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## *Unsettling memories: Intervention and controversy over difficult public heritage*

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Through heritage, selected memories are inscribed into public space. Heritage indexes places with histories that are, in part at least, their own, drawing on and further supporting a particular complex of ways of conceiving culture as ‘property’ and as a manifestation of ‘identity’. Usually, the memories that heritage inscribes and the histories that it indexes are integral parts of what is presented as a shared public narrative, bolstering senses of identity and legitimacy. Increasingly, however, these have come to be accompanied in many, though by no means all, countries by unsettling, competing or contested, memories, narratives and heritage. Part of a wider ‘heritage epidemic’ (Bodeman 2002: 24) or ‘heritage inflation’ (Hoelscher 2006: 201), this is, in part, a consequence of an identity politics or politics of recognition in which diverse groups seek public recognition, crafting self-narratives and claiming legitimacy through memory inscribed as heritage. In addition, however, if more sporadically, it may be a result of majorities or state agencies not simply *allowing* minorities to create their own heritage niches as part of a more multivocal public sphere but also incorporating at least some such voices into the mainstream. Moreover, this may even extend to majorities themselves engaging in critical self-reflection about the past and seeking to incorporate accounts, and even ‘dirty washing’, that have previously been excluded from ‘official’ heritage.

The incorporation of previously excluded memories into the public sphere does not, however, simply expand the remit of what is included and increase the number of ‘voices’ represented, but it may also unsettle and disrupt existing accounts of the past. New memories do not necessarily just jostle alongside existing ones, like new products on a supermarket shelf, but may expose previous silences, raising questions about their motives or the power dynamics of which they were part. Or they may threaten to eclipse other memories, edging them out of public space or undermining their own achieved settlement as accepted heritage. For, usually, heritage is perceived as *settled* – as a sedimented, publicly established and valued distillation of history. Memory inflation, then, may not only challenge specific existing memories but may also unsettle the traditional view of heritage itself, making it more likely to be regarded as contestable and contingent. This in turn can prompt further questioning, making heritage increasingly the object of critical interrogation rather than acceptance. The expansion of heritage studies – and the production of volumes such as this one – is in part a consequence of this unsettlement. So too is

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the marked increase in numbers of controversies over heritage and public accounts of the past that there have been over the past 20 years or so. Heritage has indeed become a contested field – even a battlefield – sometimes, at least.

### Heritage controversies

Looking at controversies over heritage provides a lens into some of the motives, lines of fission, players and implications of memory unsettlement. Public controversies are concentrated episodes during which alternative positions that at other times may be relatively unarticulated come into often noisy conflict. Like the ‘social dramas’ that were the focus of the Manchester School of Anthropology, especially in the work of Victor Turner, these episodes provide a window into wider concerns and power dynamics. As Turner wrote of social dramas, ‘[c]onflict seems to bring fundamental aspects of society, normally overlaid by the customs and habits of daily intercourse, into frightening prominence. People have to take sides in terms of deeply entrenched moral imperatives and constraints’ (1974: 35). However, conflicts do not necessarily only mobilize existing positions and principles. Rather, they are moments of heightened friction which may also create new alignments of people and interests, and even change the parameters in which future actions and judgements are made (Tsing 2005). Controversies are not simply a reflection of the disjunctive status quo, then, but are also productive interventions into a labile and changing public sphere. By ‘productive’, I should note, I do not mean that the outcome of controversies are necessarily ‘successful’, however that might be judged. Rather, my point is that they make some kind of difference, derailing or unsettling what had seemed to be the likely course of an ongoing process, though not necessarily in ways that those making the intervention might have wished. Indeed, one feature of conflict, controversy and friction is that the outcome is indeterminate, even if it might sometimes seem predictable, especially in retrospect. Sometimes, there may even be an apparent return to continuing as before. For example, curators may take a more conservative and cautious approach to exhibitions in the wake of controversy, as occurred following the eruption of controversy over the display of the *Enola Gay*, the aircraft that dropped the atomic bomb on Japan in World War II, at the National Air and Space Museum, Washington, DC (Zolberg 1996). However, even in these cases, the intervention has produced some kind of change, if only in the awareness of the difficulties that unsettlement may face.

