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Volume 6

Heritage Traces in the Making

*A Communicational Analysis
of Modes of Heritagization*

Jean Davallon

ISTE

WILEY

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Traces Set
coordinated by
Sylvie Leleu-Merviel

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Introduction

A Communicational Analysis of Modes of Heritagization

Le don du patrimoine (The Gift of Heritage) (Davallon 2006) followed up the exploration of the symbolic dimension initiated by the study of an exhibition staged as a media device. Observing, with Desvallées (1998, p. 90)¹, that the notion of heritage is a *practical category* (and not a concept), I proposed to move away from the quest for a “good” conceptual definition of this notion and to approach it, in the way that Lenclud (1987) studies tradition, in a “reverse filiation” sort-of way: in fact, it covers a range of “things” (material objects, social processes and complex entities), which are the mediums of a relationship to the past constructed by humans of the present who feel they have inherited from it. The concept of *heritagization* thus refers to the process that transforms these things into heritage through the attribution of a socially regulated status, thus instituting them as heritage objects that we have the obligation to keep, because they have value for the present and the future². In Western society, since the model of social acceptance of knowledge is based on their scientific validation, this reverse affiliation is *scientifically guaranteed*. In order to identify the operations that compose this process, I

1 In the case of certain books, there is a discrepancy between the edition cited and the original edition; thus, when necessary, in order to ensure the historical accuracy of the information, the latter appears in square brackets after the former.

2 This approach to heritagization is clearly distinct from that proposed in the *Dictionnaire de Muséologie* (Mairesse 2022, p. 383), which has no entry for “heritagization” (neither does the 2011 *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la Muséologie*, edited by Desvallées and Mairesse), but which states that “heritagization is part of the musealization process”. Such a reversal of the relationship between heritagization and musealization, while understandable in the context of a museum approach, is tantamount to reducing every construction of a symbolic relationship to “things” from the past to a technical operation of the physical or conceptual extraction of an “object” from its original context and assimilating all heritage objects to museum objects.

conducted a field analysis and also analyzed texts of a *practical, normative or prescriptive nature*, which operate, define and inscribe, in the thing itself, this new status, together with *scientific* texts that frame, describe, report or simply mention this transformation. In a second phase, focusing on an examination the characteristics of the relationship thus established, I formulated, then formalized, the working hypothesis that the recognition of these things as heritage objects amounted to the feeling of being in debt to those who had produced them. This hypothesis was accompanied by two sub-hypotheses: (i) these objects appear to remain the symbolic property of those who created them and who conferred upon them the value that we recognize in them in the present, which gives to the collective³ that claims this recognition an identity in time and (ii) they must be kept in order to be transmitted, the recognition of a debt forming the basis of the obligation to give⁴.

I had postponed the reexamination of the accumulated analytical material to a second phase in order to study the diversity of *production modes* of heritage status according to situations and types of heritage. After the study of the “symbolic” dimension of the process, about which I have just given a brief summary, I had intended to come back to the transformation of “historical practices”, if I may borrow this distinction from Augé (1994), who explains that “the symbolism that presents itself as predating any practice, is itself blamed by the historical practices whose evolutions or mutations reflect its effectiveness and extend its influence” (p. 84)⁵. This book is the result of this initial project of a communicational approach to the “historical practices” aspect. However, given the evolution of the heritage category and the development of new modes of heritagization – most especially the

3 In general, unless otherwise specified, I use the generic term “collective” to refer not only to ephemeral groupings of individuals (the audience of an exhibition, for example), but to social groups or perennial communities that regard a thing as their heritage.

4 Back in 1978, Pomian (1987 [1978], p. 42) had noted that collectibles have no usefulness but represent the invisible and are therefore defined by the fact that they are endowed with meanings, that they are “semiophores” (something that is obvious in archaeology). On the other hand, the interpretation he has put forward more recently (Pomian 2003, pp. 13–14), saying that this link, from the 19th-century onwards (only), has been replaced by a sacrifice of the present addressed at future generations, seems to me much more open to debate, since it amounts to denying any transitivity over time: in the case of heritage in general – and intangible heritage or natural heritage now confirm this – it is because we have inherited things from the past that, since we then feel we have in a way received them as a gift which makes us in debt, we think we must spend in order to keep them safe, so that others can have enjoyment of them after us. While undeniably there is expenditure and sacrifice directed toward the future, this could be said to be on account of the value we recognize in these things from the past that makes us in debt.

5 I set out the reasons that made me opt to start with a symbolic approach in Davallon (2010, point 3).

arrival of intangible heritage – it quickly became clear to me that it was no longer possible to limit myself simply to a reexamination of the material gathered for the first phase⁶. I therefore decided to include in my investigation all of the changes and expansions that have occurred in the production of heritage objects since the latter decades of the 20th century and during the early decades of the 21st century. I therefore took a fresh look at this second aspect, which was thus also able to benefit from works that had been published in the meantime.

