THE PAST OF OTHERS

Archaeological Heritage Management in Thailand and Australia

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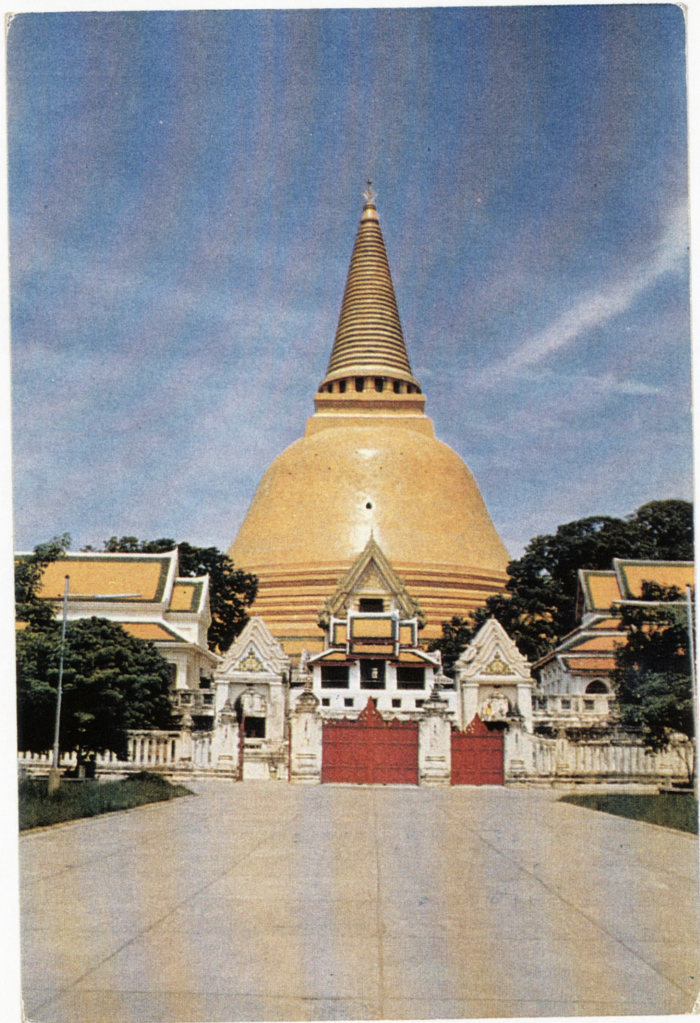
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THIS THESIS IS ENTIRELY MY OWN WORK AND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE ALL SOURCES HAVE BEEN
ACKNOWLEDGED

For Daniel Ragani Ng

Phra Pathom

Meanwhile, in every village along the coast and from
north to south, potters indefatigably turned out millions
of jars - replicas of the age-old amphorae that sponge
fishers are always finding at the bottom of the sea, full
of oil preserved by the mud since the days of ancient
Carthage. Every morning there were more jars, still warm
from the just-quenched oven. I could see Tunisia dwindling
away: all its clay being sold to girls from Norway in the
form of terracotta amphorae. In the end, I thought, it'll
disappear forever.

To the other reasons I've given for the more lively part of
Tunisian youth going to fight with the Palestinians, we
might add that it was fed up with age-old amphorae.

Jean Genet,
Prisoner of Love

Abstract

Beginning with the understanding that several European discourses compete for the right to interpret the physical traces of past human cultures I have examined what seem to be the major of these in the European context. They are the discourses of the divine, namely paganism and early Christianity, and the discourses of the secular and rational, the principal of which are antiquarianism and archaeology. Since the mid-nineteenth century archaeology has secured for itself official recognition as the proper knowledge of the material past.

Archaeology is now to be found practised in almost every part of the world. The transfer of the discourses of archaeology and art history from the West to the non-West has, not surprisingly, included the transfer of the conservation ethic. While the conservation ethic has attained a foothold at a government and elite level in the non-West it appears to have little constituency at a local and non-elite level. In Thailand I have looked at Buddhism and animism as systems of knowledge about the material past and have found beliefs and practices which honour the spiritual essence of ancient remains but rarely seek to conserve their material fabric.

In Australia the European conception of Aboriginal heritage is implicated in a primitivist longing for a 'traditional', unchanging Aboriginal culture in which authenticity is partly equated within pastness. Archaeology established its primacy in Australia by mixing its discourse with the discourse of heritage. It now finds its position destabilized as Aborigines themselves borrow elements of the same discourse in a counter-appropriation of their 'archaeological' cultural property.

The universality of the conservation ethic is manifestly spurious. The West, in its bid to domesticate the past of the Other World, allies itself with the non-Western state. The state draws upon the material past as a resource for nation-building, monumentalizing the past also in the interests of legitimizing present political arrangements. This alliance of interests is fundamentally anti-religious. Its programme of 'conserving' ancient sites cuts across local practices.

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Prece ding page - Phra Pathom *chedi* at Nakon Pathom
(postcard c. 1970s)

Acknowledgements

Introduction

The landscape of the late twentieth century is under unprecedented human pressure. Urban expansion and renewal, the tightening infrastructure of pipelines, airports, freeways, sewage ponds, dams and, in the countryside, an intensifying, machine-aided agriculture, all tighten their grip on the surface of our planet. Not merely is the face of the natural landscape being rapidly remade, the cultural remains of generations and millennia are disappearing at an unprecedented rate. The determination of burgeoning populations of the living to survive and be affluent is obliterating the traces of the dead.

Working against this tide of erasure is a formidable alliance of archaeologists, conservation architects, art historians, non-professional volunteer conservationists and National Trusts, NGO's, state agencies, the United Nations, and other international agencies. Individually and collectively they argue for the protection of these remains on the grounds that they are a non-renewable cultural resource. A resource which provides knowledge about the human past, aesthetic satisfaction, and an essential grounding for individual and collective identity. The remains, they argue, represent a human heritage which is our s to enjoy and to pass on. It is a universal heritage which all people should have the freedom to enjoy and learn from.

It was against this background that I began the project which has culminated in this thesis. It began as what seemed an unproblematic investigation of the practice of archaeological heritage management in Southeast Asia and Australia. My intention was to look at Australia (particularly the southeast), the Philippines, and Thailand. Together they sampled a range of intensities of exposure to the West. Australia was the settler colony whose indigenous inhabitants, the Aborigines, had been overrun and dispossessed. The Philippines was the post-colonial state which had emerged in the mid-twentieth century from four centuries of Spanish and American colonial rule. Thailand, miraculously, had never been a colony but had been on the receiving end of

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varying degrees of Western economic, political, and ideological pressure and influence since the seventeenth century.

My primary concern was the conservation of prehistoric and pre-colonial archaeological sites. To what extent was society in these three places motivated to protect the archaeological record and what means were being employed to do so? Was it a problem, for instance, to generate support in the Philippines for conserving a heritage which lay on the further side of a gulf opened up by colonial intervention? Had Catholicism driven a wedge between Filipinos and their pagan predecessors? Would Thailand, for its part, prove to be something of a model of continuity between past and present. To what extent and for what reasons did European Australians wish to have the Aboriginal archaeological record preserved?

From May 1989 I spent four months in the Philippines attached to the Archaeology Section of the National Museum in Manila. Though I had travelled fairly widely in Southeast Asia it was my first experience of the Philippines and I was shocked by the extent of poverty there and by what seemed to be the state of semi-collapse of the post-Marcos years. It quickly became apparent that the major issue in archaeological heritage management in the Philippines was the looting of prehistoric deposits, particularly burial sites containing Chinese trade ceramics. It seemed that at a local level the need for cash had overwhelmed people's desire to conserve their heritage. Indeed, in the villages, interest in archaeology seemed to be at a deplorably low ebb. The middle class seemed to have a greater interest in archaeology. However, it was clear that their enthusiasm to build private collections of ceramics was what was driving the antiquities market and was ultimately responsible for the looting epidemic. Clearly they needed educating in the value of undisturbed archaeological deposits and the *in situ* context of their prized ceramics.

Uncertain quite where to direct my energies at the Museum and feeling that my topic sounded more implausible each time I tried to explain it to the friendly staff, I took refuge in the records room, blowing the dust off the archive of reports which Museum archaeologists had filed on their field excursions since the 1950s. Reading back through the reports of the 1960s and 70s I could not help being moved by the sense of mission and optimism which infected the work. This stood somewhat in contrast to the ambience of the present day Museum which had been marginalized by the Aquino government. Yet the heroic days under the Marcos regime, when the earliest dates for human occupation of the Philippines were being pushed into the Pleistocene first by Robert Fox at Tabon Cave on Palawan and then by the large Museum

team in the Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon were,   coloured by a degree of nationalist boosterism. The personal interest which the Marcos clique took in much of the Museum's work in those days lent to it an aspect of performance. Not quite the performance represented by the immense and largely deserted cultural centre built by the ex-First Lady down on the edge of Manila Bay, but not altogether different either. They both gave kudos to the nation. If the state had a particular agenda for archaeology then the team of archaeologists at the museum evidently had another. They seemed genuinely committed to their research, somehow keeping three or four projects running on a minute budget.

I began to become conscious of the presence of four groups in Philippine society each with a distinct view of the remains of its country's past: the state, the archaeologists, the middle class collectors, and the remainder (accounting for over 95%) of the population. It was not a matter of the four having different degrees of archaeological interest or awareness, each seemed to conceive of the remains in quite a different way. The state saw them as a resource for nation-building. For the archaeologists they had varying degrees of research potential; for the collectors they were collectibles and sources of collectibles. I was not sure what they meant to the villagers and the urban poor. But I spent a weekend on an island with someone who seriously believed in mermaids and tried to convince me that the two important things about these 'old places' was that spirits inhabited them and that they often contained buried gold. These four views seemed to represent entirely different interpretations of the same thing. I found the idea of this plurality compelling. If there were these distinct ways of conceiving of 'the archaeological record' then what were the implications of this for archaeological site management? This seemed more interesting, if more difficult to grasp, than my original set of interests.

But if I was to allow this to become my new line of enquiry then what would happen to my growing file of notes on survey results and site attrition? I never really resolved this matter. In fact, I spent the remainder of my time in the Philippines in a state of confusion or, more accurately perhaps, of paradigm collapse. I nevertheless continued my work with the Museum records, spent some time in the Butuan area of Northeast Mindinao obtaining a first-hand impression of looting, and met more archaeologists, historians, and heritage administrators. I was staying in the 'old' inner city, most of which had been razed by American bombing which followed General MacArthur's famous 'return'. Unlike the other countries of Southeast Asia I had visited, with their rapidly growing GNP's, the economy of the Philippines seemed to be going backwards. The consequences of this on the ground, in the streets, were

very depressing. The more poverty I saw the more uneasy I felt about the conservation of archaeological sites as a priority issue.

When it came time to write, I had grown accustomed to thinking of the material past as being a value-neutral entity which was the subject of value-laden systems of thought and practice. These might properly be called discourses. I had, of course, been used to thinking of archaeology as a scholarly discipline, so the shift involved in thinking of it as a discourse may not seem to have been major. Infact, however, what the concept 'discipline' had meant to me was an agreed methodology and body of theory which, if properly used by properly trained individuals (i.e., used in a disciplined way), had the potential to make the material past speak. Looked at as a discourse, however, one became conscious of the way archaeology created not just knowledge but also the reality it seemed to be describing. Its relationship with its subject matter was dialectical. This became particularly clear when one attended to the medley discourses on the material past.

What I have attempted is not discourse analysis in the linguistic or semiotic sense. I have, rather, tried to identify different *systematic* and cohesive ways of speaking of the material past and giving meaning to it. This has meant, in the case of archaeology, for instance, that I have been more interested in what archaeologists have said about what they do than in what they appear to be doing.

One of the procedural difficulties of addressing this medley was that, having rendered archaeology as problematic, I had to be much more careful about the use of archaeological categories. It was no longer possible to speak of the 'archaeological record' as something which was meaningful across the board. What was an archaeological site for the archaeologist might be a sacred object for the pious Buddhist or the tribal animist. 'Archaeological' was no longer an adequately value-neutral term. Nor would 'antiquities' do since it gave centrality to the antiquarian interest. In the chapters which follow I have mostly I tried to use terms like 'vestiges', 'cultural property', or 'the material past'. I have not, however, been overly disciplined about this.

A month spent in Eugene, Oregon, before beginning fieldwork in Thailand gave me a chance to gather my thoughts. I spent a lot of time in the university library reading the anthropology and history of Thailand, paying particular attention to spirit cults and Buddhist monasteries. By the time I arrived in Bangkok I was looking at my

topic with such different eyes that I decided to put the Philippines behind me and to write my thesis on Thailand and Australia. This is what I have done.

It had started to become apparent that it would be necessary to look at the history of how the different discourses on the material past in Australia and Thailand had developed. If archaeology now enjoyed an unrivalled place as the legitimate knowledge of the remains of the past, by what path did it establish itself in this position? And at what point did the state, for its part, begin to take an interest in these remains? It was equally clear that it would not be possible to 'begin' with Thailand and Australia. Part of the story lay elsewhere, in Europe. For this reason I have devoted my first chapter to a review of discourses of the material past in Europe and to the specific historical circumstances that saw their emergence.

The thesis has the appearance of a literature review and I am happy enough with that appearance. There is very little direct evidence of my field experience to be found in the chapters. It is there, of course, in the background, but I have chosen for the most part to let other people's texts do the talking. To a large extent I have felt that the material that I needed already existed in text, all that was needed was for someone with my particular interest to bring it together. Ethnographers (of Thailand?) do not, by and large, address themselves to the question of how people relate to the ancient cultural remains in their midst. Although writers of certain periods of European history have increasingly been vocal about practices concerning ancient remains, students of Thai history have mostly had little to say. For their part, archaeologists and heritage managers have had little to say about the present social context of these remains. What seemed to be needed was for someone to go scavenging around in the work of these specialist scholars for the bits and pieces of a whole picture.

The Thai and Australian chapters alternate with each other. I can see the potential for this dodging about to be irritating. It is, however, more or less the order I wrote the chapters in. I have never seen this as a project in comparative culture but I do think that the Thai and Australian components inform each other. So I have kept them in this order.

Re-presenting the European Past

A MATTER OF SEDIMENTATION

The Enlightenment relegated to the category of superstition the old magical practices which centred on ancient objects and places. It insisted on a clear separation of these practices from any rational determination of what antiquities meant and how they might be treated. The importance of this pronouncement lay not so much in that it drove pre-Christian magical practices and even the popular supernaturalism of Christianity underground, or further underground, but in that it rendered such practice virtually invisible. It helped produce the present situation in which writers on heritage management not only disallow the possibility that such practices could have a legitimate claim on the way these vestiges are managed in the present, they give scant attention to the historical significance of the magic, the mythological, and the sacred as serious concerns.

This censorship has not been applied to the non-Western world. Indeed, in the construal of this world as the West's Other we are not surprised to find the supernatural existing there large as life. This is what we would expect. Steeped in mysticism, bound by superstition, profoundly non-rational: this is precisely what we imagine the non-West to be. Indeed, my own examination of the way Thais and Australian Aborigines relate to the material past gives centre stage to non-rational practices. Yet the ease with which the rational-supernatural binary seems to fall in line with binaries such as modern-primitive under the master binary of the Occident-Orient poses a danger. My contention is that while the supernatural may be easier to see in the non-West, nevertheless, it exists under our noses in the West as well. My intention in the present chapter is to show how this near-invisibility has been effected and, in so doing, to insist that the supernatural is also a major part of the Western experience of the material past.

In European history, as in the present time, particular relations of power have ensured that certain discourses enjoy social and political dominance over certain others. The combined secular and religious authority exercised by medieval Christianity, for instance, gave the Christian discourse on the material past an 'official' status elevating it above the lingering discourses of Hellenism and of classical Rome as well as above the lingering belief systems of pre-Christian, pagan, northern Europe. Archaeology's compact with Science and modernism endowed it with a similar totalizing ability. We can speak of emergent and declining discourses so long as it is understood that these concepts are more useful in describing the standing or legitimacy which a practice enjoys than in describing the extent of its occurrence.

I want to introduce here the idea that ancient places and objects are socially constituted not by single acts of interpretation but by layers of meaning corresponding to historical changes in a culture's belief systems. Social change is a gradual process and, consequently, old belief systems tend to linger long after even the most dramatic, apparently all-encompassing shifts have occurred. It is not that people are unable to get rid of their old ways, it is more that they may not want to get rid of them, opting instead to operate within different belief systems at different times and places in their lives and even, perhaps, at the same times and places. We might think of the old as being sedimented below the new in the minds of individuals. Sedimentation implies overlay rather than simple plurality and I do think it is correct to think in terms of layering, with the proviso that the latest layer does not necessarily obscure older layers. Also, that the greater visibility of the latest layer comes partly from its standing or legitimacy. It is the latest which tends to write the book on the subject. Finally, it might be said that the older practices may bulk larger or lie closer to the surface among individuals of one class, or gender, or ethnic background than individuals of another.

The manner in which Christianity dealt with the physical traces of older religions and cults in Europe is instructive. The Church made a concerted effort to obliterate the traces of the old. The emperor Theodosius decreed the closing of pagan temples in 392 and subsequently many of those within the Hellenic and Roman spheres were demolished, as were many of the sanctuaries of the northern European deities (Pallottino 1992: 184, Russel 1984: 71, Seznec 1992: 202, 204). But the Church deployed its resources against paganism on two fronts: extirpation and assimilation. Nicole Belmont, addressing herself to the situation in Gaul, explains why assimilation was favoured.

> In 452 the Council of Arles condemns worshippers of rocks; in 538 the Synod of Auxerre stigmatizes those who worship fountains, forests, and rocks. In 567 the Council of Tours recommends that all those who, before rocks, do things unrelated to the ceremonies of the Church be driven from the Church... The continuing struggle was apparently quite ineffective, since the Church was obliged to pursue it until well after the Council of Trent. The assimilative method met with much greater success... It consisted in Christianizing practices that were - or were considered to be - of pagan origin. "It is the same with sacred forests as with Gentiles", declared Saint Augustine; "one does not exterminate the Gentiles but one converts them, changes them; in the same way one does not cut down sacred groves; it is better to consecrate them to Jesus Christ."

> <div align="right">Belmont 1992a: 245</div>

The quality which distinguished those rocks, springs, and trees revered or propitiated by paganism from the churches and devotional objects of later, 'rational', Christianity was the power believed to reside in them. Not representational power, but an immediate, animating power. The object in itself is an 'effective presence' (Rowe and Schelling 1991: 67-68). The project of assimilation was facilitated by the nature of Christianity's own scheme of the supernatural. This consisted of the ordered realms of the diabolical, the natural, and the divine supernatural, the first governed by Satan, the second two governed by God (Le Goff 1988: 12).

Jeffrey Russel (1984) shows how, upon encountering pagan religions in northern Europe, with their own cosmogonies of gods, monsters, and nature spirits, Christianity fused many of the elements of these with the Christian concept of the Devil. The sacred landscape of paganism was not eradicated but was reinterpreted as the topography of the Devil in the landscape of Christianity.

> The Devil loved architecture, because he took the place of the Teutonic giants, who were builders of great artifices. Any large, mysterious object of stone was supposed to have been thrown down, built up, or dug out by the Evil One: hence there are Devil's ditches, dikes, bridges, and gorges.

> <div align="right">Russel 1984: 73</div>

Pagan temples were the Devil's dwelling places. Ancient ruins, along with certain trees, caves, streams and other natural features were his haunts (Russel 1984: 71). The reworking of the old by the new in a negative way can be seen in the convulsion of witchcraft suppression. In the period 1450-1750 old agrarian fertility cult beliefs, such as those of the Bernandanti in northern Italy (Ginzburg 1983), were reinvented by the inquisitors as witchcraft. The strategy for dealing with the anathemized physical vestiges of these beliefs often involved an attempt to bury them below significations of the Christian sacred and thus neutralize their evil. Churches were built on numerous

pagan sites (Schmitt 1992: 184) and new uses were found for such pagan objects as sarcophagi, which became altars (Seznec 1992: 204). The programme of reassignation led the clergy and the devout

> to put pious images on trees, to carve crosses on menhirs, to place fountains under the invocation of the Virgin - in a word, to cover the ancient venerations with a cloak of orthodoxy. Indeed strange assimilations had made the saints the successors of the gods.
>
> Seznec 1992: 203

The notion of sedimentation may thus be taken further. The objects and places belonging to old belief systems often end up physically sedimented below the new. Also, the assimilative device ensures near-invisibility by creating the impression that the old has actually become the new. This absorbtion, though, is unlikely to be entirely successful. The continuance of unorthodox practices tends to sustain or revive the 'buried' cult object.

In addition to those vestiges of paganism 'absorbed' into the Christian supernatural, Christianity produced its own sacred places and objects, many of them possessing the attributes of effective presence which animated the places and objects of the pagan world. By the fourth century many of the places marking events in the life of Christ had become objects of pilgrimage, especially those in Jerusalem where by the beginning of the fifth century there were two hundred monasteries and hospices established under the patronage of the Emperor in Constantinople to cater to pilgrims (Runciman 1951: 40). There was also a flow of major and minor relics of Christ and the Eastern saints to the West. Between the eighth and the twelfth centuries relics were 'the primary focus of religious devotion throughout Europe' (Geary 1986: 169). They consisted of body parts, of material (e.g., oil, or dust) associated with a saint's tomb, of clothing and personal belongings. The relics were placed in elaborate reliquaries and shrines were built to house them. The primary sacred landscape of Christianity would remain the Holy Land, but relocation of relics from there to Europe and the existence of indigenous European saints and the relics of these saints, together with apparitional sites, enabled a secondary sacred landscape. Europe, too, became a 'holy land', a landscape with its own network of religiously empowered places and objects.

Splinters of the Cross were venerated as also were relics of saints only recently dead. Such was the demand for these sacred commodities in Europe that saints such as Francis of Assissi lived in danger of being murdered for their relics (Geary 1986: 177). It was efficacy rather than age that was the main factor in the valuation of relics.

In order for a cult to form around a relic it was necessary for that relic to perform miracles. These established its authenticity. But in order to maintain its valuation it was necessary for a relic to *continue* to perform miracles. A relic's significance as an effective presence resides not in the fact of its materiality but in the efficacy for which its materiality is a mere vehicle. Here we confront a surprising fact: the discourses of the divine which so often seem to conflate spiritual presence and material presence seem to be less concerned about the fate of the material presence (e.g., the shrine, the sanctuary, the relic) than are the rational discourses. A shrine may be periodically rebuilt, a relic may be broken up and dispersed. The performance is privileged above the site of performance. For the secular discourses of archaeology, art history, and even antiquarianism, by contrast, material presence is all.

Returning to the matter of the nature of the sacred site in Christian Europe it may be observed that the status of relics was a matter of some tension between educated churchmen and ordinary Christians. The former saw the relics as a medium through which Christ and the saints continued to work good after their death. However,

> The perception of the operation of relics on the part of most people, lay and clerical, seems to have been much more immediate: relics *were* the saints, continuing to live among men. They were immediate sources of supernatural power for good or for ill, and close contact with them or possession of them was a means of participating in that power.

Geary 1986: 176

The popular inclination to vivify relics as against an 'official' inclination to limit or deny the possibility of supernatural power in objects has by no means been a matter of simple opposition. What seems to be an ambivalence in the official position is exemplified in the case of Lourdes. The apparitions of the Virgin Mary to a young French girl at Lourdes in 1858 were promoted by the Vatican as part of a programme to develop miracle cults as a defence against secular rationalism, 'asserting that knowledge obtained through supernatural means was superior to knowledge constructed from reason' (Dahlberg 1991: 31). The Church has nevertheless sought to carefully manage the way pilgrims experience the shrine complex at Lourdes. When bathing in the water of a spring associated with one of the apparitions the pilgrims are discouraged from treating the water in a magical or superstitious manner (Eade 1991: 55-68).

It is tempting to see the generic form of popular religious practice at a place like Lourdes as owing much to pre-Christian practices. The popular-orthodox tension which this engenders has a very evident counterpart outside of Europe in places where

Catholicism has run a similar course in its efforts to simultaneously exploit and contain indigenous supernatural forces in the landscape and to control the syncretic practices which have developed around them. The numerous contemporary Marian cults in Latin America are probably the best known example of these. They are particularly interesting in that so many of the apparitional sites coincide with pre-Hispanic cult sites - Rowe and Schelling (1991: 23-24, 53-54, 68-71) review a spectrum of the literature on these and other syncretic practices.