In this chapter, I look at two heritage controversies. Both concern ‘memory interventions’ that attempted to remind of uncomfortable histories that seemed to be being eclipsed by particular plans. Both, that is, entail challenges to perceived forgetting in the public sphere. Neither are particularly well-known controversies, and while both received media coverage at the time, this was not extensive beyond the localities in which they occurred. And while the memory interventions were successful to some extent in both cases – that is, they helped to prevent what the memory interventionists perceived as an eclipsing of difficult history – they did not directly result in a major revisioning of public memory. Nevertheless, I

suggest that they deserve attention partly because small-scale and relatively localized interventions of this kind are both individually and cumulatively significant in producing subtle but nevertheless significant shifts in the memory landscape. This is not to say that they are thoroughly 'bottom-up' developments. On the contrary, as we will see, local interventions can draw inspiration and also support from outside, and, equally, they may contribute to altering the ways in which non-local organizations act. Local and beyond local are thoroughly mutually entangled. Nevertheless, the 'locatedness' of the particular heritage site – what I here call 'heritage sitedness' – remains important in heritage controversies, partly because of the fact that heritage imbues place with such identity significance. Moreover, as the examples also highlight, local memory – of previous events, forgetting or injustice – is mobilized within the controversy, contributing to the specificity of the course and outcome of the dispute.

The cases that I describe below are temporally and geographically distant from each other. The first – a controversy over a proposal to turn a major Nazi building into a shopping and leisure centre – occurred in the mid-1980s in Nuremberg, Germany. This was at a time that was widely regarded by German historians and other intellectuals as one of a new wave of memory unsettlement, in which questions of Nazi perpetration and how the past should be addressed had received new levels of public recognition (Niven 2002). This was demonstrated by the *Historikerstreit*, the Historians' Conflict – a dispute, widely aired in newspapers, over the uniqueness of Nazi crimes, the extent to which the nation should continue to feel responsible for them and the forms that commemoration should take (Maier 1997). Events such as a visit in 1985, as part of 40-years since the end of World War II anniversary commemoration, by President Reagan and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to lay a wreath at a cemetery containing the graves of members of the SS as well as other soldiers had provoked concern from some commentators over whether the Nazi past was being 'normalized' and perceived as just another conflict. And proposals for a new 'national' war memorial and a new national museum of German history fuelled public debate about the nature of the German past and how it should be remembered. While never invoked in the Historians' Conflict, the controversy in Nuremberg shows how many of the same kinds of concerns and positionings were being negotiated at local level too – though with specific local dimensions that related, not least, to the materiality of the heritage involved.

The second case, likewise, can be seen as a localized controversy that arose at a time of wider attempts to interject an unsettling memory into public space – in this case, that of transatlantic slavery in the United States. While there have been many fairly small-scale or localized attempts to commemorate transatlantic slavery underway for many years now, with, for example, tourism to sites such as plantations, it is only in recent years that there has been a more concerted drive to do so, especially in official or well-funded ways (Dann and Seaton 2002). Thus, the establishment of municipally funded museums and heritage sites of slavery has for the most part taken place since the 1990s. This includes examples such as the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, opened in 2004 to present information about, and to commemorate, the routes taken by slaves in

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the United States (<http://www.freedomcenter.org/>; accessed 19.10.2007). Sites whose existence and wealth was predicated on slavery have only recently begun to acknowledge this – if at all. At Monticello, home of Thomas Jefferson (US President between 1801 and 1809), for example, mention of slavery, and especially of the possible relationship that Jefferson had had with mulatto slave Sally Hemmings, was not included until the 1990s (Gable 2006 and this volume); Colonial Williamsburg only introduced a permanent section on slavery in 1999. There is still no state-funded national museum of slavery in the United States, though a privately funded National Museum of Slavery is due to open in 2008 ([http://www.usnationalslavermuseum.org/museum\\_why.asp](http://www.usnationalslavermuseum.org/museum_why.asp); accessed 15.10.2007). In addition, also in the making and this time federally funded, though not due to open for at least another decade, is the National Museum of African History and Culture, part of the Smithsonian complex, which will include some coverage of the subject of slavery (Smithsonian Institution: National Museum for African American History and Culture; <http://nmaahc.si.edu/>, accessed 15.10.2007).