1.1. An unchanged objective: to understand the heritagization of traces of the past

Describing something as heritage does not mean recognizing it as a transcendent essence, nor does it mean denying it any quality or any operability. This is because the purpose of heritagization is precisely to endow it with specific values and meanings, since it aims to institute a symbolic “recognized” (in reality, attributed) status to objects (“things”) of the past from which we feel we have inherited and which we therefore have the responsibility to conserve, safeguard or preserve⁷, particularly with a view to transmitting them to future generations. This process, now fairly well established, corresponds to what, in sociological terms, Emmanuel Amougou defines thus:

Heritagization could be interpreted as a social process through which legitimate social agents (or actors if you prefer) set out, through their reciprocal, i.e. interdependent, actions, to confer upon an object, or an architectural, urban or landscape space or a social practice (language, ritual, myth, etc.) a set of properties or “values” that are recognized and shared first by the legitimized agents and then transmitted to all individuals through the individual or collective mechanisms of institutionalization necessary for their preservation, i.e. for their sustainable legitimation in a specific social configuration. (Amougou 2004, p. 25)

6 It is true that the introduction to *Le don du patrimoine* (The Gift of Heritage), which, being faced with positions defending – or, conversely, stigmatizing – heritage, aimed rather to present a position asserting a benevolent neutrality, focused its attention on the object studied and did not mention (which now seems to me to be an unfortunate omission) the second part that I intended, at the time, to finish very soon after the first.

7 Reference should be made to the distinctions introduced by Micoud (1995 [1994], p. 33) between “conserve”, “preserve” and “safeguard” according to the types of assets apprehended as common goods.

This definition puts the emphasis on the social actors and their social practices, whereas on my side I approach it in the meaningful functioning that serves as the basis for a symbolic operativity that we can describe, with André Micoud, as “symbolic work”:

I use the term of symbolic work for the activity of human groups that constantly reconfigure – a condition for the perpetuation of their identity over time – the representations they make of the world, of themselves and others, and of the other human groups. (Micoud 2005, p. 82)

I have had sufficient opportunities to return to the heritagization operations, which I described as “gestures”, and have explained their content (see Davallon 2002, 2006, 2018 [2014]). I thus have no need to return to them at any great length. While the selection and arrangement of their elements may have varied somewhat according to the evolution of the situations examined, the definition of the “heritagization ideal type” remains unchanged: on the one hand, the *operations* designated by the gestures remain the same, with a few updates, which I will specify below, and, on the other hand, the *program* for instituting the social status of the object that articulates these operations retains its relevance, until proven to the contrary. However, for clarity of language in this book, I will very briefly summarize the *operations* covered by the five gestures insofar as they will be used as a basis for the analysis of the variations of this program according to the various modes. Having recently effected two updates concerning the last two actions (staging an exhibition and transmission), I will begin by summarizing the first three which are unchanged before presenting the last two.

1) Gesture of discovery: at the root of the feeling of “discovery” is the recognition of the values and meanings of the thing, which come from its origin and its past, by those who discover it for the first time. When a collective feels that this thing belongs to its own past, the members of this collective have recognized a value in it, and they generally show attachment to a thing. I call this recognition of *values*, which can be effected by people outside the collective, and this *attachment* of the members of the collective by the generic expression *mobilization of an interest*. The thing then becomes a *trace*. This interest is at the root of the feeling of “discovery” by the person who “recognizes” these values for the first time. Following publicization, during a visit, watching a documentary, reading a book or an article, etc., outsiders will be able to recognize these values and feel an attachment similar to that experienced by those who “discover” it. It is this process of circulation of representations that is at the root of *interpretive schemes*. This interest occurs in a context where positive representations about this past circulate in this collective and/or in society. It can also mobilize scientists, experts, politicians or audiences.

2) Gesture of knowledge production: while a minimum level of knowledge about the thing is necessary in order to recognize a possible value and to think of it as a trace of the past,

establishing this value and understanding it presupposes the *production of knowledge* to interpret it in order to establish what it really is (its characteristics) and the world that produced it. This operation can be effected by the collective, scientists or experts. It involves at one time or another the use of a reference science (belonging to the historical sciences, social sciences or natural sciences depending on the type of heritage) that guarantees the relevance and validity of the interpretations and therefore the knowledge produced. Attesting to the existence of the world of origin of the thing and the fact that it actually does come from this world, this knowledge has a decisive role in the recognition of the object as an “institutional fact”⁸.

3) Gesture of declaration: the status attributed to the thing because of its interpretation, in order to be operative, requires a *public enunciation* of a performative nature, which therefore comes from an actor having social authority, and which is aimed at a generally wider audience than just the members of the original collective. Traditionally, the authority that thus *declares* heritage status is the state (the most common case) or an international instance such as UNESCO; it guarantees both the *status* of the object and the *truthfulness* of its representation, and the declaration is then generally binding, leading to protection. But a more sectoral authority – scientists, the collective, even the audience of various forms of publicization using an interpretive scheme – are able, not to “declare” the status of heritage *object* in the above sense, but to “recognize” and claim the heritage character of the “thing” and enunciate it publicly.

Box I.1. Summary of the gestures of discovery, knowledge production and declaration

The processes corresponding to the fourth and fifth gestures (access to the heritage object through exhibition and transmission to future generations) has been rethought in order to take into account both the arrival of intangible heritage and the emergence of new modalities of presentation to the audience on the basis of the extension of the two operations that underpin them (its safeguarding, or preserving in its present state and publicization)⁹, insofar as these are better able to cover the variety of situations encountered from yesterday to today and to establish a link in time between the world from which the object comes, the present day and the world of the future, for all of those who recognize the values (and therefore the patrimoniality) of the object.

