

Thorsten Ludwig

**Engaging citizens and  
interpreting heritage  
in the 21st century**



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# Three questions

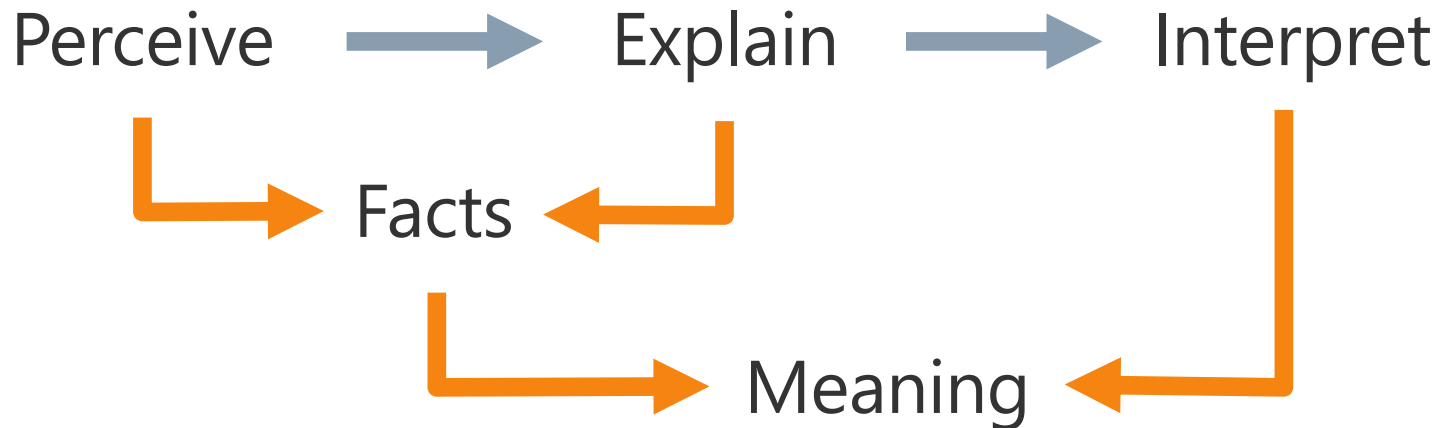
1. What challenges do we face in the first half of the 21st century?
2. How can heritage interpretation help to meet these challenges?
3. What does this mean for the tourist experience of heritage sites?



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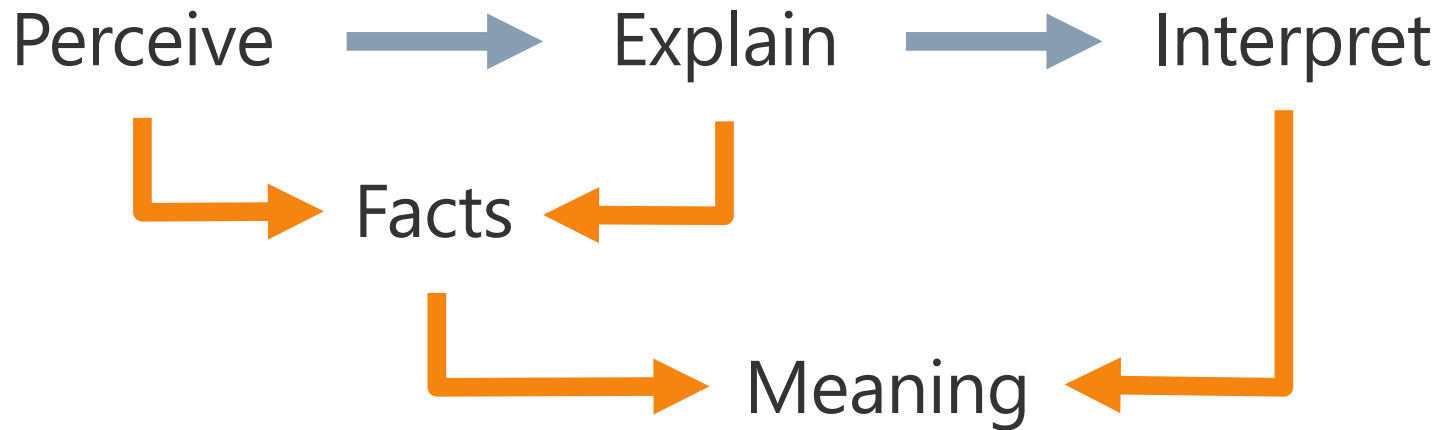
# What is heritage interpretation?