In Europe the Christian project of assimilation is by no means complete. Pagan survivals are evident in many local festivals and in what Belmont (1992b: 255), for instance, refers to as 'French topographical beliefs and legends'. In medieval England people believed Stonehenge was built by giants (Chippindale 1983: 28), megalith-building being one aspect of an 'international myth' of giants reaching back to antiquity and still found among English antiquarians as late as the nineteenth century (Piggott 1989: 48). Learned Elizabethans commonly believed Stonehenge to have been crafted by the magician Merlin (Chippindale 1983: 29, 37). What, one might ask, did the non-learned populace believe? It appears that seventeenth century gentlefolk visiting Stonehenge could expect to be told by a coachman or 'loitering shepherd' that wounds could be healed by rubbing against the stones or by using water mixed with 'Scrapings' and that fragments of the stone could clear wells of 'venomous creatures' (Chippindale 1983: 44). Prior to the eighteenth century even the educated believed that prehistoric stone artefacts were of non-Christian supernatural origin. Ground-stone 'celts' had fallen from the sky as 'thunderstones', a belief at least as old as the Rome of Pliny (Trigger 1989: 47). Smaller flaked artefacts were 'elf-bolts' shot at people or wildstock by fairies or witches (see also Piggott [1989: 92] on the subject of such beliefs in Scotland).

SEARCHING FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE SECULAR

In confronting plurality we should be wary of consigning particular discourses or particular forms of them to particular social groupings (e.g., the peasantry, the elite, the urban poor). Pallottino makes this point when he writes of early Eastern Christianity and the interest of the Byzantine scholarly elite in ancient Hellenism:

> the encounter of the Eastern Church with the complex mythology that existed around the year 313 is not an encounter between a scholarly culture and a popular culture, but rather the beginning of a thousand-year coexistence of

cultural practices at different levels of society and different levels of consciousness...

That a single individual can employ more than one discourse in relating to the material past is a point to keep in mind when considering the advent of Renaissance humanism.

Historians of archaeology have placed the humanists squarely on the path leading to modern archaeology for the reason that Renaissance humanism facilitated a rediscovery of the remains of classical antiquity which had been neglected by medieval Christianity. Certainly, the medieval cyclical view of time, the 'Time of Salvation' (Fabian 1983: 26) in which human history had a known beginning and end, the end promising a return to God, disallowed the idea of historical change necessary for an appreciation of the remains of antiquity as historical phenomena (see Trigger 1989: 31-5). The humanists recognized the distinction between the present and antiquity (Rowe 1965: 8) and, in what might be seen as a project of salvage, 'brought back' inscriptions and sculpture from classical sites in order to learn from them.

But we can hardly say that these vestiges were devoid of use or meaning during the medieval interval. Pomian seems to imply this by referring to them as 'scrap' (1990: 34) which the humanists were turning into 'semaphores', objects meaningful in that they facilitate communication between the realms of the visible and the invisible (1990: 20-25). In the preceding pages I have argued that they remained meaningful both within the lingering discourse of paganism and within the dominant discourse of Christianity. We can say, and Pomian (1990) usefully details this phenomenon, that they became the subject of an essentially secular practice of collecting. Also, that they were valued *because* they were old; because they were part of a past which those like Petrarch (1304-74) rated above the present (Burke 1969: 21). This was very different from the discourses of the divine in which 'pastness' was purely incidental.

It would be centuries before antiquarian collecting became more than the sort of oddity suggested by one account of Sir Francis Bacon's reaction upon encountering the Arundel marbles in London:

> Coming into the Earl of Arundel's garden, where there were a great number of ancient statues of naked men and women, [he] made a stand, and astonished cried out: The Resurrection!

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Classical and other antiquities did not, with the Renaissance, enter the exclusive domain of the collector's cabinet. It would be a mistake to confound the secular with the rational. There were other secular, decidedly non-rational, discourses on the material past in existence through which ancient places and objects had the power to excite decidedly non-rational responses.

It has been suggested that the displacement of liturgy by theology in Roman Catholicism meant a partial displacement of things by words as the focus of religious fervour. Peoples' desire for the experience of speechless emotion was redirected, in the century or so after 1550, to a new type of place: the Baroque place (Ranum 1991: 210). The Baroque site could as easily be an island, a grotto, an androgynous body, or a place of execution as it could an ancient object or ruin.

> ...the Baroque place brought tears to the eyes, chills, fevers, sexual arousal, lethargy, slow heart beat, rapid heart beat, dizziness, or sweating. As emotions welled up and the body responded to the place, the beholder had to choose whether to stay before it or in it, or to withdraw in order to calm down.
>
> Ranum 1991: 206

In the Baroque perception of the landscape as allegorical, the ruin was emblematic of the futility of civilization (Buck-Morss 1989: 161). Later, the romantic movement made ancient sites places to search for the sublime and places for melancholy contemplation. Romantics were prepared to travel long distances to find a landscape ruinous enough to satisfy them and among these places Italy stood out as a paradigm of picturesque decay. The Romantic view was sometimes explicitly opposed to the probing and uncovering of ancient places in the quest for knowledge. Lord Byron recorded his displeasure at the efforts in his day to reveal the secrets of Rome's ruins.

> Byron's bias is anti-archaeological; like Keats interrogating the Grecian urn, he implies that what is gained for erudition is lost to the imagination.
>
> Springer 1987: 6

For others Romanticism sat more easily with antiquarian and archaeological interests. In the Englishman, Colt Hoare, we find a man who viewed ancient remains with a mixture of objectivity and sentiment. They were a subject for art and sublime contemplation but also, on occasion, for investigation by the most rigorous means available (Woodbridge 1970). With the more scientifically inclined antiquarians the modern archaeologist is inclined to be congratulatory when they exhibit signs of objective inquiry and paternally indulgent when they lapse into wild conjecture or slip into mysticism. They are seen as aspiring to the knowledge of the remote past which

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archaeologists now enjoy: 'they hoped to know about that past, but for all their efforts they did not get very far' (Daniel 1967: 57). Opposing this view is the possibility that they were as comfortable within their limited point of view as we are in ours; for their way of knowing may well have been complete in its own terms. Colt Hoare, in his exquisite Regency library at Stourhead, may well have found his view of those remnants of the past which he loved to visit and collect to be quite satisfactory. As satisfactory as, say, Lewis Binford finds his particular archaeological endeavours.

The eighteenth century English phenomenon of Druidism was partly spawned by the manner in which early efforts in the field-recording of antiquities attracted the attention of the middle class. Sketchy references to Celtic religious specialists in Roman accounts of Britain were vastly elaborated and it became accepted by many that the recently recorded prehistoric sites, especially the megalithic stone circles, had been venues for Druidic rites (Aubrey's 1695 suggestion that Stonehenge might be a Druid temple was emphatically confirmed by Stukeley in 1740). The inability of historical scholarship to say who made these monuments left them untenanted and, in a sense, invited the Druids in.

> As the Romantic image of the Druid took hold, new places were found for Druids to inhabit. Any rude stone structure, natural or artificial, and preferably on a blasted heath or moor, became Druidic - cromlechs, dolmens, menhirs equally with naturally eroded crags.

> Chippindale 1983: 88

Druidism quickly became a self-sustaining revivalist cult. Those who desired an active participation in it solemnly took part in fanciful reconstructions of Druidic ritual at the places they believed to have been the sacred sites of the Druids.

The Druidic revival has not enjoyed a good press from historians of archaeology. In the words of one of the foremost commentators:

> The Druids make comfortably comprehensible, historical people like The Roundheads, The Crusaders or The Romans, and to attribute Stonehenge to them makes a sort of sense, as a welcome cliché grasped because it avoids the necessity of thought.

> Piggott 1968: 192

Here, presumably, thought is equated with archaeological science and the Druidic interpretation equated with base instinct or intellectual laziness. Piggott writes also of the 'decadence' of the Druid revival (1968: 174), of the Welsh Druidic 'tradition of

nonsense' (1968: 179), and of the nineteenth and twentieth century Orders of Druids whose world is 'at once misleading and rather pathetic' (1968: 180). Stukeley is given to us as he who 'invented and propagated romantic nonsense on the Druids that unfortunately had a disastrous popularity with a credulous public in a time of decline in scholarly standards' (1989: 10). Yet there is no evidence that the public experienced the Druidic revival as a disaster. Quite the contrary. It was 'disastrous' only insofar as it diverted them from the possibility of an empirically derived archaeological interpretation.

I suggest that Stukeley is a source of discomfort to Piggott's archaeology because of the ease with which he appears to accommodate both the science of his painstakingly detailed field recording and the irrationality of his Druidism. This is explained by saying he went off the rails.

IMAGINING THE DEMISE OF ANTIQUARIANISM

In the history which modern archaeology has written of its own development the humanist antiquarian collectors occupy a central position in what is often seen as a unilinear 'development' of the modern way of thinking about antiquities. Trigger shows how this is particularly so of those histories written by 'positivist' archaeologists like Willey and Sabloff who present us with 'a logical and largely inevitable development' (Trigger 1985: 224) or Grayson who 'traces a series of steps' (1985: 226). Trigger is primarily concerned with the extent to which archaeologists have seen their discipline as having a social context. My interest is more in archaeology's attitude to the other, older, discourses on the material past. An implied adjunct to the inevitability of archaeology's 'rise' has been a spread of the archaeological viewpoint through the community. As this occurs the other, older discourses on the material past are inevitably sidelined.

Even in the histories of archaeology which are open to social context, the work of Daniel (e.g., 1962, 1975) and Piggott (e.g., 1989) for instance, there is a sense of inevitability in the way antiquarianism gives way to an increasingly scientific archaeology. Before going on to consider archaeology's bonding with the state it may be interesting to look at the manner in which antiquarianism and archaeology parted ways. The difference between antiquarianism and archaeology begins, presumably, in their different approaches to the artefacts of the past. For the archaeologist, the artefact was not valuable in itself but was valuable in the evidence it contained of past behaviour (cf. Gathercole [1989: 74] on the relevance of this distinction in museum

curatorship). It was a distinction became apparent in the nature of the objects archaeologists sought to recover in their excavations: potsherds, fragments of bone, broken bricks - in fact, much of the rubbish which had been shovelled out of the way by the antiquarian diggers. 'The value of relics,' according to Pitt-Rivers 'may on this account be in an inverse ratio to their intrinsic value' (Hudson 1981: 65). For the antiquarians, an artefact was intrinsically valuable in itself. In their eyes, many of the objects which preoccupied archaeologists were simply not collectable. Artefacts were not objects of inherent power, as they were in the discourses of magic and the divine, and to this extent antiquarianism was a secular discourse. But it was disdained by archaeology for the manner in which it fetishized antiquities.

In Britain the strongholds of the antiquarian establishment were the Societies of Antiquaries of which that in London, founded in 1717, was the oldest and most prestigious. The middle class gentlemen and sprinkling of aristocrats who belonged to this Society in its early years included scholars, mainly historians for whom ancient art objects, architecture, coins, and the like served to supplement old texts in their historical researches. But for most of the antiquaries collecting was an end in itself. Evans (1956) shows how, through the second half of the nineteenth century, archaeologists and an interest in archaeology began to infiltrate the ranks of the antiquaries. By the beginning of the present century the membership of the Society had begun to 'ramify into collectors and field archaeologists' (Evans 1956: 352). In 1900 it was decided to confine exhibitions at society meetings of material from members' collections to the time after the reading of papers (1956: 353). Collecting, as an end in itself, was becoming an embarrassment. What lay behind this shift was the increasing sway of Science as the legitimate form of knowledge.

Britain's Intellectual Revolution, the inductive empiricism of Francis Bacon, and the scientific project of the Royal Society were not actually antagonistic to antiquarianism. In the seventeenth century human history was seen to be co-extensive with the history of nature. 'It was only in a later period that these two kinds of history began to be considered as separate problems' (Rudwick 1972: 71). Antiquarianism shared the space of natural history with the infant natural and earth sciences with whom it shared an enthusiasm for collecting and classifying. Gradually the sphere of 'proper science' became more strictly demarcated. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a small minority of antiquarians strove to find ways of using antiquities as a means to investigate history unaided by texts. They increasingly came to see artefacts as evidence and to see themselves as scientists. It was in this context

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that in France and England in the second half of the nineteenth century archaeology went into partnership with geology and palaeontology.

The prestige of Science did not carry all before it in the seventeenth or even the eighteenth centuries (Hunter 1981) but as time went on it was impossible not to be conscious of it as a kind of arbiter of what was legitimate in scholarship. Archaeologists were certainly conscious of it. It was in the 1830s and 1840s that science - the term 'scientist' first appeared in 1833 - established its claim to be the 'proper way of gaining knowledge' (Morrell and Thackray 1981: 96). But it was by no means easy for archaeologists to gain acceptance - it took decades, for instance, for archaeology to be recognized by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. A response to this and a by-product of it was that archaeology put exaggeratedly marked defining boundaries around itself. Antiquarianism became its Other in the quest for recognition and legitimacy. Hence the affected polarization noted earlier which still informs most of the histories of archaeology that have been written. The professionalization of ethnology seems to have involved a similar dynamic. Nicholas Thomas maintains that one the consequences of that discipline's efforts to present itself as a science - he makes particular reference to Radcliffe-Brown's vision of a 'natural science of society' - was the 'rejection of pre-professional ethnographic research' (1989: 19). This was accomplished partly by exaggerating the distinction between the work of the 'amateur observers' (1989: 22) and that of the professional ethnographers.

By the early decades of the present century archaeology was installed as the natural and uncontested discourse on the physical traces of the human past. One wonders, though, whether the pains archaeology took to emphasize the distinction between itself and antiquarianism arose from a certain insecurity as to whether the distinction was complete. Archaeologists would deny that they 'collect' antiquities yet the almost obsessional hoarding of artefacts in the vaults of museums and in university laboratories suggests otherwise. So also does the extreme reluctance to de-acquisition items in these collections. This reluctance has recently been displayed in the struggle of native North Americans and Australian Aborigines to gain custody of the skeletal remains of their ancestors. In heritage management the counterpart of the museum vault is the site inventory, a repository for information on thousands of sites which is rarely used for research and is of dubious usefulness even for site protection and management. I would suggest that archaeology's view of artefacts as evidence does not eclipse an overriding commonality between archaeology and antiquarianism centred on a tendency to commodify the material past.

If antiquarianism is bourgeois to the extent that it fetishizes the products of the past as commodities hollowed out of their original meaning - a trait which so interested Walter Benjamin (Buck-Morss 1990: especially 159-85) - then how is archaeology different? The fetishism is simply a step removed. Archaeology claims to be interested in the physical vestiges of the human past only insofar as they are evidence of what happened in the past. But the end result is the same: it is the materiality of the vestiges that is privileged. In the discourses of the divine what is privileged is the efficacy of the object, the object as effective presence. The distinction between archaeology and antiquarianism is less than radical when both are set against this.

THE PERFORMANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

It may seem odd that even as archaeology, with its increasingly complex methodology, its technical language, and the sophistication of its analyses, was removing itself from the sphere of popular practice it was simultaneously able to attract a great popular following. Certainly, at one level, the nineteenth century public was in the thrall of Science (Morrell and Thackray 1981). But my contention is that while it was the science in archaeology that seemed to grip the public imagination - its astonishing ability to reach out over vast stretches of time and bring back increasingly precise and detailed pictures of life - actually it was the materiality of what it brought back that satisfied the public.

By 1859 it is possible to speak of a discipline of archaeology existing in Scandinavia, Switzerland, and Scotland (Trigger 1989: 84). An agreed methodology of stratigraphic interpretation governed the recovery of prehistoric remains in the field and the technique of seriation allowed them to be ordered in temporal sequence. In each of these places the results of the new archaeology were transmitted to the public. Denmark's Museum of Northern Antiquities opened in 1819 with Thomsen as curator and with public education a key part of its brief as an institution. The Swiss lake villages under excavation from the 1850s proved to be tourist attractions. One of the peculiarities of the rise of Science was that in the very process of professionalization and closure the scientific disciplines were reaching out for a constituency. What they recruited, however, was an audience rather than a brotherhood. To be an antiquarian required money and leisure (which, of course, effectively excluded most of the population). To be an archaeologist required training and, as the process of professionalization advanced through the first half of the twentieth century,

increasingly it required recognized qualifications. This, too, excluded most of the population. But whereas antiquarianism had not been a spectator discourse archaeology was able to gain its popular following by being just that.

The discovery and transportation back to the metropolitan museums of antiquities from the Mediterranean and the Middle East attracted great public interest. Archaeology's ability to produce revelations was confirmed by the discovery of Palaeolithic cave art and by the work of European classical archaeologists in Greece, Egypt and the Middle East. Heinrich Schliemann's search for Homeric Troy in the 1870s, Arthur Evans' excavation of the Palace of Minos on Crete from 1899 and the discovery of the ancient Minoan civilization, Henry Layard's excavation of the ruins at Nimrud, the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamen by Carter and many similar exploits were followed closely by the public of northern Europe and given extensive coverage in the press. The 'human legacy' (Hinsley 1989) which was recovered was for most people a legacy of objects - gold ornaments, sculpture, pottery - rather than a legacy of lessons in human history.

People flocked to the museums where these objects were displayed. Public museums proliferated in the nineteenth century. There were fewer than a dozen in Britain in 1800, almost 60 by 1850, and an additional 300 between 1850 and 1914 (Clarke 1981: 123). The manner in which the objects were displayed may have been heavily laden with the ideology of Progress but the museum experience was for most people arguably one of vicarious antiquarianism and had little to do with archaeology. Ironically, the public attention archaeology has sought and gained may actually have been a major factor in swelling the ranks of the collectors whose seemingly insatiable appetite for antiquities has created an international industry which today constitutes one of the main threats to the 'archaeological resource'. Antiquarianism has not withered in the face of an emergent and totalizing discourse of archaeology. It has flourished alongside archaeology.

By excavation of numerous glacial deposits and cave sites the coexistence of humans with extinct fauna was demonstrated along with the reality of an immensely long human history reaching far back beyond the 6,000 years allowed by biblical chronology. But science, as Chadwick (1975) has argued, did not necessarily imply secularization. The Christian Churches accommodated Darwinian evolution and absorbed geology's shattering of Biblical chronology as simply 'better knowledge, irrelevant to faith' (1975: 15). One of the ways that the discourses of the divine continued to be manifest was in the way popular interest in the archaeology of the

Near East was partly underwritten by a devout interest in the Biblical associations of this realm. Many of the late nineteenth century Western tourists to The Holy Land, especially those from America, were pilgrims whose approach to the sacred sites was informed by religion, antiquarianism, and archaeology in a variety of mixes. For many, these were places of supernatural efficacy. For others, their Orientalism took the form of high culture familiar to us in the writing of T.E. Lawrence, Gertrude Bell, St. John Philby.

AN APPETITE FOR EMBLEMS

The near monopoly which archaeology and archaelogists now enjoy over government instrumentalities charged with managing and protecting the physical vestiges of the nation's past testify to its success in achieving official status. The demands which the modern nation state makes on these vestiges are not, however, the same as the demands of the archaeologist. Specifically, the state draws upon their emblematic potential. By a process of monumentalization it exploits their potential to galvanize a sense of national community (Herzfeld [1991] presents an interesting recent study of this process in modern Greece). The deployment of the past in this way has given rise to what I will refer to as the discourse of heritage, a discourse only as old as the entity of the nation state itself. The relations which bind archaeology to the nation state, relations not without tension, are based on a mutuality in which the state gives archaeology official status and archaeology, for its part, acts as a supplier of emblems to the state. Archaeology's official status has meant the discourses of the divine and of antiquarianism are denied a voice in site management.

Again, though, we should beware the tendency to inflate the opposition between archaeology and antiquarianism. In the process of professionalization and closure archaeology has reified the boundary between the two discourses. From the state's point of view the differences may seem far less significant. What is important is that both enable monumentalization. It is clear that, in Britain, patriotic sentiment was a large element in early antiquarianism. We see it in Camden asking his detractors to 'pardon what I have attempted out of that zealous affection I possess for my Native Country' (Piggott 1989: 19). In the eighteenth century rivalry between 'Taste' (the appreciation of Graeco-Roman art and antiquities) and commitment to home-grown antiquities (Evans 1956: 118) it is arguably the local product which won out. In England as early as the sixteenth century 'antiquaries' began producing topographical studies of towns and counties which might be seen as a first step in monumentalization. The itineraries kept by the topographers were akin to the journals

of the explorers which the rulers of Europe sent out on voyages of discovery, the *historias* of the Spanish friars in Mexico being one example. John Leland's (1503-52) approach was typical:

> When he came to a town, he recorded its distance from other places, and he made notes about its wall and gates, its castle, its parish church, its streets and markets, and its finest houses; he observed, if there was one, the course of the river through it, and recorded the bridges; he also mentioned the suburbs, if any, and he inquired about the staple industry; then he asked about any archaeological discoveries that had been made, and occasionally he recorded some bit of local folklore or speculated about the meaning of the town's name.

Kendrick 1950: 53

Hereditary rulers encouraged a patriotic reading of ancient places in various parts of Europe. Perhaps the best known instance being the royal patronage of the work of the Scandinavian scholars Johan Bure (1568-1652) in Denmark and Ole Worm (1588-1654) in Sweden the context for which was the rivalry between these two countries (significantly, these states were also the first to afford legal protection to antiquities). The object was to present a flattering picture of 'primordial greatness and valour' (Trigger 1989: 49). But the topographies, to the extent that they were inventories of what was characteristic in the landscape of one's own country also involved an act of taking possession on the part of the growing bourgeoisie.

In the seventeenth century fieldwork of antiquarians like John Aubrey antiquities had become isolated from other elements of the landscape, a feature this work had in common with that of Worm and Bure. They were cut loose as suitable for systematic observation in their own right. The project of recording led, by the eighteenth century, to the middle class English seeing their landscape 'as a cultural and aesthetic object' (Bermingham 1987: 9). Bermingham stresses the nostalgia which informed this change, nostalgia for a landscape untouched by the processes of enclosure and industrialism currently transforming it. 'It was a case,' she observes, 'of actual loss and imaginative recovery' (1987: 9). Ruins and ancient sites were an integral part of this mythical landscape. It is not difficult to see how a conceptual, discursive development such as this would later aid in the programme of nation building.

Certain well-known weaknesses in the generic structure of the nation state made its exploitation of antiquities almost inevitable. Chief among these were the frequent lack of any coherent cultural or political community coinciding with the nation's boundaries. Instead, a sense of community had to be finessed and one of the obvious ways of doing this was by constructing a new history for the new national community

(see Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1989,1990, Hobsbawm and Ranger 1989). Trigger (e.g., 1984) and Sklenar (1983), among others, have detailed the history of archaeology's involvement in nationalist agendas.

Daniel Wilson in 1851 traced the new 'zeal for Archaeological investigation which has recently manifested itself in nearly every country of Europe' to the door of Sir Walter Scott because it was Scott who insisted that 'the bygone ages of the world were actually filled with living men (Wilson 1851: xi; cf. Kehoe 1991: 467). Wilson was surely right, but we can also see that Scott had a genius for making the past Scottish. Along with many other Romantics (Porter and Teich 1988) and with many of the Druid revivalists, his 'invention of tradition' had a solid political context. It was more than a longing for the pre-bourgeois past. It was rooted in the present and in the desire to foster a particular sense of social-political community. Archaeology's involvement in nationalism is of a similar order to its earlier - some would say, continuing - complicity in promoting the doctrine of progress.

THE CONSERVATION ETHIC ENSHRINED

By the latter half of the twentieth century the conservation ethic was firmly established in archaeology, art history, and related disciplines and had long received the imprimatur of the state. It is easy to see why. The state's interest in antiquities as emblems was based on the materiality of these vestiges. Ancient 'authentic' material fabric is valorized by archaeologists and art historians because it constitutes the evidence on which they base their studies. It is valorized by the state because the fabric constitutes the emblem. While the state may be less concerned with the exactitude of material authenticity - often it is satisfied with the 'look' of age rather than the fact of age - it is nevertheless committed, within certain limits, to ensuring the continued physical existence of those monuments which it has embraced as the nation's patrimony.

But the conservation ethic as we know it was established in the teeth of strong opposition from groups whose desire for the antique actually ran counter to the notion of conservation. The protection of ancient sites, for instance, meant depriving antiquarian collectors of access to them. Ruskin's (1963: 199) well known complaint, in the mid-nineteenth century, against the fashion of 'restoration' which had seen extensive rebuilding of historical buildings in an attempt to imitate or resurrect a hypothetically pure style (e.g., Gothic) pitted him against the popular ideas of Viollet-

le-Duc (cf. Molina-Montes 1982). This conflict was over the privileging of the surviving *fabric* of a building against an *idea* of what the building was intended to be. To Ruskin it was the difference between honesty and a lie (1963: 200). The dispute was reconciled 'officially', and in favour of the former, by the Charter of Athens (1931) and the Charter of Venice (1964).