8 Searle (1995, p. 46) posits that “institutional facts exist only within systems of constitutive rules”, which have the particularity that they “create the possibility of facts of this type” – in the sense, for example, that the rules of chess create the possibility of the game. It should be noted, however, that this constitutive rule is usually only the crystallization of conventions arising from social practices and the circulation of interpretive schemes.

9 Transmission stems from these two actions under the constitutive rule of heritage.

4) Gesture of maintenance (or preserving in its present state): this operation *aims to keep the heritage object concerned safe, that is, alive and in good condition*, no matter what the risks of disappearance may be. From conservation, it has evolved since the 1970s into *maintenance*, either of the material object or of the (intangible) process. In particular, it involves the state, scientists and the collective, but also the public through their participation in the upkeep of the cultural being, Heritage.

5) Gesture of publicization: producing media traces of the heritage object, in order to make it public, this operation *establishes a link* between the humans of the present, whether they belong to the collective or to the audience¹⁰, and the humans of both the past and the future. However, for material heritages, this operation generally takes the specific, favored form of staging an exhibition; nowadays this uses the various media available, thus usually aiming at a *broadening out* from the interest of the initial collective to the scale of an *audience* that is more open from viewpoint of the society to which it belongs, space and time.

Box I.2. Gestures of maintaining in its current state and publicization

To account for the changes occurring in the operationalization of the gestures, I had recently compared two heritagization “regimes” (Davallon 2012b, 2015, 2018 [2014]), corresponding to two types of implementation of the program (respectively, the production of tangible heritage and the production of intangible heritage¹¹). But a closer analysis of these implementations, in particular the use they made of knowledge, led me to follow Genette (1994, p. 23, No. 30) in identifying *modes* (possibly with variants) rather than “regimes”: for a given situation, several implementations can indeed coexist, interact and combine together in a non-exclusive way, insofar as new modes are added to the old ones.

I.2. The objects studied: media texts as observables

In the introduction to *Le don du patrimoine* (The Gift of Heritage), a *text* was defined, following Umberto Eco (1985 [1979], Chapter 3), as a machine for producing meaning through cooperation between a linguistic *dispositif* (and thus indirectly its producer) and the one interpreting it. Additionally, I had extended this

10 The social ensemble, consisting of institutions and specialists, nonspecialists (audience), together with the various forms of mediation, can be defined as a “heritage public space” as a “place for the development of communicational actions” (Fèvres 2012, p. 34). For official instances, this gesture takes the form of a use aligned to an objective.

11 The program is a typical ideal (in the sense of Weber), resulting from an analytical reduction operated from a basis of situations and texts. What I call “implementation” is in reality the way this typical ideal exists through social practices, seen from this typical ideal.

definition of a text in natural language to complex ensembles that are meaningful, communicational and also social (“socio-semio-pragmatic”, if I may use the term), these being exhibitions, the promotion of heritage sites, mediation documents, television programs or video documentaries¹². This conception of a text, communicational and no longer linguistic, shifted the approach that we could take in regards to its functioning: the enunciation became decisive and, consequently, also the procedures that guided the reader’s interpretation of a media *dispositif*, and no longer a simple combination of units of meaning that were shared to some extent because they were socially defined according to a code (or even a language). On the practical level, this *enunciation of a dispositif* took the form of a *writing* effected by means of a material inscription awaiting interpretation during a “reading”. Since this point, Yves Jeanneret has extensively developed and set out in detail an approach to a text whose basis is quite similar, but whose wording is more incisive, because it is more complete. Thus, in *The Trace Factory*, he reiterates the three reasons that lead communication researchers to “not regard a text as a simple emanation of verbal language”.

On the one hand, no text exists only as a set of words, it is always deployed upon a perceptible materiality. On the other hand, all texts, even the most literary or mathematical, combine multiple codes; and finally, texts are presented themselves as immediately complex and concrete entities. It is only the eye of the beholder that can choose to divide them into shapes and elements, especially verbal ones. The perceptible, plural, concrete, complex nature of the texts conveyed by the media appears as soon as they are understood within the practical processes of social communication. (Jeanneret 2020, p. 152)

The consequence of this is that the sociosemiotic *dispositif* thus constituted functions as a text, as a document and also as a medium, which he rightly calls a “media text” (or a “media-text complex”¹³). Therefore, fully subscribing to this conception of a text, I adopt it here¹⁴. My initial classification of media texts involved in heritagization was initially formed from two groups: texts of a *practical*,

12 With the semiotician, we can class this as “syncretic semiotics” or “polysemiotics”, because they combine multiple languages, sometimes multiple media, in a single enunciation.

13 “Mediatized communication is thus first and foremost a production of representations, embodied in texts, themselves configured in their formal properties by the features of their media” (Jeanneret 2008, p. 166).

14 While the concept of “discourse” introduced by Smith (2006) and Smith and Waterton (2009) presupposes a communicational dimension, it remains, in my opinion, very far short of a consideration of the media text.

normative or *prescriptive* nature and texts of a *scientific scope*. Over the past two decades, the development of documentaries and websites, coming in addition to the staging of exhibitions (and sometimes even replacing it), led me to identify three groups.

