heritage that is embodied in its very definition of OUV⁷⁴. Here, the WHC does not only act to universalize the valorization and protection of heritage, but also universalizes its approach to managing heritage sites.

In the language of the WHC’s special publication on managing cultural heritage, the artificial isolation of heritage concerns from other sectors would be simply unfeasible, since external factors would “continue to penalize heritage practice just as isolated heritage management decision-making would penalize the relationship of heritage to its context”⁷⁵. Here one can sense the move away from what I called the rather Spartan aspirations of the Convention and its focus on merely conservation of “the materials or the fabric of the past”⁷⁶. The increasing involvement of society as a whole with heritage means that it is no longer, if indeed it ever was, the act of preservation for academics and antiquarians.⁷⁷ As others have argued, this marketing of “culture”, and thus in turn heritage, is increasingly an important part of tourism strategies⁷⁸. As I have mentioned, the WHC can be interpreted as globalizing its approach to heritage, that is, heritage understood – at least in part – as an industry. Here, embodying Guy Debord’s claim in 1967 that culture would be the next domain of capitalism in the years to come, the WHC world heritage sites can be interpreted as being what others have called in different contexts the “gift shop at the end of history”⁷⁹.

⁷³ See UNESCO, *Managing Cultural World Heritage* (France: UNESCO, 2013), 14.

⁷⁴ A process embodied in the WHC’s special edition on Managing Cultural World Heritage. See UNESCO, *Managing Cultural World Heritage*.

⁷⁵ UNESCO, *Managing Cultural World Heritage*, 21.

⁷⁶ UNESCO, *Managing Cultural World Heritage*, 24.

⁷⁷ UNESCO, *Managing Cultural World Heritage*, 22.

⁷⁸ See Thomas Klak and Garth Myers, “How States Sell Their Countries and Their People” in *Globalization and Neoliberalism: The Caribbean Context*, ed. Thomas Klak (USA: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 87–110.

⁷⁹ McKenzie Wark, *Telesthesia: Communication, Culture & Class* (Great Britain: Polity Press, 2012), 101.

2.3.2. The World Heritage Order?

The OP guidelines show how while the WHC operates with nation states it can also be understood as transcending the domain of nation states. The story of “world heritage” is not the tale of autonomous, sovereign, nation states, but rather an “increasingly autonomous international administrative system”⁸⁰ - or what I call the *world heritage order* that operates within nation states. This new order achieves its authority on world heritage by interpolating other forms of heritage as being of lesser value than the universal heritage sanctioned by the WHC. The *world heritage order* achieves a standardization of both the valorization of heritage, with World Heritage at its pinnacle, as well as a global standardization of a particular relationship between management and the pinnacle of world heritage.

While a site’s receiving the designation of “World Heritage” has clear benefits for the promotion of the sites local tourism/heritage industry, entering the WHL also carries a series of assumptions about the ways in which these sites are to be managed⁸¹. While the site’s World Heritage status is set from an authority it is the assemblage of the tourist gaze⁸², interpretive apparatuses and various other media that surround and sustain the location as a WHS⁸³. Within this assemblage, the sovereignty of the nation’s heritage is reconfigured under a transnational WHC definition that embodies a management mandate.

While under normal circumstances a World Heritage site is directly managed by the nation in whose political boundaries it is located⁸⁴, as I have shown, it operates within a rubric set by the WHC that simply cannot be ignored. The nation manages its WHS as a type of semi-privatized transnationalism⁸⁵: the sites both promote the WHC’s

⁸⁰ Irr, *World Heritage Sites and the Culture of the Commons*, 85.

⁸¹ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 92.

⁸² John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990).

⁸³ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 92.

⁸⁴ Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 7.

⁸⁵ While Scher does not use this specific language, here I am drawing from the work of Philip Scher, “Heritage Tourism in the Caribbean: The Politics of Culture after Neoliberalism,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 30, no. 1 (2011).

“universalistic” transcultural appropriation of national heritage as well as sets the manner in which one accesses such sites through its “management mandate”. In this way and others, the WHC operates as a “heritage regime”⁸⁶. In WHC sites, WHC’s institutions reside in their adopted host nations that allow them significant legal and operational autonomy⁸⁷. Here, they operated in what I call *special heritage-economic zones*, where a form of governmentality is constituted in a local-global context through a synergistic mix of WHC “international policy, national legislation, local rules and market needs”⁸⁸. In cases such as this, “heritage resource management” acts as a force that legitimizes relations of power/knowledge and fosters the creation of new subject positions for individuals and social groups⁸⁹. This form of transcultural identity is fostered through the high valorization of heritage that must be accessed through the gatekeepers of an applied management mandate. Forming a part of what Bourdieu calls our *habitus*⁹⁰, this set of processes mandated by the WHC fosters the articulation of subjectivities that internalize a passive relationship to culture and heritage⁹¹. In other words, it is an approach that, as I will show, is *essentialist* with regards to its treatment of heritage.

⁸⁶ Coombe, *Managing Cultural Heritage as Neoliberal Governmentality*.

⁸⁷ Irr, *World Heritage Sites and the Culture of the Commons*, 86.

⁸⁸ Coombe, *Managing Cultural Heritage as Neoliberal Governmentality*.

⁸⁹ Coombe, *Managing Cultural Heritage as Neoliberal Governmentality*.

⁹⁰ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

⁹¹ Coombe, *Managing Cultural Heritage as Neoliberal Governmentality*.

Chapter 3.

Theorizing Janus Faced Heritage: Pasts, Promises & Present Politics

The Roman god Janus provides an appropriate symbol in which to appreciate the role of the imagined past and future in the present. A much-loved symbol in works of historiography this one-time Roman god is often symbolized as having two faces: one looking forward and one looking backwards. It has been said that Janus was seen as guarding the “order of the universe” by at once being the god of beginnings and the god of gateways⁹². By both looking at the past and the future, the figure of Janus “connects the past to the future and the future to the past”⁹³. As Arendt puts it, it is the “future which drives us back into the past”⁹⁴. It is this shared sense of history and the future that develops the basis for the *communitas* of a present society by providing what Arendt calls a “pre-established framework of reference”⁹⁵. For the purposes of this paper, this figure can be understood as representing the “present-ness” in which the past and future are “located”. That is, “heritage” operates *in* the political present and not *from* the past. In other words, the Janus-faced development of heritage and visions of development provide the DNA for the cultural horizon of the present, providing the very context for meaning-making within the paradigm of a given archive. In this way, heritage narratives, can be understood as “the past as cultural fact”⁹⁶, and can also be understood as providing the context for the narration of development, or what has been called the “future as cultural fact”. Here, approaches to the past and future are understood as

⁹² Jerome Kohn, Introduction to *Between Past and Future* (USA: Penguin, 2006), vii.

⁹³ Kohn, Introduction to *Between Past and Future*, vii.

⁹⁴ Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (USA: Penguin, 2006), 10.

⁹⁵ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 5.

⁹⁶ See Arjun Appadurai, *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition* (New York: Verso Books, 2013).

operating in the present in the form of a cultural horizon. People in the present need “antecedents to locate themselves now and legitimate their ongoing and future ways of living”⁹⁷.

History and heritage then, become ways in which identities are conjured for present purposes⁹⁸. In the discourse of the past, heritage can be understood as playing a very significant symbolic role as the “past alive in the present,” the impossibility of knowing the “truths” of the past⁹⁹. Moreover, heritage is often perceived as being relatively value free, free at least from political allegiances¹⁰⁰. Appealing to heritage is like invoking the common good, which can be achieved “without provoking suspicion of party interests”. Before moving on to define two strands of Chinese heritage and analyze the role of the WHC in China’s developing authorized vision of the past, I will provide a brief outline of an implicit component of the paper: that visions of the past & future are necessarily interrelated. The paper is, in other words, premised on the assumption that “culture, cultural heritage and museums have become central to political agendas due to their ability to define, celebrate and also question the cultural identity of social groups”¹⁰¹. Therefore, the purpose is to open up the apparent neutrality of these institutions to critique. In order to further this end, the paper will focus on how the past – here included is heritage – is an articulation that is fundamentally composed in the political present. That is, far from heritage – let alone the OUV idea of such a heritage – being a “fact of history”, the paper hopes to open the critique of the neutrality of such claims.

3.1. Approaching Heritage: Essentialism & Nominalism

One can differentiate two major approaches to heritage: one which plays a role in hiding the ideological role that claims of the past can make on claims of the present and future by treating heritage as a natural given, and another that opens the past – and in

⁹⁷ Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (Great Britain: Routledge, 2006), 22.

⁹⁸ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 22-3.

⁹⁹ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* 13.

¹⁰⁰ Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 94.

¹⁰¹ Anico, *Representing Identities at Local Municipal Museums*, 64.

turn the nexus of the present and future – to criticism and creative alterations by treating heritage as a social construct among others. I will now turn to a brief definition of what I call the mainstream *essentialist* approach to heritage, which can be understood as the purview of *heritage experts* that passively accept and study a given transcendental heritage, and that of a *nominalist* approach, where *heritagicians* are understood as being active participants in the socio-historic assemblage of a given heritage. On the one hand, there are “*heritage experts*” that treat heritage as a discursive object that is available to study and on the other hand, there are *heritagicians*, understand that, following Faulkner, the “past is never dead, it is not even past”¹⁰². Here, *heritagicians* can be understood as being half-mortician half-magician: conjuring up the past and beautifying its imperfections it for its *final* triumph in the present. Building on my delineating the two approaches I will also provide special focus on what both mean to the question of identity, which is of great importance in unlocking the unfurling PRC-WHC dynamic and it’s role in re-configuring China’s heritage in both form and content.