It was to resist the nineteenth century practice of 'restoring' Britain's churches and cathedrals back to a pure 'Gothic' that William Morris founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings founded in 1877. Earlier, the Society of Antiquaries had been active in agitating against this practice (Evans 1956). Meetings were arranged with the clergy and chapters of churches which were planning restorations in order to give them guidance. One clergyman's response (in 1855) to the Society's policy scorned what he saw as an endeavour to inscribe an antiquarian significance on churches at the expense of their role in a functioning religion:

> I fear it throws an unjust and an unwarranted stigma on many persons who have during the last 10 or 12 years been anxiously desirous of promoting the glory of God and the spread of his gospel by affording increased and improved accommodation in our Churches for our increasing population, particularly for the labouring classes. Our Churches are not set apart for the collection of antiquities or merely for the preservation of the records of past ages, but for the worship of Almighty God.

Evans 1956: 312

More important in the clash between antiquarians and the church than whether conservation should take priority over function was a clash of tastes: the clergy and congregations believed they were *beautifying* their churches by modernizing them. The work was usually funded locally through donations collected by the churches' restoration committees and it is hardly surprising that these committees doggedly resisted the Society's attempts to impose its antiquarian sensibility on them. In the wave of 'restorations' which swept the country in the last decades of the century - many of the ancient churches in London were 'under sentence' by a 'vandal bishop' (Evans 1956: 335) - the conservationists seem to have lost more often than they prevailed.

The restorationist Victorian churchmen are among the pet villains of writers on heritage conservation (e.g., Chamberlin 1979: 50-51) and the clash is seen as a closed chapter in the history of the conservation movement. Two things are significant in this. Firstly, it ignores the fact that the conflict between clergy and conservationists persists into the present day, based on the same competing assertions: on the one hand

the assertion of the primacy of worship and, on the other, the assertion of the primacy of aesthetics (Binney 1977). Secondly, it undermines the claim of modern heritage management (as espoused in ICOMOS guidelines) to be sensitive to the social significance of heritage properties in the community at large. Where the heritage industry runs up against a discourse which is fundamentally different - a Christianity, for instance, struggling to appear relevant - and where the conservation ethic is not in evidence, its claims to universality are shown to be threadbare.

One of the few practitioners to admit to the mutability of the conservation concept, E.R. Chamberlin, poses a question:

> What caused this profound shift in human thinking whereby the physical shell of an institution - what the old chop-logicians would have called its accidence - has become endowed with the same importance as its substance? Julius insisted throughout that he was 'restoring' St Peter's: quite clearly he held in his mind's eye a picture of the basilica of St Peter's as an indestructible entity that could change its physical form a score of times if need be, without affecting its essential nature in the slightest.

> Chamberlin 1979: 39

Chamberlin's query which, incidentally, he leaves unanswered, must necessarily be of fundamental importance to those engaged in the practice of archaeological or architectural conservation. In the present chapter I have tried to answer it myself or, at least, provide a background in which the answer might be sought. Is it, I wonder, significant that one of the only occasions on which the question has been raised since Chamberlin's book has been in relation to China (Wei and Aas 1989)? Is it that the shift Chamberlin speaks of in Europe has not occurred in China or has only occurred partially and at an elite level? In the following chapters I look to the non-West for clarification.

The Past as a Field of Merit

THE BUDDHIST PAST

Mahayana Buddhism first appeared in mainland Southeast Asia in the early first millennium A.D. but was confined to the Mon and Burmese kingdoms and even there had only a weak hold. Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries proselytizing monks who had visited Sri Lanka spread the religion in its Theravada form through the Mon, Burmese, Tai, and Khmer areas. By the fifteenth century most Tai-speaking peoples in Southeast Asia and southern China had accepted the Buddhist world-view (Keyes 1987: 33-35).

It sometimes seems that Thailand has no past but the Buddhist past. It is true that children learn in school about a few famous prehistoric sites like the early Bronze Age settlement at Ban Chiang. It is also true that many Thai villages stand on mounded deposits laid down there in the course of prehistoric occupation and that the present inhabitants are frequently aware of this. Some of them even dig up ancient pottery from below their houses or out of their fields and sell it off to agents of the city antique dealers when they make their rounds. But the physical remnants of the past which seem most tangible in people's lives are Buddhist objects. The statue of the Buddha, for instance, which has been in the village temple for as long as anyone can remember and the crumbling brick stupa on the nearby hill are the past in its familiar guise. The omnipresence of Buddhism in the landscape is partly a result of its having colonized or absorbed the remnants of pre-existing religions. The ruined Khmer *prasat* in the Northeast have been appropriated for Buddhism in this way, their stone galleries and courts now populated by Buddha images and thronged by visiting monks.
I have not been immune to the pull of the Buddhist past myself. I went to Thailand in the course of this project primarily with the intention of studying the management of prehistoric archaeological sites. I visited old temples, initially, as light after-hours

relief from the seemingly more serious work of discussing prehistoric site management at the Fine Arts Department, visiting archaeological excavations, and accompanying archaeological site survey teams in the field. Gradually the balance shifted and I found myself increasingly drawn to later, Buddhist antiquities and to the proto-historic and historic periods. It was a shift connected, perhaps, to my interest in looting as a pressing issue in prehistoric site management. I frequency heard it said that the only real solution to the problem of looting was to be found in public education, a sentiment echoed by archaeological heritage managers in every country where looting occurs (Byrne 1991: 273). This seemed to beg the question of what existing popular attitudes to antiquities it was that education was intended to change. What, moreover, was the social context of these attitudes? Even if these attitudes or ways of relating to antiquities were hostile to the preservation of archaeological sites how could preservation be achieved without taking account of them?

In the remainder of this chapter I will take up the question of social context with respect to some of what seem to be the more distinctive attitudes Thais have to certain classes of antiquities in their country. This will serve as a preliminary to a later, detailed examination of a selection of issues in archaeological site management. I am particularly concerned, in what follows, with that core principle of the heritage discourse, the conservation ethic. This principle privileges the physical fabric of old or ancient remains in determining value and in carrying out conservation. It also assumes and frequently invokes the universality of the conservation ethic and the primacy of fabric. What follows is partly a scrutinizing of this assumed universality.

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SACRED

The Buddha, according to Theravada doctrine, attained *nibbana* and ceased to exist. This being the case, why do Buddhists venerate his image, make offerings to him, and implore his help? An orthodox answer is given in a 2,000 year old text, *The Questions of King Milinda:*

> the Buddha's attainment is symbolized in his images and by his relics, and when men pay homage to them goodness is caused to arise within them because the relics and images act as a field of merit in which men can plough, plant, and produce fruits.

Tambiah 1984: 201

Relics and images are commonly referred to as 'reminders'. They may be divided, using A.B. Griswold's system (quoted in Tambiah 1984: 202), into four types: bodily

relics, doctrinal reminders (e.g., canonical texts), reminders by association (the sites and objects with which the Buddha had physical contact during his life), and indicative reminders (e.g., Buddha images, and replicas of the stupas enshrining his relics). Of particular interest to me are the first and the fourth of these.

Buddhist historical sources vary on what precisely happened to those relics of the Buddha remaining after his cremation (i.e., teeth and bone fragments). It appears they were divided (possibly into eight portions) for distribution to local Indian rulers and, some two centuries later, were collected together and redistributed by King Ashoka (r. 274-236 B.C.) throughout the area across which the faith had spread. At each of the places where they were lodged the relics were enshrined within a stupa, an architectural form which appears to have pre-dated Buddhism in India, though its construction in stone or brick seems to originate in Ashoka's time (Pruess 1974: 23). Relics reached Sri Lanka at an early date and those which appear in Thailand (by the thirteenth century A.D. at Sukhothai) seem to have been brought from Sri Lanka by monks. As in South Asia, relics received in Burma and Thailand were enshrined in stupas.

Several general points about Buddha relics and stupas as they occur in Thailand may be made here. Firstly, it is believed that the Buddha visited a number of places in northern Thailand during his lifetime. Traditions to this effect are recorded in many shrine chronicles which tell of how, during his airborne visits, the Buddha predicted or promised that after his death his relics would be sent to the localities of the present-day shrines. Ten of the eighteen relic-shrines older than 200 years in Northern Thailand have such traditions (Pruess 1974: 41). In some cases, notably that of the That Phanom relic in the Northeast, tradition holds that relics were transported to the shrines by disciples of the Buddha and were later visited by celestial deities (*devata*). A canonical Pali text records the Buddha as stating during his lifetime that the relic-shrine stupas would become objects of veneration (Pruess 1976: 4), a prediction borne out by the pilgrimages which now focus on the shrine sites in Buddhist countries like Thailand.

Relic-shrines have become 'fields of merit' for the faithful (e.g., Tambiah 1984: 200). Visits to and offerings made at them serving to increase the store of positive deeds redounding to a person's favour in future lives. The sacredness of the relics transmits itself to the stupa containing them so that both - in a sense the two have become one by physical association - are venerated. The stupa, of which there are many thousands in Thailand where they are known as *chedi* (the vast majority not

containing Buddha relics), in a more general way has become an architectural symbol, in Pruess's words, 'of that which it originally enclosed' (1974: 25). In the chain of re-presentation, the relic stands for the Buddha and the *chedi* stands for the relic.

The stupa is actually one of the 'substitute symbols' for the Buddha (others being the *bodhi* tree under which he achieved enlightenment and representations of his footprints) which were used in Indian art before the first century A.D. at which time his image was never represented in human form (Tambiah 1984: 201). As 'reminders', then, the stupas are vehicles by which the significance of a past event, the Buddha's life, has been able to flow though time and space (India to Thailand) in a material-symbolic form so that millions of people in the present have an indirect connection with that event.

No images of the Buddha were made until about 500 years after his death. Since then, images in the form of statues, paintings, printed pictures, and clay impressions have proliferated in Buddhist countries. Statues take pride of place among all of these image forms and are almost synonymous with the term 'Buddha image'. In Thailand there is a rich iconographic tradition which has seen the emergence of several major historical and regional stylistic variations well known to art historians and the public alike. Many temples contain examples or replicas of images in the Ayudhyan, Sukhodayan, or Lan Na styles. But it is not the styles, so much, which are the focus of popular attention · as it is certain individual historical images around which have built up an immense chronicalization, scholarship, and folklore. Among them are the Phra Buddha Jinaraja at Phitsanulok and the Phra Buddha Jinasiha at Wat Bovonniwet, Bangkok. Of the several versions of the legend regarding their creation one has it that the work was sponsored by a King Traipidok of Chiang Saen on the Mekong (Tambiah 1984: 210-11). One of the images had remained flawed, despite repeated castings, until a white-robed man arrived to assist. With his help a perfect statue was produced and the king decided to found a city called Phitsanulok at the spot where the man, upon completion of the work, mysteriously disappeared. He installed the statues in a *wat* (see glossary in Appendix 1) which he directed to be built in the city. According to popular account the statues were visited by kings of Ayudhya: King Ramesuan in 1384 paid homage to them on his way to attack Chiang Mai, King Narai in 1660 and King Boromkot in 1740 both paid homage and sponsored celebrations in honour of the statues (Tambiah 1984: 211). Two of them, the Buddha Jinasiha and
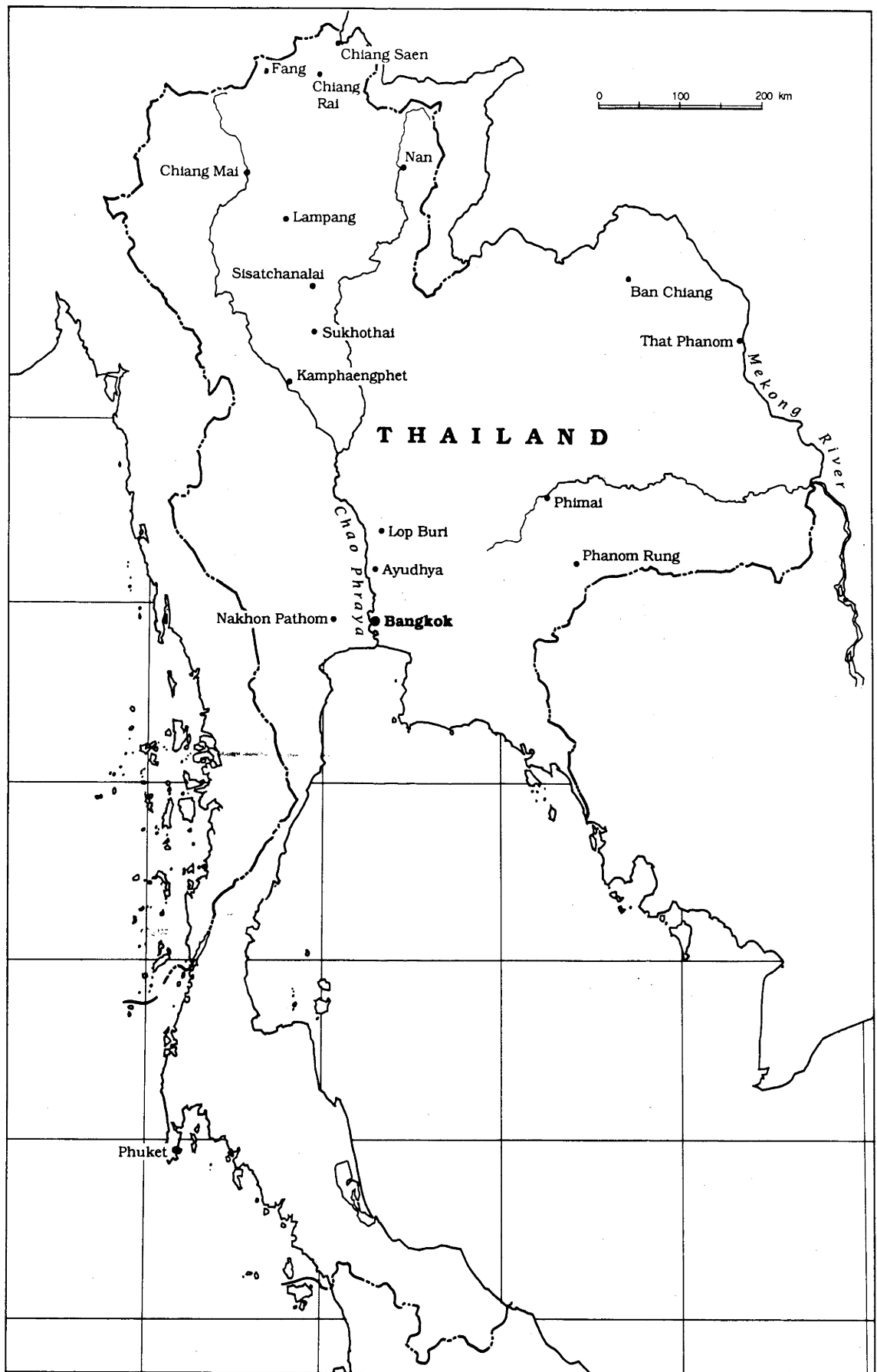
FIGURE 1   Map of Thailand

Phra Sri Sasta, were removed to Bangkok in the second half of the nineteenth century. A replica of the third was made for Rama V's new Wat Bencamabophit in Bangkok.

Thailand's most illustrious Buddha image is the Emerald Buddha jewel (Pra Kaeo Morakot), housed in the Royal Chapel of the Grand Palace, Bangkok. The Emerald Buddha is the palladium of the Thai state and of the Chakri dynasty (originating in 1782 - see Appendix 2). Origin myths hold that it was created in India 500 years after the Buddha's death, carved from a sacred jewel with the assistance of Lord Indra, and implanted with seven relics of the Buddha. After 300 years in India it moved to Sri Lanka and from there to the Khmer capital of Angkor. It was later removed by a monk to Ayudhya and later again moved to Kamphaengphet, from where it was captured by the lord of Chiang Rai and ended up in Laos, via Chiang Mai. In reality the image was probably made in Southeast Asia. The later part of the origin myth blends into historical fact. It seems likely the image moved through the hands of a number of princes in present-day Thailand. It is known with certainty that it came into the hands of King Tilok of Lannathai late in the fifteenth century, was taken to Luang Prabang by the Lao king of Chiang Mai when he returned there in the mid-sixteenth century and later installed in Vientienne when he established his capital there. It was captured by a Thai general in 1778 and taken to Thonburi, remaining there until Rama I placed it in the Royal Chapel where it resides today. The extent to which rulers coveted the image reflects upon its ability to confer legitimacy on a particular reign or polity (Reynolds 1978, Tambiah 1984). The association has tended to be symbolised by installation of the image near to the royal residence of the prince who plays host to it.

In summary, Buddha images are personalized representations which are a major focus of religious practice. The prestige of him who is represented for the most part ensures they are treated with a respect over and above what might be expected on the basis of their age, physical fabric, or aesthetic appeal alone. We are dealing here with a religious heritage. The images have a history which invests them with 'personality'. Their treatment, for management purposes, as art historical or archaeological objects is likely to be at the cost of this 'personality'.

Among the most common everyday articles of Buddhist faith in Thailand are the amulets which people wear around their necks for protection and invulnerability (Turton 1987). Coedes maintains that amulets were originally made as mementoes to be taken away from pilgrimage sites and as *ex votos*. Only later did they become sources of merit, acquired by manufacturing them or by offering them to be sealed

inside stupas or Buddha images, often in very large numbers. Amulets come in the form of miniature Buddha statues, medallions and coins, or as small tablets of fired clay carrying images of the Buddha, the deities, or famous monks and kings. Often it is the famous Buddha images such as the Emerald Buddha jewel, Buddha Jinasiha and Buddha Jinaraja which are imprinted on the amulets.

Amulets and miniatures are manufactured and sold in the course of fund raising. By the time he died, the monk Dhammavitako, had personally sacralized amulets to a value of U.S.$200,000 which had been sold for charity and building projects (Heinze 1977: 59). Amulets and miniatures are also subject to a form of collecting so widespread and avid as to constitute an industry complete with dealers, thousands of shops and stalls, an array of popular magazines, and a flourishing trade in fakes. The prestige of an amulet and, hence, its market value, is derived from the fame of the Buddha image represented, the fame of the individual monk who sponsored its manufacture and who sacralized it, or the fame and historical prestige of the ancient site where it may have been found. Connoisseurs either in the monkhood or the collecting industry assign specific value to each amulet or batch/class of them. Their specialist knowledge mediates between the amulets and the common people.

Tambiah maintains that amulets constitute 'material signs and mental images of national identity and history' (Tambiah 1984: 199). In this view, the diverse cultural groups in the country who wear these sacra are carrying a common history with them. But from what has been said of 'reminders' of the Buddha it will be clear that people do not see amulets or other images as reminders in the sense of being lessons in history. Rather, they are integral, as 'merit fields', to present religious practice and some of them have the potential to confer political legitimacy.

FIELDS OF POWER

I have left out of the above account of 'reminders' what is arguably their major attribute or, certainly, one critical to any real understanding of peoples relationship to them. This is that they are empowered objects. Their power derives from the ritual of sacralization which they have undergone, a 'life-giving process' which 'animates' them (Tambiah 1984: 230). They come to possess a radiant energy which enables them to perform miraculous feats and to benefit and protect those who venerate or appeal to them. Their power is not independent of that which they represent since the power instilled during the rite of sacralization itself derives from the Buddha. What

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can be said, and this is what is important here, is that their power endows them with a degree of agency and that this agency means their relationship with people who venerate them is dialogic.

I have already spoken of the flow of sacredness from relics of the Buddha to the stupas containing them. The connection between a relic and the Buddha's person, together with the stylistic connection between the architectural form of a contemporary stupa and the first stupa, enables the power of the Buddha to flow down through time. Flowing through these sacred objects, it empowers them. The power also radiates out through space, moving from a relic outwards to invest the stupa, the temple which contains the stupa, and even the town which contains the temple with a power and, consequently, a prestige which presumably diffuses upon each transfer (Pruess 1974: 25). In the plan of the stupa the flow is symbolized architecturally by concentric spheres radiating out from the axis,

> in the manner of ripples spreading from a stone dropped into a still pond of water, but conceived in a three-dimensional rather than a two dimensional way: a series of spherical "waves" or "pulsations" emanating from a point source of origin.
>
> Snodgrass 1985: 19

The radiant flow may be reified in local practice, as occurred in a case recorded in the That Phanom Chronicle. The That Phanom shrine is a tower-like stupa located near the Mekong River in Northeast Thailand. When the shrine was restored in 1901, fragments of brick and plaster which had exfoliated from its surface were taken and used in the construction of a small stupa nearby. Fragments were also taken by local people as objects of veneration, a custom which the chronicle maintains to have been widespread in the Northeast: 'those who build *stupas* at their local temples bring candles and incense to venerate the Relic and ask for bits of plaster... to install within the *stupa* as an auspicious mark of well-being' (Pruess 1976: 72). Similarly, Terweil (1965: 81) records a case where stucco fragments knocked off a temple building by a lightning strike were carefully collected by monks, ground up, and mixed into a compound for the manufacture of amulets.

According to tradition, the radiant energy possessed by relics has exhibited itself both in magical or miraculous feats, performed by the relics to prove their authenticity to the sceptical (e.g., by spectacular displays of light), and in miraculous cures and other acts of good fortune bestowed on those who venerated them. Chronicles commonly record instances where certain relics have miraculously subdivided or replicated themselves. A single relic-shrine may thus 'seed' numerous others. Similar

powers of replication and miracle-working apply to the relics of monk saints (*arahants*) as to those of the Buddha (Tambiah 1984: 127).

Relics are in a different category to Buddha images in that, in order to be empowered, the latter require the sacralizing act of a specialist monk. Such acts are part of what might be called the 'magic' content of Thai Buddhism. They are magical by nature but Buddhist to the extent of 'deriving their supernaturalness, which is a constituent element of magic, from the sanctity of the Sangha (Ishii 1986: 23). A Buddha statue is sacralized just prior to casting by a ritual wherein the mold is joined by a sacred thread running from an existing, prestigious, and probably old image through the hands of several monks, around the mold and back to the existing image. Griswold says an image is normally chosen which has 'already proved itself by displaying unusual magical qualities' (1980: 30). Of course, in addition to this ritual, the transference of power depends upon the new image being a likeness of the old. The old image, in turn, traces its likeness back to parent images no longer existing which are believed to have been authentic likenesses of the Buddha.

Thais, however, seem less concerned with representational authenticity than with the authenticity of the link to the Buddha's infinite power, that radiance and 'fiery energy' deriving from his enlightenment. Material (representational) authenticity counts here, but not as much as authenticity established via performance. In a sense, each new image must establish its own authenticity. Once sacralized, it may or may not prove the efficacy of its power. Moreover, its power may wax and wane. The Sinhala Buddha's magical powers which declined in the 1500s and were said to be exhausted by 1662 when the king of Ayudhya seized it from Chiang Mai are now popularly believed to have undergone a revival (Tambiah 1984: 239). It is apparent that authenticity may mean something rather different in Thailand to that concept of authenticity enshrined in Western heritage conventions which focuses on the inert form and fabric of structures and objects.

Amulets are sacralized and empowered in a similar manner to Buddha images. A significant difference is that their power flows only partly from the representations they carry. It flows mainly from the particular famous monks who have sponsored and sacralized them, saintly ascetic monks of the forest having been especially significant in this respect. What is specifically required is sacralization by someone credited with magical power. An amulet made by a famous Pali scholar 'is worthless compared to one made by an untitled forest monk with magical power' (O'Connor 1978: 150). Some are of the opinion that the power of amulets is proportional to their

age (Wells 1975: 41), but it is clear that age is only one factor in their efficacy. The quality of power comes not from age itself but from the saintly power of the monk who sacralized them and from their own subsequent demonstrations of efficacy. Also, even without appreciable age they still all share the attribute, according to Tambiah, of being 'sedimentations of power'. By this he appears to mean that some fraction of the power of successive images and saints, of the history of Buddhism, and of the Buddha himself has settled within them.

The representation/empowerment duality has some relationship to the opposition between orthodox Buddhism and spirit cultism, a matter which is taken up later. Griswold suggests we think in terms of 'rationalists' and 'pious believers' among the Buddhist faithful. What the former want from an image is a 'comprehensive symbolism'. What the latter wish for is a 'talisman that would inherit some fraction of the Buddha's infinite power' (1980: 30).

TEMPLE BUILDING AND MERIT-MAKING

Temples are the religious, social, and physical foci of the Thai cultural landscape. Often a temple compound will contain the only public buildings in a village, buildings which dominate village life just as they dominate the rural landscape. The major structures, the ordination hall (bot) and/or the congregational hall (viharn), rise above the trees to be seen glittering across the fields from several kilometres away. Similarly, in the old parts of Bangkok the often spectacular green and orange tiled temple roofs are landmarks in the spread of ordinary rooftops. As well as being religious centres, temples are venues for social rites and ceremonies such as weddings and cremations. They often house schools and are meeting places for community groups. It would thus not be possible in Thailand to find built structures, with the exception of domestic dwellings, which are more central to the lives of the majority of the population (93.4% of whom, according to the 1960 census, are Theravada Buddhists).