The first group brings together *texts that are direct operators of heritagization*. It is possible here to distinguish two subgroups: on the one hand, all of the texts *governing the process*, in particular prescriptive texts of a more or less performative or injunctive scope (regulations, forms, databases, classifications, inscriptions on inventories or lists, the granting of labels, funding, etc.); on the other hand, texts that are produced in the form of *scholarly documents* by specialists, by scientists or by anyone else involved in the heritagization process (scientific, technical, administrative dossiers, but also descriptions, maps, summaries of various kinds, recordings, etc.).

The second group includes all of the texts that make up the *abundant scientific literature* studying, discussing or mentioning the heritagization process, its practices, its characteristics, its actors, its products, its consequences and its evolution, in history, art history, sociology, ethnology, geography, information and communication sciences, philosophy, etc.

The third group is made up of all of the *texts that provide for the publicization* of heritage objects. Firstly, the heritage objects themselves, material or “intangible”¹⁵, textualized by heritagization: the exhibiting of material objects, the publicization of enactments or denotations of intangible heritage, works describing the objects destined to constitute, or constituting, heritage, etc. Secondly, texts based on this first level of media texts: recordings, catalogs, mediation and promotional documents, websites, documentaries, reportages, etc.

Box 1.3. *The three groups of media texts*

Even if these three forms of media texts are a priori intended to circulate in different circles (professional, scientific, cultural), the boundaries between these circles being in reality porous, all of these texts more or less form a system: whether by their aim, function, format, circulation, references, transformation and transition from one media to another; in short, by the whole process of writing, interpretation and rewriting that is involved in the circulation and transformation of representations, which Jeanneret (2008) calls “triviality”. Also, in addition to their declared function, on which the above classification is based, all of these texts have *two types of operativity* that are variable according to their function.

15 The concept of “heritage object” here covers all heritagized “things”, whether physical or processual.

– First of all, is an operativity relating to the heritage object itself. These texts, by offering an interpretation of this object as a *trace of a past social reality* (whether material or processual), present a body of knowledge about this reality that constructs, more or less directly, a *scholarly representation*. This scholarly representation has a crucial role. It provides the interpretation of the characteristics (observable or already known, intrinsic or circumstantial) of any potentially heritagizable reality, insofar as it is the index of what it has been in the past and insofar as it is recognized as a bearer of values. The scholarly representation defines the *heritage value* of the trace object; in other words, its *patrimoniaity*. *The heritage object* is thus a trace and indissociably a scholarly representation. The second is therefore the necessary condition for the first to exist as heritage¹⁶.

– Then, there is an operativity that concerns how, precisely, we should understand this particular cultural form that we call “heritage”, the *heritage form*. We should not understand from this that the social world of heritage exists only in the form of the text: it is not a fictional world. It is actually made up of everything that can characterize it as a “social world”¹⁷, and thus made up of everything that can be involved in the *social practice* of heritagization: interactions and collective activities, representations, common perspectives (sense of belonging and awareness of doing things together going in the same direction), but also communicational *dispositifs*, organizational frameworks, institutional regulations, uses, power relationships, etc.¹⁸ This simply means that *media texts are the bearers of indices of this social practice*, either performatively, by contributing to this practice, or, conversely, by being the result of it, or, quite simply, by making reference to it: they contain information about it, they describe it, or they evaluate or discuss it. And this is why an analysis of these indices allows us to grasp the existence of variations in the social practices. But, in practice, how can we grasp these traces and indices?

16 On this point, I concur with Fraysse (2006, p. 124) regarding the monument, as he writes in his doctoral thesis: the heritage reality of monuments is constructed by mediation of the knowledge accumulated about it. But it seems to me that this ought to be applied generally and systematized to all heritage objects. The same idea of an indissociable link between object and knowledge, but without the assertion of a consubstantial character, seems to me to be present in Poulot’s (2006, p. 16) definition of what he calls “patrimoniaity”, that is, “the perceptible modality of an experience of the past articulated to an organization of knowledge – identification, attribution – capable of authenticating it”.

17 For more details, I refer to the discussion by Hammou (2012) of the notion of “world”. Between “social world” and “art world” (Becker 1988 [1984]), he identifies a common origin that gives them their processual specificity, but at the same time their differences: the first corresponding rather to the approach of a “shared culture”, the second to that of a “collective action”.

18 In short, all of the social processes identified by Amougou in his definition of heritagization.

I.3. The sociosemiotic analysis of media texts as traces of practices

First, it is necessary to clarify a point of method. We are in the presence of two categories of traces. On the one hand, *traces of the past*, and I am seeking to show how these are “things” in the process of acquiring the status of heritage objects (heritagized beings). On the other hand, *traces of the social practices* of heritagization as the bearers of indices of these practices themselves. In practice, making heritagization an object of research¹⁹, instead of heritage, amounts to studying the latter (the *traces of social practices*) in order to understand the former (the emergence of *heritage traces*). This way of proceeding meets two objectives: to grasp the operations that institute “things” thus recognized as heritage traces in heritage objects, and to be able to apprehend the changes in this process of institution. In other words, on the one hand, to understand the heritagization process (which was the subject of *Le don du patrimoine* (The Gift of Heritage)), and, on the other, to identify the various modes of this heritagization process (the subject of this book being *emerging heritage traces*). In both cases, the method is a sociosemiotic analysis of the heritagization operations from the three groups of media texts. This analysis is based, in this case, on an epistemic reduction of observations and texts chiefly by using the *narrative semiotics* model to formalize the operations that are constitutive of the granting of heritage status. It is based on the observation that the way of thinking about heritage is governed by the relationship “object (reality or process) *versus* subject (understood here in the semiotic sense of an actant who knows and who acts)” according to a dualistic logic (according to a naturalistic ontology, if we follow Descola), insofar as the subject isolates, defines and interprets the object that they regard as coming from the past, since it *is already there* when the subject starts to operate, in order to recognize values in the objects (and therefore to endow it with values) and to attribute to it the social status of heritage: in short, to heritagize it. From the point of view of the approach, this analysis therefore does not address media texts (the observables) either as works or even as a simple meaningful ensemble, but in that as they are traces, indices of social practices of heritagization²⁰. Narrative semiotics here provides a relatively simple but robust tool, making it possible to formalize both the *operations* and the *program* of transformation that articulates them: to describe the representation present in these texts of the way in which the subject transforms the object. My use of narrative semiotics is therefore fairly close to what Ricœur discusses in *Temps et récit*, even though it is, obviously, for different purposes.