Like the Nuremberg example, the second case that I look at – that of a controversy in 2006–2007 over how artefacts from a shipwreck should be exhibited – has not been much invoked in wider debates about remembering transatlantic slavery. Nevertheless, it too is at the same time clearly part of a wider move to incorporate more ‘difficult’ memory into public space, albeit if sometimes reluctantly so by many authorities. Furthermore, as in the Nuremberg case, the disputes were heated and altered existing plans. In my following short accounts of the controversies, I seek to outline some of the key touchstones and understandings of the nature of heritage and memory as they were mobilized in the disputes, as well as the course that the events took.

### **Unsettlement one: Consumer paradise in Nazi heritage<sup>1</sup>**

Not far outside the scenic Old Town of the City of Nuremberg is a large area of former marching grounds and various completed, semi-completed or ruined massive monumental buildings that were constructed by the National Socialists in the late 1930s in order to stage the mass spectacles known as the Nuremberg Rallies. Since 1945 the City has adopted various approaches to the buildings, including ignoring or destroying some of them; restoring some areas subsequent to them being listed as official heritage in 1973; and, in the mid 1980s, making the first concerted, though still small-scale, attempts to comment on the history of the site, especially a temporary exhibition opened in the Zeppelin Building in 1984. All of these memory interventions had been largely driven by a fairly small group of leftist history activists in the City, some of whom also held City Council positions. Just how marginal such interventions were, however, is in some ways demonstrated by the controversy that I want to look at, though it could also be argued that its outcome was also evidence of the growing strength of the drive to avoid papering over the City’s awkward Nazi past.

In 1987, a local private company – Congress & Partner – produced proposals to convert the vast horseshoe-shaped Nazi building, which had been intended as a

Congress Hall, into a shopping and leisure centre.<sup>2</sup> ‘Property with Personality’ and ‘The World’s Money to Nuremberg’ were the two slogans that the company used to promote the 500 Million DM project. And it presented detailed plans for using the extensive space of the Congress Hall building for high-class shops, restaurants, luxury flats, cinemas, discos, a wide-range of sports facilities including swimming pools, tennis courts, squash courts, gyms and golf-driving ranges, and an older people’s home.

Since 1945, various rooms in the listed Nazi building had been rented out to a variety of local organizations, mainly to be used as storage space. However, although the Council gained rent, it also sometimes faced expending considerable sums on repairs to the building, especially to prevent roof leaks which would jeopardize the capacity to rent the rooms for storage and which might also contravene the heritage protection legislation. There were many Council debates over the years during which fears about the demands that the building might in future make – fears that were, perhaps, symbolic as much as practical – were repeatedly aired. This, then, was part of the backdrop to the social democratic (SPD) Council working with Congress & Partner to help produce the proposals and why they were initially welcomed by most Council members. The Council Treasurer was particularly positive about the plans, expressing pleasure that not only would the Council gain an income generator in future years that should easily outstrip any future necessary repairs, the development would also ‘bring life into the building’, in what he called ‘the spirit of demythification’. The City’s Heritage Protection Office was also on board, requiring only that the external shell of the building was maintained. Indeed, the only initial concerns voiced were to do with details of financing the project, potential traffic problems and the impact on local retailers.

Although the plan to develop this unique fascist building in this way came to be declaimed by some as an astonishing and disturbing instance of forgetting and even repressing an unsettling memory, as I describe further below, the Treasurer’s use of the term ‘demythification’ (a term that was also bandied around in a later Council debate on the proposals) indicates that he had not forgotten the building’s history and resonance. On the contrary, what he was mobilizing here was a discourse that had been developed locally precisely to address the awkward presence of the monumental Nazi buildings in the City – a discourse of attempting to ‘counter’ their potential symbolic power by variously neglecting them or using them for banal uses (see Macdonald 2006a, 2006b). This discourse, which had been developed by the well-known SPD councillor, historian and public intellectual Hermann Glaser, drawing on ideas from theorists such as Hannah Arendt, was part of the existing local heritage complex, available as a resource in negotiations such as this.