When in the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries the Tai embraced Buddhism it meant making 'the human actor rather than the cosmic order the central focus of religious thought' (Keyes 1987: 34-5). This brings us to the idea of merit (bun) which is related to the concept of karma. Theravada Buddhists believe that their present situation, the balance of suffering and well-being in their lives and, more specifically, their place in the socio-economic hierarchy is the result of their actions in previous lives. One cannot alter the karma one has inherited but one's actions in the here-and-

now will be what determine one's karma later in this life and in the lives which follow. One's karma will be determined by the merit and demerit one has accumulated. While, doctrinally speaking, merit is accrued by living according to the moral code passed down by the Buddha, in practice, for most people, merit-making focuses on a complex hierarchy of good deeds. These include the donation of food and clothes to monks and the sponsorship of certain ceremonies ranked according to the amount of merit to be earned by their performance. To understand the deadly serious nature of merit-making in Thailand one might reflect upon the great disparity of income between the wealthy few who have a virtual monopoly on opportunity for advancement and the relatively poor majority who are locked into a cycle of poverty. For the latter especially, but also for the well off who always hope to be better off, their sights are fixed on their next life and on the possibilities for making enough merit to be reborn in a better position.

For Thai Buddhists the act of completely financing a new temple is immensely meritorious, accruing more merit than perhaps any other single act (see Heinze 1977: 116, Ishii 1986: 18). It is possible that Buddhism took over a practice of making merit by the endowment of stupas which existed in pre-Buddhist India (Amore 1985: 36). In Thai Buddhist teaching, temple builders are promised inclusion among those reborn in the time of Buddha Maitri who will be liberated from the cycle of reincarnation (Tambiah 1970: 94). The link between merit and temple-building was noted as early as the seventeenth century by Westerners in Thailand (van Vliet 1910). In a survey of family heads in a Northeastern village Tambiah (1970:146-7) found almost unanimous agreement that temple building ranked as the most meritorious religious act, more meritorious than the act of becoming a monk oneself (ranked second), or contributing money to the repair of a temple (ranked equal third with the offering of post-Lenten *kathin* gifts). A similar survey in a village near Bangkok reported temple building as ranking second after the act of becoming a monk, contribution towards the repair of a temple ranking fifth (Kaufman 1960: 183-84). This, anyway, is the position in ideal terms. It is recognized that from a practical point of view temple building is an act which is way beyond the means of most people (Bunnag 1973: 145). What is more significant here than whether temple-building is the merit-making act *'par excellence '* (Tambiah 1970: 146) is that it far out-distances the act of repairing or restoring existing temples. The Thai, unlike Christians, hold that a costly act of giving by a rich man is more meritorious than the modest gift of a poor man achieved at greater sacrifice (Hanks 1962: 1248).

While contemporary reformist Buddhist movements depreciate the whole ideal of merit, seeing it as 'a mechanical contract for buying oneself a good rebirth' (Wijeyewardene 1986: 21), and while since the nineteenth century the state in Thailand has tried to temper the ideal, there remain sufficient wealthy believers to ensure the constant endowment of new temples. Vella has observed that 'The belief that merit was obtained by building temples and entering the priesthood led to a profusion of temples and priests' (1957: 33). 'Profusion', here, is a subjective measure. Certainly, though, there has been an accelerating increase in *wat* numbers through the course of the twentieth century as the following figures taken mostly from statistics assembled by Terweil (1965: 98) indicate:

YEAR	NUMBER OF MONASTERIES	POPULATION OF MONKS	POPULATION OF THAILAND	PEOPLE PER MONASTERY
1900	10,000	60,849	7,491,000	749
1927	17,000	130,000	11,600,000	682
1937	17,000	150,000	14,549,000	856
1950	20,000	176,000	20,000,000	1000
1958	21,000	156,000	24,800,000	1181
1965	24,000	173,000	30,744,000	1281
1970	26,000	195,000	36,100,000	1388

TABLE 1:   The number of monasteries in relation to the population of Thailand in the twentieth century. In addition to Terweil's figures I have added those cited by Ishii (1986: 69) who refers to a 1900 survey reported by David Wyatt (PhD thesis, Cornell University 1966). This found 7,026 *wat* in Thailand 'apart from the former vassal states of the north' whose inclusion would perhaps not raise the total over 10,000 (1986: 69). Vella, basing his figures on Pallegoix (a Catholic priest who was in Thailand during the Fourth Reign), suggested that in the mid-nineteenth century there were 10,000 monks in the capital and 100,000 in the country as a whole (Vella 1957: 33), but the 1900 survey puts the number of monks at 60, 849 (Ishii 1986: 79).

Between 1901 and 1970 the number of temples in the country had more than doubled. Thailand's population during the same period, however, had increased by a factor of almost five, so that by the end of it there were almost twice as many Thais per monastery as there were at the beginning (whereas the number of monks per monastery had increased only slightly). I would suggest this can be explained by a dramatic growth in urban population matched by a tendency for urban monasteries to be larger but fewer in number per head of population than those in rural areas.

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Given the primacy of temple-building in the hierarchy of merit-making it may be relevant to ask whether the proliferation of new temples does not also lead to a proliferation of temple ruins. There is clearly a limit to the number of temples that the community can support and that the Sangha can provide monks for. The question is whether the founding of one temple leads to the abandonment of another. Were this to be the case then there might be said to exist in Thailand an ethic acting directly against the preservation of architectural heritage. I begin by looking at some of the contexts in which temples are founded.

Tradition has it that in the early days of Buddhism the monks led ascetic lives in the forests and mountains. Allowance was later made for them to reside temporarily in villages or towns during the rainy season. To provide for the monks at these times the laity built structures which became monasteries when, later again, monks were permitted to stay permanently in such places (Heinze 1977: 4-5). There are a number of village ethnographies (e.g., Kaufman 1960, Potter 1976, Sharp and Hanks 1978) which show how individual temples have been founded. People contribute money, materials, or labour according to their means. Once built, the village must invite -in effect, attract - monks to come and live at the temple. In this way, at Bang Chan, after the villagers had erected a temple pavilion (*sala*) in the early 1890s on a plot of land which one of them had donated a group of elders went to visit a *wat* in their area and invited one of the monks to come and reside at their new temple. It was not until about 1905 that they managed to build the ordination hall necessary to have the temple consecrated and become a *wat* proper (Sharp and Hanks 1978: 97-8, 108). This might be seen as the simple model of temple-founding.

Many of the new temples built in the modern period are in newly settled areas recently brought under agriculture. Often these are in areas of former forest and the construction of the *wat* is seen as a vital component in civilizing the wilderness (cf. Condominas [1970: 17] on the same process in Laos). Several writers have mentioned an interesting juxtaposition in Thai thought between the settled environment and the forested environment. Speaking of the northern Thai, Davis (1984: 82-3) says that beauty is equated with settlement and civilization rather than with raw nature; beauty and civilization flow down (or out) from the town to the most peripheral village, losing 'some of its lustre' along the way (cf. Thacker [1983: 3] on the antipathy of pre-modern Europeans to the uncultivated environment). It is not so much that the

clearing of forest is seen as virtuous *per se* as it is that virtue is seen in bringing the land under cultivation and making it productive (Douglas Miles pers. comm.). Carving settlements out of the wilderness and building *wat* for them is thus a positive, civilizing, and meritorious act.

There is also the tradition of forest monks living on the fringe of the settled environment, effectively on a frontier which advances ever deeper into the forest as population increases. Not surprisingly, a significant component of the 'development' push in the 1960s and 70s was the building of new *wat* in peripheral, impoverished, and hill tribe areas (Heinze 1977: 188). 'Missionary' monks and lay volunteers went out to assist in the programme of temple building in these regions, regions which constitute at once the periphery of Thai Buddhism and the periphery of Thai national culture. Because wealth in Thailand is concentrated heavily in the capital it is common for patrons in Bangkok to sponsor, and for the abbots of large Bangkok *wat* to raise funds for, construction and restoration of upcountry *wat* (e.g., O'Connor 1978: 130). In Davis's (1984) terms, civilization is flowing out from the light at the centre of the *muang* hierarchy to the darkness at the periphery.

It is, then, easy to imagine an historical scenario in which the landscape is dotted by increasing numbers of *wat* as human population increased and agricultural lands ate into hitherto forested hinterlands. In this scenario temple-building would be driven by demographic imperative. A great many of the new temples, say of the 3,900 odd built in the interval 1959-69, are likely to be in areas where there were no temples before and, therefore, their founding cannot be held to have precipitated the decline or abandonment of pre-existing or old temples. What happens, though, when a given landscape is already 'stacked' with temples? To begin with, it may be misleading to think of a 'stacked' or saturated landscape in these terms. Bunnag's (1968: 416) figures indicate that in the 1890s only about half the villages in Siam actually had *wat*. Rather, settlement intensifies over time, new villages hive-off from old ones and a new village will want its own consecrated *wat* 'even though there may be one in the next village or urban community within a kilometre or two' (Wijeyewardene 1986: 94). The aspiration for temples seems always to run ahead of the ability to create them.

Though many temples are founded by the joint efforts of village communities many others are founded or financed by single individuals who can count as their personal possessions (Vella 1957: 46). The temples may be named after them, the cremation relics of the owner families may be interred there in stupas or in the walls of the main buildings, and the 'owners' (*chaokhong*) might be expected to pay a stipend to

resident monks for their support. Because they tend to compete for clergy and congregation, it is the founding of these temples rather than those built by village communities which are more likely to lead to abandonment of existing temples. O'Connor (1978) provides a history of the elite patrons of three temples in the Thewet (Theves) area of Bangkok. He shows that the possession of a wat has been a mark of esteem for important families, the splendour of its buildings serving as an indicator of their wealth. Rich people from the city are also inclined to look around for a *wat* in a poor, remote centre or village where they can make 'a significant contribution' rather than an 'already overwhelmed' *wat* in a major centre (Wijeyewardene 1986: 94). They may also do this in the belief that upcountry *wat* are more pure (O'Connor 1978: 129). Bangkok *wat* are expensive to build and maintain and while in the past many have been financed by individuals, by the new rich of the Third Reign (see Appendix 2 for Chakri reign intervals), for instance, this is now uncommon (O'Connor 1978: 126). Patronage of *wat* is also an important mark of political power. The legitimacy of the king and the provincial elite was and, to some extent, still is based on a store of merit to which temple sponsorship is an essential contributor. *Chaokhong* may present their *wat* to the king, who himself, of course, 'owns' very large numbers of *wat*. It then becomes a royal *wat*, of which there were 117 in 1900 (Ishii 1986: 69) and 162 out of a total of 25,659 in 1970 (Heinze 1977: 117). The great majority of royal *wat* are in Bangkok.

On what scale are temples abandoned? In the Fifth Reign there were 23 deserted *wat* in the provinces around Bangkok under the control of 167 active *wat* and in the 1970s the Department of Religious Affairs had control of 23 deserted *wat* in Bangkok (O'Connor 1978: 129) out of a total of just under 400 (Heinze 1977: 139) active city *wat*. This, however, may apply only to recently abandoned *wat*, there likely being a great many more abandoned or ruined *wat* not under the control of any active *wat* or of the Department. And Bangkok, being only 200 years old, naturally has far fewer deserted *wat* than a place like Chiang Mai where more than half of the 85 *wat* are in ruin or, in Lampang, where thirteen of 33 *wat* are in ruin (Nyberg 1976: 36-37).

It appears true that the Thai practice of temple building, driven as it is by the desire to make merit, does lead to the abandonment and ruin of many temples. It strains to impossible limits society's ability to prolong the life of so many *wat* or to find monks to occupy them all. The equation, however, is not a simple one. We have arrived at the vexed and fascinating complex of practices which intervenes between the construction and the decay of temple buildings. There is in the West an extreme form of the conservation ethic which seems to deny that buildings have a life between, as it were,

the cradle and the grave. Yet it is precisely those events and processes which do happen in between - the reworking, for instance, of building form and fabric for the convenience and taste of successive generations of users - which stimulated the debate between Ruskin and Viollet le Duc in nineteenth century Europe (mentioned in the previous chapter). It is tempting, perhaps, for heritage specialists with a rationalist background to downplay the fact that what happens in between is often religious in nature and that form and fabric are animated by the supernatural.

MAINTENANCE AND ELABORATION: THE GREY AREA IN BETWEEN

It might be said that the decay, abandonment, and eventual ruin of temples represent a chain of events mediated by an opposing set of processes, namely, those of maintenance, restoration, and rebuilding. The reality of decay constantly presents opportunities to make merit and this, together with the fact that much of a community's prestige is invested in its temple, leads to an almost constant effort not just to counter decay but to elaborate and multiply temple structures. In what follows I will look briefly at the processes of maintenance, elaboration, restoration, and abandonment.

The hot and humid monsoonal regime of Thailand tends to hasten deterioration of both organic and inorganic construction materials (Larsen 1988). The climate also favours a host of insects and fungi which consume or damage structural and decorative woodwork and stimulates chemical processes which weaken brick and mortar elements. Large parts of the country are subject to flooding, a problem for structures on wooden pillars, and an often high water table tends to cause severe rising-damp in brick walls. It would certainly be wrong to give the impression that building is all that matters and that once merit has been made by founding temples or constructing individual buildings they are left to rot. On the contrary, maintenance is quite institutionalized.

In pre-modern times the endowments of many temples, especially royal *wat,* included slaves (*dasa*) for carrying out menial work, labourers or craftsmen (*kammakara*) for carrying out repairs, and helpers (*aramika*) to guard the *wat's* contents and keep it tidy (Reynolds 1979: 193). The royal *wat* Phrachetuphon, for instance, was endowed by its founder, Rama I, with 66 labourers, 224 families, and 7,672 *baht* for upkeep (Reynolds 1979: 198). The move to a monetary economy was accompanied by a shift, completed in the course of the Fifth Reign, towards providing *wat* with cash from property income, gifts, and government grants with which to pay

salaries to those maintaining and guarding their buildings. At a village level, temple committees similar to those overseeing the maintenance of irrigation systems coordinate the community's efforts in *wat* maintenance (Potter 1976: 36-7). Temple fairs are a key part of these efforts. Labour is often voluntarily given by parishioners though with the new pressures on people's time in the modern economy there has been an increasing tendency to offer money in lieu of labour (Sharp and Hanks 1978: 197). Novices perform cleaning chores in the *wat* and they and younger monks often participate in maintenance activities.

Rather than being built complete, temples are elaborated over time. Pressure for elaboration comes from the clergy: 'Monks, and abbots in particular, are enthusiastic about the development of their monasteries. They encourage new building which may help make the monastery a centre for the pious from far afield, rather than just a single community' (Wijeyewardene 1986: 94). Wat Bovonniwet, a royal temple in Bangkok, makes an interesting study in this process of elaboration, each abbot in its history having added something to it (Heinze 1977: 133). One gets the impression in Thailand that building is in progress in almost every temple compound. It may involve the erection of a major structure such as a *viharn* requiring the services of a professional construction team (temple construction is a major industry in Thailand) or a humble concrete block wall being put up by volunteer (merit-making) labour. 'In progress' may mean anything from weeks or months to several years, the work being carried out in stages as the money is gradually raised. One gets the impression, also, that there is no such thing as a complete temple. There always seems to be one more structure, be it a bell tower, an abbot's residence, or a stupa, that can be added.

There is thus a grey area between elaboration and the simple business of finishing the original building of a temple. Half-finished structures are a common sight in temple compounds, a sight which to the Westerner could suggest laziness or absentmindedness. The Siamese, according to Carl Bock, are 'ever building ...And more often than not what they do build they leave uncompleted' (1986: 82), an impression shared by Henri Mouhot who found most 'pagodas' to be 'on the one hand unfinished, and on the other in a state of dilapidation' (1968: 128). Actually, the incompleteness is testimony to an enthusiasm for building which routinely overreaches the community's resources. The unfinished structures often have next to them a signboard listing the donors by name and amount of contribution and indicating the target sum by a 'thermometer'. It is relevant to ask whether the notion of a completed *wat* is at all meaningful in Thai Buddhism.

The same driving force of merit-making underwrites the elaboration of temples as it does their founding. And with the community donating something in the region of 7% of its total income to the Sangha annually (Heinze 1977: 118) one begins to appreciate the magnitude of the resources able to be tapped for building. It would be difficult to overestimate the sacrifices people are prepared to make in giving priority to the beautification of their temple. Condominas noticed in 1959 in Laos that much of American aid money given to villages, many of them presumably in dire poverty, was used for re-building and beautifying *wat* (1970: 25).

Turning to the category of restoration, it is first necessary to qualify the sense in which the term is used. Thai heritage managers use it more or less in the Western manner approved by the Venice Charter and related conventions such as Australia's Burra Charter. That is, to denote the act of returning a structure to a known former state (Section 1.7 of the Burra Charter defines restoration as 'returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material'). Commentators on Thai Buddhist practice, by contrast, tend to use it to describe attempts to return a *wat* or individual structures in it to their former beauty and prestige. Importantly, this latter usage allows for a constant revision of what constitutes beauty. Typically, village Thai will want to employ in restoration the building materials currently fashionable. The fad for mass-produced 'bathroom' tiles has seen numerous old *wat* structures resurfaced. Old decorative stucco surfaces and even deteriorated wall paintings disappear behind expanses of these pastel-coloured tiles, much to the satisfaction of pious villagers and the horror of art historians. This is a phenomenon common all over Southeast Asia. In Laos, corrugated iron sheets which made their appearance in the countryside in 1955 and spread like wildfire were considered a 'huge success' by villagers as a replacement for ceramic roof tiles (Boutsavath and Chapelier 1973: 12). Implicit here is an understanding which fails to find anything intrinsically valuable in the fact that existing structures or fabrics are old. What the Western cultural tourist, for instance, may see as the glorious patina of age is seen rather as evidence of the ravages of unkind nature upon once-beautiful buildings which are now crying out for 'restoration'.

Because restoration, in the Buddhist sense, is a significant source of merit, structures are restored far more frequently than one might think necessary. The same applies to images of the Buddha and other deities. The Brahma image at the famous Erewan shrine in Bangkok, for instance, is renovated every two years (Majupuria 1987). The scale and cost of a restoration may have more to do with merit-making

than the evident dilapidation of a structure, a phenomenon not without equivalence in the West. The dispute between the Society of Antiquaries and the clergy of Exeter Cathedral over what the former saw as the unsympathetic restoration of the cathedral's West Front occasioned the remark that 'The Dean and Chapter apparently argue that the more money expended, the more virtue there is in the work' (in Chamberlin 1979: 53).

There is plenty of evidence from the shrine chronicles and from archaeological investigations that restoration and rebuilding of ancient structures was historically a very old practice. It is interesting to observe the wave of temple restoration carried out in and around the new capital of Bangkok in the first half of the nineteenth century (Ishii 1986: 65). The subjects of this work were the temples in existence prior to the capital's move from Ayudhya and the work was surely motivated by a desire to bring these temples up to a level of prestige befitting the seat of a Buddhist kingship. Nine royal *wat* were constructed in the Third Reign (1824-1851) but 60 *wat* were restored or expanded, 35 of them by the king (Vella 1957: 46). Rama I (r. 1782-1809) had begun the process by restoring Wat Po, near the Grand Palace as well as the Buddha footprint temple at Saraburi.

A temple may fall into disuse as a result either of gradual decline in patronage or sudden abandonment. Sudden abandonment occurs, for instance, when a move is made to a larger or otherwise more attractive site. In this way, at Bangkuan in Central Thailand in 1893, two years after construction of the village *wat* had begun and the *viharn* and monk's cubicles had been finished a new site was donated and the temple was moved (Kaufman 1960: 96). Near Nan, an old *wat* was abandoned in favour of a new one because its site was 'too cramped' (Wijeyewardene 1986: 94). We should bear in mind that old *wat* consisted primarily of timber buildings which were able to be dismantled, in the same way as traditional teak houses, and transported to new sites. Merit-making might be directly responsible for cases of abandonment, such as those mentioned, by motivating the donation of sites for the construction of a new *wat* which then 'lures' the monks and clergy from old *wat*. But if a temple has outgrown its site then the role of merit-making is less direct. In the past, sudden abandonment also occurred in the context of warfare of the type where the victor's booty included the defeated population who were taken away to be resettled (Wijeyewardene 1984).

What fate awaits an abandoned *wat*? The situation at Ayudhya is illustrative. There, 543 *wat* were abandoned to the weeds and jungle following the sacking of the city by the Burmese in 1767. By the first years of the present century the land

belonging to these *wat* was being informally appropriated by the farmers and shopkeepers who were then settling in the area (Reynolds 1979: 206). Stupas were being demolished by people scavenging for building material. At Ayudhya all this followed in the wake of a cataclysmic event. Cases of sudden abandonment from other causes are not, as noted, uncommon. But most often abandonment occurs only after a protracted decline and has its roots deep within Thai social and religious practice. Despite institutionalized counter-measures, *wat* buildings do routinely deteriorate to a point beyond remedy by ordinary maintenance. In late nineteenth century Siam Carl Bock was struck by a failure of people to keep buildings in repair (1986: 82). This was an early expression of what has been a fairly common and inaccurate perception among Westerners: Thais do not maintain their temple buildings. What they may, in fact, be observing is an eventual, inevitable failure of institutionalized maintenance to ward off decay.

But is it also, perhaps, not possible that there is a certain ambivalence in the attitude to decay inherent in Buddhism? Sharp and Hanks observe that, 'If Buddhism offers a theme of preservation, it consists in giving to sustain life. Otherwise no one gains merit by holding back decay from material things' (1978: 22). Similarly, O'Connor found that 'Buddhism preached the inevitability of decay and people readily accepted fallen wat as evidence of an exhausted store of merit' (1978: 177). What we seem to be approaching, in O'Connor's statement, is an understanding that the stance people take towards maintenance and restoration in particular cases is the outcome of their having taken the measure of a *wat's* value, value here being a quality which is very like that of the variable store of merit possessed by individual people. The place of a man in the social hierarchy and hence the extent of his prestige, the number of his clients, and his social mobility is determined by his store of merit (Hanks 1962: 1248-52). The complex circularity of this system ensures that the greater one's merit is, the greater potential one has to make merit.

At some temples decayed buildings are favoured by restoration. At others they are replaced by new structures. The waxing and waning of *wat,* I would suggest, is not simply a matter of the ravages of tropical climate or the ability of people to fight decay. All these efforts entail social decisions. The important thing about the effort to fight ruin is that it is selectively directed. Excluding warfare, the most common cause of *wat* abandonment is loss of merit. And the state of a *wat's* merit is determined by a dynamic relationship between *wat,* monks, and community.

It is true that *wat* cannot survive without a community and that population shifts may be added to the reasons for abandonment. But monks are not entirely helpless in the face of such shifts. O'Connor observes that on occasion certain monks 'have literally created communities to support their *wat* 'and he goes on to posit 'failure of sanctity' as a frequent cause of *wat* decline (1978:129). This concept encourages the perception of the *wat* as a physical entity which closely reflects the nature of the relationship between the Sangha, the abbot and monks of the *wat,* and the surrounding lay community whom it serves and who serve it. A *wat* whose clergy is unpopular may find the community turning its back on it, ultimately forcing the monks to abandon it. This is what O'Connor would describe as the divergence which can occur at one extreme of 'the nexus of sanctity and community' (1978: 129). 'Founding new wat,' on the other hand, '...marks the historical convergence of sanctity and community' (1978: 130). But, 'New and deserted wat illustrate merely the extremes of a middle ground on which the vast majority of wat prosper and decline through the interplay of sanctity and community' (O'Connor 1978: 131). The abbot plays a pivotal role here, it being his 'social' sanctity which attracts lay support for building and restoration, each success in the area enhancing his prestige and his potential to draw further support (O'Connor 1978: 136-7). If, for instance, a *wat* should decline after the death of its 'owner' or main patron this is partly attributable to the abbot's failure to attract replacement sponsorship.

A manifestation of *wat* decline may be the expropriation of *wat* land by commercial or other outside interests. O'Connor gives instances of a strong abbot who confronted local groups abusing *wat* land (1978: 138) and of active young monks running a campaign to evict local merchants who have gradually been occupying areas of a *wat* compound which they perceived to be unused (1978: 217-20). The existence of shophouses or the tendency of their tenants to encroach onto adjacent areas may thus be a source of tension between monks and outside interests (O'Connor 1978: 220). It may also be a source of tension between outside interest groups. In 1969 the adding of 200 shops to the shophouse enclave within the compound of Wat Saket (the Golden Mount) in Bangkok saw conservationist architects locked in a public conflict with the *wat's* abbot over his collaboration with property developers (Fine Arts Commission, Report No. 2, 1969). A newspaper article in support of the architects noted that it was all very well for the government to rally the population against the Communists in the Northeast and the South of the country on the grounds that they (the Communists) would destroy the country's temples when the same end was already being achieved in the capital at the hands of developers (*Bangkok World,* 10th Sept 1969).