Heritage interpretation enables people to make sense of heritage.



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# What is heritage interpretation?



We want heritage to become more **meaningful** to people.



BROUWERIJ  
GOUDEN CAROLUS

Kraakenvoet

Mechelen  
Belgium



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Bruges  
Belgium

  
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# What challenges do we face in the 21st century



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Stafford  
UK



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# Reflecting upon our values

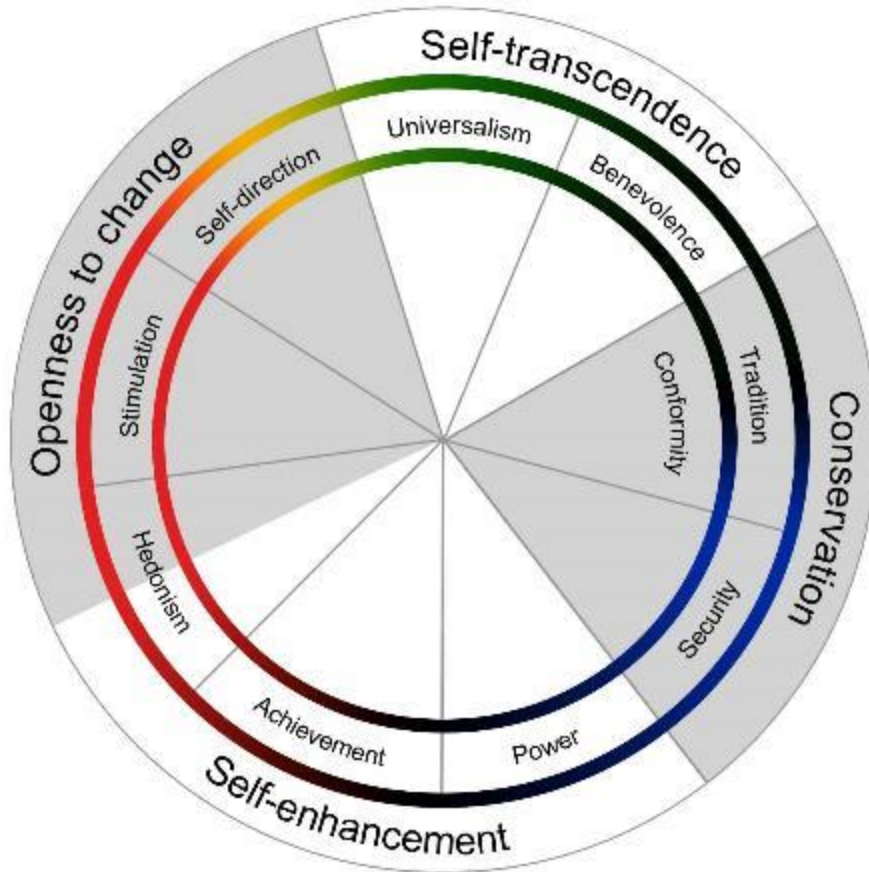
“ ...respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights...

European Union (2016) Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union. Official Journal of the European Union C 202, 17



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# Reflecting upon our values



Based on:  
Schwartz, S. H. (1992) 'Universals in the content and structure of values: theory and empirical tests in 20 countries'. In Advances in Experimental Social Psychology (Vol. 25). ed. by Zanna, M. New York: Academic Press: 1-65



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Dadia  
Greece



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# Learning for sustainability



## “ Social and emotional learning dimension

Build core values and attitudes for sustainability, cultivate empathy and compassion for other people and the planet, and motivate to lead the change.