It did not, however, cut much ice with some members of the public who variously sent letters opposing the plans to the local newspaper and participated in a ‘citizen’s initiative’ (*Bürgerinitiative*) to try to prevent it. The latter is a legal right of German citizens to mount a challenge to decisions being made in their name. The initiative charged that since the War the City authorities had failed to recognize the importance of the Congress Hall for public remembrance but had instead

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‘hushed up, repressed and concealed’ the City’s past. Letter writers also characterized the plans as evidence of a forgetting or even repressing of the Nazi past. One writer, for example, sarcastically commented: ‘Congratulations on this extraordinary idea. Not only will Nuremberg’s inner – city ... become a treasure chest again, no, even as unlovable relic from the great days of the Nazi Rallies will become the finest shopping paradise in Franken. There’s no better way, 42 years later, to repress misery and atrocity’. And another reasoned that consumerism was always predicated upon forgetting – for example, of Third World poverty and hunger that are produced in service of assisting the wealth of the West – then Nuremberg was the obvious place to build a ‘shopping paradise’. This argument, voiced by several letter writers, that consumerism *per se* was implicated in forgetting – either as a technique or as a symptom – was also one that had gained wider currency in Germany, with the generation known as ‘68ers’ seeing Germany’s post-war consumer boom as a symptom of an unhealthy repression of the awkward past by their parents’ generation.

Remembrance was posited as an antidote to this sickness and moral turpitude. The buildings should act, argued the citizens’ initiative, as a *Mahnmal*. This term, sometimes translated as ‘memorial’, carries a connotation not only of being a ‘reminder’ of the past but, as it contains the roots of the word for ‘to admonish’, also as a kind of warning for the future (e.g. Neumann 2000: 10). The chief conservator of the Bavarian Conservation Department – taking a different line from the City’s own heritage officials – also argued that the building should act in this way, rather than being developed into a shopping centre. The building was, he explained, ‘one of the most important witnesses (*Zeugnisse*) of the gigantomania of National Socialism’. In other words, the building itself held a capacity to tell of the past – to unsettle forgetting – but only if it was not somehow suppressed by the opposing forces of consumerism. To fulfil this task, the citizens’ initiative proposed subjecting the building to ‘planned demise’, erecting a barbed wire fence across its inner courtyard in order to symbolize the idea of ‘barring National Socialism from our lives’, and mounting exhibitions within it to help actively and publicly recall its history.

Following a vociferous and closely fought Council debate, the proposals were narrowly rejected; though simultaneously Congress & Partner withdrew them, recognizing that they were proving considerably more problematic than they had anticipated. The memory intervention seemed, then, to have effectively seen off the threatened forgetting that the activists, the conservator and various other members of the public saw in the plans. However, the alternative proposal by the citizens’ initiative did not materialize either – there was not erection of symbolic barbed wire, no exhibitions in the building, and its demise was no more planned than it had been earlier. Nevertheless, the controversy came widely to be seen in Nuremberg as a turning point, as a moment when it became no longer possible to simply forget the past. That is, this controversy itself lodged in public memory as a moment at which history could have taken a very different turn. Moreover, the resistance to the shopping centre became cast as a key precursor to the Congress Hall coming in 2001 to at last house a permanent exhibition about the history of Nazism and the Party Rally Grounds. It did so partly because

had things gone otherwise in the narrow vote, the building would no longer have been available to be used in this way – or at least not to the same effect – but also because controversies, like other kinds of social dramas, themselves become especially available to public memory as ‘condensing narratives’, as moments of special significance. The shopping centre controversy, while it did not entirely inoculate the Nazi site against any kind of future commercial activity, certainly seemed to feed into later debates, especially those leading to the incorporation of more unsettling memory amidst the Nazi architecture.

### Unsettlement two: Piracy and slave heritage<sup>3</sup>

How far the second example to which I now turn will remain in public memory is hard to say, as it is considerably more recent, though as will be evident in the account below, its course was itself partly shaped by a previous controversy over a similar matter within the locality. This was part of a local ‘heritage sitedness’ that was also evident in the Nuremberg example, though in different ways.