Before moving on however, I will draw on a metaphor from Borges that will be used as a frame to delineate these two approaches by providing a brief introduction to two fundamental concepts of heritage: the past and the narrative. The past is, to put it crudely, “all that has gone on before everywhere”¹⁰³ which is, to put it simply, both *before* and *beyond* any sense of the human scale. Even if it were possible to provide a *total account* of the past, it would be of no use-value. As an example of “completeness” without use-value, consider Borges’ “On Exactitude in Science.” In this short story Borges writes of an imagined empire where the science of cartography has reached such an exacting high that a map is made to the very same scale of the empire itself¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰² As quoted in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (USA: Penguin, 2006), 10.

¹⁰³ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ The story goes: “ In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.” See Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (USA: Penguin, 1999), 325.

Here, rather than the expected poverty of a signifier there is, in this case, excess: by being “exact” – the signifier covers the signified in its entirety – it has no use-value. With regards to the past, if history really aimed to describe the past *precisely*, in-itself an impossible feat, it would be a meaningless accumulation of detail. Moreover the “facts of known history”, taken by themselves, “possess neither a common basis nor continuity nor coherence”¹⁰⁵. In other words, history is “less than the past”¹⁰⁶ and even the most “empirical” chronicler has to invent narrative structures to give meaningful shape to time and place¹⁰⁷. While it may be only “partial” history and heritage are nonetheless full of potential. Following Emile Duckheim, while the “part evokes the whole, it also evokes the same feelings as the whole”¹⁰⁸. Despite the “absence” of “complete heritage”, which as I have shown can never be made “present” in its totality, nominalists and essentialists have different views on the nature of what makes it onto the heritage “map” in question. For essentialists, what makes it on the map is a natural given, while for nominalists, what makes it on the map is open to critique. I will now turn to an analysis of these two approaches.

3.1.1. Mainstream Heritage: An Essentialist Approach

The mainstream approach to heritage is *essentialist* in nature, that is, an approach that finds unchanging *essences* in cultural heritage. Here, heritage is understood as being transcendental and “outside” society, by both being understood as having existed in the past while, nonetheless, also understood as being embodied in the present. Applied to China, where “civilizational” discourses abound, one can find many examples, such as Dun Li’s classic “The Ageless Chinese”¹⁰⁹ or more recently Weiwei Zhang’s “The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State”¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁵ See Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 84.

¹⁰⁶ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 6.

¹⁰⁸ As quoted in Di Giovine, *The Heritage-scape*, 30.

¹⁰⁹ Dun J. Li, *The Ageless Chinese: A History* (Charles Scribner’s Sons: USA, 1978).

¹¹⁰ Weiwei Zhang, *The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2012).

When we engage in heritage on essentialist terms it implies that it is something that “is” naturally, existing outside but nonetheless operating on the social. Here, the *heritage expert* – those engaged in the practice of heritage in this manner – traces a pedigree when she looks for a single line of descent from the privilege of the “end” (present) through a “middle” to a single source, a beginning¹¹¹, with the single action being the specific heritage of the nation or the people. In such cases, the narrative represents the past – and in turn heritage – in terms of a teleological linear pedigree.

The mainstream approach is located in many major institutions that are established to re-produce the *heritage assemblage*: museums, legislative bodies, academic disciplines ect...¹¹² Each of these institutions embody the approach to heritage as “something above and beyond the ordinary, outside the realm of accountancy; ‘the audit society’ and the economic”¹¹³. This follows a long line of treating culture as something outside of daily life. For example, Adorno & Horkheimer’s view of an economic interpretation of cultural processes as an expression of a society in trauma¹¹⁴, something that - when it cannot be avoided - is to be disdained as being of low value. In cases such as this culture, and in turn heritage, brought into the reality of economics, located within the “base” world of real social relations, is perceived as being degrading or somehow “inauthentic”. In order to distance myself from this line of thought, I will now first turn to a brief outline of the essentialist approach to heritage with regards to what this means to identity, and then move on to provide a couple of examples of the essentialist approach.

¹¹¹ A structure that is quite a similar to Aristotle’s approach to plot. See Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. James Hutton (USA: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982).

¹¹² See John Carman, *Against Cultural Property: Archaeology, Heritage and Ownership* (Great Britain: Duckworth, 2005), 56.

¹¹³ Carman, *Against Cultural Property*, 56.

¹¹⁴ While Throsby is arguably oversimplifying the work of the Frankfurt School, there is nonetheless a slippery slope for arguing for the autonomy of culture with a society and overlooking how culture is produced within society. See David Throsby, *Economics and Culture* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11.

Essentialism and Identity

It is not hard to see how the valorization of heritage paired with approaching it as transcendental fact, operating both outside and through society, can be seen as playing a critical role in identity formation given its alleged neutrality. Being “outside” of the everyday but also “in” everyday life, the essentialist approaches heritage as if it has an *active* role in producing individual and national identity. In such an approach, individuals and ideals can be measured against the litmus test of the peoples true essence as revealed by tradition and heritage. Here, heritage is not understood as merely being a “map of the past” but also a “constitutive map of the present”. This approach leads to a view of heritage as being an agent, or in Aristotelian language, a type of *prime mover* that irrevocably sets in motion a given identity of a people (and in turn of a person). In other words, essentialism presents heritage "as a 'consensual' past, a past without conflict and a past that is more to do with leisure, entertainment and family fun than with historical verities and continuities"¹¹⁵.

Such is the pervasiveness of the essentialist approach to heritage that it has succeeded in generating the self-fulfilling aura of trans-historic truth around the concept of nationhood¹¹⁶, which requires a sense of heritage. When approaching heritage as operating outside of normal social relations, it is no wonder that national entity is regularly experienced in ways that resist dismissal as merely “false consciousness”¹¹⁷. In a similar way, as it operates in this manner, it is deemed to be “neutral” heritage and is not something that one can be blamed for, as heritage plays a fundamental constitutive role in identity. Here the valorization of heritage as being *outside of society* as well as operating *through individuals* sets the ground for understanding heritage in terms of an “invisible hand” with regards to identity formation: one must submit to heritage as an

¹¹⁵ David Crouch, “The Perpetual Performance and Emergence of Heritage,” in *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past*, ed. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, 57-71. (Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 46.

¹¹⁶ Goss, Brian and Christopher Chávez, Introduction to *Identity: Beyond Tradition and McWorld Neoliberalism*, ed. Brian Goss and Christopher Chávez (UK: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2013), xiii.

¹¹⁷ Goss, Brian and Christopher Chávez, Introduction to *Identity: Beyond Tradition and McWorld Neoliberalism*, xiii.

attempt to regulate or change it is doomed to fail. In short, this view opens the concept of heritage as being an *agent* capable of producing subjects.

Essentialism in Practice: Huntington and Thatcherism

I will now locate two examples of the essentialist approach to heritage, by briefly looking at Samuel Huntington's book "The Clash of Civilization" and British Thatcherism. Consider how Thatcherism, following the work of Stuart Hall, unleashed market forces that created anxiety from "below" while at the same time an appeal to tradition and heritage and its corresponding vision of social order was made from "above"¹¹⁸. At a moment of electoral unpopularity and social unrest, the Thatcher government summoned not the rhetoric of market rationality "but an archaic British nationalism"¹¹⁹. Here, while "market forces" destroyed the illusions of broken political promises, in this moment of social difficulty one can trust the "empire to strike back"¹²⁰. This example shows how through a defense of heritage, one can push through a wide range of policies. Heritage, in other words, far from simply reflecting one reality can be used to justify a wide range of legislation¹²¹. As an example, heritage on the one hand, may push through a rhetoric of a "modern market" and, on the other hand, appeal to "fantasy of a late return to the flag" leading to an affect of "marching towards the future clad in the armour of the past"¹²².

One of the better-known examples of this approach is found in Samuel Huntington's work *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*¹²³. Here we have a picture of the world where nation states are shown to be arbitrary divisions, a superstructure, that stay on the mere surface of the true basis of identity which is understood in terms of civilizations. In other words, while civilizations – understood as

¹¹⁸ Stuart Hall, "The Neoliberal Revolution: Thatcher, Blair, Cameron - the long march of neoliberalism continues," *Soundings* 48 (May 1, 2011): 9.

¹¹⁹ Hall, *The Neoliberal Revolution*, 18.

¹²⁰ Hall, *The Neoliberal Revolution*, 18.

¹²¹ Derek Gillman, *The Idea of Cultural Heritage* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 2011), I.

¹²² Hall, *The Neoliberal Revolution*, 18.

¹²³ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York : Simon & Schuster, 1996).

transcendental – make up the tectonic plates of world identities nation states operate and their boundaries act as superficial happenstance. Here, rather than identity characteristics being understood in eugenic fashion as causally linked symptoms of race, characteristics are triangulated through perceived cultural essences. Here, the roots of civilizational “heritage” play a more important role than the superficial level of nation states. For example, whereas China can become temporarily – *superficially* – communist, its “true essence”, of the “children of the dragon”, is *now and forever* Confucian. In cases such as this, we cannot expect a Fukuyama “end of history”¹²⁴ of Western style political economics as the world is not based on Western civilization: if one is born within a “Confucian heritage” then it sets in motion the constitutive events leading to one’s own identity formation.