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020) Education for sustainable development: A roadmap. Paris: UNESCO Education Sector, 17



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# How can heritage interpretation help to meet these challenges?



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# Fostering interpretive literacy

- How can the experience of heritage inspire and empower people to make our future more **peaceful** and more **sustainable**?
- How can we complement formal learning, which is more focused on knowledge and skills, with reflection on **human values**?

## Value-based heritage interpretation



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# Calling for transformative experiences

“ ...raise awareness on the values of sustainability and help converting site experience into a **transformative experience**...

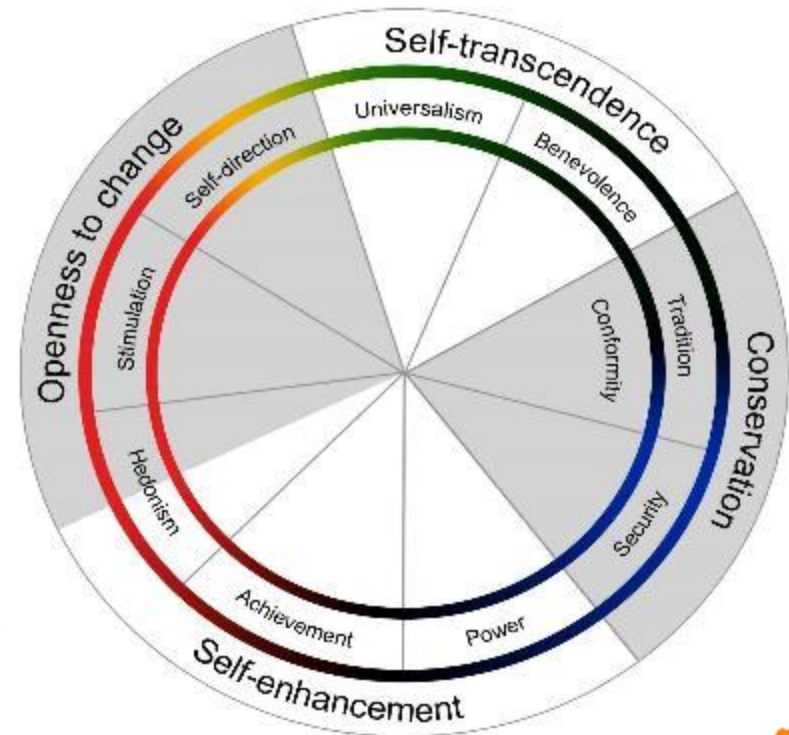
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2021) Pilot regional course on interpretative planning at World Heritage properties in Europe. Unpublished concept paper. Venice: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, 8



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# Strengthening bigger-than-self values