The example concerns the public display of maritime heritage – items found on the wreck of a ship called the *Whydah*. Excavated off Cape Cod in the mid 1980s, the *Whydah* was first launched from London in 1715. It was used to transport items such as liquor and tools from England to West Africa, where these were traded for slaves. Up to 700 slaves were then carried on the perilous three- to four-week journey to the Caribbean where they were exchanged for precious metals, indigo and sugar, which were then taken back to England. In February 1717, however, the ship was captured by pirates on what was only its second voyage, as it travelled from West Africa to the Caribbean. Then, only a few months later, it was wrecked in a storm.

Artefacts from the *Whydah* have been displayed at ([http://whydah.com/pages/pirate\\_hunters\\_pages/cap\\_bellamy.html](http://whydah.com/pages/pirate_hunters_pages/cap_bellamy.html); accessed 19.10.2007) the Expedition *Whydah* and Sea-Lab and Learning Center in Provincetown, MA. But to try to bring them to wider public attention, the ship’s excavator, Barry Clifford, successfully negotiated a collaboration between the exhibition-making company Arts and Exhibitions International – responsible for some major exhibitions such as *King Tut* and *Princess Diana* – and the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Tampa, FL. The plan, publicly announced in 2006, was to exhibit what was described as an ‘unparalleled’ hoard of ‘pirate treasure’ in an exhibition to be called *Pirates*. However, African-American activists protested against the plans, complaining that they marginalized African-American heritage – the history of transatlantic slavery. The fact that the plans sought to attract new audiences to the museum by drawing on a popular fascination with pirates, evident in the then recent film, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, was seen as trivializing the history of slavery and, just as slavery had done, putting commercial interests above ethics. Making this argument, James Ransom, a member of the Coalition of African American Organizations and spokesperson of an *ad hoc* group of the black activists called Citizens who Support Preserving African and African-American History, said that this insensitivity risked opening up a ‘cavernous wound’, insulting many of Tampa’s black residents whose

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ancestors originally came to America as slaves. To display the *Whydah* as a pirate ship, he argued, would be an 'exploitation' of this history and, as such, a continuation of a history of exploitation that black people have suffered.

This was a controversy, then, about whose memories should be prioritized within public space. Memory was not, however, only an object of contested representation. In a sense, it was the memory of having suffered exploitation – the memory of slavery itself – that shaped the perception of the exhibition as a form of exploitation. Memory also inspired the protest itself – in this case, the recollection of a highly similar controversy and course of events 13 years earlier. At that time, there had been African-American protests against a planned private museum of piracy in Tampa, which was also to have included the *Whydah* wreck as well as other Tampa pirate links. Kevin Yelvington, Neill Goslin and Wendy Arriaga have provided an insightful analysis of this, tackling it both ethnographically and historiographically, and seeking to understand the power differentials and kinds of arguments, and understandings about history itself, that were mobilized during the dispute. They present a context of fraught and sometimes violent racial tensions in which, as they put it, 'pirate politics are more than symbolic' (2002: 356). According to 1993 Census figures, they explain, 'Tampa's black poverty rates were surpassed only by the poverty rates of blacks in New Orleans and Detroit and ... Blacks have continuously been marginalized in the political and economic arenas' (2002: 357). As they argue, the African-American response to the marginalization of their heritage was undeniably bound up with these other forms of marginalization. At the same time, however, they also point out that although the controversy became cast as one of black versus white interests, it was in fact more complicated. In particular, there were some African-Americans who supported the project, partly because of the jobs that it promised to create.

In 2006 there was some attempt by MOSI to draw on the memory of the 1993 failure in order to ensure that history would not be repeated. Some members of the African-American community were consulted early on in its plans. Despite this, however, once the objections were voiced by James Ransom, none of those involved came out in support of the exhibition. Memory of the volatile atmosphere of 1993, and the vilification of those African-Americans who had tried to support the planned museum, may have played a part here. In response to the objections, MOSI initially tried to point out that it would not ignore slavery. Barry Clifford intervened with an argument that an account of pirate life could be a positive one for race-relations as any slaves captured by a pirate ship would have been freed and would have held equal status with other crew members, including an equal share of any loot. This was not, however, an argument that appealed to the opponents of the exhibition. Being invited to share in the admiration of a piratical approach was perhaps not the best pitch with which to appeal against arguments about lack of sensitivity.