19 In the sense in which I defined “the research object” in Davallon (2004). Addressing heritage as an object of communicational research through its operations (gestures) and its social and symbolic operativity (Davallon 2006) has some proximity (although it part of a different approach) to what Heinich (2009), a sociologist, described, a few years later, as “heritage chain” and “heritage function”.

20 I therefore subscribe to Jeanneret’s project (2019, p. 3) to examine the question of “mediatized traces of social issues: traces produced via media *dispositifs* that claim to be reporting on aspects of society and culture”.

– The texts are able to bear traces of the practice, insofar as, as he explained, the practice is “always already *symbolically mediated*” (Ricœur 1983, p. 113), and this is all the more important in the present case, since this is a highly structured process responding to an objective defined in texts.

– But these texts are not merely bearers of indices of practices, and they operate a “configuration” by means of “constructing a plot” (Ricœur 1983, pp. 144–146 and 276–301). What I call “articulation of operations into a program” thus corresponds to a series of operations (the paradigm) that is syntagmized to go from an initial state to an end state in the form of a *transformation program* of the object’s status (its definition, its uses, its values)²¹. The first act of the modelization will therefore have to consist of an identification of the components involved in the *operations* (the “doing”) of this transformation program, namely, the *objects* (the “actant-objects”), the *operators* (the “actant-subjects”)²², the *values* mobilized (the endowment of values) and the *relationship to time* (the modalities of its representation).

– Then, the media texts operate a “refiguration” of the practice, either directly in the use of operative texts, or through the metamorphosis of the representations resulting from the circulation of these texts. Indeed, if media texts are able contribute to the *heritage form*, they owe it to their variety, their number, their circulation in the form of documents interpreted, used, transformed and “distorted” (Jeanneret 2008, p. 87). Because of the circulation and transformation through the writing-interpretation-rewriting sequence, the heritagization program, in its entirety or piecemeal (operations, object, operators, values, relationship to time), will be able to function as an *interpretive scheme*²³, which will then be mobilizable in whole or in segments by social subjects, in order to interpret situations, objects, parts of media texts, elements of memory or representations whose heritage character is being assessed, with a view to possibly producing new media texts. We should note in

21 This is why I fully agree with Smith (2006) when she considers heritage to be a cultural process. But, it seems to me, Poulot (2006) is basically developing more or less the same argument.

22 In real life, these subject-actants (but the same applies to the receiver-actants) group together the various concrete operators who implement the actions. It is the latter that correspond to what the sociology of the network actor calls “actant” (Akrich et al. 2006).

23 On this concept of “interpretive scheme”, I refer to Jeanneret’s (2019, pp. 34–35) discussion on this. He reiterates the definition of the concept of “organizing scheme” that he formulated with Émilie Flon: “A structural construction that forms a link between the technical, semiotic and phenomenological dimensions of representation and for this reason defines certain determining conditions for the construction of the meaning from information within a *dispositif*” (Flon and Jeanneret 2010, p. 4). But it introduces a difference: while the organizing scheme finds its relevance in writing, the interpretive scheme finds it “in the reading and the production of knowledge”. I use here the concept of the *heritage interpretive scheme* to refer to both forms: inscribed in media texts (in that it assumes an act of interpretation before the act of inscription) and mobilized by the receivers of the text.

passing that this now gives a decisive importance to the gesture of publicization. Then, institutionalized both through its mobilization to interpret and its inscription in new media texts, this interpretive scheme will in a way contribute to the institution of *the cultural being, Heritage*. In this way, all of the media texts will link scholarly representation and heritage form, with the result both that the heritage object is heritage and that the heritage form can cover all heritage objects. In other words, if I adopt the viewpoint of use, by their “triviality” (in the sense of Jeanneret), media texts have the effect that heritage objects and heritage forms form the “cultural being, Heritage”, which is in the background of what functions as a generic *heritage interpretive scheme*²⁴.