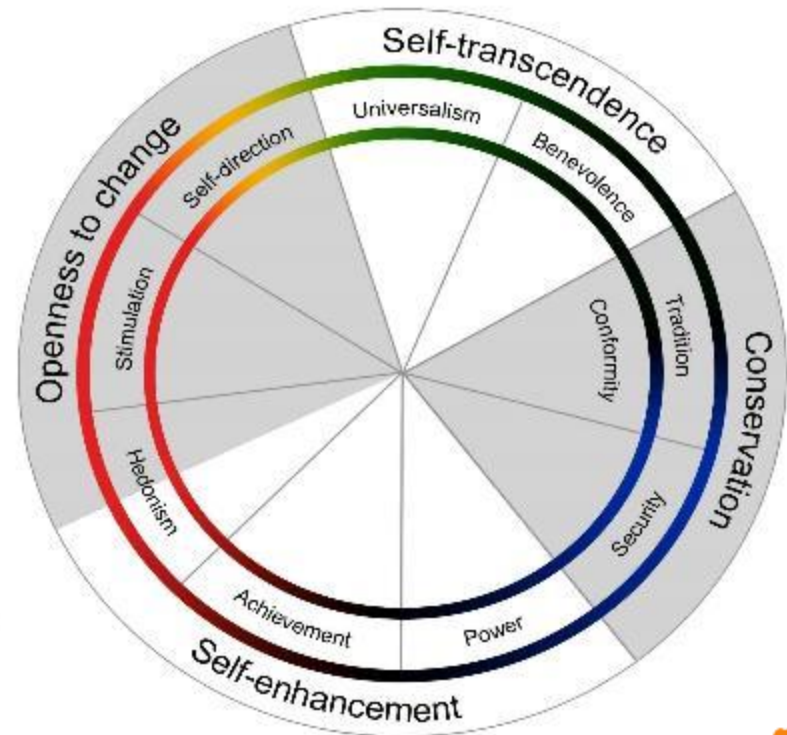
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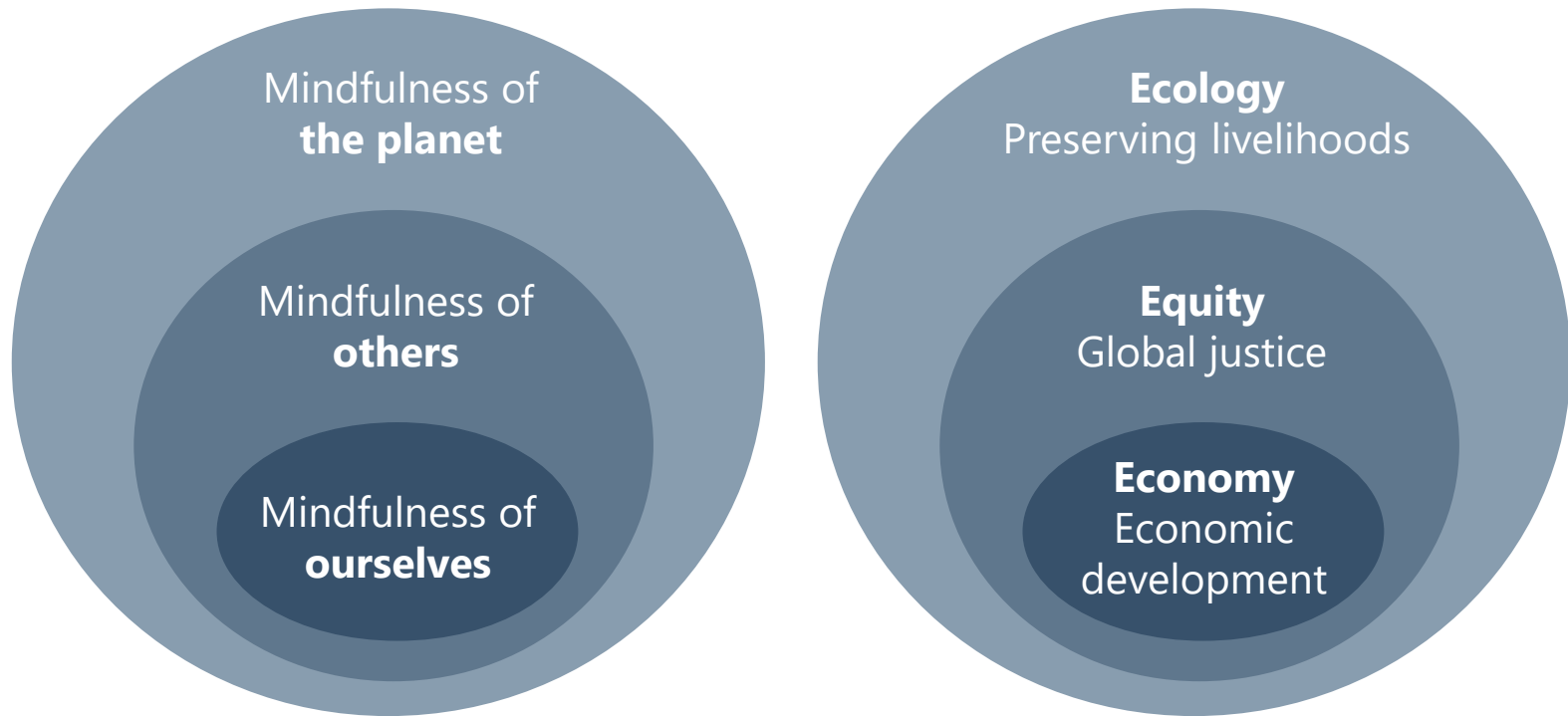