Huntington’s argument can, in short, be understood as implying that the tectonic “heritage” of a given civilization has agency *over* the superficial agency of individuals. This is an essentialist approach to heritage at its finest, as it is not what is perceived today as being a civilization – say Chinese – subject to cultural change or political choice, but rather heritage as being a type of *prime mover* with regards to questions of agency. It is the essentialist interpretations of culture and heritage read in such a way that allows, in no small part, for the discourse of authenticity and cultural imperialism to flourish. Such terms can only operate with such a teleological reading of identity, in other words, heritage equates to identity. When one does not meet the criteria of a given heritage, it opens the horizon to be interpreted in terms of *bad faith* or *falleness*, or simply in terms of the fairly recent debates of authenticity/in-authenticity. In short, not acting out according to ones heritage leads one open to being *marked*¹²⁵. That is, a subject may exalt the abstracted ideal of their imagined community, while (paradoxically) despising most of their imagined neighbours.

¹²⁴ Following Lowenthal’s comment on Fukuyama: “perhaps the eclipse of history heralds the rise of heritage”. See Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 3.

¹²⁵ See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (Great Britain: Routledge, 2002).

3.1.2. Critical Heritage: A Nominalist Approach

A nominalist approach is quite different than an essentialist stance. A nominalist approach to heritage recognizes the role of ideology in the social imagination of the past as pedigree. Given its high valorization and implicit crystallization of a view of the past, values such as “culture” and “heritage” are understood as playing a privileged role in the reproduction of power relations. In short, heritage is understood ideologically. This approach assesses “heritage” as not the past living amongst us, but rather a curated engagement with the past from the perspective of the present. In other words, it would approach essentialism as being an example of reification *par excellence*, given its treatment of heritage as an otherworldly “thing”.

In the tradition of critical Marxists, the production of history is understood as being far from objective. Rather, it is understood as being one of the playing fields for ideological positioning¹²⁶. This forms the basis of Anderson’s famous argument with regards to the “imagined communities” and the nation state, where economics and culture intersect at the assemblage of the nation¹²⁷. Taking this a step further, the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves also affect how others interpret us. As cultures are in a perpetual state of change, so are the stories we tell about ourselves, with heritage narratives being one of many. In this sense an orchestrated attempt by a government to mediate this story, understood as *authorized heritage*, is worthy of examination and is a site open to critique.

In this way and others nominalism, first and foremost, opens heritage to critique. Far from being understood as a natural fact, following Benedict Anderson’s arguments on imagined communities¹²⁸, heritage can be understood as an imagined community imagining backwards. This form of imagining backwards, expressed in terms of tradition or heritage, are what Hobsbawm has claimed to be a rather recent invention: rising

¹²⁶ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 67.

¹²⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

¹²⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

heritage paralleling the rise of nations requiring such national narratives¹²⁹. In short, far from being a transcendental entity, heritage then is real in so much as it is real ideology: that while a heritage of a nation may be used to motivate political concerns it is a socio-cultural ideological formulation which can be debated and questioned.

It is important to note that nominalism does not necessarily entail a simplistic postmodernist “anything goes” approach to heritage, history, or narrative more broadly. Historical narratives, which make up ones cultural horizon, “are premised on previous understandings, which are themselves premised on the distribution of archival power¹³⁰”. In other words, *heritagicians* build their successive narratives based on the archive they inherit¹³¹. In short, while sources are mute¹³² the availability of such sources to a given reader represents historical power relations. These constraints can be understood as forming the basis of a type of Gadamerian “cultural horizon” in which we, as socialized individuals, operate on some level. In short, from the vantage point of a particular horizon, differences between “fact” and “fiction” can be made.

Nominalism and Identity

Against an essentialist approach to heritage which is understood as being an unquestionable constitution of identity, a nominalist approach is able to interpret the relationship between heritage and identity as being a site of politics. Like Saïd’s arguments against essentialism being applied and normalizing power relations between “east” and “west”¹³³, nominalism opens up heritage to critique in that it recognizes that for each narration of heritage can also be understood as a narration or crystallization of power relations and of presences and absences. That is, the choices of what belongs to the map of a given heritage – the aspects of an archive to be called forth – produces a positivity of a heritage as well as set of absences and silences.

¹²⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-14.

¹³⁰ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (USA: Beacon Press, 1995), 55.

¹³¹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 56.

¹³² Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 46.

¹³³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003).

A nominalist approach recognized how amazingly fast historic multicultural points of contact can be subsumed under the fault-lines of the cultural-now. Marx, recalling one of the founders of “modern historical consciousness” – Giambattista Vico’s – argued “the history of man is to be distinguished from the history of nature by the fact that we have made the one but not the other”¹³⁴. That is, we actively produce history and therefore history does not, at a fundamental level, operate simply outside of social relations. In other words, heritage cannot exist independently of a process of categorizing, ordering, listing and archiving¹³⁵. It is a selective process that “charts” the “visible” on the map of a given heritage as much as it *maps* absences, the “un-important” and “invisible”. In other words, all production of heritage will, at some point, also be a production of absence due “to uneven power in the production of sources, archives, and narratives”¹³⁶. We are now prepared to accept that heritage narratives cannot provide “complete” accounts of the past, but rather have different functions and relations with the past as a *necessarily ideological field of inquiry*. That the heritage has a given shape because the present is full of purpose, as our desires prepare the rhetorical moulds into which tradition and heritage is poured¹³⁷. Drawing from Trouillot, silences enter the process at four crucial moments in the process of re-articulating the assemblage of a heritage: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)¹³⁸.

Nominalism in Practice: Opening the Possibilities

While we may be historically rich we may be historiographically poor, or, to further the metaphor of *dramatis personae*, we may know our roles, but not know the *place* in which we act. Against this trend, a nominalist approach opens the normative assumptions of a cultural horizon to critique. As I have shown, rather than interpreting

¹³⁴ As quoted in Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, 112. Also see Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 57.

¹³⁵ Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 6.

¹³⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 27.

¹³⁷ Robert Spoo, *James Joyce and the Language of History: Daedalus' Nightmare* (USA Oxford University Press 1994).

¹³⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 26.

heritage as a transcendental given, operating outside of nature, a nominalist approach locates heritage as an object constituted by social-relations. In other words, heritage is not a natural given, but rather a socio-historic product. Nowhere is this social fabrication of heritage more explicit than in “failed heritage”: narratives that are no longer tenable or when the identity in which the heritage was associated has been displaced¹³⁹. Against an essentialist approach, where earlier attempts at authorized heritage can be interpreted as being “aberrations” to the true identity of a people or culture, a nominalist approach would interpret each successive attempt at authorized heritage-making in terms of what Gramsci would call a war of position.

It is easy to see how the valorization of heritage as something that is both a key to identity formation as well as something that is outside of society, as an eternal fact, that makes heritage such a salient mechanism for the naturalization of an ideology¹⁴⁰. For Latour¹⁴¹, facts are approached as indisputable, complete, objects that are unmediated and therefore outside of interpretation. This operates within the essentialist approach as a “fetishism of the facts” that “still dominate[s] history and the other social science” where it reinforces the view that any conscious positioning should be rejected as ideological¹⁴². As Jenkins puts it, “dominant ideologies currently articulate history ‘academically’”¹⁴³. From this approach, the historian’s position is thought of as being an “unmarked” non-historical “observer”¹⁴⁴. Given this perceived neutrality, heritage here is closed to critique. Against this, as Nietzsche says, we need history, but “our need for it

¹³⁹ With some irony the appropriation of an earlier take on authorized heritage as being “fake”, an “imposture” or even as a temporary setback, is part and parcel of authorized heritage in the present.

¹⁴⁰ It is not only the idea of “heritage” that has been globalized but also the concept of “culture” as an ontological category. Consider for example, how the Chinese concept of *wenming* entered it’s vocabulary via Japanese translations of French writings. See Nicholass Dynon, “Four Civilizations’ and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology”, *The China Journal* 60 (July 2008), 89.

¹⁴¹ See Bruno Latour, “From realpolitik to dingpolitik or how to make things public,” in *Making things public: Atmospheres of democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour & Peter Weibel (USA: Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe/MIT Press. 2005), 14-41.

¹⁴² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 151.

¹⁴³ As quoted in Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 25.

¹⁴⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 151.

differs from that of the jaded idlers in the garden of knowledge”¹⁴⁵. The point is not merely to study heritage, but, in a fundamental way, to change it by following Benjamin in bringing the “ethereal”, theological speculation over history and return it to the “profane” political present¹⁴⁶.

Being able to critique heritage, against the essentialist de-political approach to heritage, nominalism takes heritage to be a site of politics. Here we are now able to see heritage, the past, as a site of political struggle. That is, while the curators of authorized heritage pick and choose the past they are understood and approached as operating firmly in the present. Here, what I call the *heritagician*, rather than simply passively accepting the heralds of heritage – a perceived kowtowing to the teleology of tradition – is understood as actively believing backwards¹⁴⁷, knowingly and actively forming and performing heritage in the present¹⁴⁸. Critics approach these curators of the past and promise in terms of the political present.