In summary, it may be seen that a *wat* survives intact by an effort of will. As soon as this will and the energy it generates is withdrawn the *wat* will begin to disintegrate. The agents of disintegration are the weather, robbers, scavengers of building fabric, encroachers upon *wat* land, and weak abotts. Opposing them are building maintenance works, temple guards, a committed clergy, and state laws. Laws, such as a Charter by the court of Ayudhya in 1698 which threatened punishment in hell for those encroaching on temple lands (Reynolds 1979: 197), were never totally successful. The fact that they were even necessary attests to the constant tension between the forces of disintegration and maintenance.

BUDDHIST KINGSHIP AND THE CONSERVATION ETHIC

The reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV r.1851-1868) is distinguished by his advocacy of a much more orthodox type of Buddhism than was being practiced in Thailand at the time. From our point of view his reign is remarkable for his attempt to reverse the common belief that there was more merit in building new *wat* than in restoring old ones. Though he himself built royal *wat* (particularly for the reformist Thammayut order which he founded) he believed that there were already more than sufficient and that restoring old and ruined *wat* would bring as much merit as building new ones. We see state policy encouraging this revisionist view and we see it become entrenched in the following reigns. Rama V built new *wat* as well as actively promoting the restoration of the old. By the Sixth Reign the modernizing elite had taken up the idea that 'unregulated temple construction and ritual acted as a drain on the time, money, and energy of the people' (Tambiah 1976: 243). Rama VI (r. 1910-1925) was not a *wat* builder, merely completing in his reign what was already under construction and setting up a restoration fund. Rama VII advocated Rama IV's line that restoration was as meritorious as building. By the 1960s the idea even had some non-elite support. Several of Bunnag's village informants 'remarked that to build a new *wat* at the present time was both a foolish and ostentatious gesture, as there were already so many monasteries in the country which were falling into disrepair' (1973: 145).

The change in emphasis from the building of temples to the building of schools, hospitals, and other public facilities which we see in the present reign (King Bhumibol Adulyadej r.1949-) was begun by Rama VI who went so far as to suggest that his attitude to conservation was actually a revival of ancient practice: 'The ancient Thai had the imagination and industry to build large and beautiful buildings that lasted. Thai

today demolish and destroy old sites or let them decay because of their infatuation with new things from the West' (in Vella 1978: 205). My initial reaction to King Mongkut's innovations was to see them as an import from the West on the part of this first king of the Bangkok dynasty to open Thailand to large-scale Western contact. At first glance it appeared to be the first appearance in Thailand of a Western-style conservation ethic. But it is not that simple. To begin with, as mentioned earlier, temple-restoration was not uncommon prior to the Fourth Reign. Mongkut, however, appears to have been advocating restoration in *preference* to temple building. In the course of the first three Bangkok reigns, in the process of founding the new capital and coping with a growing population, there was bound to be something of a building boom. It may be this - a temporary imbalance in the resources directed to building as opposed to restoration - against which Mongkut was reacting, the catalyst being that by the Fourth Reign many of the first *wat* constructed in Bangkok after it became capital were now in disrepair.

A more compelling reason to resist the temptation to see in Rama IV's initiatives the arrival of the conservation ethic is the extent to which it can be shown that restoration was institutionalized within the system of royal *wat*. O'Connor's research on this leads him to see continual expansion of the royal *wat* system (i.e., by the addition of new *wat*) as both a strength and weakness. A strength insofar as it allowed emergent elements (be they kings, nobles, abbots) in society to be brought into the system by founding and donating *wat* to the crown. But a weakness in that 'ceaseless growth... meant continual decay', decay which 'threatened the proper order of society that legitimated the king's rule' (O'Connor 1978: 175). That many of the proliferating royal *wat* would fall into decay as a result, for instance, of the death of their original patrons or the decline in position of the patron family, and that this decay would reflect upon and undermine the prestige of the throne itself, was a danger that could hardly be ignored. And ignored it was not.

O'Connor points to the Third Reign as a time when affluence from trade (following the Burney Treaty with Britain in 1826 and a similar one with the United States in 1833) was producing many people of new wealth. Since the building of royal *wat* was the 'means and media' of the social and political rise of these people there resulted an increase in the number of such *wat* 'even as existing ones required renovation and lacked capable abbots' (1978: 176). 'Only decay could follow, and it meant not only the physical decay of cracked walls and stolen images, but the social decay of unruly monks and a dissipating lay community as well' (1978: 177). To check this decay the kings - we see this first with Rama IV - encouraged the support of declining royal *wat*.

Chulalongkorn (Rama V) encouraged the building of shophouses on *wat* land which could be rented out by the *wat* as a source of income (O'Connor 1978: 178) and encouraged wealthy patrons to restore *wat* founded by previous patrons (O'Connor 1978: 130). Thus, what might be taken for the state adopting a new ethic of conservation appears actually to be but an aspect of the conventional operation of the system of royal *wat*. The magnitude of the royal advocacy of restoration was unusual but in keeping with a recent proliferation of royal *wat*. But there were yet other factors at play.

CHAKRI DYNASTY	REIGN	*CHEDI* BUILT	*CHEDI* RESTORED	TEMPLES BUILT	TEMPLES RESTORED
Rama I	1782-1809	3	1	3	24
Rama II	1808-1824	3	-	6	11
Rama III	1824-1851	8	-	3	52
Rama IV	1851-1868	5	3	6	53
Rama V	1868-1910	2	-	9	43
Rama VI	1910-1925	1	4	-	2
Rama VII	1925-1935	2	-	-	1
Rama VIII	1935-1946	-	-	1	-
Rama IX	1949-	1	3	0	1

TABLE 2: Royal *wat* projects in Bangkok. The Table shows how restoration consistently overshadows building. Notes that figures apply to royal *wat* only. From the report of the Committee for the Rattanakosin Bicentennial 1982.

King Mongkut and the Thammayut movement he founded rejected much popular Buddhist literature on the grounds that it was 'postcanonical and heterodox'. This included the '*Traiphumikatha,* the cosmological treatise that provided popular Buddhism with the theoretical basis for merit-making' (Ishii 1986: 156). Mongkut favoured a rationalist Buddhism or, more properly, a return to the pure tenets of a Buddhism whose rationality and objectivity, he believed, had been lost over the centuries. The expenditure of vast amounts of money and labour building temples for merit could hardly expect to meet with royal favour under this king. Ishii puts this Buddhist reformism in the context of proto-nationalism by showing how it was part of Mongkut's defence of Buddhism against Christianity, the religion of the West championed by waves of missionaries who were arriving in Thailand during his reign.

He was most concerned that Buddhism should be able to stand up against the attack of Protestantism.

> To them [Protestant missionaries], Christianity was inseparable from Western civilization. The basic attitudes with which they came to Siam, and which appear frequently in their diaries and other writings, were that because the West's advanced science and technology had been produced by Christians, Christianity was manifestly the superior religion. This meant, conversely, that backwardness was the result of idolatry like Buddhism, that the religions professed by barbarians were as inferior to Christianity as the barbarian civilizations were to that of the West.

Ishii 1986: 157

The conservationist approach to temples promoted increasingly by the state from the mid-nineteenth century does appear to owe something to Western influence. But that something was the fear that the West's religion, exalted by the achievements of its technology, might undermine Buddhism and thereby the Thai ruling class. It was certainly not an adoption of the conservation ethic familiar to us in the West's heritage discourse which, at the time, was still only germinating in Europe. Mongkut's reformism appealed mostly to the new elite, the sort of people who in his son, Rama V's time, would undertake the modernization of Thailand's economy, education, and administration. They and the growing urban middle class, though both still vastly outnumbered by village farmers, would ensure a following for this type of reformism through into the twentieth century and the present day.

In the previous section I mentioned the wave of temple restorations carried out in and around Bangkok in the decades of its establishment as capital. The point here is that restoration in the context of Buddhist Thailand is always present-oriented. It is not to do with nostalgia or with respect for the integrity of a former architectural style. It is to do with integrating the past firmly within the fabric of the present and making it work in the present for current priorities. One could say the same about Rama I's (r.1782-1809) 'restoration' of the corpus of Siamese law. It was concerned not so much with salvaging much that had become obscure or tainted but with bringing it into conformity with current standards of justice.

While previously state control of the Sangha was mostly limited to royal *wat*, the important Sangha Act of 1902, while ostensibly aiming to 'rationalize' the financing of monasteries (Reynolds 1979: 191) and reorganizing the Sangha for its new responsibilities in national primary education, effectively gave the state control of it. The 1902 Act did for the Sangha what the reforms of the late Fifth Reign had done for provincial administration. It put in place a multi-tiered, centralized structure which

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brought every monk in every monastery under the authority of the Council of Elders appointed by the king. By bringing the Sangha under the state, Buddhism was effectively made the state religion. The set of regulations contained in Article 9 of the Act which were administered by the Department of Religious Affairs (established in the Ministry of Education in 1889) governed the founding of new *wat*. It was these conditions which the villagers of Bangkhuad had to satisfy in 1905 in order to build their *wat* . There could be no existing *wat* within four kilometres and there had to be a minimum of 200 people who would be served by the new *wat* (Kaufman 1960: 96). Royal permission, through the new Sangha administration, was necessary even to establish an unconsecrated temple (i.e., one with resident monks but no *sema* or *bot*) and additional formal consent was necessary to have the temple consecrated (Ishii 1986: 74).

Partly these regulations seem designed to ensure the viability of new *wat* . The same impression is given by the regulations in place in the 1970s which required that new *wat* should be on a minimum of six *rai* (1 *rai* = 1,600 sq metres), that 50,000 *baht* (18 *baht* = A$1 in 1993) be already in hand to meet the cost of construction, and that a deadline for completion be set (Heinze 1977: 116). But they are frequently seen as being intended to discourage spending on new *wat* in areas where existing, perhaps dilapidated, *wat* are present (Heinze 1977: 116; Kangsadara 1986: 259). Prince Wachirayan, Supreme Patriarch and half-brother of Rama V who, with Prince Damrong, was the architect of the 1902 Sangha Act, apparently took this view. He ordered that there should be no fewer than two monks to a *wat* and that those with only one monk should be abandoned (Kangsadara 1986: 260), an attempt at consolidation and at ensuring monastic discipline. Again we see that it was not conservation of *wat* buildings which was the state's priority but, from this perspective, the conservation of the Sangha.

Within the monkhood itself there has never been more than piecemeal and lukewarm support for the programme of conservation advanced by heritage managers. One of the seven objectives of the Sangha, according to Heinze, is 'to maintain and to preserve the national heritage, e.g., Buddhist shrines as well as art and archaeological objects' (1977: 62). Her surveys of monks, however, show that little priority was given to conservation of *wat* structures. Well over half of a sample of 71 Bangkok monks said they had on occasion assisted the laity in the city and countryside in such activities as the repair of old *wat* (1977: 95) but they are unlikely to have had in mind conservation of the kind advocated by the Western heritage discourse. At the present time the Department of Religious Affairs is fostering a cooperative programme with

the Fine Arts Department to educate abbots in the rationale and practice of conservation and the Buddhist universities are beginning to include such material in their curriculum (interview with DRA official). The existence of a centralized Sangha administration means theoretically that such ideas could spread quite quickly. Whether they do will depend, of course, on whether they are able to compete with or adapt to the entrenched ideology of merit-making.

Government expenditure on 'temple repairs and reconstruction' in the years 1950 and 1958 were 3,000,000 *baht* and 9,000,000 *baht* respectively compared to 11,968,000 *baht* and 16,483,000 *baht* for the support of monks and novices for the same years (Von der Mehden 1986: 126). While the three-fold increase in two years for repair and reconstruction is unlikely to represent a continuous trend and, anyway, amounts to a small fraction of the cost of such work carried out in the country in any one year, it does seem to indicate a commitment on the part of the state.

Following the 1932 coup the government appropriated from the king control over the construction of new *wat* and by the 1941 Sangha Act introduced, at least on paper, a more democratic Sangha administration. During the military dictatorship of Field Marshal Sarit a new Sangha Act (1962) allowed him tighter control of the Sangha. These developments meant the state could intervene in traditional merit-driven practices should it wish to, a position it was not in during the Fourth Reign. Of the two ways of achieving this, the negative approach of withholding building consent and the positive approach of promoting conservation, it seems to have opted for the first.

If the state actually financed Thailand's 30,000 *wat* it would, of course, be in a position to dictate that restoration take priority over temple-building. In fact it finances only royal *wat*. The 'commoner' *wat* which account for well over 90% of Thai *wat* - 99% of those in the provinces are estimated to be commoner *wat* (Ishii 1986: 131) - are built and supported by lay contributions (Ishii 1986: 18). While the Department of Religious Affairs now encourages restoration it is able to finance relatively little directly (Heinze 1977:118).

The question of climate has been raised earlier as a factor hastening physical decay. Interestingly, this is often considered by the international heritage industry to be the main issue of built-heritage conservation in places like Thailand. But the rapid deterioration which is normal in tropical monsoonal climates such as Thailand's does not of itself cause abandonment or ruin. It simply shortens the life-expectancy of materials and structures. It is the decisions whether or not to maintain, elaborate,

restore, or abandon *wat* which determine these ends. Most Thais are unlikely to perceive that they have a rapid-deterioration problem. Climate-induced deterioration has always occurred, is anticipated, and is perceived as normal.

Since the advent of art historical discourse in Thailand (see Chapter 4) there has been a new, or alternative, knowledge about temple structures based strictly on documentary evidence and agreed rules of description. This knowledge may draw upon 'traditional' knowledge but sets itself outside it and resists contamination by it. Archaeological heritage management in Thailand, as elsewhere, is informed by modern discourses such as archaeology and art history. The reason for my emphasis here on traditional discourse is the very fact of its virtual exclusion from heritage management and the gulf which this opens up between the material past as it is experienced by the community and the material past as it is conceived by the heritage discourse. Archaeological heritage management tends to ignore traditional representation in favour of discourses of scholarship and science.

In the case of amulets and Buddha images, a distinction has been made between representation and empowerment, the two attributes of 'reminders' which I discussed earlier in this Chapter. While heritage management may tend to ignore the first it is at least able to appreciate the existence of it. The second is not merely foreign to the rational tradition, around which the modern discourses have formed, it threatens that tradition's claim to provide a complete explanation of the world.

THE OVERLAPPING DOMAINS OF SPIRIT BELIEF AND BUDDHIST ORTHODOXY

The popular practice of Buddhism mixes animism, mediumship, and local legends with the formal tenets of the orthodox religion. It is commonly held that the Tai belief in spirits was not abandoned when they took up Theravada Buddhism. Tambiah (1970), while he maintains that the two occupy separate, distinct domains, holds that they actually balance and complement each other. The distinct threads of the two are interwoven. Others go further. Davis (1984) sees the distinction between Tambiah's Buddhist and animistic entities as more blurred and as overlapping. Wijeyewardene (e.g. 1986) seems to dispense with separate categories altogether, perhaps finding them unhelpful impositions on people who in daily life are little concerned with such distinctions. Spiro (1967), in reference to Burmese Buddhism, maintains that because they satisfy a need which Buddhism does not satisfy the pre-existing animist beliefs cannot be considered a fading anachronism. Rather than attributing suffering to the effects of

karma, animist belief attributes it to malevolent agents outside oneself and allows a range of direct remedies which included the making of propitiary offerings to specific spirits and intervention by spirit mediums.

There are three divisions or systems recognised within Thai religion: Buddhism, rituals associated with belief in gods, and those associated with belief in spirits (Wijeyewardene 1970: 249). Buddhism I have spoken of already. The gods (*devata*) are benevolent deities in heaven, are mostly of Hindu origin, and though legitimate within Theravada Buddhism, were part of a belief system predating the arrival of Buddhism in Southeast Asia. The spirits (*phi*) comprise the spirits of dead persons (ghosts), non-human spirits and, occasionally, the spirits of living persons. Belief in them is thought to be part of an indigenous system predating Indian influence and the introduction of Hindu deities and their associated cults. The extent to which spirit belief has fused with Buddhist practice in Thailand is illustrated by Wijeyewardene's (1986) account of religion in the Chiang Mai area. The leaders of local spirit cults there often learn their magic while they are monks. Spirit possession is allowed to take place during spirit propitiatory rites within *wat,* the cults concerned with *sya wat* (temple guardians) are focussed on the *wat,* and they and all the local cults include in their rites the chanting of monks (Wijeyewardene 1986: 140).

Now a closer look at *devata* and *phi* , focussing on the spatial dimension (i.e., their links with place). The *devata* and *phi* have two things in common of importance here: each performs a tutelary (i.e., guardian) role and their relationship with humans is normally mediated by shrines. The *devata* are the less terrestrial of the two since they dwell in heaven. Shrines to them are erected within *wat* compounds but also within the compounds of public (e.g., government ministries, police stations) and private buildings (e.g., hotels, shopping plazas) and of houses. *Phi* are of numerous different types but among the more prominent are those which are tutelary spirits of particular *wat* , villages, and *muang* (territorial-political unit including several villages and/or a town). These are territorial spirits for whom shrines are erected in their respective territories. In the case of guardian spirits of *wat,* the shrine may be located within the *wat* compound. Other territorial spirits are those associated with particular trees, fields, forests, swamps, or other natural landscape elements. These are described as 'nature spirits' by Tambiah (1970: 316). Road intersections, bridges, and mountain passes also have resident *phi.* Turton shows how 'non-specific forest spirits' become specific when forest areas are cleared for houses or cultivation (1978:124). The major category of clan spirits, known mainly from northern Thailand, are the subject of spirit cults with female mediums. Spirit shrines in

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Thailand generally are in the form of raised miniature houses. They vary from shrines about the size of a letter box to larger structures capable of accommodating three or four people seated.

How closely are *phi* associated with particular shrines and what is the link between the shrine and its precise location? At Muang Landing, near Nan in northern Thailand, Davis tells us that some 'free-floating' spirits are without shrines. They 'wander' in their territories but can be 'domesticated' by the building of shrines for them should they become 'vicious' (1984: 36). It seems that spirits may reside permanently at a shrine or simply be there when invited to. But even spirits with permanent shrines can move around, to attend rituals elsewhere, for instance. It appears that a spirit can occupy multiple shrines and, conversely, several spirits can reside at one single shrine (Wijeyewardene 1986: 131). Also, clan spirits can and do move, such as from an old to a new shrine if a new medium is chosen or when a clan fissions and new shrines are established.

Of more than passing interest to my study are those spirits who occupy ruins. In a *tambon* (commune) near Chiang Mai, Wijeyewardene found that the tutelary spirits of four villages were situated in ruined monasteries (1986: 147-48). People in the region tended to assume that any ruin would have a resident spirit. If a previously unknown ruin was discovered the local people would seek to discover who its spirit was by bringing in a diviner to be possessed by the spirit and thus identify it (Wijeyewardene pers. comm.). It is common in Thailand to hear of encounters between people looting archaeological sites and the guardian spirits of those places. It is reported, for instance, that after villagers at the Khmer ruins of Maha Sarakan in the Northeast accidentally unearthed fragments of Buddha statues and other material they rented out the ruin to treasure hunters by the square metre (much the way owners of reservoirs sell fishing rights by the hour). 'But the resident spirit soon visited its wrath on the "grave robbers". Misfortune overtook many...' (*Bangkok Post* 5th November 1989). One of those overtaken was a businessman who set off for Bangkok with a large Buddha image from the site in the back of his pick-up truck. He was pursued by the spirit which caused the vehicle to break down repeatedly and eventually forced him to return the image to the ruins.

It is likely the association of spirits with ruins is simply a case of continued residency on the part of spirits which belonged to a place prior to the building of a Buddhist temple there or, in the case of the Khmer monuments in the Northeast, the building of shrines to Hindu deities. Perhaps there is something in the nature of ruins

themselves which attracts. Perhaps their deserted nature renders them similar to the secluded forest groves on the edge of villages which are often mentioned as the location of spirit shrines. In Burma, as it Thailand, spirit shrines are often situated in close proximity to Buddhist religious structures. Spiro suggests that the same 'high places' (e.g., hills) in Burma which are now the sites of Buddhist temples were originally the sites of shrines for spirit (*nat*) propitiation:

> [they] only later became places for Buddhist worship, so that this juxtaposition of the two systems, with the consequent necessity of worshipping the Buddha either prior or subsequent to propitiating the nats, was intended to serve two functions. In the first place, it served to Buddha-ize the nats and, in the second place, served - and serves - to remind the nat devotee that his primary loyalty was - and is - to Buddhism.

1967: 250

Shorto (1967: 127), following Mendelson, is led to believe the pantheon of 36 *sotapan* ('stream-winning gods') of the Mon people was a prototype of that of the 37 *nats* of modern Burma and was evolved by the Pagan royal priesthood in an accommodation of local spirit cults to the political structure of the Pagan empire (see also Reynolds 1992: 143). Buddhist stupas were erected at the cult sites of the *sotopan* which became 'places of state worship for the kingdom, its four provinces, and their 32 districts' (Shorto 1967: 131).

Speaking of the matrilineal spirit cults of northern Thailand Wijeyewardene notes the tendency for cults to have shrines 'on public land, often associated with some visible or notional sacred object, such as an old tree or ruin' (1981: 3). And again 'the abandoned monastery is analogous to a category of striking natural features such as mountains, caves, cliffs and watersheds which are the abode of powerful protective (or dangerous) spirits' (1986: 149). If the landscape is humanized by populating it with spirits associated with striking natural features then the same might be said of ruins. While different to natural features in that they are recognizably of human origin and, in this case, recognizably Buddhist, the ruins are remnants of a time beyond living memory and have no living cultural context except via the spirit cults.

I want to stress the particular connectedness of many animistic spirits and cults to particular points in the landscape, a connectedness which represents what Keyes calls 'the potency of local geomantic forces' (1991: 273). Keyes refers to Paul Mus's (1957: 21) term, 'cadastral cult', a term which I think expresses well this aspect of their nature. It is evident that animistic cult practices are inextricably entangled with prehistoric and Buddhist archaeological sites in Thailand, a situation resulting from a

superimposition of one religious landscape onto that of another. At work seem to be those same processes of incorporation, coexistence, and utilization which can be shown to have operated in the European cultural landscape (Chapter 1), that of South America, and perhaps many others. In the management of sites by heritage agencies, however, the multifaceted significance of sites is typically overlooked in favour of management strategies which interrogate sites unidimensionally. It may be interesting to ask, in the Thai context, why this is so.

AUTHORIZED ACCOUNTS

At one level Buddhism sees its liaison with animism as an effort to domesticate the latter: it sanctifies, purifies, and civilizes it (Wijeyewardene 1986: 142). But, as noted earlier, there is a reformist element within the Sangha and elite lay community which is critical of what it sees as superstitious and unorthodox practices operating within the religion. It is generally opposed to what it sees as the excesses of merit-making, of the whole area of belief which attributes extraordinary powers to Buddhist sacra, and to spirit cults.

In his role as protector of Buddhism, Rama I issued a number of decrees aimed at arresting perceived decay in the religion. Some were directed at curbing widespread superstitious practices, the king being particularly concerned that civil servants should be orthodox (Wenk 1968: 39-40). By a law of 1805 the lower class's custom of burying bones remaining after cremation under Buddha images in temples, for instance, was prohibited (Rajadhon 1954: 177). As Wyatt (1982) observes, this reformist programme had a political background: in order to legitimize his reign and the dynasty he was founding he created a link between himself and a purified, legitimate, Buddhism. His programme also seems to anticipate the rational modernity which would not appear clearly in Thailand for another half century or so. In a time of upheaval the king and his advisers were setting aside

> accretions of custom or habit... Unsystematic ideas about animistic spirits or brahmanical deities were not very useful in this effort, while Buddhist thought came increasingly to be seen as pertinent and utilitarian. Theirs was ultimately a more critical, rationalistic, and pragmatic way of looking at the world than their Ayudhyan forefathers'
>
> Wyatt 1982: 39

I have earlier looked at King Mongkut's efforts to promote temple restoration as part of an indirect response to Western influence, particularly that of Christian missionaries who began to be particularly active from this time and who were convinced that Oriental 'underdevelopment' was due to idol worship (Ishii 1986: 157-8). Ishii suggests that Mongkut sought to purge Buddhism of the 'folk beliefs' which attracted the missionaries' contempt (Ishii 1986: 158).