Rather than risk a repeat of the angry protests of 1993, the Museum and Arts and Exhibitions International swiftly decided to cancel the exhibition, in Tampa at least. While some judged the museum's cancelling of the exhibition to be the only responsible course of action, others regarded it as caving in to excess political

correctness.<sup>4</sup> When I raised this with John Norman, Director of Arts and Exhibitions International, he told me that in his view it ‘was not a fight worth fighting’. Those who objected to *Pirates* did so, he believed, without proper knowledge about the exhibition content and then felt unable to back-down. He thus remained confident about being able to find new venues to show the exhibition. And he also said that he was not worried about the activists’ threat to protest against the exhibition in any possible new location, because ‘I don’t know who would object to true history’.

His optimism seems to have been well founded. In June 2007, *Real Pirates: The untold story of the Whydah from slave ship to pirate ship* opened 900 miles North, and thoroughly inland, at the Cincinnati Museum Center – to no reported protests. This was surely not only because nobody ‘object[s] to true history’ as Norman had trusted. The factual veracity of the pirate account had never been at issue among the exhibition opponents. The objections were to the emphasis and approach. As is clear from the sub-title of the new exhibition, *Real Pirates* does not ignore slavery – though piracy remains the central focus, as is clear from the main title. Furthermore, the exhibition is the kind of impressive multimedia show that is a hallmark of Arts and Exhibitions International productions. It includes not only carefully displayed artefacts recovered from the *Whydah* but also a virtual ship journey. So was just the slight modification to include a little more reference to slavery enough to assuage the sense of offence generated by the earlier plans? While surely partly responsible, also crucial was the disconnection from Tampa, and its existing heritage and memory politics. Not only was there the memory of a similar prior dispute in Tampa, the City had also focused its heritage image on piracy, especially the annual Gasparilla pirate festival (<http://www.gasparillapiratefest.com/>; accessed 19.10.2007; Yelvington *et al.* 2002). Disconnection from the locality was also achieved by replacing a local source of scientific authority (MOSI) by a national one: National Geographic. Much was made of this collaboration in the publicity for the new exhibition. Although Cincinnati, like Tampa, is a City with a high proportion of African American citizens (just over 40 per cent), and although it has some history of racial tensions, its ‘heritage complex’, unlike that of Tampa, is not centred on piracy. Moreover, and possibly of critical importance, it already included some important public memories of slavery, such as the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, mentioned above. In its new location, then, piracy was subsumed under a wider emphasis on remembering slavery rather than the other way around.

## Discussion

Memory interventions of the kind that I have outlined here are far from unusual and, indeed, are surely increasing in frequency as more and more groups demand a public space in which diverse interests and an addressing of uncomfortable aspects of the past are included. In both of the examples, the interventionists came initially and primarily from outside official governmental organizations,

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though in both they gathered support within official organizations as the controversy developed; in both cases officially sanctioned accounts that incorporated the awkward memory followed, if not immediately. Such a course of events – intervention from a minority prompting revision and at least partial incorporation into the official and public sphere – is surely rather frequent, though I would not want to elevate it to a universal structure of the sort that Turner attempted to outline for social dramas. Nevertheless, Jennifer Jordan’s argument that moves towards memorialization typically follow a trajectory in which ‘the calls of memorial entrepreneurs’ find broader public ‘resonance’, some gaining wider publicity until ‘the campaign seems to reach a point of no return, a moment at which any alternative use of the land becomes unthinkable, and it becomes politically difficult *not* to support a given memorial project’ (2006: 12), seems to characterize the process well. Of course, this does not mean that all interventions necessarily find such resonance, neither that, even if they do, memorialization always follows, or at least not immediately or completely – the Nuremberg example shows a considerable time delay and the Tampa example shows an only partial shift towards the demands of the interventionists. All the same, it is clear that such interventions can make a difference, even if they are not acknowledged as part of the official story later.

While we can detect a frequent pattern or trajectory in memory interventions of this sort, I have in the account here also sought to point out how the specificity of ‘heritage sitedness’ and local memory, of, for example, earlier disputes, can inflect upon it. So, for example, the Nuremberg controversy was framed partly in terms of what interventionists claimed to be a long history of the City forgetting and repressing the past, and, materially, failing to treat Nazi building appropriately. Or, in the slavery example, what is at issue is partly the specific Tampa history, and we see how what is another instance of marginalization there might transmute into being part of a wider heritage offer in another context in which difficult history is already on the agenda.