3.2. Pasts & Promises in the Political Present

As I have briefly shown, specific visions of history and culture, invoked as “neutral” facts, can normalize a variety of interests and close these spaces to critique. The example I used of Huntington’s taxonomy of the *flora and fauna* of civilizations, for example, carry with them deep political commitments of how things “are” naturally. In cases such as this, far from being “neutral,” a “defense of heritage” can push through a whole range of policies that may have otherwise faced wider social resistance. Here one thinks of Marx when he claimed that:

Man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of the whole cloth; he does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself, but out of

¹⁴⁵ As quoted in Uwe Steiner, *Walter Benjamin: An Introduction to his Work and Thoughts*, trans. by Michael Winkler (USA: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 170.

¹⁴⁶ Steiner, *Walter Benjamin: An Introduction to his Work and Thoughts*, 171.

¹⁴⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer* (USA: Penguin, 2003), 35.

¹⁴⁸ See Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (USA : Cambridge University Press, 2010).

such as he finds close at hand. The tradition of all past generations weighs like an alp upon the brain of the living. At the very time when men appear engaged in revolutionizing things and themselves, in bringing about what never was before, at such very epochs of revolutionary crisis do they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past, assume their names, their battle cries, their costumes to enact a new history scene in such time honored disguise and with such borrowed language.¹⁴⁹

While heritage is not “pure invention,” neither is it “simple fact”. That is, while it is “created,” heritage is not “entirely out of choice”. Against the essentialist approach, this paper adopts a nominalist approach and takes for granted that visions of development and the development of the past are interrelated, starting with the premise that the past, far from being relegated to history, is full of promise in the present and for the future.

¹⁴⁹ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (USA: Serenity Publishers, 2009), 9.

Chapter 4.

PRC-WHC: A Horizontal Analysis

The PRC joined the WHC rather late and only after an anti-leftist purge. Joining the WHC party late, however, does not mean that they have not “caught up” with the global rise of heritage. Today, the PRC has an impressive number of sites on the WHCL. Given its incredible predominance on the WHCL, the PRC has also spent a considerable amount on World Heritage applications. Far from simply being a matter of “promoting Chinese heritage”, the “heritage fever” can be understood as drawing on heritage narratives and displacing political red heritage in both form and content. In other words, this “heritage fever” replaces the importance of red heritage through a World Heritage stamp of approval, as it goes about interpolating red heritage in the Chinese context as a local peculiarity that is valued as being beneath the heritage of the world. Moreover, these new WHS’s operate in the WHC’s approved manner as tourist sites to be managed in a very particular way. In the context of the PRC, unlike other development projects that may have faced wide public resistance, the world heritage process occurs under an aura of the “neutrality” of heritage valorization that can be said to effectively nullify “normal” political resistance through its invocation of national pride and national culture. Here, culture is evoked in a way that protects itself from the accusation of embodying a given ideology or even party line beyond the perceived neutrality of cultural heritage essentialism and its natural valorization.

I will now provide a brief overview of the PRC’s relationship with the WHC, before moving on to Pingyao as a case study for these emerging relationships. As of 2010 the PRC ranked second in the world for most number of properties included on the WHC

list¹⁵⁰, being a contending leader in what has been called the “World Heritage fever fight” (世界文化遗产争夺热). The number of PRC locations on the list have increased dramatically in recent years leading to what some Chinese press have called “heritage fever” (遗产热)¹⁵¹. As I will show, it would be incorrect however to interpret this “heritage fever” in politically neutral terms, as a type of natural “cultural renaissance”, as it may instead be seen as being fuelled by the “party line and bottom line”¹⁵². That is in this case the twinning of in Thatcherism-like fashion business incentives and an apolitical political presentation of the past. Given the number of sites, one would think that the list would reflect China’s vast heritage. However, not only are there no sites representing what this paper has called red heritage, there are no sites that I am aware of that at the WHC level in China which are narrated through a nominalist red frame. In other words, if the WHC acted as our Virgil in approaching heritage, we would, simply put, never be introduced to China’s ongoing history with communism nor get a sense of its engagement with the past, tradition, and heritage as a site of politics in the present.

The question must be asked, given the enormous costs of site applications to the WHC, why would there be such a drive within the PRC for there to be so many applications for the WHC stamp of approval, and, perhaps more surprisingly, why are so many applications accepted given the incredibly high costs associated with such projects. We should now be prepared to see how the presentation of these issues in terms of “preserving Chinese culture” and “heritage fever” (遗产热) as a type of “capitalist fever” (淘金热). I will now, first, provide a nominalist approach to China’s contested heritage, second, locate the PRC’s entry in to the WHC, and lastly, look at the WHC Ancient City of Pingyao as being a case example of the role of the PRC-WHC dynamic in displacing in both form and content of China’s red heritage.

¹⁵⁰ See “Shòu huānyíng de “shìjiè yíchǎn” chēnghào.” News.163.com. Accessed November 10th 2010, <http://news.163.com/special/00012Q9L/whs.html> .

¹⁵¹ “Shēn yí shí jǐ yì huā de zhí!” Gzdaily.dayoo.com, accessed November 10th 2010, http://gzdaily.dayoo.com/html/2010-08/11/content_1058864.htm .

¹⁵² See Zhao, *Communication in China*.

4.1. China's Contested Heritage: A Nominalist Approach

With regards to Chinese heritage from a nominalist perspective, one can talk of ways in which “heritage” is being employed to help navigate the difficult terrain of pursuing developmental paths by various and at times opposing players. It would be no surprise that the developmental path offered by working from China's communist heritage, or even from a red framing of heritage as a site of politics, would be quite different from a position valorizing China's non-communist heritage. Here, definitions of China's heritage can be understood as playing a role in navigating the difficult terrain of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”: as through a “defense of heritage,” a whole range of future-oriented developmental projects that may have otherwise faced wider social resistance may be “packaged” in a socially salient manner. Who, after all, would be willing to argue *against* spending on a highly valorized heritage given its alleged essentialist importance? The high valorization of heritage after all sets it as a difficult topic for engagement from a “rational” public sphere perspective.

Within the PRC context this is all the more important to take into consideration given that the country is walking the tightrope from a socialist past or legacy and what is increasingly being seen as a capitalist future horizon. That is, while officially, the country is not following capitalist ideology but rather the doublespeak of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, or what has been called elsewhere “market socialism”¹⁵³. The question then becomes whose heritage will be called on to represent whose approach to development. In short, in whose image will heritage be articulated? Here, China is hardly unusual in formulating authorized heritage in order to deal with its controversial past¹⁵⁴.

While there is as much diversity as there are overlapping heritage claims around the concept of “China” itself, from an *authorized heritage perspective* and painting in rather broad strokes, my goal here is to provide an operative definition of various

¹⁵³ Peter Zarrow, “Social and political developments: the making of the twentieth-century Chinese State”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Chinese Culture*, ed. Kam Louie (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 40.

¹⁵⁴ Richard Curt Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2012), 111.

aspects of Chinese authorized heritage in order to critically access the PRC-WHC dynamic. In order to further this end, I will elaborate on two archival threads one could make use of to assemble China's vast heritage resources. Here, we can speak of these two major threads competing for claims of the status of China's heritage: the *nominalist red frame*, drawing from what I have shown to be a view where culture and heritage can be made a site of political struggle, and what I have labeled as an *essentialist neutral frame*, where culture and heritage are understood as being neutral sites reflecting an unquestionable status-quo¹⁵⁵.

4.1.1. Political Heritage: Nominalist “Red Frame” (1914-1976)

I will now recollect the past promises and past heritages of what I call the “red frame”. Within this frame, there is a recurring trend to locate heritage and culture firmly in the realm of the political. I will briefly outline some of these moments – themselves historical – where heritage, tradition, and history were approached as political sites. Underlying these past heritages and past promises were distinct moments where heritage was presented as neutral fact and was brought into the political realm of the present. In order to outline this “red frame,” I will briefly discuss the May 4th movement, the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, and the Cultural Revolution. In each, I will show how heritage was portrayed through a frame that approached the past as a site open to critique.

May 4th Movement

While it is difficult to do justice to the complexities of the May 4th movement of 1919, one of its major themes was its critical appraisal of China's heritage. In a very simplified way it can be said to have regarded the major obstacle for social progress to be Confucian heritage, with its normalization of patriarchy, the land tenure system, and the opposition to learning foreign ways¹⁵⁶. In short, the May 4th movement can be said to

¹⁵⁵ It is also important to note that while I have “dated” the two approaches I do not do so to claim that one naturally progresses into the other approach. My point is not to claim that the “red thread” has been lost in the great tapestry of the new, but rather to locate temporally when these approaches were at, arguably, their strongest.

¹⁵⁶ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 4.

have opened the high valorization of the past, tradition, heritage, and their alleged authority in early 20th century China, to critique. One of the primary targets was the perceived “stagnant tradition” of which Confucianism was perceived of being at its very core¹⁵⁷.

Within this cultural tectonic shift there were scholars arguing for “creative” relationship with heritage rather than an imagined simple “preservation” of heritage that served to not only retain the appearance of tradition but also the crystallization of power relations that came with it¹⁵⁸. In the words of John Thompson, echoing the general May 4th spirit, culture is understood as being a set of “mobilized by symbolic forms” which comes to serve to establish and sustain relations of domination¹⁵⁹. That is, here and elsewhere there was an awareness that many pursuing the alleged glory of tradition and heritage were also benefiting from the power relations that these systems of valorization supported.