In practice, the first part’s approach consisted of identifying *regularities* in the indices present within a relatively representative set of the various types of media texts (the observables). The objective was then to assign to each operation, and also to the program as a whole, as many features characterizing them as possible, in order to understand what they taught about the way in which practices transform the status of objects. This explains why the “gesture” that emerged as the pivot marking the change from the status of “thing” to that of venerable object was that of the declaration; the other gestures supported it by preparing for it, and then by operationalizing it: recognition of the object and its study, then conservation and putting on exhibition. Although, in accordance with the traditional conception of heritage, this role of the declaration was expected, the fact of identifying the other gestures (and therefore of identifying an ideal type from the program)²⁵ revealed the way in which heritagization, as a social process, constructed a relationship to the

24 I call this “heritage interpretative scheme” *generic*, in that it derives directly from the constitutive rule of heritage. I will define this concept in more detail at the end of Chapter 1 (section 1.4). With regard to this point as a whole, it is still in line with what Smith (2006, p. 3) says when she considers the process is self-referential. This self-referentiality is due to a phenomenon of circular causality in which the social practices of the transformation of realities into heritage are the implementation of representations of practices that circulate in media texts related to these practices. This is one of the effects of this process that I addressed with the hypothesis of the debt and the temporal perspective in *Le don du patrimoine* (The Gift of Heritage).

25 Although I have kept the Weberian denomination “ideal type” here to denominate “heritagization”, it is actually a production of what Jean-Claude Passeron considers to be a *semi proper noun* – in between common noun and proper noun; in other words, the designation “by typological nouns, of these collective, partially describable ‘individuals’, constituted by the ‘historical individualities’ deictically referenced as ‘global configurations’” (Passeron 2006, p. 582). For a more developed presentation of this dual status of symbol and index (in the Peircian sense), see his chapter on “historical enunciation” (*ibid.*, pp. 361–383). For the relationship to the ideal type, see also “proposition 3.1” and its four scholia (*ibid.*, pp. 575–591). Veyne (2008, p. 118, n. 1) puts forward a summary presentation of this model.

past – different from that constructed by history and memory – by using certain chosen objects to which it attributes the function of mediators.

But, once the indices representing *what constituted* the process being studied, it remained, in the second part, to examine the *variations occurring in the implementation* of this process.

1.4. Understanding heritagization modes

In contrast to what had been studied previously, this second part turns its attention to the regularities in terms of *changes* affecting the various components: the objects (selection of new candidates for heritage status), operations (e.g. the fact that they can be rolled out in several stages or can overlap), operators (e.g. the arrival of new actors in almost every operation), values (e.g. the introduction of economic or social values), knowledge (introduction of new reference sciences) and the relationship to time (centering on the present of the enunciation rather than on chronology).

The examination of variations does not here take the form of studying particular social situations whose functioning we hear described, or recording the history of an evolution, or understanding the social dynamics involved in the social world of heritage. However, in the light of the effect of the activity of the social world constituted by the world of heritage, new regularities have emerged through media texts. These media texts then become points of singularity that suggest – or even explicitly declare or assert – the emergence of a new way of heritagizing, more or less distant from the previously dominant existing mode, more or less in rupture with it, sometimes even in conflict with it. The new way of heritagizing will either combine with the existing mode(s), influencing them and causing some of them to take a new direction, or diverge from them in the form of a *variant*, sometimes going on to constitute a new autonomous line of force taking the form of a new *mode of heritagization*, or they join together with other lines of force in a recomposition of heritagization modes, resulting in the coexistence of a number of heritagization modes or variants, or combining them. However, this range of lines of force involved social issues that can then be grasped through *certain* media texts which, through the indices they bear, are the *trace* of the implementation of social practices seeking to modify an existing line of force. As such, they constitute *enunciative events*, in that they make legible and visible the presence of what ostensibly presents itself as a new line²⁶.

26 These events can be regarded as “singular points”, to use Deleuze’s (1986, p. 29) expression. Indeed, I am borrowing from Deleuze’s reading of Foucault’s work a notion in terms of the relationship between “regularities”, “lines of force”, “points of singularity”, “force diagram” and “institutions”.

I.5. Emerging modes of heritagization

I will start (Chapter 1) by giving an example of how to carry out the sociosemiotic analysis of media texts in order to show how to identify tipping points between heritagization modes. But there is more to it, because the case chosen is also emblematic of the issues currently affecting heritagization, since the starting point is a documentary on the archaeological heritagization of traces of social practices (Aboriginal rock carvings) which leads on to other media texts, either scientific texts, or publicization texts (other documentaries), or operative texts, bearing a different type of traces, those of a confrontation with the social heritagization mode.

Then (Chapter 2), the search for tipping points leads us to first consider two major precursors of the “reversal” of the 1970s, as Nora calls it, which characterize the upsurge of social heritagization. The first of these precursors is the Inventory, which replaces traditional heritagization (in France, an administrative legal declaration for the purposes of protection) with a declaration keeping the traces of the object’s characteristics by its inscription in the General Inventory of Cultural Heritage (originally the General Inventory of Monuments and Artistic Wealth of France). The second is the publication of *Les lieux de mémoire*. While, in the conclusion, Pierre Nora defends the traditional conception of a national heritage, stigmatizing the reversal constituted by the emergence of the heritage of groups, he nevertheless develops an approach to it (the “unfolding” of what the place is the memory of) that brings to light the memory dimension of heritage, thus covertly introducing the continuity of memory, as reconstructed by knowledge, in the background behind the rupture with the past that is inherent in heritage.