The move towards incorporating more unsettling memory in public contexts itself deserves further comment. In the introduction, I outlined some of the shifts with which this has been involved – in particular, the attempt by groups whose memories have been excluded to be publicly remembered. This is illustrated here by the slavery example in particular. However, this does not adequately explain all cases, including that of Nuremberg, where calls for remembrance came from Germans, many of them local people, for whom the awkward memories were ones capable of unsettling their sense of self. In other words, they were not simply seeking to have ‘their’ account added to the mix but to admit a fuller and more disturbing version of a past that they recognized as their own. This is part of a much wider move, seen elsewhere in Germany and elsewhere. While shortcomings in some of the self-critical attention have been identified, they are invoked among those who feel such self-criticism to be somehow shaming and a lack of proper patriotism, as in the *Enola Gay* case or in protests about an exhibition at Britain’s National Maritime Museum showing how the country profited from slavery (Duncan 2003), shows clearly how unsettling such accounts can be for some at least.

Nevertheless, there clearly is such a move underway in many parts of the world; as Robert Shannon Peckham observes, ‘memories of trauma are taking the place of an increasingly discredited heritage’ (2003: 207). Nervousness over heroic accounts of the past has contributed to a wider unsettling of a conceptualization of heritage as necessarily settled and laudable. But far from depleting the significance of heritage in the public realm, this unsettling has made heritage all the more available as an ethical space – as one in which values can be explored and debated.

One feature of both of the cases that I discussed was that intervention, rescuing from forgetting, was couched partly in terms of a countering of crass consumerism or commercialism. This, I suggest, is evidence of an attempt to secure heritage as an ethical space, capable not only of affirming certain identities but of prompting more complex, often humanistic and cosmopolitan, reflection on matters such as the relationship between past, present and future, and on the nature of heritage itself.

### Acknowledgements

The research on which this is based was funded partly by an AHRC special leave award and by the Alexander von Humboldt foundation. I am also grateful to the Nuremberg Stadtarchiv for assistance with the material relating to the Nuremberg example. Elsa Peralta and Marta Anico deserve thanks for stimulating the chapter and forbearance in waiting for its various revisions.

### Notes

- 1 This case is taken from Macdonald (forthcoming), where it is covered in more detail, together with further contextualization.
- 2 The following account is based on original documents in the Nuremberg Stadtarchiv, especially Pressemappe Congress & Partner, and newspaper articles from the *Nuremberg Nachrichten*. An account can also be found in Dietzfelbinger and Liedtke 2004. I have translated from the original German.
- 3 I have discussed this case elsewhere, briefly in an opinion piece, ‘Stormy Waters’, in *Museums Journal*, May 2007, and also in Macdonald 2007. The account is based on interviews with John Norman, Director of Arts and Heritage International and on newspaper articles, including the following: Greg Allen, ‘Museum cancels pirate exhibit over slavery issues’, 18 December 2006, *National Public Radio* (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6640303&ft=1&f=1001>; accessed 29.04.2007); Kevin Graham, ‘MOSI drops plans to display artefacts from slave ship’, 5 December 2006, *St Petersburg Times* ([http://www.sptimes.com/2006/12/05/Tampabay/MOSI\\_drops\\_plans\\_to\\_d.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2006/12/05/Tampabay/MOSI_drops_plans_to_d.shtml); accessed 20.04.2007); Justin George, Bill Varian and Janet Zink, ‘Tampa slavery ship exhibit sparks controversy’, 9 November 2006 ([http://www.flcourier.com/index2.php?option=com\\_content&do\\_pdf=1&id=446](http://www.flcourier.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=446); accessed 29.04.2007); Larry Rother, ‘A Tempest in Tampa over and ex-slave ship’, *New York Times* 12 February 1993 (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=travel&res=9F0CE6DD1738F931A25751C0A965958260>; accessed 29.04.2007); Tampa Pirate, ‘Civil Rights Activist diminish blacks yet again’ (<http://tampapirate.com/?p=277>; accessed 20.04.2007).

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