Whatever the complexities of the May 4th movement, encompassing many thinkers and intellectual positions, one can get a very general sense of the movement through the work of Lu Xun (魯迅). Lu Xun understood first hand how a defence of “heritage” could in reality be a defence of the status quo of power relations. Or, as Lu Xun put it, almost all “who praise the old Chinese culture” associate themselves with the ruling class¹⁶⁰. This echo’s Bertrand Russell’s then contemporary critique of those defending Confucian tradition. Against the alleged praise of “Chinese heritage understood in essentialist terms,” Russell argued that “all those foreigners who with it, exploit China, [praise] the old tradition”¹⁶¹. By applying what we may now call a genealogical approach to discourse, Lu Xun argued that the alleged “eternal” nature of Chinese heritage has changed time and time again¹⁶² reflecting the given power

¹⁵⁷ Tse-Tung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 308.

¹⁵⁸ Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 309.

¹⁵⁹ As quoted in Yuezhi Zhao, *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict* (UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 37.

¹⁶⁰ Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 310.

¹⁶¹ As quoted in Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 312.

¹⁶² Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 310.

relations of the ruling groups at a given time. In Lu Xun's words, when the "barbarians" became rulers of China, Chinese scholars "discovere[d] these 'barbarians' [were] also the descendants of the Yellow Emperor"¹⁶³. Here the only "eternal" feature of Confucian heritage was not its content or "eternal teaching" – that he proved had changed time and time again - but rather it's "eternal form", that is, it having been understood in various times as being eternal regardless if it had in fact undergone incredible change¹⁶⁴. All this was part and parcel of a directed effort to reorganize the nascent nation's heritage. Through the efforts of Hu Shih (胡適), and others of the May 4th movement, came the "reorganization of the heritage", where heritage was actively politicized and brought into the realm of critique¹⁶⁵.

Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art

The "Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" was a 1942 conference held in Communist-controlled China during World War II. In order to get a flavour of the complex event, I will examine a speech given by Mao Zedong that was later published as "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art". The talk can, painting with broad strokes, be said to have pushed forward an approach to culture that, given the importance of the social role of art, be put into the service of the revolution and to subordinate itself to politics more generally¹⁶⁶. At this conference, in short, Mao's speech embodied the goal of subjugating the arts to serve political ends¹⁶⁷. Here what was understood as being "cultural workers" were just another brigade in the revolutionary army and another front in which Communists sought victory¹⁶⁸. As Mao put it "there is a cultural as well as an

¹⁶³ As quoted in Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 311.

¹⁶⁴ See Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 310-311.

¹⁶⁵ Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 317-318.

¹⁶⁶ Timothy Cheek, *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents* (USA: Bedford/St.Martin's, 2002), 113.

¹⁶⁷ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 6.

¹⁶⁸ Cheek, *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions*, 113.

armed front”¹⁶⁹. Here, part of this need of “a cultural army”¹⁷⁰ can be interpreted as being related to the heritage question:

“In the world today, all culture or literature and art belongs to a definite class and party, and has a definite political line. Art for art’s sake, art that stands above class and party, and fellow travelling or politically independent art do not exist in reality”¹⁷¹

Applied to the question of heritage, we can see a direct condemnation of “autonomous” or “essentialist” approaches to heritage as if it operated outside of society as neutral fact. Within this framework, we can see an approach to culture in general, as well as heritage, not as some neutral natural entity that stands “above class and party,” but rather a component of the political.

Cultural Revolution

In 1963 Mao complained how it was absurd that “many Communists are enthusiastic about promoting feudal and capitalist art, but not socialist art”¹⁷². On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, Mao complained that the Ministry of Culture had become the “Ministry of Dead Mummies”¹⁷³. These “dead mummies” of China’s heritage became the prime targets of the Cultural Revolution¹⁷⁴. While approaching the Cultural Revolution is wrought with difficulty¹⁷⁵, my goal is simply to provide a working outline of the way in which the revolution approached heritage¹⁷⁶. Much like the May 4th Movement and the Yan’an talks, this revolution located culture and heritage as sites open to critique in the

¹⁶⁹ Mao Zedong, “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art”, in *Mao Zedong and China’s Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Timothy Cheek, trans. Bonnie McDougall, (USA: Bedford/St.Martin’s, 2002), 113.

¹⁷⁰ Zedong, *Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art*, 113.

¹⁷¹ Zedong, *Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art*, 116.

¹⁷² As quoted in Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 49.

¹⁷³ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 43.

¹⁷⁴ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 43.

¹⁷⁵ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 23.

¹⁷⁶ During the Cultural Revolution that was also lots of subversion, both by the state and the common people. The state intervened to save certain heritage sites from destruction, by the orders of then Premier Zhou Enlai, by placing military guards at important cultural sites. Other times, individuals organized and hid documents of cultural value. See Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 43-44.

realm of the political. With the realization that the 1949 seizure of political power and the economy had not truly empowered the working class, at a basic level a major thrust of the CR was to “destroy the four olds, [and] establish the new”¹⁷⁷. The “four olds” were “old customs, culture, habits, and ideas”¹⁷⁸. The “four olds” were understood to be symbols of China’s “traditional” society, ranging from artworks celebrating Confucian elitism¹⁷⁹, classical paintings to women with bound feet¹⁸⁰. In other words, it was a battle not only against the “objects” of antiquity but against the webs of social relation they were understood as upholding, such as the horribly practice of bounding feet.

Red Thread’s International Heritage

It is important to note that “red heritage” can also be interpreted in terms of “global heritage,” given its global scope and relationship with world politics. While the May 4th Movement can also be located within a global discourse in approaching heritage, the PRC’s internationalist rhetoric working within a long tradition of international communism was explicitly pronounced. In other words, the Cultural Revolution itself can also be interpreted, rather than as a specifically Chinese expression, as being part of global heritage. One can see this global link between China’s communist heritage and the world through various meeting points around the globe. For example, various global radical youth movements in the West during the 1960’-70’s claimed imagined and emotional links to then contemporary events in the PRC¹⁸¹. The Cultural Revolution in particular captured worldwide attention as it coincided with global radical politics: from black power movements in the US, hippies, to the May ’68 Paris riots and the 1968 Prague Spring¹⁸². Western feminists, for example, borrowed the Maoist slogan “women hold up half the sky”¹⁸³. It is also important to note that at the level of authoritative heritage Party members in China itself were taught to respect “foreign contributions” to

¹⁷⁷ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 43.

¹⁷⁸ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 43.

¹⁷⁹ It is also important to note that the Cultural Revolution tapped into some long-standing traditions even as it called for radically new art. See Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 44-52.

¹⁸⁰ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 44.

¹⁸¹ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 4.

¹⁸² Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 84.

¹⁸³ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 85.

world revolution through the study of Mao's essay *Remember Norman Bethune*, which celebrated the Canadian surgeon who died in 1939 while treating communist soldiers¹⁸⁴. These examples, among others, point to the fact that the PRC's red heritage, with its global framing and relationship to other global movements, is eligible for world heritage.

4.1.2. De-Politicized Heritage: Essentialist “Neutral Frame” (1977-2014)

The late 70's and 80's marked a real shift in the way in which heritage was understood in the PRC. In 1976, the ailing Mao said that the “great Cultural Revolution is something that has not yet been concluded,” and thus he passed the task to the next generation to further the cause¹⁸⁵. That said however, whoever wished to continue this struggle in the immediate future failed as there was a Copernican paradigm shift after Mao's death in terms of the political culture in the PRC. In fact, just a year after Mao's death far from a next generation of cultural revolutionaries taking up the mantle, Hua Guofeng declared that the Cultural Revolution was over¹⁸⁶. Here and elsewhere, one can see a general shift in social and cultural policy demonstrating the repudiation of the Cultural Revolution¹⁸⁷ and red heritage more broadly. This general repudiation is still alive and well today. For a recent example, consider how during the Bo Xilai political scandal, Premier Wen Jiabao warned that China risked another “historical tragedy” such as the Cultural Revolution if it does not “reform”¹⁸⁸. In cases such as these and others, we see in China an example of what Wang Hui described as the rise of “depoliticized politics, from East to West”¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸⁴ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 86.

¹⁸⁵ As quoted in Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 101.

¹⁸⁶ See Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 101.

¹⁸⁷ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 102.

¹⁸⁸ Tania Branigan, “China Needs Political Reform to Avert ‘Historical Tragedy’ Says Wen Jiabao,” *The Guardian*, last modified 14 Mar. 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/14/china-political-reform-wen-jiabao .

¹⁸⁹ Wang Hui, “Depoliticized Politics, from East to West”, *New Left Review* 41 (2006).

In this new developing context anything *wenming* (文明) – that is civilizational or cultural – is highly valorized in a hierarchy of value¹⁹⁰. After decades of ideological appropriation, *wenming* presently carries with it a host of meanings which, together, provide a rhetoric for a distinctly reform-era value system¹⁹¹. Here, the Communist Party of China of the PRC is understood as recreating itself as a party that finds its legitimacy not through class credentials, but rather through civilization superiority¹⁹². The discourse surrounding “spiritual civilization”, quite unlike political civilization, does not tackle issues relating to political structures allowing it to be understood as being relatively “value free”. The *1996 China Yearbook* summarized the Party’s new rhetoric of that time by placing special promotion on “spiritual civilization”:

“In the building of modernization, we cannot seize only material civilization without seizing spiritual civilization; we cannot firstly seize material civilization and then seize spiritual civilization; and we cannot sacrifice spiritual civilization in exchange for momentary economic development.”¹⁹³

This points to a resurgent rise of the valorization of “Chinese culture” and tradition, which was so vehemently resisted by the May 4th movement and elsewhere. In 1995 then PRC leader Jiang Zemin commented that if Chinese people were to neglect “traditional moral teachings” China would become a Vassal of “western culture”¹⁹⁴. This represented a general shift in authorized heritage. For an example among many, around this time certain readings of Confucius were re-read as there was a new reading that positioned his theories within the framework of capitalist market reforms¹⁹⁵. Here and elsewhere there is a “cultural renaissance” the like earlier scholars such as Lu Xun would have critiqued vehemently.