# Stages of mindfulness



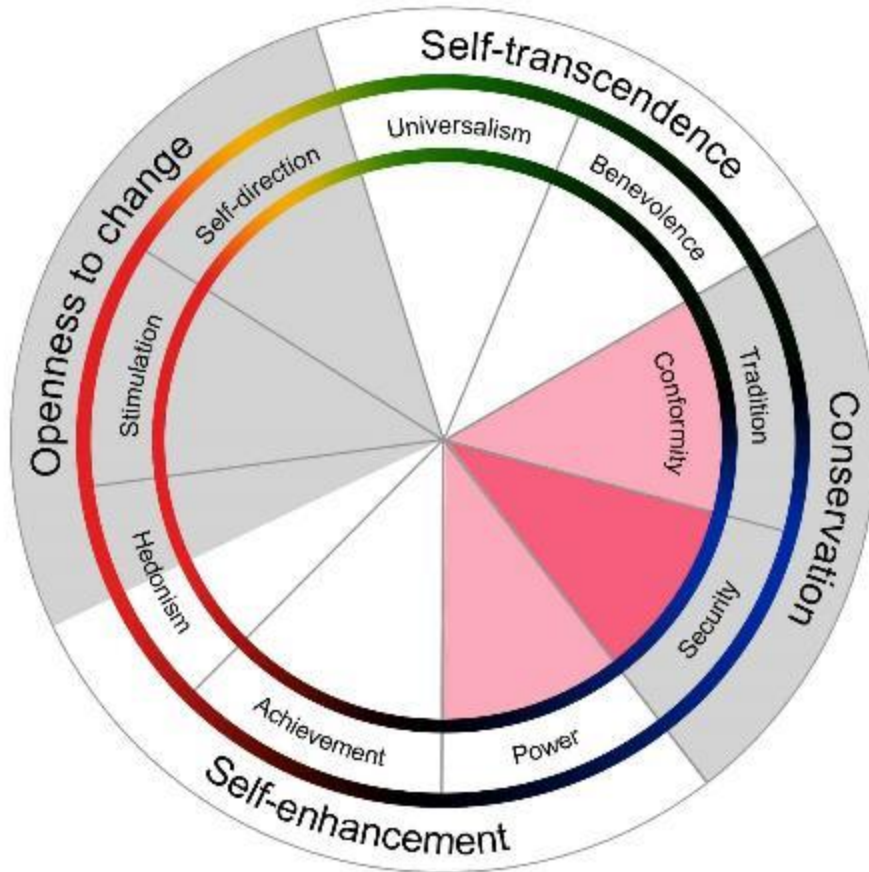
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# Stages of mindfulness



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# How can heritage help us to build bridges?



Based on:  
Schwartz, S. H. (1992) 'Universals in the content and structure of values: theory and empirical tests in 20 countries'. In Advances in Experimental Social Psychology (Vol. 25). ed. by Zanna, M. New York: Academic Press: 1-65