It then becomes possible to reexamine the tipping point constituted by the social heritagization mode’s upsurge in the heritage world during the 1980s (Chapter 3). The analysis of the “emerging heritage” of the traces – in reality, of the remains, be they industrial, rural, urban, memorial, etc. – of a society in the process of transformation, called “transmission in action” by Henri-Pierre Jeudy, makes it possible to identify the major characteristics of the mode of this heritagization in the process of emerging at that time. An analysis of the various types of media texts that contribute to this heritagization mode, or discuss it, reveals two variants that correspond to two lines of force: one centered on the involvement of the population as subject and object of the heritagization; the other focused on the use and treatment of memory as a trace of situations experienced and reported by witnesses.

The sudden advent of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2018) then further disrupted the traditional (including ethnological) conception of a necessarily material heritage by creating the new category of “intangible” heritage. Sociosemiotic analysis shows that by

constructing a scholarly representation designed to keep a trace for the future of social processes, this convention invented *de facto* a heritagization mode that combines the continuation of putting into practice these processes with this scholarly representation. This invention not only led to the creation of a new form of institutional heritage, but more broadly it profoundly changed the way of recognizing how things did or did not “constitute” heritage, giving new weight to the heritage interpretive schemes circulating in society and more particularly in the media.

Finally, a mode of heritagization, relatively unnoticed until now, is in the process of emerging: complex heritage entities (Chapter 5). The originality of this mode, whose antecedents can in fact be observed very early in archaeology or ethnology, but which was to develop above all with the social heritagization to which it has more or less been assimilated, is particularly well illustrated by urban heritage that integrates heterogeneous elements into a new entity. But it is above all through the publicization of landscapes that we see how heterogeneous elements of culture and nature acquire coherence and value through scientific knowledge in particular. The novelty of this method of heritagization can be said to be the role it gives to the interpretive schemes circulating in society that define what we have an obligation to keep. The premise of a new way of thinking about heritage?

I dedicate this book to the memory of Yves Jeanneret, with whom I had begun to discuss many of the questions addressed herein.

I would like to thank Sylvie Leleu-Merviel who, by including this book in the “Traces” series, actually led me to look at “heritage traces” in a new way and to deepen my investigation. Also, I would like to thank Maggie Wakefield for the English translation, and especially for her patience in the translation of the concepts.

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Analyzing Heritage Traces in Media Texts

The French documentary “*Australie: Le grand livre des Aborigènes*” (Australia: The Great Book of the Aborigines), and an episode of Arte’s “*Enquêtes archéologiques*” (Archaeological Investigations) series, which presents an archaeological investigation of Aboriginal petroglyphs (rock engravings) in northwestern Australia¹, offer an excellent starting point for illustrating how to conduct a sociosemiotic analysis of the way in which certain media texts are bearers of heritage traces, and identifying how tipping points in heritagization methods can occur.

This documentary illustrates the development of *media publicization* (on television and the Internet), where documentaries are a much less traditional form of promoting material heritage than exhibitions or books. Moreover, since this publicization focuses less on the objects themselves than on the archaeologists’ research process in interpreting the engravings as traces of their world of origin, the documentary highlights the importance of the *production of knowledge* which characterizes archaeological heritage: it is in fact the archaeological investigation that serves as a basis for the recognition of the heritage character of the engravings and therefore the need to apply for their inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List (UNESCO 2021). It is therefore the bearer of the two levels of traces mentioned in the introduction. The primary level is of potential *heritage traces* constituted by the engravings from the moment their interpretation is initiated, and the secondary level concerns *traces of social practices* from this interpretation carried out by

¹ This documentary is the 17th episode of the first season (2016–2017) of the *Enquêtes archéologiques* series (a second series of 10 episodes was broadcast in 2018–2019). The list of episodes is available at: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enquêtes_archéologiques [Accessed January 24 2022].

archaeologists. Even before being publicized by the documentary, this interpretation fed into various media texts aimed at the scientific community and the bodies involved in World Heritage List inscriptions (the Australian government and UNESCO experts). However, these scientific or administrative texts echo other scientific texts dealing with the study and heritagization of the Aboriginal material culture, which either supports the archaeological approach and its method of heritagization or proposes a different approach; this introduces de facto a bifurcation towards a new method of heritagization.

1.1. The documentary, a media publicization text

The short TV format (26 min) of this documentary is part of the encyclopedia (in Eco's sense) of Arte's audience, since it corresponds to a category of program focusing on civilizations or heritage (monuments, villages, landscapes, gardens, etc.); this is strongly represented on this channel under the headings "Travel and discovery" or "History", or even "Science", which, moreover, remains accessible for a few weeks on the channel's website. I will begin by analyzing it in order to show how it constructs a relationship between audience and engravings through publicizing their interpretation. It has the advantage of being a mediatized mediation, between the archaeologists who worked on the engravings and the audience of the documentary, and is hosted by a presenter who is an expert in the field, archaeologist Peter Eeckhout.