With this new cosmology of “opening up” to global capitalism, a remarkable shift was set in motion from a previous approach to heritage and development, as sites

¹⁹⁰ Dynon, *“Four Civilizations” and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology*.

¹⁹¹ Dynon, *“Four Civilizations” and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology*, 109.

¹⁹² Dynon, *“Four Civilizations” and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology*, 101.

¹⁹³ As quoted in Dynon, *“Four Civilizations” and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology*, 93.

¹⁹⁴ Dynon, *“Four Civilizations” and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology*, 94.

¹⁹⁵ Dynon, *“Four Civilizations” and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology*, 94.

opened to critique. It is precisely this “red thread” that has undergone a process of becoming absent as a new frame of heritage closes to critique the displaced the red thread’s historical antecedents (May 4th, Yan’an, Cultural Revolution ect.).

Re-Threading Red Heritage

China’s “opening up”, via it’s entry into the WTO and rapid marketization, has been argued to go hand in hand with the entrenchment of neoliberalism as a belief system¹⁹⁶. A major component of this belief system is the re-organization of China’s political archive via the displacement, or re-framing, of China’s communist legacy. Here, the “red frame” approach to heritage is displaced, as various aspects of the political “opening up” of culture to politics is framed as an unfortunate interlude to China’s *true heritage* and *true developmental path*. “Mistakes” during this period were “re-rectified,” and once purged “capitalist roader” officials and once purged historical figures – such as Liu Shaoqi and Confucius, respectively – were rehabilitated during this period¹⁹⁷. With the “opening up” policy of economic reforms being pushed through, the “red frame” approach to heritage as a site of politics was quickly and quietly shelved by the new Party majority who were committed to developing new visions of the future and of the past. Here, the language provided of the history and heritage of class struggle was replaced by new narratives of economic development with the very term “economic class” being replaced by the “more benign appellation stratum”¹⁹⁸.

This represents broader re-orientations of the past. Today, for an example among many, Red Guards have been subsequently blamed not only for their own actions but also earlier acts of vandalism against China. They have become red-scapegoats to blame for a myriad of problems. It is not uncommon, for example, for everything from the Kuomintang activities in the 1920’s, Western art plunderers, the ruin of the “Emperor’s Garden of Perfect Brightness” (burned by European based forces in

¹⁹⁶ Yuezhi Zhao, *Chinese modernity, media and democracy: An interview with Lu Xinyu* *Global Media and Communication* 2010 6: 5,23)

¹⁹⁷ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 103.

¹⁹⁸ See Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise: Middle-Class Living in a Chinese Metropolis* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2010)

1860), to be wrongly attributed to the Red Guard at times by visiting tourists and even locals¹⁹⁹.

Counter-Cultural Revolution: From Critique of Ideology to Cultural Consumption

As I have already mentioned, in China one can see an increased move away from “ideology” to a focus on “culture”. This turn to “culture” also became apparent in various other disciplines, globally²⁰⁰. While “morality campaigns” post-Mao period have satisfied various political agendas, they have been interpreted as attempts to “fill the perceived inadequacies of China’s moral culture in dealing with the unintended realities of contemporary market reform”²⁰¹. Similarly to Hall’s observations of Thatcherism in Great Britain, China’s “cultural push” can also be understood in a similar manner. The impact of the de-stabilizing market forces unleashed at once on those on the bottom of the socio-economic food chain is/was coupled by the imposition of social order through appeals to tradition and heritage and is evident in present-day China²⁰².

While this can be seen in a variety of locations – such as the PRC-WHC dynamic itself – it can also be seen in the “Report of the Party’s 16th National Congress” in 2002. Under the section “Cultural Construction and Cultural System Reform,” it is stated that politics, economics, and culture are mutually affecting in the modern world²⁰³. This can be interpreted as admitting that a “global cultural rebranding” not only affects how Chinese see themselves and how others see the Chinese, but also helps establish “cultural markets,” such as tourism and the prestige of the quality of “made in China” products. It is, in other words, large scale advertising. There have been reports, for

¹⁹⁹ Kraus, *The Cultural Revolution*, 47.

²⁰⁰ For a brief overview of the rise of “culture” as a site of politics in the 1990’s, see Susan Wright, “The Politicization of ‘Culture,’” *Anthropology Today* 14. no. 1. (1998), 7.

For a larger analysis, see Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

²⁰¹ Dynon, “*Four Civilizations*” and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology, 84.

²⁰² For his analysis of Great Britain, see Hall, *The Neoliberal Revolution*, 17.

²⁰³ See Zhao, *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict*, 108.

example, which detail developments of a market-oriented cultural industry as a means to satisfy the masses' spiritual and cultural needs in this new economic system²⁰⁴.

Redux: Developing Confucius' De-Politicized Revival

As an example of the re-developing of China's "red frame" approach to heritage, consider the contested re-birth of Confucius within the current political cosmology of the PRC. Confucius has become, once again, a major figure in China's authorized heritage. His re-arrival on the cultural heritage scene was heralded by his "rehabilitation" by the Communist Party at the authoritative heritage level in 1984 where he was again accepted as "one of the glorious figures of China"²⁰⁵. The expenditures in promoting Confucius in China can be interpreted as being part of a "rebranding program" for the PRC both within and outside of the country. With regards to within the PRC, although some have presented the rise of Confucianism in terms of a positive cultural "rebirth", it can be interpreted as being part and parcel of legitimizing new theories of developing the future in China through bypassing the Maoist tradition by pointing to a "neutral" antecedent past. Rather than interpreting Confucius in Marxist terms as a being shackle from the past on the present, as had the May 4th movement, the return to Confucianism is framed as promoting a "rebirth" or a form of cultural "renaissance". For some, the rebirth of Confucianism is able to happily co-exist with the newly founded "socialism with Chinese characteristics," replacing certain tenets of Marxism which are thought to be no longer applicable.

Rising Confucianism can be seen as being a response to reports which detail developments of a market-oriented cultural industry as a means to satisfy the masses' spiritual and cultural needs in this new economic system²⁰⁶. Like Thatcher's calls to tradition while opening up market forces, a defence of a "heritage" is intertwined with interests of certain Communist Party members as well as the rising capitalist class.

²⁰⁴ Zhao, *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict*, 109.

²⁰⁵ Bill Smith, "Confucius rises as Communist Party revives tradition" *The China Post*. Last modified April 4, 2011. <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/china/national-news/2011/04/04/297217/Confucius-rises.htm>

²⁰⁶ Zhao, *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict*, 109.

Here, there is no “neutral” heritage in which to call forth through “true remembrance,” but rather only various ideological maps to create.

Confucius can be seen as being a “neutral” figure – unlike “political” figures like Mao or Chiang Kai-shek – that “all Chinese” can be said to find a common symbolic heritage in. To promote Confucius at the authoritative heritage level, in other words, is to promote an essentialist antecedent “homogenous past” to serve as a backdrop for the differences today. To do so is to arguably suggest that the political/ethnic differences are not as important as their historical unity. Confucius’ re-birth however is still contested at the authoritative heritage level, as was shown when a statue of Confucius was put in Tiananmen Square only to be quickly removed²⁰⁷. While its placement and quick disappearance can be seen as being a testament to the various factions within the PRC, its placement in the first place can be shown to be a “great leap forward” in approaching heritage given that in the cultural revolution such status were direct targets.

4.2. China’s Entry in to the WHC: De-Politicized Heritage with an International Stamp

The PRC’s entry into the WHC came after the purges against the left after Mao’s death. In 1985, the National People’s Congress ratified the UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, integrating, as then ICOMOS China Chairman Zhang Bai said, the “practice of heritage conservation in China with that being done around the world”²⁰⁸. It would take until 2001 for China to “join the rest of the world” in the re-organizing of its economy in joining the WTO. As I will argue China’s relationship to the WHC can be interpreted as operating on a privileged plane in displacing “red heritage” in both form and content given that “red heritage” is not present on the WHCL and given the fact that, as I have shown, a

²⁰⁷ Andre Jacobs, “Confucius Statue Vanishes Near Tiananmen Square,” *New York Times*, April 22, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/23/world/asia/23confucius.html?_r=0

²⁰⁸ Zhang Bai, “On the Development of the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China,” in *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China = Zhongguo Wen Wu Gu Ji Bao Hu Zhun Ze*, edz. Neville Agnew and Martha Demas (USA: Getty Conservation Institute, 2002), 91.

particular “management mandate” limits these sites in to a very particular commoditized vision of heritage. In other words, the manner in which the WHC-PRC dynamic has been developed sets itself at odds in terms of access with some aspects of Communist legacy.