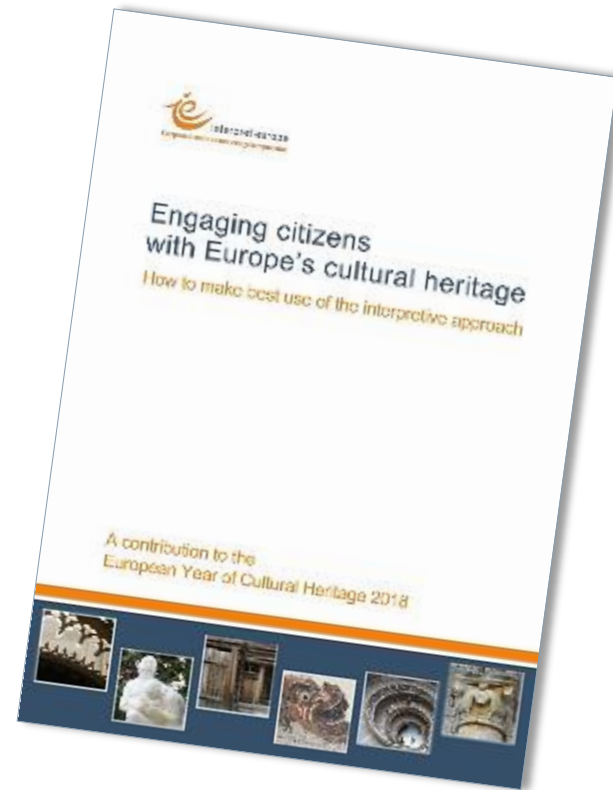


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# How can heritage help us to build bridges?

Interpret Europe 2017  
Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural  
heritage. Witzenhausen: Interpret Europe

[www.interpret-europe.net/material](http://www.interpret-europe.net/material)



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# The relevance of interpretation for UNESCO

“ The duty related to education through value-based heritage interpretation should form the core mandate of the Visitor Centres in UNESCO designated sites

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020) The role of visitor centres in UNESCO designated sites – Report of the Second Regional Workshop for Europe. Venice: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe: 29

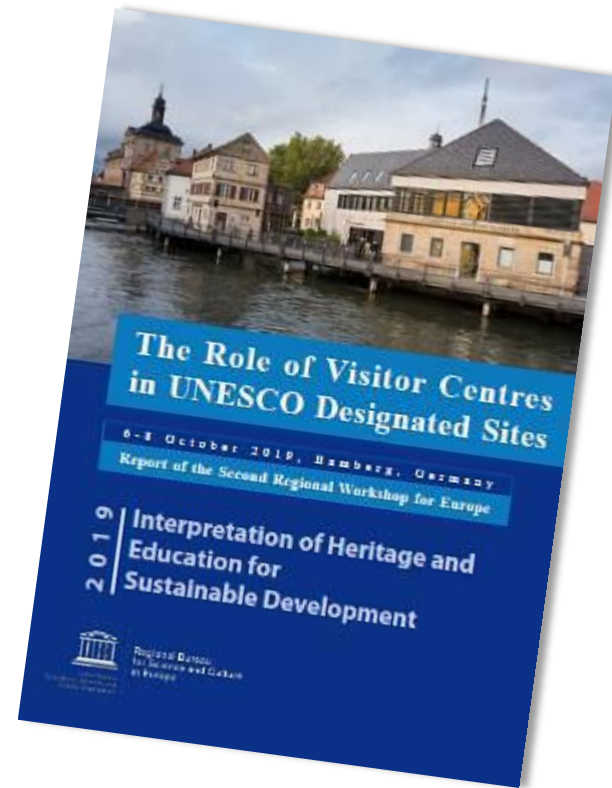


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# The relevance of interpretation for UNESCO

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020)  
The role of visitor centres in UNESCO designated sites – Report of the Second Regional Workshop for Europe. Venice: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe

<https://tinyurl.com/5xeycpex>



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# What does this mean for the tourist experience of heritage sites?



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# Advantages of learning at heritage sites

- Iconic points of reference are always relevant.
- They offer a store of stories, values, frames.
- Revelations encourage dealing with new ideas.
- People from different backgrounds can liaise.
- People play with meaning in a temporary way.
- Experiences result in long-lasting memories.