The close alliance in Thailand between Buddhism and the state is striking, particularly in relation, say, to historical Sri Lanka (Tambiah 1973). It is a characteristic which has been most marked during the course of the Chakri dynasty and is related to the development of the modern nation state. Wijeyewardene (1986) maintains that Thai polities have long sought to unify all aspects of religious practice under them. Spirit belief is incompatible with such an enterprise since, lacking an equivalent structure to the Buddhist Sangha and lacking a regulating canon, they are much more difficult for the state to control. State Buddhism only emerged in the Fifth Reign with the creation of an effective state bureaucracy (Ishii 1986: 60). Wijeyewardene finds that though they are frequent 'champions of orthodox Buddhism and enemies of animistic heterodoxy' (1986: 130) civil servants and the political elite in Northern Thailand nevertheless have revived sacred sites and rites in a form which makes them state cults, the animistic aspects having been de-emphasized or sanitized. It appears, however, that the state is not opposed to animism as such, provided it has a measure of control over it. Similarly the Buddhist Sangha 'may in some sense fashion the spirit cults, but the cults must be controlled and kept at a distance' (Wijeyewardene 1986: 142).

I suggest that one aspect of the state's effort to control spirit cults is to be found in the area of heritage management. It is from among civil servants and the middle class generally that reformist monks such as Buddhadasa and Bodhiraksa draw their support. The personnel of the various branches of state heritage management are drawn from the same background. It appears that the advocacy of rationalism over superstition appeals to the world-view and the aspirations of this class grouping. When we consider that it includes the nation's teachers we can appreciate its potential for exclusion of unorthodox practices from public life. We can also see how and why this world-view authorizes a particular interpretation of archaeological remains.

Aboriginal Societies and the Tyranny of Tradition

THE REAL ABORIGINES

'It appears that anthropologists have assumed that we all know who the Aborigines are' (1987: 221). Cowlishaw finds this assumption questionable. She believes that we, the white Australians, continue to 'know' the Aborigines in ways which have as much or more to do with the nature of our culture than with theirs. Put another way, Aborigines, like all people, have an inside view of their society. Their image of themselves derives from the structures and world-views which are peculiar to their culture. This self-image, relying as it does on culturally-specific ways of thinking about the world, is real in its own terms. It is tempting, of course, to think that a society has an objective, observable reality which can be grasped from the outside. The European explorers and colonizers of Australia no doubt believed their knowledge or apprehension of the Aborigines grasped such a reality. Instead, their view of the Aborigines was as socially constructed as was the Aborigines' view of themselves. Europeans could only 'know' Aborigines by using those discourses available within their own culture at the time for understanding other peoples: 'To locate Aborigines, to render them familiar, Europeans had to situate them within existing discourses and, thereby, within the dominant relations of power and knowledge available to nascent colonial administrations' (King and McHoul 1986: 24).

The Scale of Being was a discourse available in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries within which it was relevant to ask whether the Aborigines were human. Having decided they were, the discourse most employed by the colonists was

that of 'race'. As it was developed in Europe, the concept of 'race' appears to trace back to the European involvement in the fifteenth century African slave trade:

> By the end of the eighteenth century, the traffic in slaves in Europe was extensive, and slavery was almost entirely black, even New World Indians having been virtually excluded as candidates for enslavement. Slowly blackness itself, which in the ancient world had often been associated with positive qualities such as physical or moral beauty, came to be associated negatively with the degraded condition of slavery. Eventually, a black skin was taken as a 'natural', outward sign of inward mental and moral inferiority.
>
> Stepan 1982: xii

The ascription of moral and mental inferiority to people with black skin was refined to include other non-European groups and to embrace a whole range of physical traits. By the late eighteenth century comparative anatomy had produced a science of race and it was in pursuit of this science that for most of the following century and a half race scientists went out among the peoples of the world with callipers for measuring skulls and colour charts for grading skin colour. The racial typology which the scientists produced was reified. Rather than being merely an abstraction, the racial types were held to be real in nature (Stepan 1982: xviii).

To return to the Aborigines, the colonial deployment of the discourse of race meant, firstly, that because they were black the Aborigines must naturally be inferior. Secondly, because the racial type 'Aborigine' was, like all other racial types, the embodiment of a particular physical essence it followed that, via miscegenation, it could be found at an individual level either in a pure or in a diluted form. The type itself could thus be sub-divided into half-castes, quarter castes and even finer discriminations (e.g., octaroons). The essence, Aboriginality, was gradable and allowed the conclusion that a half-caste person, for instance, was only half Aboriginal. As the essence of Aboriginality was seen to reside in the physical-biological, Aboriginality could be lost but not added to.

Racial ideology was present among white settlers during the first half century after 1788. In other words, at the time most Aborigines were being dispossessed of their country. But racial categorisation and gradation was not practised until later, especially after 1890, when the emphasis shifted from the dispossession of Aborigines to the control of their lives (see Markus 1988). When the concept of biological race was abandoned by anthropologists in the mid-twentieth century it was left, Cowlishaw notes, to social anthropologists rather than physical anthropologists to define who the Aborigines were. In the event, social anthropologists defined them by reference to the

surviving elements of 'traditional' Aboriginal culture in the north and centre of the continent. Culture took the place of blood and the concept of the 'pure' or 'full-blood' Aborigine was substituted for by that of the 'traditional' Aborigine. Because the essence which the new definition relied upon was static rather than dynamic there remained in the anthropologist's discourse a 'submerged and implied definition of Aborigines as a race' (Cowlishaw 1987: 223). Culture, like race, was conceived as a measurable quantity, some people having more than others.

It followed that most anthropologists in Australia took as their priority the recording of a 'pure' Aboriginal culture. Purity, here, was equated with pre-contact culture. In the first half of the present century, as European settlement and Christian missions penetrated the last relatively uncontacted pockets of the continent, 'pure' Aboriginality was on the verge of disappearing. Stanner's deliberate focus on the process of cultural change was exceptional in its time and isolated him somewhat from his colleages (Barwick, Beckett and Reay 1985: 24). Even if the belief that the 'pure/real' Aboriginal culture was gradually being lost was not stated explicitly - frequently it was, by leading anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown, Elkin, and the Berndts (Cowlishaw 1987: 229-31) - the comparative lack of interest in the Aborigines of the southeast testified eloquently enough to this conclusion. The lack of research interest in Aborigines of the towns or in the way Aborigines everywhere were adapting and 'reworking' their culture similarly implied that these were impure.

The studies carried out by those few anthropologists like Jeremy Beckett, Marie Reay, Malcolm Calley, and Diane Barwick on Aborigines in the rural and urban southeast tended to be marginalized by mainstream anthropology. It was as if their subjects had become invisible, as Aborigines, to white society. In the settled southeast, 'School textbooks described the nomadic hunter-gatherers, the cleverness of their artefacts and the exotic nature of their religious beliefs' (Cowlishaw 1988: 102) but had nothing to say about fringe-camps or reserves. With the enduring commitment of anthropologists themselves to the study of the 'traditional' Aborigines of northern Australia it is hardly surprising that the white community generally adopted this same outlook. Intellectuals showed their interest in Aborigines by going to 'talks on totemism and moieties' (Cowlishaw 1988: 102). In a current variation on this tendency, some members of the counter-culture and Green movement in the southeast idealise a spiritual essence which they see residing in the culture of Aborigines in their own region. This sometimes extends to 'adopting' charismatic Aborigines and enlisting this particular construction of Aboriginality in their campaigns against land development. Further, I maintain that heritage management

conspires in the construction of an exotic Aboriginality by emphasizing a heritage configuration consisting of sites which are either prehistoric or represent remnants of tradition (e.g., *bora* grounds and natural landscape features associated with Dreaming stories). Archaeology, which I will later argue has largely succeeded in confining Aboriginal heritage management within the terms its own discourse, has as its counterpart to the anthropological avoidance of contemporary Aboriginal cultures of the southeast the remarkable failure to engage in research on Aboriginal sites of the post-contact period. For archaeologists the 'real' Aborigines are elsewhere in time rather than elsewhere in space.

If the 'real' Aborigines were always elsewhere how did the white community in the southeast conceive of the Aborigines on their doorstep? The corners of the 'urban-rural-tribal triangle' to which Langton (1981: 16) refers represents a descending order of cultural attrition in the eyes of the white community. The culture of the urban Aborigines is seen as the most incomplete, followed by that of rural Aborigines in states like New South Wales. These cultures are not seen as coherent wholes but, rather, as comprising two parts. The first consists of remnants of traditional culture and the second consists of those elements of European culture which have been taken up. The Europeans' image of these 'de-tribalized' Aborigines is drawn from this second part, almost always dwelling on negative traits. Misdemeanours ascribed to them include misuse of alcohol, inability to keep their houses or clothes clean, swearing and a general bastardization of English. A recent addition is the purported inability to run the finances of Land Councils. It is a construction which rests on an unfavourable comparison with an ideal of European behaviour - hence, Aborigines are brawlers, slow in school, unpunctual, and unashamed to rely on welfare. The borrowing by Australian social scientists of the 'culture of poverty' model (Langton 1981) does nothing to temper this image.

The traditional-detribalized duality in the white conception of Aboriginality is inescapable in all this. The negative image of the southeastern Aborigines requires as counterpoint the image of the 'traditional' Aborigine. As long as one is around so will be the other.

The tyranny of the 'real-traditional Aborigine' calls for attention in some detail because it is still with us. It lingers in anthropological discourse, is large as life in the popular mind, and is central to the discourse of heritage management. The concept of the 'traditional' is, however, finally under attack by some anthropologists. 'Traditional culture', according to Edmund Leach, 'is simply not available for inspection and it

never has been' (1989: 39). By this he means that the ethnographer's very presence constitutes a change in the society he observes and, more importantly, that social change is the norm in all societies. Thomas is inclined to see implicit ties to evolutionary thinking in the term 'traditional': 'Traditional society is just that - one which is structured on the whole by tradition' (1989: 39). The 'custom-bound primitives' (Thomas 1989: 39) have a society which appears less alive than ours. We would not think of referring to the eighteenth or nineteenth century British as 'traditional' because history tells us that this was a period of great change. By the same token, these changes are not believed to have made the Europeans culturally less European. Change, then, is natural to the West. Timelessness is what is natural to the non-West and is one of the attributes which has attracted Westerners there. For Gustave Flaubert in Egypt it was 'the old Orient which is always young because nothing changes' (Stegmuller 1983: 81). It was a quality which turned the Other World into an historical resource 'a memory bank of how and who we think we were in the "primitive" reaches of the past' (Foster 1982: 21).

'Traditional societies' are not credited with change until Europeans arrive on the scene. The change they experience at that time is change which we have initiated. It takes the form of loss of their culture (read, 'traditions') as they pick up irresistible elements of our culture. The question of what or who is 'traditional' in Aboriginal Australia thus relates directly to the West's tendency to relegate non-Western cultures to another time, the past. Anthropologists cannot step outside the world view of their own culture. Those studying Aboriginal cultures were not blind to the changes which were occurring within them but they were mostly unable to accept their integrity, as cultures, outside the past to which they had been consigned. Change for them could only mean loss, it could not mean creation.

> "Entering the modern world", their distinct histories quickly vanish. Swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West and by various technologically advanced socialisms, these suddenly "backward" peoples no longer invent local futures. What is different about them remains tied to traditional pasts, inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it.
>
> Clifford 1988: 5

Like the North American Indians, the contemporary Aborigines were always seen as 'survivors', a category redolent with connotations of passivity. As survivors they 'could not by definition be dynamic, inventive, or expansive' (Clifford 1988: 284). More than any other anthropologist, A.P. Elkin has come to embody the view of Aborigines in settled areas as cultureless survivors. It was his view that, except for the oldest men, Aborigines on the New South Wales reserves had 'lost almost all their

own culture...it no longer had any grip on them' (1935: 121). Here is his account of the state in which Hale and Tindale found the Wailpi people of the Flinders Ranges in 1926:

> The Language was almost forgotten; the marriage rules broken; totemism and moiety organization barely a memory; and apparently no account of the secret life was obtained. So a few fragmentary notes - the last possible - were given to the world.

<div align="right">1935: 121-22</div>

The point is not that elements of 'traditional' culture were found to be missing in such people - clearly this was the case - but that Aborigines were helpless in the face of this cultural disintegration. The most that could be expected from them, in their last gasp, was to produce these fragments of the way things were. Elkin and many of his colleagues in fact saw their work largely as a project of salvage.

The image of the passive survivor can be developed further. Thomas declines to deploy the 'feminized images of indigenous places' often used to describe those 'vacant or passive spaces' awaiting colonial 'penetration' (1991: 205; cf. Said [1985: 206] on the 'feminine penetrability' and 'supine malleability' ascribed by Orientalism to the East). It is easy to see how necessary such images have been to the colonial project in Australia and how central the passive indigene is to them. The assimilation policy was an embodiment of this view - Aborigines would be transfused with our culture and our blood until they effectively disappeared as a separate category.

Several books could and have been written about the way white society imagines Aborigines. My main point is simply that a notion of culture similar in its quantifiability to the notion of 'race' has become ingrained in our perception of Aborigines in the southeast. Countering it, though, is a largely recent insistence that Aboriginal culture in all parts of the continent is as dynamic and complete now as it was two hundred years ago. Working with the Murinbata (Northern Territory), Stanner, as early as the 1930s was interested in the 'dynamic' nature of their culture in a period of rapid change. He wrote of the 'ingenuity which the Murinbata are showing in making the new principles of social organization compatible with the pre-existing organization...' (1936: 188). In 1958 he spoke against the notion that Aboriginal culture was collapsing:

> The structure has been depicted as so rigid and delicate, with everything so interdependent, that to interfere with any part of it - say by fencing off the hunting territories, or by prohibiting ceremonies -is to topple the whole, in rationale, design and structure. But there is at least some evidence which

<div align="center">63</div>

allows one to say that here were a people exploring a potential of their structure, a people taking advantage of its flexibility.

Stanner 1979: 47

Langton, in the 1980s, urged that the integrity of urban Aboriginal cultures be recognized. 'This involves viewing the changes resulting from white settlement as evidence of their adaptive capacity' (Langton 1981:17). In anthropology this view is in line with a rejection by many researchers of the synchronic approach to ethnography which, after Durkheim, posited culture as an organic unity which could be observed as such in the field by ignoring change and isolating outside influences. Rejected is the essentialist concept of culture as given rather than constructed (Rosaldo 1980). The shift   can be expressed as one which gives priority to social process over social structure (Hiatt 1984: 15, Layton 1985: 152), or as one to 'integrate structure with process' (Berndt and Tonkinson 1988: 12-13). Such thinking is obviously a departure from the 'rescue' approach evident in Australian anthropology as late as the 1960s (Morton 1989: 7) and is radical to the extent that it liberates 'tribal' peoples from the passive role previously assigned to them.

A major collective statement of this new approach has been the publication of the two volumes *Past and Present* (Beckett 1988a) and *Being Black* (Keen 1988a). *Past and Present* contains contributions to the 1986 Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies conference, one of the sessions of which took the theme 'uses of the past in the construction of Aboriginal identity'. The appeal for contributions to this session described Aboriginality as a cultural construction fabricated not only by Aborigines but also by white 'experts', advocates, critics, and the media:

> The principal currency in these exchanges is the Past. The memories of old
> people, anthropological writings, archaeological remains, documentary
> records, are all ransacked to give authenticity to competing constructions.

Beckett 1988b: 1

Aborigines, in other words, and in common with other peoples, draw not so much upon the past to arrive at their present self-identity as upon various representations of the past.

The contributions in *Being Black* depict emergent Aboriginal cultures and show them to be quite distinct from white culture. Sansom's work with the fringe dwellers of Darwin indicates that rather than being assimilated with the mainstream monetary economy these people have 'turned things round by assimilating money to their

modality for exchange' (1988: 159). Mainstream money is incorporated into a system of service exchange, people helping each other out, and in the process its valuation departs quite radically from that in mainstream Australian economy. Elsewhere in the volume fighting is seen as having a role in social control in Aboriginal communities rather than as being a symptom of cultural disintegration or an indicator of a 'culture of poverty' (MacDonald 1988). Both fighting and swearing are seen by Langton (1988) as having a basis in customary law though they are among the most commonly cited grounds for police arrest. Roads and motor vehicles introduced by Europeans are used in a novel way by Aborigines to maintain kinship links along 'beats' (Beckett 1988c) and 'runs' (Birdsall 1988). These are kinship systems which draw from both the past and the present. They are not, in structure, those of 'traditional' Aboriginal society but nor, certainly, are they those of European society. Keen (1988b) reviews other characteristics of contemporary Aboriginal groups in various parts of Australia.

Is there a coherent Aboriginal attitude to the past and to the material remains of the past? In the remainder of this chapter, as a preliminary to a later examination (in Chapter 7) of the inter_action of Aborigines with one particular historical landscape, I look at the place of land, mythology and history in Aboriginal society.

ABORIGINES AND LAND

Since my concern is not simply with Aboriginal relationships with the past but with the spatial expression of that past it is useful to know something of Aboriginal relationships with land. The orthodox model of Aboriginal land tenure worked out in the 1930s by Radcliffe-Brown held that land is owned by clans (exogamous patrilineal descent groups) who have exclusive foraging rights over it and who relate to it by their connectedness with the totemic sites of the land and the mythology associated with these sites. The land is occupied by foraging bands drawn from among clan members, unmarried sisters and daughters, and women who have married into the clan. Although, by the 1960s, modifications to this model had been offered by anthropologists such as Hiatt it was essentially the orthodox model which was incorporated into the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 when the federal government moved to allow Aborigines in the Territory to make claims to vacant Crown Land.

In the period since 1976 it has become clear that this model is flawed. It is 'at best inadequate to describe the system of land tenure of any region, and at worst, false' (Keen 1984: 26). It has been shown that among the Pintupi of the Western Desert

rights to totemic/sacred sites and hence to 'ownership' of country may derive from conception at them and by close kinship with members of a previous generation conceived there, but also from prolonged residence near a site or from the death of a close relative residing near one (Hiatt 1984: 15). The unilineal rule applying to descent groups has been challenged. In the case of the Uluru land claim (Layton 1986) it was demonstrated that decent groups were actually ambilineal, recruiting members through either parent, and that adherence by the court to the orthodox model would disqualify many legitimate traditional owners. Also, it has been shown that in much of the Northern Territory men have custodial responsibilities for sites in the area of their mother's descent group; the principle that these 'managers' be included as traditional owners was argued during the Utopia claim and accepted by the Commissioner in his findings on the Willowra claim (Hiatt 1984: 20). In practice, the Commissioners presiding over land claims in the Northern Territory have been able to accommodate much of the flexibility now shown to be inherent in land tenure, and to an extent have recognized that current affiliation to country, familiarity with it, and sharing of knowledge about it may be as important, or even more important, than ancient descent rights (Keen 1984: 34-5).

A problem with the orthodox model was that it presented land tenure in terms of an established and rigid structure. This was partly traceable to the synchronic tradition in ethnography, social structure being seen as static because the ethnographer normally observed a society in the field only during a 'narrow slice in time' (Rosaldo 1980: 10). But it was also because the old doctrine of social evolution died hard - if indeed it has died - and predisposed ethnographers to think of tribal societies as timeless, endlessly 'marking time', as it were, in the ethnographic present. An important contributor to the demise of the orthodox model was the movement of anthropology, noted earlier, towards an emphasis on process over structure. This shift is seen in the Ranger Enquiry's (1977) recognition that title to the land of several clans which had died out within living memory was held by adjacent groups who could now be considered traditional owners:

> This was an important decision, because it acknowledged Aboriginal land tenure to be a living system, a concept which dismayed those white people whose ideology held that Aborigines are a dying race.

> Layton 1985: 157

Also committed to a processual view of Aboriginal ownership and identification with land is Myers who, in his study of the Pintupi, argues that group membership is

socially negotiated and that land ownership 'is not a given, but an accomplishment' (1986: 129)

Land tenure is dynamic rather than static. 'Inevitably some groups burgeon while others die out; larger groups split and succeed to the estates of deceased groups' (Keen 1984: 27). In other words, the land tenure system is responsive at a demographic level to change through time. It is also responsive at a political level. The considerable choice which the system permits to an individual in taking up rights in different groups and areas allows for a constantly evolving pattern of alliances, affiliations, and movements in space. Gumbert speaks of 'cognatic bands in a constant state of re-formation' (1981: 116). The impression of flexibility, not allowed for in the orthodox model, is also given by the suggestion in the Gove case that displacement of groups through warfare partly accounted for the present pattern of site ownership (Layton 1985: 149).

The Finniss River claim concerned an area of land near Darwin to which conflicting claims pitted the descendants of the original owners against people from language groups on the Daly River, to the south. The Daly River people had been moving north to the Finniss River on a seasonal basis in the 1920s and 1930s and later they settled there permanently. An interesting point about this case was that the claimants of mixed Aboriginal-European descent were recognized by the Commissioner as Aboriginal. Also, the migrant group were acknowledged to have valid common spiritual affiliations with sites in part of the area and on this basis they could be considered traditional owners. It was found that the migrant group had given names in Daly languages to many local hills and creeks. 'Dreamings, some having clear connections with Dreamings in the Daly area, were attributed to many sites' (Layton 1985: 164). In Layton's review of this case we are told of evidence presented by anthropologist Peter Sutton of cases in the past where Aboriginal groups had forcibly taken over land. Title was held on the basis of a 'forgetting', in time, by the wider Aboriginal community that the migrant groups had not always lived there (1985: 164). Basil Sansom, another anthropologist involved in the case, 'saw politics, not law, as the dominant force in Aboriginal society':

> Referring to his work in fringe camps, Sansom argued that around Darwin groups were characteristically mixed in composition, mobile and accustomed to using every claim based on kinship, friendship, trade partnership, etc. to establish their presence in an area.
>
> Layton 1985: 164

In the Northern Territory, then, anthropologists and to some extent the legal system have recognized the principle that Aboriginal land tenure is dynamic. There has been a degree of recognition of the validity and authenticity of adjustments made to the system in the course of adaptation to the reality of white settlement. How much, one might ask, has that dynamism and flexibility we now see as inherent in their society allowed Aborigines in the rural southeast of the continent to endure the massive disruption of at least 150 years of white settlement while still retaining a relationship with the land which is distinctively Aboriginal?

THE PAST OF THE DREAMING

The world-creative era in Aboriginal mythology is known in English as the Dreamtime. There is a case to be made for avoiding use of the term 'mythology' in accounts of Aboriginal culture, and hence avoiding a myth-reality opposition which has no place in an Aboriginal worldview in which religious knowledge and historical knowledge are not mutually exclusive categories. Many Aborigines and some anthropologists refer to 'myths' as stories, often in the sense that each sacred place in the landscape has its own story. One advantage of 'story' over 'myth' is that it emphasizes the active role of the individual in framing narratives and interpreting stories. Recent discussions of the problem of rendering Aboriginal ontology and cosmology into English include Rose (1992: 34-47) and Williams (1986: 25-34, 234-37).

The Dreaming is an epoch in which supernatural spirit-beings in human and animal form emerged or awakened and travelled the world, creating its various features. The era ended with their going back into the earth where they remain, sleeping but fully powerful. Dreamings constitute a history of the world. It also acts as a personal history in that each individual receives a particle of an ancestral spirit-being local to the place they were conceived. They have a relationship with this spirit-being, are able to communicate ritually with it and other ancestral spirit-beings, and will themselves, upon death, go back into the land and into the Dreaming. The Dreaming thus continues. It has a beginning but no end. Dreaming stories are narratives in that each is 'an intricate patterning of the activities of mythic beings' (Berndt 1974: 13).

Aboriginal religion is 'essentially land-minded and land-centred' (Berndt 1982: 2). As the ancestoral spirit-beings created not only dominant landscape features such as mountains and rivers but also individual trees, rocks, and water holes, the landscape in its entirety is understood to have been created and imprinted by them. In their

travels the Dreamtime beings moved along specific pathways known to the living and commemorated by them. The pathways are dotted with landscape features created in the course of their travels and adventures. People travel the same tracks - in the arid zone they form a web linking key water holes - and visit the Dreaming sites, these being the sacred sites, ownership of which forms the basis of recent lands claims.

Such, in fairly crude summary, is Aboriginal Dreamtime 'mythology' as recorded in northern Australia by anthropologists in the first half of the century. The Dreaming has also been a key component of the construction of 'traditional' Aboriginality and has long been held by white Australians to have been one of the casualties of the encounter between Aboriginal and white culture in the southeast. Before asking if the Dreaming survives in southeastern Aboriginal cultures I will briefly scan some of the newer studies of mythology where the emphasis is on social process.