While 1985 was the official date for entry in to the WHC, adaptation of the WHC approach to heritage can be seen earlier. In 1982, the Standing Committee of the 5th National People's Congress passed and issued the *Law on Protecting Cultural Relics of the People's Republic of China*, which indicated a “great progress of China's legal construction in relics protection”²⁰⁹. Moreover, in the PRC's 1982 constitution, it was added that:

“Governments at all levels should pay attention to heritage, correctly handle the relationship between economic development, social development and heritage conservation to ensure safety of cultural relics. Infrastructure, tourism development must comply with the principle of conservation work, the activities do not cause damage to artefacts. Public security organs, the administrative department for industry and commerce, customs, urban construction planning department and other relevant national authorities, it shall conscientiously perform the duties assumed heritage preservation and maintenance of cultural relics management order.”²¹⁰

These new regulations, enshrined after the fall of Mao, are a far cry from the critical approach to heritage found in the red thread. Here, heritage and its preservation are already being articulated as being outside of the realm of critique. With it's entry into the WHC however, one can see the extent in which China is joining the practice of heritage conservation “with that being done around the world”, as it goes about, in both form and content, displacing the PRC's red heritage. In order to further this end, I will now focus on the case example of Pingyao.

²⁰⁹ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²¹⁰ “Constitution of the People's Republic of China.” *People Daily*. Accessed January 30 2014, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>

4.3. From Poverty To Propriety: Pingyao's (平遥) Changing Walls

After the PRC signed on to the WHC approach to heritage, Pingyao, located in Shanxi province, became a World Heritage site. The city received the WHC stamp of approval in 1997 “due to its well-preserved city layout, city wall, and architectural excellence”²¹¹. During the late Qing Dynasty, there were many financial institutions within the cities walls. In fact Pingyao was once the financial center of China. It is home to one of the largest, as well as the first, “Chinese bank”, the “Rishengchang Exchange Shop” which was founded in 1923. This institution controlled almost half of the Chinese economy until the arrival of foreign banking institutions. It was, in Marxist terms, home of a national bourgeoisie. Pingyao’s walls were, after all, built for a reason. With the fall of the banks however, and without “natural resources”, Pingyao quickly plunged into poverty. With the rise of the communists and the PRC, Pingyao’s “heritage buildings” – many of which were sustained from those involved in the banking industry - were re-appropriated to meet the local living needs of broader elements of society.

I will now turn to an examination o the Ancient City of Pingyao in order to show how WHS designation displaces “red heritage” and the “red frame” approach to heritage in both form and content. As I will show, in terms of form, locals are literally out-priced now from entering their own city and, in terms of content, I will show how the re-appropriation of the treatment of the historic city during the cultural revolution, which was focused on providing housing for the people, is re-framed as being a “tragedy” against heritage as these residents are evicted out of their own city to make way for preservation. In order to further this end, I will first, locate “red Pingyao”, that is Pingyao prior to the “opening up” policy; second, look at Pingyao post-“opening up” policy; and finally, outline the role of the PRC-WHC dynamic in re-framing Pingyao and displacing, in both form and content, red heritage.

²¹¹ Shu-Yi Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 18–30.

4.3.1. Pre-Opening Up: Red Pingyao

As I have shown earlier, the “red thread” of Chinese heritage, embodied a new vision of politics and economics that went against “traditional” beliefs. This new approach to heritage and this new approach to development had visible effects on Pingyao. After liberation in 1949, many family mansions and shops were adapted for use as office buildings and factory warehouses, but the architecture remained in its original state²¹². What would now be called “heritage buildings” from earlier dynasties, such as temples, were converted into administrative structures, schools or simply housing to meet the needs of living locals²¹³. Space was re-articulated in the image of the worker as temple performances were replaced by socialist performances and courtyards became home of standardized exercises²¹⁴. Within these walls, families continued living in old courtyards — some within the once thriving banks. While this might not be surprising consider how, as one local scholar put it, “imagine the headquarters of Lehman Brothers converted into a commune”²¹⁵. During the Cultural Revolution this is essentially what happened. While Red Guards destroyed objects of architectural ornamentation and carvings, none of the old “heritage” houses that were inhabited were demolished²¹⁶.

4.3.2. Post-Opening Up: Workers go to the City

In the City and County of Pingyao, less than 50,000 people lived inside the walled city before the World Heritage designation. A big portion of the population living outside the city only visited the walled city to do business or shop on special occasions. When China began its “opening up policy,” economic development became the

²¹² Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 21.

²¹³ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 21.

²¹⁴ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 21.

²¹⁵ Edward Wong, “Ghosts of a Faded Gilded Age Haunt a 19th-Century Chinese Banking Hub,” *China Today*, Last modified March 17, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/asia/18pingyao.html?_r=0 .

²¹⁶ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

buzzword for the entire country. However, without any natural resources for economic development, Pingyao remained one of the poorest cities in China between the 1950s and the 1990s²¹⁷. Here, it does not take too much imagination to think of just how many of Pingyao's residents left to find work in the cities along the coastal industrial heartland of China, given that the coast was where much of what we now call heritage was destroyed in order to develop the new manufacturing bases of the world. These early boomers to the opening up policy chased the elusive development dragon to the detriment of heritage, a process is an ongoing one that is far from being over. Now, however, after the development of the coastal cities the development of a "resource-less" city like Pingyao is achieved through a development of heritage.

4.3.3. Pristine Propriety: Heritage comes to the Village

While Pingyao's historic survival rested on the walls that protected the city – as well as its banks – from destruction, it is poverty that prevented the city from following a similar pattern of "development" that would have lead to its demise²¹⁸. While poverty may have saved the city it did not save Pingyao's people from the realities of poverty. Moreover, it has been said that compared with other historic cities, Pingyao does not even stand out as being of any outstanding architectural worth²¹⁹. It's preservation, in light of the mass destruction of other traditional settlements after the open door policy of the 80's and 90's, is said to be the only reason Pingyao became the representative city for research²²⁰. In short, much like Shanxi provinces famed "mature vinegar" (山西老陈醋), Pingyao itself was "mature" for World Heritage Status given its "state of preservation": left alone, untouched from the sprouting new flavours of capitalist-lead development that initially occurred along China's coasts, and hidden away from many of such narratives, it was now ready to be opened for tourist market consumption.

²¹⁷ Wang, "In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 21.

²¹⁸ "Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage" *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²¹⁹ Wang, "In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011).

²²⁰ Wang, "In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011).

Pingyao Becomes a World Heritage Site

While local officials began “restoring” Pingyao in the 1980s²²¹, the designation as World Heritage Site in 1997 gave the city a resource to mine, through a palpable rise of heritage tourism. While there may be many other causal factors at play there is an incredible rise in tourism industry revenue at Pingyao upon entering the WHCL. Pingyao’s tourism revenue soared from 12.5 million RMB in 1997, when added to the WHC list, to 670 million in 2008²²². In short, the WHC designation has brought the Ancient City of Pingyao into the global heritage stage, and the walled city now has become a tourist destination for economic benefits²²³.

While the initial income that was received from it’s joining the WHCL ranks “may seem a paltry amount to inhabitants of the more developed eastern Chinese provinces”, but to residents of Pingyao, a relatively poor area, it is a wealth “beyond measure”²²⁴. Here, in line with WHC’s recommendations, effort was made to keep the city’s “traditional form and style” for tourist usage instead of for their original religious functions²²⁵. In other words, locations that had been transformed into schools or government buildings during “red Pingyao” have now been transformed into spaces for the operation of a re-articulated PRC heritage industry. In short, the designation as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO has not only brought the Ancient City of Pingyao into the global heritage stage where the walled city now has become a tourist destination for economic development²²⁶, but, as I will show, it has a role in re-processing China’s other cultural heritage.

²²¹ Edward Wong, “Ghosts of a Faded Gilded Age Haunt a 19th-Century Chinese Banking Hub,” *China Today*, Last modified March 17, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/asia/18pingyao.html?_r=0 .

²²² Zheng. “World Heritage Fever: Good or Bad?” *CriEnglish*.

²²³ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 23.

²²⁴ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²²⁵ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 21.

²²⁶ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 23.

Re-framing Red Heritage

In Pingyao the subdivisions put in place during the height of communism are interpreted by WHC representatives as being threats to the preservation/restoration status of the Pingyao project²²⁷. The World Heritage Fund website, for example, laments how during the Cultural Revolution “the once magnificent large courtyard compounds occupied by individual wealthy families were confiscated and redistributed to multiple families, leading to extensive destructions and additions”²²⁸. What is interesting is that the changes made to the structure to make it more useful for the community are framed as being “destructive” to the great neutral/de-politicised historic past. The power relations embodied in these old habitations – historically reserved for the cities national bourgeoisie and beyond reach from the countless poor (think of the Lehman Brothers example earlier) – are never acknowledged by the WHC.

In this way, the Centre fails to acknowledge in other words why the walls around Pingyao were so big. What is acknowledged on the other hand, is that WHC wants to “restore” Pingyao to what it sees as being the “original” Pingyao – embodied power relations and all. Moreover, this set of older power relations that are being “re-lived” through the process of evicting local residents which is occurring not just in the name of the local economy but in the name of *World Heritage*. This is evident as the Global Heritage Fund document previously mentioned goes on to claim that today “the problem has yet to be been resolved; complicated multiple ownerships and occupancy have led to uncontrolled additions of new kitchens, bathrooms and other functions to the courtyards, which were originally designed for single family units”²²⁹. In this case it is very obvious: the “preserved” culture sought for by the WHC is one for elites that bypasses the “mistake” of the Cultural Revolution. Here, that “preservation” means that

²²⁷ “*Pingyao Ancient City, China: China’s First Banking Capital An unpreserved area of the Ancient City?*” *globalheritagefund.org*.

http://globalheritagefund.org/what_we_do/threats/current_projects/pingyao_china

²²⁸ “*Pingyao Ancient City, China: China’s First Banking Capital An unpreserved area of the Ancient City?*” *globalheritagefund.org*.

http://globalheritagefund.org/what_we_do/threats/current_projects/pingyao_china

²²⁹ “*Pingyao Ancient City, China: China’s First Banking Capital An unpreserved area of the Ancient City?*” *globalheritagefund.org*.

http://globalheritagefund.org/what_we_do/threats/current_projects/pingyao_china

personal ownership of the site has to be ended in order to promote the interests of tourism industry. In simple terms the goal of “restoring” Pingyao goes hand in hand with “relocating” Pingyao’s residents.

