

ABSTRACT - 4. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN HERITAGE DISCOURSE - A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STATE OF THE ART IN HERITAGE DISCUSSIONS, CONSIDERING THE EVOLVING PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES THAT HAVE EMERGED SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE VENICE CHARTER. EXAMINING THE RELEVANCE OF THE VENICE CHARTER IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT, WITH A FOCUS ON CHALLENGES POSED BY THE WESTERN DIVIDE BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE, THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF METROPOLISES, SOCIAL INEQUITIES, THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES, DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS, AMONG OTHERS.

**ADVANCING THE VENICE CHARTER WITH THE TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE: THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM**

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The Venice charter provides a point of departure for considering authenticity and integrity in the representation of our common heritage. In the years since it became the touchstone for heritage preservation, it has become clear that the integrity and authenticity of heritage itself often requires attention to both the tangible and intangible. The Underground Railroad Network to Freedom provides access to and knowledge of places and stories associated with the self-liberation of peoples brought to the Americas and enslaved there. Monuments and other forms of tangible culture sometimes provide points of entry to the heritage of people who engaged in these liberation struggles, But, to represent the authentic and complete heritage requires access to the intangible. These are the stories self-liberators told by themselves, which are

now often told by contemporary observers. The United States National Committee of ICOMOS has been working with the United States National Park Service to enlarge a network of places that represent these liberation stories beyond the boundaries of the United States. The effort thus far has focused on colligation with the ICOMOS national committees in Canada and Mexico. We present here how this was done in hopes of increasing participation by the countries in the Americas, all of which must reconcile their heritage with the legacy of slavery.

The story of self-liberation in Latin American countries is slightly different than that in the United States and immediately adjacent countries. This difference is important. First, because it demonstrates that the desire for freedom is ubiquitous and unstoppable. Also, importantly because these untold stories hold other vital implications. Self-liberators in the United States could find refuge in the northern United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Those enslaved in other countries escaped to remote locations, often within the border of the countries where they had been enslaved. There they encountered indigenous populations and often intermarried with them. These maroon communities have evolved into powerful political entities in some countries. Moreover, in almost all countries, they are now in the forefront of the battle to preserve the natural environment that continues to serve as their home. They are thus playing a crucial role in combating climate change.

The Underground Railroad Network to Freedom provides access to information about monuments, places, and people who played roles in self-liberation. This is done through storyboards, websites, and in the future other types of social media. This presentation will also serve as an invitation to all the countries in the Americas to move toward participation in the network.

Palavras-chave: slavery; intangible culture; americas; self-liberation; the underground railroad.