Dreaming stories have been described as 'blueprints' or guides' for human action and welfare (Berndt 1974). This is a functionalist interpretation which holds the Dreaming to be a charter for human action. The Dreaming 'mythology', in this sense, is a given. Against this view, or modifying it, is the understanding of Dreaming stories as dynamic and able to be personalized by the living. Among the Walbiri of Central Australia the manner in which the ancestors transform themselves into country (at particular sites) and into ritual objects (e.g., *tjurunga* boards) is 'conceived as a process linking the interior subjectivity of the person with the external world' (Munn quoted in Morton 1987: 102). This means of objectification personalizes the landscape, but it does so for the living as well as the ancestral beings. Links are established (e.g., via conception sites) between living individuals and particular ancestral beings. Upon death the individual (in spirit) goes into the ground at the site of the ancestor with which he is linked. The object world is thus a 'common currency' shared by the living, the generations of the dead, and the ancestors. Dreaming stories and ritual are 'a form or mode of experiencing the world in which symbols of collectivity [the landscape and ritual objects] are constantly recharged with intimations of the self' (Munn quoted in Morton 1987: 105). If the Dreaming is a charter it is thus clearly not one which is passively received. It appears to allow individuals to put their own imprint on the country and to integrate themselves with the past.

Nor, it seems, does landscape precede the Dreaming in the sense of landscape features demanding the sort of explanation Dreaming stories provide as a topographic charter. Kolig maintains that 'myth' is *arbitrarily* superimposed on a geographic site and embellished over the years' (1980: 121). As awareness of a particular story

spreads to more people it may be elaborated by individual contributions as it moves across space (a story may also be handed from one tribe to another) and down through time.

The dialectical nature of the relationship between living people and the Dreaming comes out also in the way they must reproduce the stories such as to maintain its congruity with present reality of their lives. Since the world is constantly changing, the Dreaming, too, must constantly change. There is now a body of anthropological research which details such change, focussing particularly on the way the Dreaming of tribal groups has responded to contact with the West. Hugh-Jones (1989), for instance, shows how white people have been assimilated into the mythology of Indians in the Colombian northwest Amazon. He employs the concept of 'analogy-matching' to show one way in which this is done, giving an example of how information he had provided of the previously unheard of submarine was woven into an account of the mythic anaconda. It is not so much a matter of myth changing as of myth accommodating a new twist in a world full of novelty: 'It is as if submarines had been there all along, lurking under the surface of the myth and waiting to be discovered by some chance remark' (1989: 64-65). Similarly, Kolig (1980) cites the case of a natural landscape feature in the Fitzroy River area of Western Australia which, according to the relevant story in the area, is the resting place of Noah's Ark, a tenet of Christian mythology thus successfully synthesized with the Dreaming.

In the world of Hugh-Jones' subjects, remote in the Amazon, white men remain for the most part on the periphery. In other parts of South America the encounter with Europe was traumatic and entailed extensive and rapid social, economic, and political change. The Spanish 'installed' marian and other images from the Christian iconography as patrons of villages and towns in the Andes in the expectation that reverence would be transferred to them from pagan deities (Sallnow 1987,1991; Urton 1990). From the end of the sixteenth century particular images became famous for the miracles they performed and their shrines became the foci of pilgrimage. The location of these shrines, as it turns out, tended to coincide with pre-Conquest mythological sites and continuities are apparent between the specific belief and ritual surrounding these shrines and indigenous mythology. A similar scenario appears to have accompanied the Christianization of Europe (Chapter 1) and also the early Buddhist 'colonization' of the indigenous animistic landscape of Thailand (Chapter 6). Sallnow stresses that the Christian shrines did not 'emerge *onto* religious tabulae rasae but *into* a historically prefigured ritual topography, a preexisting pattern of sacred sites from which they must draw their significance' (1987: 89, emphasis added).

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The category, sacred space, does indeed seem to embody a sedimentation of memory in which locality is more enduring than meaning. Once subjects, be they ancestral spirit-beings or generations of the dead, have been 'objectified', to use Munn's parlance, into points in the landscape, these points are liable to persist through time and accommodate to a great deal of social change. Even through epochs of the greatest social change people seem more disposed to reinterpret the points than discard them. Where the points are marked by old religious structures or emblems they may appear actually to *attract* reinterpretation. A permutation of this occurs where secular remains - the ruins of a town, a crumbling ancient wall, or an archaeological deposit - are recontextualized later in time as sacred.

In what Urton (1990) calls 'concretization' we have the mirror image of such processes. He reveals how, for administrative and bureaucratic purposes, the Spanish in the Andes appropriated pre-Conquest mythology by linking it to specific points in space and to particular lineages of the indigenous elite. It was in this way that the origin place of the Inka ancestors, which in the original mythology was not identified with an exact locality, after 1572 became associated with a village, Pacariqtambo, which had not existed until the previous year.

The foregoing stresses the dynamic nature of myth. In Australia the conception of the Dreaming as charter has, to some extent, appeared in new guise in the land claim context, becoming a charter for ownership over land and responsibility for it (see Sutton 1988: 252). Sutton points out that because of the narrative form of creation/transformation stories, 'mythology', in this sense, is also history. But his interest is in showing that it is a history constructed rather than simply received by the living. To this end he cites cases where certain Dreaming paths seem to represent the residential movements and ceremonial histories of the key men to whom these Dreamings belong. In some areas migrations of people may become embodied in Dreaming stories and people may actually move their Dreaming from one place to another (see the Finniss River land claim, above). Similarly, the Berndts (1970) show how the Gunwinggu's move to Oenpelli early this century involved an associated migration of Dreamtime beings to that place. Sutton sees Aboriginal 'mythology' as an 'idiom' (1988: 254) rather than a charter, a code by which peoples' residence, ownership, and totemic rights and linkages are debated and negotiated. So, rather than its being a charter for the present from the past he seems to see it more the other way round, as reflecting actual historical events experienced by living people or their recent forebears.

Myers (1986) helps us appreciate the peculiar way in which the Dreamtime departs from the Western understanding of myth and history. The Dreamtime as understood at any one time is not contradicted by novel events or the arrival of totally unprecedented elements, such as Europeans and European settlements, into the landscape. These are not so much incorporated into the Dreamtime as revealed, through visions, to be a previously unrealized dimension of it.

> In Western historical terms, changes have always taken place. The evidence of new customs and new cults is unassailable; life is not static. The Pintupi understandings of the historical process are not totally static either, but the concept of the The Dreaming organizes experience so that it *appears* to be continuous and permanent. For the Pintupi, the dynamic, processual aspect of history seems to exist as one of discovering, uncovering, or even reenacting elements of The Dreaming.

Myers 1986: 53

In the Andes, Urton tells us, there are no institutions or practices untouched by history; there are no 'innocent survivors' (1990: 15). Equally, it must be clear that there is no Aboriginal Dreaming anywhere in Australia untouched and unchanged by the events of the last century or two. And yet against all indications that the Dreaming is dynamic and negotiated is the entrenched view of many white Australians that the Dreaming has been lost to Aborigines of the southeast. That it has fallen victim to change. This is compatible with the conception of Aboriginal culture as static and unchanging. Those who hold to this view would expect to find in the southeast, at most, only remnants of recognizably 'traditional' stories . They would not expect to find a Dreaming which has re-formed. A suggestion of what might result from such a re-formation is given by Sansom, referring to Baines' work among the Nyungar people of the southwest of Western Australia. Here a body of legend has emerged in which Dreaming beings are replaced by known human ancestors and the stories record the adventures of these ancestors on their travels along known routes through the present country of their descendants (Sansom 1982: 121). The 'new cosmology' (1982: 120) of such people is an adaptive reworking of the structure of the 'traditional' Dreaming.

The European habit of drawing a distinction between 'real' history and mythology or legend on the basis of the former's presumed factual veracity goes back to the seventeenth century. Scholars at that time were attempting to deal with the contradiction which claims of great antiquity for the Egyptian and Chinese civilizations posed to biblical chronology. They claimed it was possible to distinguish between the

'real' history of the Bible, an account they believed to be based on fact, and 'fabulous' history based on myth and legend (Rossi 1984: 158-67). This was not simply a distinction based on the superiority of the written over the oral record since, at least in the case of China, written records existed for the ancient dynasties and posed a problem to the extent that they predated biblical time. Rather, it was a case of discriminating on the basis of the supposed character of the authors of the written records. The Egyptians and the Chinese were held to be 'rough and primitive nations' who were inclined to fantasize their history (Rossi 1984: 159). In the European mind from at least this time the classification of different modes of representing time was linked to the classification of different human societies. Historical accuracy became, in this way, a monopoly of European society. Other civilizations, to say nothing of non-literate societies, could not be trusted to accurately record their own past. Clearly there were many other factors involved in the formulation of this distinction but it is one which has held firm up until the present. Only now is it being shaken loose by deconstructionist insights. The mythical/rational should be seen as a sub-set of the premodern/modern and non-West/West binary oppositions. Such is its immanent power that the West is unlikely, even now, to part with it easily.

THE TIME OF ABORIGINES

> Prefigured in the Christian tradition, but crucially transformed in the Age of
> Enlightenment, the idea of a knowledge of Time which is a superior
> knowledge has become an integral part of anthropology's intellectual
> equipment. We recognize it in an outlook that has been characteristic of our
> discipline through most of its active periods: the posited authenticity of a past
> (savage, tribal, peasant) serves to denounce an inauthentic present (the
> uprooted, évolués, acculturated).

Fabian 1983: 10-11

The meaning of time has changed at various points in western history. The medieval Christian experience of time as cyclical was an experience of it as a dimension of sacredness. In the biblical Creation time had a known beginning and, in the anticipated Second Coming, a known end. The post-Renaissance secularization of time permitted it to be experienced as linear flow. With the discovery in the nineteenth century of geological process, biological evolution, and the great depth of prehistoric human antiquity the stage was set for what is arguably the most revolutionary of the west's innovations in temporal experience: time was 'naturalized' (Fabian 1983: 11-12). The experience of time was now no longer tied to human events or human history, whether cyclical or linear, but was seen to be linear duration in nature.

We may assume that just as the ordinary people of Europe did not begin thinking archaeologically upon the development of modern archaeology, so the intellectual construction of linear/secular time in the Enlightenment did not, at least immediately, change ordinary people's experience of time and the past. Partly this is because to a certain degree they already experienced time in linear fashion. In fact, it is questionable whether human society could operate without a linear ordering of time. Interestingly, though, it is with some surprise that Western scholars have learnt that tribal societies experience and express (orally) at least their recent history as linear chronology. In his introduction to *Who needs the Past?* Layton (1989) notes that people as diverse as the Hadza, Inuit, and Northern Territory Aborigines all perceive life as linear change rather than as a repetitive passage of events. Without linear time these events would circulate in that peculiar vacuum which the West has imagined tribal people inhabit, the only chronology in this vacuum being the fictional one of their mythology. Layton asserts that the linear/cyclic duality of societies does not hold up (1989 : 5-6). The linear experience of time as cumulative sequence appears, he maintains, to be the human norm rather than a special attribute of literate society. He also points to studies which show that variation in interpretation of the past from one individual to another is a feature of 'traditional' as well as complex societies (1989 : 6).

Are we to take it, then, there is no difference between Western and tribal experience of time? Distinctions do exist but not where they have been sought. The 'naturalization' of time in nineteenth century Europe was related to the specific historical experience of capitalist economy and industrial technology. It freed time from definition purely in terms of human experience, allowing it to become a neutral, natural dimension but also allowing it greater potential to control human behaviour. The ordering of history and prehistory into an immensely long and increasingly finely calibrated chronology was matched by increasing use of clocks to measure and control productivity. Landes (1983), indeed, maintains that the mechanical clock was crucial to the West's modern economic and technological development and the hegemonic relations these involve. It permitted time to be internalized as 'time discipline'.

'Time discipline' undeniably underwrites modern Western productivity but Williams and Mununggurr (1989) take issue with Landes' view that this amounts to a fundamentally different conceptualization of time. They refer to the Yolngu (Northern Territory, Australia) whose activities are performed according to a perception of time which can be either task oriented or work (duration) oriented: 'It is a matter of emphasis and context whether time is structured to focus on a *task* or on an anticipated *lapse of time* ' (1989: 75, emphasis added). The European habit of valuing

change 'in itself', a habit associated with the rise of capitalism, and the identification of their society with 'progress' led Europeans to attribute to 'non-Western, non-capitalist societies the opposite: that is, those societies were not only unchanging, they resisted change' (Williams and Mununggurr 1989: 72). Anthropology and archaeology were intimately associated with the production of this polarisation.

Johannes Fabian has addressed anthropology's conception of time as a factor in the relations of power between anthropologists and their ethnographic subjects. His central proposition is that anthropology has denied 'coevalness' to the non-Western societies it studies, a refusal to allow that they occupy the same Time as the anthropologist - i.e., the present (1983: 31). The context for this has been the colonial-imperialist expansion of the West, a project that required 'Time to accommodate the schemes of a one-way history: progress, development, modernity (and their negative mirror images: stagnation, underdevelopment, tradition)' (1983: 143-4). One way by which the colonizers could occupy the space of an indigenous society was simply to remove that society from that space. Another strategy, the preferred one, 'assigns to the conquered populations a different time' (Fabian 1983: 30).

Nicholas Thomas (1989) tells us that anthropology's neglect of history amounts to a denial that history plays a role in social life. 'A reinstallation of history' (1989: 7), he argues by detailed reference to ethnographic writing on Polynesia, cannot occur simply by tacking the historical dimension onto current anthropological representation. The exclusion was constitutive of the discipline in its formation and is a major part of what anthropology now is.

While some anthropologists have been reexamining tribal perceptions of time, finding there an historical consciousness which had previously not been credited, other scholars have been subjecting Western understanding of history to scrutiny. They have found that the reality of the West's history is no more available for inspection than is that of 'traditional' societies. Western societies, like all others, invent the past insofar as the meaning given to it resides in the present. This is not to say that we who live in the present choose from all the events of the past those ones which we will use as ingredients in our recipe for the construction of the past. A prior process of selection has already occurred, one by which our choice is already limited. As Edwin Ardener explains:

> There are, indeed, plenty of grounds for saying that the 'memory' of history begins when it is registered. It is encoded 'structurally' as it occurs. The structuring, by this view, is actually part of the 'registration' of events... Then we can say that since not all events do survive, but only 'memorable' or

significant events..., the structural processes are not necessarily retrospectively imposed, but are synchronic - all part of the very nature of the event-registration (with or without any specific physical recording).

<div align="right">Ardener 1989: 25</div>

There are grounds now for understanding the differences in the perception of time which exist between Western and non-Western peoples as a matter of emphasis and context rather than of absolute distinctions. The old belief that non-Western, particularly tribal peoples, locked as they were seen to be in cyclic and sacred/mythological time, had no apprehension of historical time was one which allowed and even morally obliged Westerners to be the the historians of these peoples as well as of themselves. In heritage management in places like Australia this was reflected in a dichotomy between sacred/mythological places on the one hand and archaeological places on the other. The latter became the province of European historians and archaeologists while the former remained in the province of Aboriginal expertise (to be interpreted by anthropologists). Later (Chapter 7), I will explore some of the oddities created by the attempt to enforce this split on Aborigines in the southeast.

THE POSSIBILITY OF ABORIGINAL HISTORICAL SPACE

The Dreaming enables what might be called 'mythological space', consisting of a network of   places made significant by Dreaming stories and forming a sacred landscape. What is the possibility, in Aboriginal cultures, for the existence of *historical* space?

Again we must begin with ourselves and ask whether we would be able to perceive Aboriginal historical space even if it existed. The European colonization of Australia occurred at a time when the achievements of the Industrial Revolution had given Britain's triumphant middle-class an overweening confidence in the inherent capability of its own civilization, a confidence which made an ideology out of the Enlightenment myth of Progress. Operating within this ideology, European historians transformed an exceptional phenomenon, that of the rapid growth experienced by the new industrial nations, into a global historical narrative. More than that, they used it to divide the world into two camps. In the words of Francois Furet:

> Henceforward history concerned only a few countries - those which produced, those which changed; in other words, those that mattered. The rest of human space was relegated to historical non-existence... The historian having transformed the exception into a model, ethnology was left to reign over the

> reverse of history, a field at once vast and marginal. It became the separate domain of the unwritten as against the written, the unmoving as against change, the primitive as against progress.

<div align="right">1973: 198-99</div>

The discipline of history as practised today in the West was founded and grew to maturity during the West's age of imperial expansion. The societies encountered during this expansion were incorporated into a universal World History, but not as equal players. World History, rather, defined and explained their inferiority and established the West's moral authority to rule. It was a history written not just for metropolitan consumption but also for the classrooms of the colonies (Ferro 1984, Preiswerk and Perrot 1978).

Against this background and given the limitations of previously established theoretical models it is not surprising that until recently anthropologists were not inclined to credit Aborigines with a consciousness of history and, in a number of cases, even praised them for this lack (Partington 1985). In so doing they gave greater weight to the sufficiency of the systems of mythology which were so central to the work of many of these researchers. Maurice Bloch (1977) advances an explanation for this. He has it that the claim that different societies have different concepts of time followed from the Durkheimian proposition that all behaviour is socially determined. Because they had different social systems, the proposition goes, they must also have different concepts of time. Bloch argues that if societies did have fundamentally different concepts of time they would be unable to communicate with each other. Rather, in his view, cyclic/static (mythological) time is associated with the ritual aspect of life while linear (historical) time is associated with the practical or mundane aspect of life. Because societies such as those of the Balinese and the Aborigines have had greatly elaborated systems of ritual communication it might appear, especially if this has been the only aspect of their lives attended to by anthropologists, that for them time is always experienced as cyclic and static. In fact they experience both forms of time but in different contexts. Put another way, whereas mythic consciousness emphasizes structure, historical consciousness emphasizes 'agency and social action in the present' (Hill 1988: 6).

There is a growing body of ethnography which finds that tribal peoples do experience both forms of time and recognize them as two separate but compatible modes of representing the past (e.g., Hugh-Jones 1989, Peel 1984). Chase (1989) reports that the Aborigines of northeast Cape York Peninsula employ three categories of the past: a 'beginning' or creative period commemorated in stories, songs, and

ceremonies; a pre-contact period back beyond the lifetimes of contemporary people, the events of which (socio-economic life and specific events such as battles) are commemorated in secular stories and songs; and a modern period within living memory for which first-hand oral accounts are available. The 'beginning' period is clearly 'mythological' but it incorporates stories of Captain Cook, the creator ancestor of white people. Commemorated events of the 'middle' period include encounters with spiritual forces and 'half-human' cannibals from the country of neighbouring tribes. This would seem to illustrate the interpenetration of myth and history which Sutton (1988) sees as typifying Aboriginal dealings with the past.

While it is reasonable to maintain a distinction between the time of Dreaming and the time of history, both remain social constructions. Howard and Frances Morphy's (1984) explication of the nature of history among the Ngalakan of the Roper River in the Northern Territory is important here in that it develops an understanding of history as a set of stories *imposed* on the past rather than *coming from* the past. These stories which they refer to as 'generalisations' were found to consist not only of a selective forgetting and remembering of verifiable past events but also of events which never happened.

> On the whole these generalisations about the past have been neglected by anthropologists and others. It may be that their tenuous factual basis, the fact that many of the generalisations seem to be a caricature of the past and a trivialisation of history, has led to their rejection as a source of data. It may be because they conform so little to a European model of history that they have been overlooked, instead of being explained and reconnected analytically with historical process. Anthropologists and historians have, meanwhile, worked at creating a 'proper' oral history by recording the life histories of old people, collecting texts about the past and integrating them with archival materials to create a history that is European in concept if Aboriginal in content.
>
> Morphy and Morphy 1984: 461-62

What gives form to this oral history is the 'changing Ngalakan view of themselves and of their relationship to Europeans' (1984: 465). After the violence of the first decade or so of their encounter with Europeans (from the early 1870s) the Ngalakan separated into 'station' and 'wild' blacks. In the present day these wild blacks have been consigned to a mythic era, disconnected from the history of the present people by an intervening Golden Age of peaceful relations with whites. The present people construct their identity from the Golden Age experience but, given the new context of land rights, the authors suggest they may in future reconnect themselves to their ancestors. The function of history is thus not to record events but to give meaning to them.

As with historical events, so with places. The fact of a place's association with certain events in the past will not necessarily determine the meaning given to it by the present-day community. Places are different from events, though, insofar as they exist physically in the present and may exhibit physical traces of the past event(s). They are, however, equally subject to selective remembering or forgetting. The physical traces are suggestive but not determinate of the meaning which the present will bestow on them - in a sense they are standing by, waiting for meaning to alight on them.

ABORIGINAL HISTORICAL LANDSCAPES

Society lays down a configuration of significant points and networks on the landscape and the landscape, thus, can be said to be socially constructed. The notion that Aboriginal communities in the southeast are living in landscapes somehow denuded of cultural significance by the catastrophic events of the last two centuries is a nonsense (this has been demonstrated in the work of Barwick 1988, Calley 1964, Gale 1972, Hausfeld 1963, and Sharpe 1985, among others). As Myers's observes, 'it is activity that creates places' (1986: 54). With the passage of time and the arrival of suceeding generations of people in the landscape this socially significant physical space becomes, also, historical space. Historical space is a stratified phenomenon insofar as it is populated, at any one time, by several generations. Each generation to some extent reinterprets the historical space of the preceding generation(s) rather than taking it as given. I am drawing here partly on the understanding that individual age-cohorts have a different experience of history (Colson 1984, Rosaldo 1980) and I am interested in using this insight to show how heritage (as the Western heritage industry uses the term) is always simultaneously inherited and produced by the living.

The historical landscape is inherited by any one generation or age-cohort in the form of a configuration of physical traces along with the social significance given to them by the previous generation. Assuming, for the moment, a non-literate society (and, therefore, exluding the histories written by the latest generations of Aborigines), then this social significance is communicated to them by members of the previous generation who are now more or less old. Orally transmitted, typically in story form, such communication is obviously only possible because generations overlap. If we take, for argument's sake, a generation span to be twenty years then members of at least four generations are likely to be alive and sharing the landscape at any one time. Also, those in the middle generations, the 40-60 age bracket, are layered between both
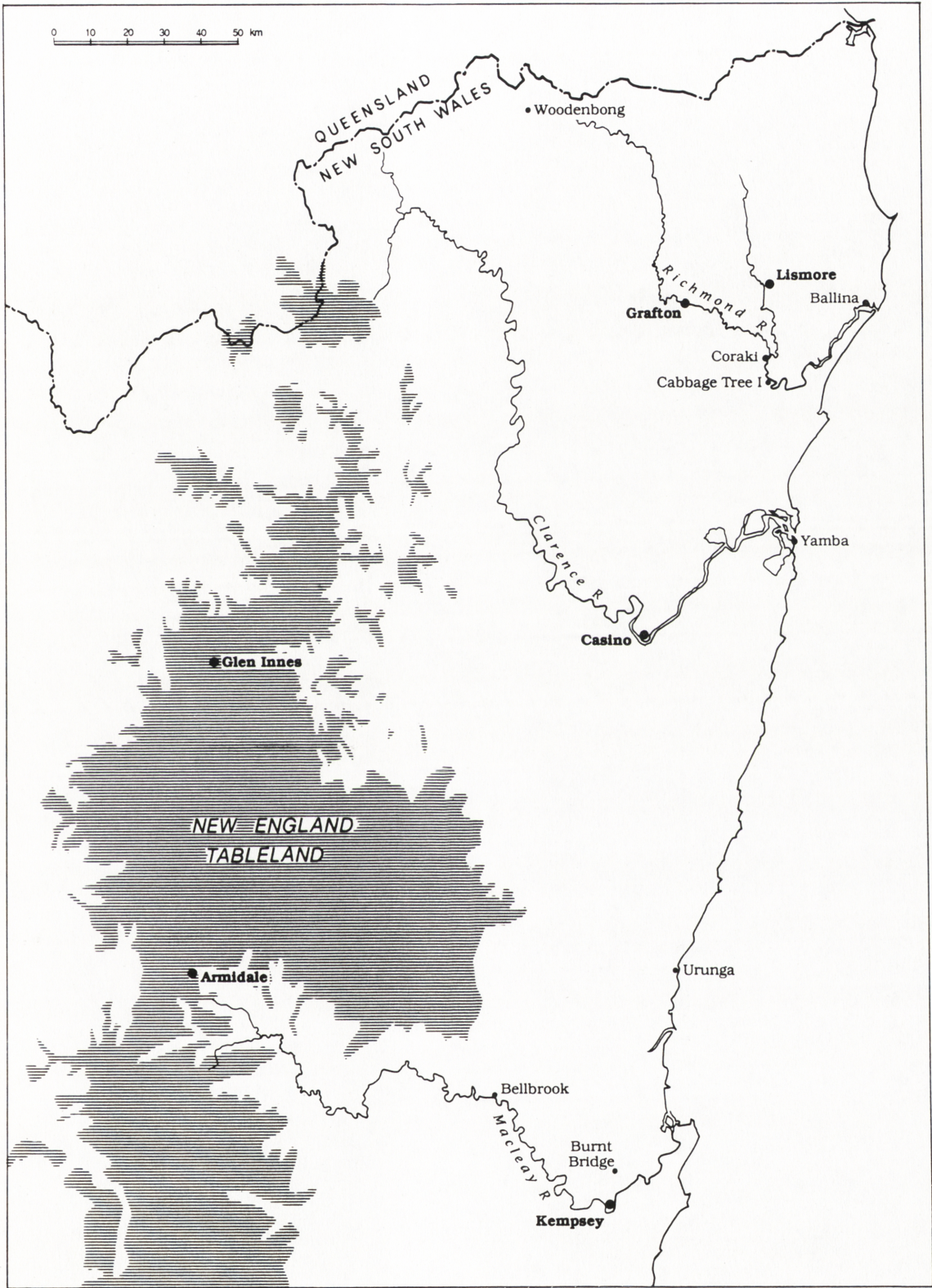
FIGURE 2   Map of the North Coast of New South Wales

older and younger generations of the living. Those in the newest generation inherit the historical landscape of their parental generation and that of their grandparents' generation as reinterpreted or mediated by their parental generation. But they are also able to receive it directly from the grandparental generation. The complexity of the situation may be appreciated if we acknowledge that each generation's reworking of the landscape is not something accomplished and then concretized but is a process of becoming which continues until death.