“Relocating” Residents by “Restoring” Pingyao

While the WHC was happy to ensure that the “ancient city of Pingyao” was here to stay as an example of OUV, a city “well-preserved” since the Ming and Qing dynasties²³⁰, much less can be said about the actual residents who had made it their home. They, on the other hand, were of less “OUV” given the manner in which they were “relocated”. It is claimed that in 2003 some 400 families have moved into 18 new buildings²³¹. While the rhetoric of the local Pingyao government adopted a principle to not simply preserve this cultural heritage city “like a dusty museum relic inside a glass case”, but to keep it alive and working²³², these residents were perhaps interpreted as being “unworkable” given the city’s new role as World Heritage. Extending Mao’s words, it is the “dusty mummies” that are being valorized and not the living residents. It could be argued that these people might have made the location look less scenic and marketable. Here, a defense of heritage and culture can be translated into the interests of capital and the creation of new repression against space and movement. In other words, we have a heritage version of “pastoralists,” taking peasants off their land²³³.

As one government website claims, as “tourism is helping Pingyao citizens to emerge from poverty, it is in their interests to protect and conserve the old city”²³⁴ and so the “local government has, therefore, taken the advice of experts” and aims to “relocate 20,000 Pingyao residents so that the crowded old city may retain its authenticity”²³⁵.

²³⁰ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²³¹ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²³² “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²³³ Wark, *Telesthesia: Communication, Culture & Class*, 109.

²³⁴ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²³⁵ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

However, while “residents fully support the relocation plan, their finances do not permit buying the more spacious houses in the new city”²³⁶. Following Harvey’s argument that the “language of the commons” is the handmaiden of economic globalization²³⁷, Pingyao’s *world heritage* status displaced the *worldly homes* of residents in and around the city. As a form of “accumulation by dispossession”²³⁸, the language of the commons was used here in the language of the OUV of Heritage that was employed at the very moment it was dispossessing the city’s inhabitants. All of which occurs under the auspices of “World Heritage”.

The New Walls of Pingyao?

Given the WHC imperatives of management and conservation, as well as to create income for the residents left in Pingyao, an entry fee is charged to enter certain buildings. According to 2005 data, also available for purchase are “all in one” tickets available for 120 RMB for adults or 60 RMB for youth and students²³⁹. With the 2005 average monthly income of Pingyao Country being 300 RMB²⁴⁰ the high entrance fee translates in to the reality that these *new economic walls* cannot be overcome by poor locals who cannot compete in the newly minted “heritage market”. In short, these new walls have excluded local residents from being involved in what was previously their own city center²⁴¹.

²³⁶ “Pingyao Relocates Its Dwellers to Conserve World Cultural Heritage” *China Today*. January 8, 2003. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/53066.htm> .

²³⁷ David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2003).

²³⁸ Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 162.

²³⁹ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 22.

²⁴⁰ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *J Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 22.

²⁴¹ Wang, “In search of authenticity in historic cities in transformation: the case of Pingyao, China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 1 (2011): 27.

4.3.4. Concluding a Journey To The Bank: Re-Writing Development via WHC Designation?

Through a horizontal analysis, I have shown how, like a vampire, the WHS label has sucked the red out of Pingyao: displacing red heritage in both form and content. It has also set about a process where a mummified heritage is preserved at the expense of the actual living. I have shown how at the same time there was a Copernican political shift within the PRC there was also a shift in its relationship with its contested ideological heritage. In short, there has been a celebration of a de-political heritage, developing the past, running concurrently with its move towards integrating China into the global capitalist economy and its move to new visions of development.

Consider how a moment of how celebrating “red heritage” in Pingyao, on such an institutional scale and with such funding as the Pingyao process received for its WHS application, may have been an impossible feat post-opening up of China’s economy to global capitalism. While some have argued that “red heritage” tourism can be adopted as a strategy for the development of rural economies²⁴², for whatever reason none of these sites have made it to the WHL. Perhaps, if it was not because of the WHC’s “management mandate”, red heritage could have had a better showing in China’s vast representation on the WHL. As I have shown in terms of form, the unthinkable reality from a red heritage perspective has set in: presently Pingyao locals are literally out priced from entering their own city. The valorization of Pingyao as a site of China’s re-framed heritage has, in other words, established new economic walls around the once impoverished city, a state of sustained poverty that ironically preserved its eligibility for WHL status. At the same time as China’s old banks of Pingyao are now re-opened as museums in the town’s OUV center, Pingyao’s residents themselves are being physically displaced²⁴³. Pingyao’s state now is a far cry from the city’s state during communism where, for better or worse, residents used land to their own benefit and participated in communist cultural performances celebrating the countries red heritage.

²⁴² Yiping Li, Zhi Yi Hu & Chao Zhi Zhang, “Red tourism: Sustaining Communist identity in a Rapidly Changing China,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 8:1-2 (2010): 105.

²⁴³ Edward Wong, “Ghosts of a Faded Gilded Age Haunt a 19th-Century Chinese Banking Hub,” *China Today*, Last modified March 17, 2009.
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/asia/18pingyao.html?_r=0 .

As I have shown, in terms of content, given that Pingyao was also the site of China's early banking culture and national bourgeoisie, it also plays a particular salient role in re-articulating China's ideological heritage. Celebrating Pingyao's banks and architecture, instead of Pingyao's population, is a very far cry from celebrating China's Red Heritage. As one architecture professor claims, the "banks tell a history of Chinese financial development, like how China started to transform from feudalism to capitalism"²⁴⁴. In short, it tells of everything except revolutionary heritage, everything except the past and future understood in terms of a political present. This quaint tale bypasses Red Heritage in favour of an essentialist reading of the "neutrality" and transcendental status of heritage, which provides the gateway for development. While new forms of development have opened, so has an alternative reading of China's heritage in the form of Pingyao understood as being the birth of China's banking and therefore market economy. The professor, however, is not alone in giving the banks a special place in China's heritage. Many Chinese leaders have made pilgrimages to the banks as is evident in pictures of a procession of the new Chinese visionaries of development: Hu Jintao, Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji, and other open market reformists²⁴⁵.

²⁴⁴ Edward Wong, "Ghosts of a Faded Gilded Age Haunt a 19th-Century Chinese Banking Hub," China Today, Last modified March 17, 2009.
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/asia/18pingyao.html?_r=0 .

²⁴⁵ Edward Wong, "Ghosts of a Faded Gilded Age Haunt a 19th-Century Chinese Banking Hub," China Today, Last modified March 17, 2009.
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/asia/18pingyao.html?_r=0 .

Chapter 5.

Concluding a Tiger's Leap

“History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now. Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of the now which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome incarnate. It evoked ancient Rome the way fashion evokes costumes of the past. Fashion has a flair for the topical, no matter where it stirs in the thickets of long ago; it is a tiger's leap into the past. This jump, however, takes place in an arena where the ruling class give the commands. The same leap in the open air of history is the dialectical one, which is how Marx understood the revolution.”²⁴⁶

As I have already mentioned in the beginning of the paper, seen from our Janus perspective of the present we live in the “interval between past and future”²⁴⁷. Drawing from Walter Benjamin's last work a creative engagement with history, or in this case heritage, can be described as being a “tiger's leap into the past” that is as much a “tiger's leap into the future” given that the creative engagement occurs in the present. In other words, it is a jump from the point of the contemporary status quo with the aim to “stir” the “future's past” to liberate heritage, if you will, from its political crystallization in the present: to re-route the heritage map by re-launching historiography as a form of creative remembrance. A process that would not only be “back-ward looking” but also carries forth a cognizant Janus-faced project of looking to the future and the past as part of an assemblage in the present²⁴⁸. In short, the aim of this creative engagement is to “short circuit” the alleged automaton that a crystalized understanding of history can be

²⁴⁶ Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, trans. Unknown, <http://www.sfu.ca/~andrewf/CONCEPT2.html> .

²⁴⁷ Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 10.

²⁴⁸ See Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 142.

said to perpetuate: to slay, in other words, the golem that was once conjured and is now operating on its own: the essentialist understanding of heritage.

I hope this paper has, in a very small way, furthered the uncovering of the meaning of the past as possibility²⁴⁹ by opening up the PRC-WHC's authorized heritage dynamic for further critique. I have shown, far from being a "neutral" the WHC's OP point to a very particular approach to world heritage. A shift, that I have shown, that occurred primarily over the changing understanding of "OUV". As I have shown, moreover, China's joining into WHC and its following "heritage fever" can be understood in terms of displacing, in both form and content, political alternatives found in China's cultural archive as it goes about re-structuring of the ideological foundations of China's authorized heritage discourse. In summation, while heritage of the essentialist lot is rarely associated with creativity, I hope that my paper has captured, at least in part, some of the spirit of the "tiger leap" of creativity to heritage and that it is not merely a "paper tiger" (紙老虎).

²⁴⁹ See Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 150.

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