1.1.1. An original form of publicization: mediatized mediation

The use of a presenter who is an expert in the field can be found in many other documentary series about heritage, for example: *Villages de France*, with photographer Emmanuel Laborde, *L'Héritage de Rome*, with photographer Alfred Seiland, *Paysages d'ici et d'ailleurs*, with science journalist Raphaël Hitier², *Jardins d'ici et d'ailleurs*, with landscape architect Jean-Philippe Teyssier DPLG, or *Habiter le monde*, with philosopher Philippe Simay³. The principle of an actor who is both a narrator holding the narrative thread and a representative of the interpretive activity of the audience is thus quite common. This actor plays the *mediator* role between the audience and the object in an in situ visit. The difference is that the producer of knowledge, who, most of the time, is not present in the latter case, is present here; therefore, the mediation involves three actors: the mediator (in this case, Peter Eeckhout), the producers of knowledge (in particular, the archaeologists) and

2 Doctor in Neurogenetics, journalist, presenter, columnist and documentary filmmaker.

3 Doctor of Philosophy, Assistant Professor at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture, Paris-Belleville.

the objects (the engravings and their environment). However, the *Enquêtes Archéologiques* series goes even further in this communicational logic, since Peter Eeckhout is a Professor of Archaeology at the Free University of Brussels, specializing in pre-Columbian civilizations. As stated in the series credits, he goes out to meet colleagues so that they can present the excavation site, their work and their findings⁴.

This episode opens with a presentation that establishes the relationship between the narrator (for the narrative)-mediator (for the communicational structure) Peter Eeckhout, and the audience: having identified the region of the excavations (Dampier archipelago in northwest Australia) and swiftly outlined the purpose of the episode⁵, we see him arrive onsite, identify some engravings, refer to their importance, meet the protagonists (the archaeologists), and explain how the presence of the petrochemical plants behind him threatens their existence, before turning to face the audience.

Positioned as narrator, Peter Eeckhout explains to the audience what he discovers: engravings, archaeologists' activity, environment, mobilized lateral knowledge, etc. From the beginning of the presentation, the audience is therefore invited to share the view that the narrator is engaged in a *cognitive quest*, whose ultimate ideological and practical stake is an evaluation of the heritage nature of the engravings (should they or should they not be protected). As long as viewers have at least a minimal knowledge of the world of archaeology and heritage, they will recognize the implicit question behind the presentation given by Peter Eeckhout, which serves as a background for interpretation of the documentary by the audience: "Does the nature, and above all the value of the engravings, as brought to light by knowledge, justify protecting them by restrictive measures?". The future action strategy (in other words, the narrative framework of the episode) is thus established in a world of reference which is both that of archaeological research (interpreting relics) and heritage (does the value of the relics imply their conservation?); to put it another way, a cognitive program whose focus is whether or not the status of an object is to be recognized (i.e. a sanction, in the narratological sense).

4 This credit sequence is at the beginning of each episode: "My name is Peter Eeckhout. I'm an archaeologist and I'm going to take you out into the field across the planet. We will meet other archaeologists. Together we will follow their investigations and their latest discoveries. A great journey through time and history".

5 "In northwestern Australia, in the Dampier Archipelago, archaeologists are deciphering one of the greatest history books ever written by man. A story carved in stone that may well disappear. Here, millions of years ago, the earth created this strange cluster of red rocks. In this rugged landscape, Australia's first inhabitants, the Aborigines, left their footprint. There were to be a million patterns engraved here over time for 50,000 years. A unique heritage, now under threat".

The documentary begins with a title sequence that is common to the entire series, presented with a voiceover by Peter Eeckhout – against [a series of scrolling images of an excavation site]⁶: “My name is Peter Eeckhout, I’m an archaeologist, etc.”; then a presentation, still in voiceover, of the site with which the episode is concerned [geographical location and presentation of the topic of the documentary: map of Australia, then an aerial view of the archipelago, then views of engravings]⁷; and, finally, the title of the episode [“*Australie : Le grand livre des Aborigènes*”].

Three image sequences (A) follow. From this point on, the documentary alternates between live speech in interviews and voiceover for the commentary.

(A.i) Presentation sequence of the engravings: commentary that develops the topic stated earlier [during Peter Eeckhout’s arrival and image of engravings].

(A.ii) Presentation sequence of the archaeologists and their work, with an initial commentary – on [shot of rock clusters with archaeologists working]; then an initial discussion with the archaeologist Jo McDonald; then, again, a commentary that sets out the issues in the documentary: the threat posed to the engravings by industry; the colonists regarding the Aborigines as savages and not having tried to learn their history. However, petroglyphs are indices to the Aborigines’ way of life and how it has stood the test of time – with [engraving of arrival of the colonists and photos of the Aboriginal way of life].

(A.iii) Sequence showing meeting with an Aboriginal park warden (Kenny Diamond⁸), who describes the various types of information given by the engravings for Aborigines.

Box 1.1. *The three opening sequences of the documentary*

6 I have put the description of the image accompanying the commentary in square brackets.

7 The commentary sets out the substance of the documentary; so, despite its length, I will quote it in its entirety: “Ah! this is extraordinary: we can see here, engraved on the rock, this big fish, and then right next to it, quadrupeds, we find these pretty much everywhere in this range of great massifs that are literally constellated with what we call petroglyphs. It is an extraordinary place, we find lots of species represented, past, present, kangaroos, emus, etc. It’s the largest concentration in the world of this type of relic. It’s quite simply extraordinary. But you only have to turn around to realize the problem: chemical and fertilizer factories, which not only gradually eat away at the territory occupied by the petroglyphs, but also, unfortunately, release contaminants that significantly affect the environment. For five years, archaeologists have been working tirelessly to decipher this great book of stone. Because, thanks to these petroglyphs, we have a little-known history that Jo McDonald and her team intend to retrace. That of the Australians from their arrival on the continent, fifty thousand years ago, up to their colonization by Europeans”.

8 Hoping not to make a mistake in the transcription of the name... .