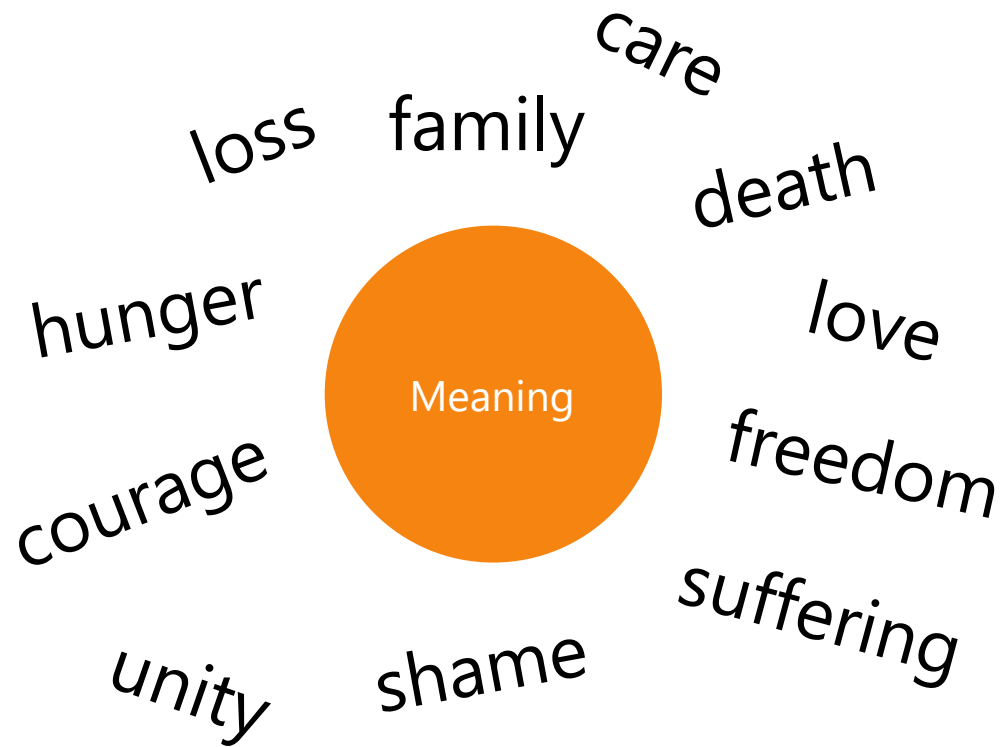
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Dubrovnik  
Croatia



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# Considering universal concepts



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# Participation means a shift in roles

informing



listening




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# Participation means a shift in roles



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## THIS IS MY TRUTH TELL ME YOURS


*Welsh text describing the historical context of the image.*

*Welsh text describing the historical context of the image.*


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**CAU PYLLAU OLD**  
*Welsh text describing the colliery's history.*



**CHWARGO TEG A CHYFOD TEG**  
*Welsh text describing the miners' strike.*



**GARTREFN A PHANT GORSEGOR**  
*Welsh text describing the railway strike.*



**AN Y LLAW ARALL**



**ON THE OTHER HAND**



**AN Y HALL LAW**



**ON THE ONE HAND**



**AN Y FAMIL LAW**



**ON THE OTHER HAND**







Düsseldorf  
Germany





Garather Geschichten

WHP

HSH  
GHH

Düsseldorf  
Germany



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# Value-based heritage interpretation...

...emphasises **interpretation by the people**, including visitors and local people.



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Brussels  
Belgium



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“ Interpretation is not an occasional luxury but our fundamental way of being in the world.

Zimmermann, J. (2015) Hermeneutics – a very short introduction.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 9



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# Want to know more?

## 4 December: Inspiration Day

IE Country Coordinator Belgium:

**Laila De Bruyne**

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[www.interpret-europe.net](http://www.interpret-europe.net)

**Thank you**

[office@interpret-europe.net](mailto:office@interpret-europe.net)

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Getty Images (8), Catsadorakis (17), Rutt (29, 30), Ludwig (all others)



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