It is important to understand that it is not merely the process of reinterpreting physical traces which renders the historical landscape dynamic. Suceeding generations add their own traces in the form of the things they build, the places they frequent, the cars they drive and abandon, and the events they witness and perpetrate. The landscape is thus authenticated or personalized by each generation in a transactional manner - transactional in the sense that present and past lives act on each other.

Those New South Wales Aborigines presently in the 20-40 age bracket grew up during what might be called the post-assimilationist New Deal. Their parental generation grew up in a very different world during which their lives were controlled by the Protection Board whose policies had turned the missions (a term synonymous in New South Wales with reserves) into something resembling concentration camps. In what follows I draw a picture of what is now the historical space of this parental generation mainly from my reading of a small number of published reminiscences of its members (Cohen 1987, Cohen and Sommerville 1990, Gilbert 1978, Langford 1988, *La Perouse* 1988).

The two bedroom weatherboard houses built by the Protection Board at La Perouse on the edge of Botany Bay, Sydney, in the late 1920s to replace the old tin huts there which were sinking into the sand were elaborate compared to those on missions elsewhere. The huts at Purfleet had walls and roofs of bark and whitewashed sacking, sometimes with dirt floors, sometimes with 'green' timber floors. People remember the hearths built of stone and clay and 'whitewashed', sometimes daily, with pipeclay. There were beds with mattresses stuffed with chaff or soft grass and quilts of flour bags sewn together. Many of the houses had shutters instead of glass windows. Many were built by the people themselves and were marvels of artifice and improvisation. They were a blend of older Aboriginal concepts and European concepts. On the one hand, 'Houses were still shelters, a highly expendable commodity, and people demolished them, moved out, swapped them, added on to them or built more

depending on immediate needs' (Cohen and Sommerville 1990: 70). On the other, they represented a striving after the 'good life'. I mean by this not a reaching for the *white* lifestyle but a desire to be active participants in the *new* lifestyle. It was a desire which had seen members of previous Aboriginal generations spending their farming profits on pianos and curtains (Goodall 1990: 18) and was akin to the effort to get decent food or to get one's children into schools.

Adjacent to the houses (and the huts and tents) were vegetable gardens and sometimes flower gardens. Further away there were swimming holes, cricket pitches, tracks running into the bush, and roads leading to picture theatres, shops, and churches. At La Perouse there was the wharf off which kids dived for coins and the was the 'Loop', the tram terminus where people from the reserve sold pokerwork boomerangs and shellware. Often there was bush or ocean nearby where they could get wild food or where they could go to 'get away' (from the mostly disapproving white gaze). People from the rural missions or camps sometimes went to the bush for a holiday, people from La Perouse took the ferry to Kurnell, people from Redfern hired buses to go to 'National Park'.

At night there were sometimes *mimi* lights in the trees nearby and there was often a reluctance to be outside after dark for fear of ghosts. Various areas of bush were notorious for *yowies*. Then there were *bora* grounds and other places of spiritual importance which one's parents or their parents pointed out from a distance and cautioned one to avoid. If a woman's feet became swollen she might wonder if she had inadvertently walked on a *bora* ring (Cohen and Sommerville 1990: 58). These older people rarely passed on details of ceremonies which had taken place at these sites or the stories associated with them. Presumably because the radical changes which had taken place in Aboriginal lifestyle meant such knowledge was no longer appropriate.

The 20-40 age cohort in, say, the 1940s moved through a landscape configured in terms relevant to their own lives. It was populated with missions, dance halls, vegetable-picking camps, Christmas camps. On the periphery of this world they see, as it were, a faded image of the historical landscape of the older generation(s). Few societies ever experience the extreme speed or scale of change experienced by Aboriginal society over the last two centuries and the overlap, surely, between generations living through this time must have engendered a particular strangeness. A strangeness, I mean, which accompanies the sense of being intimate with a person (older or younger) in the present and yet distanced from them by the enormity of changes which each generation has experienced. It is evoked by a girl's experience

one Christmas in the 1940s when she and other Casino Aborigines had gone to camp at Yamba:

> Early one morning I was walking along the beach and again I heard the woman singing, chanting on high notes, calling out. It was someone from the Maclean mob at Yamba, they said. In a while I could see her, quite an old woman, very black, standing on top of the cliff.
>
> I walked along listening to my feet squeaking in the sand and the woman singing above me. A fisherman who'd come from the mission near our camp walked past me and I asked him what the woman was doing. He said she was calling the porpoises in, she did it every day during the holidays.

<div align="right">Langford 1988: 38-39</div>

How do Aborigines experience historical space? One thing which is noticeable in the reminiscences cited earlier is a lack of nostalgia for built structure. It is rare - unheard of, virtually - for Aborigines to express a desire for buildings relating to their history over the last two centuries to be preserved. Perhaps this relates to a cultural emphasis on social relationship rather than relationship to commodities. In their reminiscences, the authors (or interviewees) describe houses and other built structures almost purely in behavioural terms. They are merely the furniture, as it were, for narrating 'the way we lived'. They do not occur in detached isolation from people but always have people in front of them, as it were, just as the houses, cars, walls, dot paintings, and landscapes depicted in the photo-compilation *After 200 Years* (Taylor 1988) almost all have people in front of them.

The idea that people take their identity from kinship systems rather than from attachments to particular pieces of country might help explain this phenomenon (Donaldson 1984). If there was one thing that characterized Aboriginal strategies and aspirations over the post-contact period it was the desire to have a place to stay. This desire - it might better be thought of as an intense anxiety - appears to relate to the way they were hounded by white people away from their camps on the edge of one town after another, even towns which had once been 'safe' eventually turning them away (Read 1984). It may also have to do with the early realization of Aborigines in southeast Australia that the only way they could operate within the settler economy (which, as the natural resources on which they had previously relied disappeared or became inaccessible, quickly became the *only* economy) was by having their own land to farm (Goodall 1990).

So kinship and land are stressed over and above the built environment. What seems to be a lack of interest by Aborigines in preserving their built environment might also

be to do with the way they were alienated from this environment by the revocation, in the decade after 1916, of the land which they had independently cleared and farmed (Goodall 1990). Also with the way in which, at the hands of the Aborigines Protection Board (established 1909), the lives of people on the missions, subject as they were to minute regulation and survelliance, became a misery. The built environment which might have formed some basis for a cherished heritage was thus either confiscated or transformed into a prison.

I return to the question posed earlier: is there a distictively Aboriginal attitude to the past in southeastern Australia? In affirming that there is, I point to the the centrality of kinship and land which has endured into the present. Aborigines exist in areas like the New South Wales North Coast as self-consciously distinctive cultures. As in other parts of Australia, it appears that the flexibility of group composition, religious practice, and relationship to land has allowed North Coast Aboriginal society to re-form itself in response to the events of the last two hundred years. This thesis is rather more concerned with the way Westerners, particularly via the discourse of heritage, apprehend the Aboriginal historical landscape (Chapter 7) than it is with the Aboriginal apprehension of it. I will, however, now offer one instance where the reconfiguration of the historical landscape can be observed in the southeast.

Aboriginal Christmas camps were ritual events which are recalled vividly by many older people today. The celebration of Christmas by Aborigines in the southeast seems to have been a practice introduced by missionaries in the nineteenth century (Attwood 1989, Thomson 1989). By distributing gifts and special foods such as Christmas cake ('pudding') they hoped to attract people to the missions, reinforce the importance of the birth of Christ, demonstrate Christian benevolence, and civilize Aborigines via participation in one of Western civilization's great rites. Aborigines subsequently absorbed elements of the white Christmas into a ritual of their own whose emphasis seems mainly to have been the drawing together of kin. Christmas puddings were baked, cricket was played, and there was singing and dancing to the music of violins and gum-leaf bands.

White peoples' Christmas was reworked with elements of previously existing practices, most obviously the corroboree and the habit of groups converging at particular times of the year at places where and when seasonal abundance of food permitted (the bunya nut 'festivals' of southeast Queensland being a famous example). Aborigines from the Lake Tyers mission went away for their 'Christmas holidays' to the lakes and the sea and to places 'where Aborigines had met in the summer for as

long as they could remember' (Attwood 1989: 77). People from Wallaga Lake had their Christmas camp down on a coastal flat behind the dunes quite close to the reserve. People from the Purfleet mission went to the coast at Saltwater : 'We went every Christmas for six solid weeks and we went back to the natural state' (Gilbert 1978: 36). It was something people looked forward to all year and its significance may have heightened as life on the missions became increasingly restrictive. The practice now mostly seems to have stopped. Perhaps it went out with the demise of the Protection Board against whom it may partly have been an antidote. But the Christmas camp locations endure as a part of the historical landscape. This was evident when in 1992 the Cabbage Tree Island community was trying to prevent the site of their old Christmas camp at Boundary Creek being developed into a golf resort.

When Ruby Langford, in her girlhood, watched the old woman calling the porpoises from the clifftop at Yamba it was not a case of a member of a ritually bereft younger generation observing a lost authenticity. She had wandered, momentarily, into a part of the strangeness of the overlap between generations. But she herself, at this moment in time, was a participant in the Christmas camp ritual of the Casino Aborigines, in itself a highly authentic transaction between generations and between cultures.

ABORIGINAL AGENCY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURE

At several points in the foregoing discussion history and the historical landscape are held to be socially constructed in the present. Just as it was in the nature of the Dreaming to be constantly reformulated in the present so the practice of Aboriginal history, continuously reconstituting the past, is likely to differ from the reality of that past. I am not blind to the ways in which statements such as these might be used against Aborigines, particularly in cases where rights to land or sites are claimed by Aborigines on the basis of their historical significance. Indeed, it is relatively common for white Australians to claim that Aborigines fabricate Dreaming stories and history to suit their political and economic purposes. Effectively, the claim they are making juxtaposes an unstable, inventive Aboriginal practice of history with a solid Western historiography based on a disciplined reading of historical facts. This juxtaposition is one which can no longer be sustained.

The firmness of Western history's grasp on past reality is conventionally seen as evolving over a long period of time. It moves from annals to chronicles, the rediscovery of classical histories by Renaissance humanists, to the modern discipline

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of history which arose in the early nineteenth century. Influenced by the developing natural sciences, the early practitioners of the discipline were concerned with objectivity and believed that, practised as a science, history could provide definitive accounts of the past. This was to be accomplished via agreed rules of evidence which would enable an appropriately critical, empirical treatment of historical evidence. By the beginning of the present century there was mounting dissatisfaction with the approach. Critics urged a movement away from an elitist history concerned with events of state to one which also studied the lives of the masses, which took account of social processes, and which recognized that history must operate as a social science rather than a 'pure' science (Iggers 1984: 26-27).

Since the 1950s, and particularly by the *annales* school, debate has focussed on the narrative aspect of historical productions. Hayden White (1987), drawing upon the work of Paul Ricoeur, describes historical productions as allegorical. He has it that the historian is engaged not in fiction, because the events dealt with are/were real, but in imagination.

> How else can any past, which by definition comprises events, processes, structures, and so forth, considered to be no longer perceivable, be represented in either consciousness or discourse except in an "imaginary" way? Is it not possible that the question of narrative in any discussion of historical theory is always finally about the function of imagination in the production of a specifically human truth?

White 1987: 57

Western society generally, though, continues to equate myth with falsehood and delusion. There is not general acceptance that history is a construction. The 'affiliation of narrative historiography with literature and myth' which Hayden White soothingly urges 'should provide no reason for embarrassment' (1987: 44) does actually embarrass many people. Or, more accurately, embarrassment is avoided by denying the truth of the assertion. Australia's bush mythology (see Chap 5) like America's Vietnam war mythology are for many people matters of fact rather than invention.

It may suit a particular white image of Aborigines to continue to believe they have not been active players in the history of the last two centuries. This goes hand in hand with the belief that they are not active builders of their own culture, their culture being frozen in tradition. Much of that which I have suggested belongs in Aboriginal historical space over the last two hundred years would be said by many whites not to be authentically Aboriginal because it is not 'traditional'. Because their culture, in this view, cannot be added to, the Aborigines' fate is to lose more and more of their

identity and become more and more 'white'. Clifford, on the contrary, argues that identity 'must always be mixed, relational, and inventive' (1988: 10).

As long as culture is seen as a matter of essence and history as a matter of fact then the West has very little chance of understanding its own relationship with historical space let alone that of other societies.

Evoking an Oriental Past

ROYAL ANTIQUARIANISM OR SOMETHING ELSE?

I have earlier maintained that the conservation ethic is not convergent with the meaning and value placed on antiquities by many Thais, particularly those of the non-elite majority. The matter is more complex than this. Over the last one hundred and fifty years or so the Thai royalty and elite have been in close contact with Western ideas. The same period has seen great change in the Thai polity, in class structure, and in the economy. Exposure to Western ideas and practices together with the internal changes mentioned has meant that new ways of interpreting the material past have come to stand beside the pre-existing ones. New discourses on the material past have appeared and old ones have changed. In this chapter I attempt to follow the trend of this process of innovation.

The history of Thai interest in the physical remains of antiquity, as it has been presented in English, is remarkably similar to that produced for the West. A similar narrative line runs through each. An antiquarian interest 'appears' among Thai royalty in the nineteenth century, at about the same time as it becomes a diversion among some of Western residents and travellers in the country. It gradually becomes a more serious pursuit as it evolves into archaeology and art history, scholarly pursuits which by the early and mid-twentieth century respectively have become established disciplines. Far less of this history has been written for Thailand than has been the case for the West and no recognized historians of archaeology have emerged as Thai counterparts of Daniel, Piggott, Trigger, or Willey in the West. It consists of what has been written by Thai archaeologist Pisit Charoenwongsa (1983) and in a very limited way by other museum and Fine Arts Department representatives (e.g., the Thai delegation to the founding conference of SPAFA in Phnom Penh 1972). The history

of the involvement of Thai royalty in antiquarianism has been summarized briefly by Western historians (e.g., in Graham 1924, Vella 1978), art historians (e.g., Griswold 1967, Woodward 1978) and archaeologists (e.g. Higham 1989).

The narrative begins in the mid-nineteenth century with Prince Mongkut visiting the ruins of ancient temples in various parts of the country prior to his accession as Rama IV in 1851. In 1833, among the ruins of Sukhothai, he discovers the inscription of the late thirteenth century ruler, King Ramkhamhaeng, (Sukhothai Inscription #1) and brings it back to Bangkok along with Ramkhamhaeng's 'seat of justice' (Moffat 1961: 14). The study of history numbers among the wide range of the king's scholarly interests. Through his contacts with foreigners and his facility with French and English he would have been aware of antiquarianism and the early archaeology in Europe. After becoming king he keeps a private museum in the compound of the Grand Palace for the antiquities he collected. In the Fifth Reign the king and a number of princes continue the tradition of visiting ancient ruins. Ayudhya is popular but they also range as far afield as the Khmer sanctuary of Phanom Rung in the Northeast. Now, however, they record what they see in travel diaries. King Chulalongkorn (1853-1910) makes stylistic comparisons between the Buddha images and *chedi* he encounters - the account he compiles of his visits to temple ruins in the Ayudhya and Lopburi areas in 1878 has remained useful to art historians (Woodward 1978: 69). Prince Naris (1863-1947) includes many sketches and ground plans in the record he keeps of his trip to the north in 1900-1901. But it is Prince Damrong (1862-1943), according to Hiram Woodward (1978: 69), whose travel writing from the 1870s or 80s shows a 'specific curiosity about ancient ruins'. Damrong's efforts surpass those of his contemporaries and foreshadow his later involvement in art history, his role in the establishment of the government's Fine Arts Department, and his historical writing.

An equivalent might be sought for these activities in the topographic recordings of European antiquarians operating, for instance, in Britain from the sixteenth century. Like the European topographies, the travel diaries are concerned with many elements of the social and physical landscape in addition to ancient 'monuments' and, like them also, they represent a first project of describing and recording antiquities. In the narrative presented above these royal excursionists would be antiquarians, Thai equivalents of the various Western antiquarians resident in or visiting the country by this time. Likenesses for them might also be sought in the European Grand Tourists of the eighteenth century.

I find this narrative problematic, not least in the use of terms such as antiquarianism and archaeology to refer to Thai practice. A closer reading of what the Thai were doing shows a distinct lack of fit between their activities and the specific meaning which the categories antiquarianism and archaeology have in the West. Antiquarianism emerged in the West as part of the humanist tradition. It came to fit that form of knowledge, so well exemplified by natural history, in which the world could be understood by systematic description and comparison of the phenomena found in it. While the Thai travel diaries might give the impression of being compatible with this form of knowledge they, actually, are not because they deal almost exclusively with religious objects from *inside* the religious system to which the objects belong. If it were possible or desirable to find a place for this Thai literary genre within the history of Western knowledge it would be more comfortable within that Renaissance knowledge based on what Foucault (1973: 17-25) calls 'similitude'. The Buddha images and *chedi,* the temple ruins on consecrated ground, are not being described as an exercise in empiricism but as an act of piety.

Collecting is constitutive of antiquarianism. In the West the antiquarian's cabinet was joined by the private museum and then the public museum as the display context of collection. Superficially, the collecting we see practised in Thailand seems equivalent. Rama IV's cabinet of antiquities became in 1859 a private museum and in 1874 was incorporated into Rama V's public museum. This was housed in the Grand Palace till 1884 when it was moved to its much more spacious present home in the former palace of the Prince Successor. The public museum which was opened at Ayudhya in 1902 became the first of many museums in provincial centres and at well-known ancient monuments. These Thai museums contained old weapons and ornaments as well as 'specimens of brass-work, porcelain, and wood carving which have been gathered from among different ruins' (Graham 1924: 188). They also displayed sculpted and cast Buddha images collected from ruined temples as far afield as Fang and Chiang Saen.

The new museums of the Fifth Reign were without precedent in Thailand and I assume they took their inspiration from those in the West which at least some Thais by this time had seen for themselves. Not so the museums established in certain *wat* in the nineteenth century. These mainly contained old Buddha images and were heir to an old tradition of gathering together in *wat* those Buddha images or fragments thereof found in the *wat's* locality. Sometimes these pieces were uncovered by farmers in their fields along with fragments of carved stonework which also went to the *wat.* Whether in public museums or *wat* , however, ancient Buddha images remained

sacred objects. Even for Thai art historians visiting these places it was possible to relate to the images simultaneously with pious reverence and scholarly curiosity. For the average Thai they were simply images of the Buddha and were treated accordingly. The museum in Thailand might thus be said to have something of the temple about it just as the temple has something of the museum about it. The Thai activity of collecting begins to look distinctly awkward under the category 'antiquarian'.

The Thai 'antiquarianism' which emerged from the mid-nineteenth century was thus not the same as antiquarianism in Europe though the two shared some striking similarities. I continue to use the term, unencumbered by inverted commas, in recognition of these similarities and the undeniable borrowing which produced some of them.

The Fifth Reign travel diaries warrant a closer look. Woodward (1978: 69) finds a precedent for them in the older tradition of travel poems, known as *nirat*. In these the sights and sounds of travel are mixed with the history of places visited and melancholy references to lovers left behind (Chitakasem 1972). Woodward also finds continuity between the *nirat* genre and later, archaeological writing. 'It is the terms of description', according to him, 'which alter in the second half of the 19th century' (1978: 69). He goes on to observe:

> If the travel diary can be understood as a form that today appears in the guise of the chronologically organized archaeological report, it is still much alive. Thematically presented archaeological reports and scholarly articles on the Western model are, in comparison, genres that are still developing in Thailand.
>
> 1978: 69

Implicit here is a warning against the assumption that Thai antiquarianism or, for that matter, Thai archaeology, can only be either autochthonous innovations or straight imports. If most of those who have written about the history of these developments in Thailand have not looked for continuity it is partly because the modern discourses are supposed to be characterized by objective observation rather than the religious mysticism, loose or erroneous chronology, and the confusion of historical fact with legend which are seen as marking the older, 'traditional' genres. David Wyatt (1976), in a plea for the *tamnan* and *phongsawadan* chronicle traditions to be recognized as legitimate historiography, points out that these chronicles continue to be written and read today. Also, that elements of the genre are found in much other contemporary

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FIGURE 3   A party of visitors in front of Phra Mongkon Bopit, the giant bronze Buddha image, in the ruins of its *viharn* at Ayudhya, in the late nineteenth century. Courtesy of the National Archives of Thailand.

writing which is widely taken to be entirely modern. Thai culture was not swamped during that period from the mid-nineteenth century when Westerners arrived in significant numbers. Reynolds speaks of a 'more cosmopolitan environment' in which the Bangkok Siamese sought out Westerners in order 'to discuss technology and comparative culture' (1976: 211-12). What this evokes is an atmosphere not of forced change but of learning, borrowing, *comparing* on the part of people who, while they had neither the inclination nor the need to abandon their present ways, were keenly interested in the possibilities of change.

Antiquarianism, archaeology, and art history are all subsumed in Thai under the term *borankadi*, literally, the study of what is old or ancient. The same term would apply to those shrine chronicles which combine historical 'fact' with myth. We in the West may be liable to the conceit of thinking our modern discourses are proof against the tampering and selective scavenging of the Other World. That they keep their virtue when they travel.

The negative attitude displayed by Westerners towards Thai religion may have encouraged a man like Damrong to play down the religious context of his interest in antiquities. Most Thais of the elite would have been conscious of this negativity, the very presence of Christian missionaries in the country being a blatant enough statement of it. The assumption that the Thai would readily give up their religious beliefs when confronted by Christian truth implicitly trivialized those beliefs and was in sympathy with the imperial delusion that non-western 'traditional' cultures fell apart upon exposure to the modern West. The embassy of French Jesuits which arrived at the court of King Narai in 1665 fully believing he was ready to convert to Catholicism is early testimony to this. The king was evidently mystified by their presumption. In the reign of Damrong's father, King Mongkut, religious debates between learned Thais and the missionaries had been carried out in public. 'While the missionaries condemned the Buddha to hell, publicly insulted images of the Buddha as pagan idols, and denounced the Buddhist *Dhamma,* most Thais chose to respond through debating rather than through violence' (Phirotthirarach 1983: 62). Given that the missionaries were guests in a sovereign country violence would have been an understandable response, though a dangerous one, given the proximity of the Western colonial powers to Thailand's borders. The effrontery of the West, though, was sometimes astonishing. For instance, when Rama IV in 1825 did the British envoy, Captain Henry Burney, the singular honour of inviting him to help tow a famous Buddha image down the Chao Phraya on the last stage of its journey to Bangkok:

When the procession began to return, a message was brought to me from the King requesting that my boat should come and assist his and the boats of the Courtiers, to tow the Image down the river. I returned an answer that I was willing to shew every respect and reverence towards his majesty, but that I could shew none to the Image in which I had no faith.

Burney 1971: 67

Scholars such as Damrong would hardly, then, expect a sensitive and unprejudiced hearing for any account of the subtleties of Thai religion. The Western observer colludes in his own deception: he is shown what he expects to see. Religion, the most important component of the significance of antiquities to most Thais has, in this way, been largely invisible to Westerners and is absent from most of the literature on the subject aimed at a Western readership.

Pomian (1990) has shown how the European practice of collecting grew out of specifically European historical conditions. Critical to its development was a humanist perspective for which there was no counterpart in nineteenth century Thailand. If the Westerners in the Siam Society (established 1904) were men of their time they would not have expected Thais to develop original, innovative discourses on antiquities. The modern West, according to the doctrine of progress, held a monopoly on inventiveness. It was easier to see a man like Damrong as a fellow antiquarian than as an originator of a novel variety of their own discourse. It has been notoriously easy for Westerners to be taken in by the veneer of international modernity which appears to coat many practices and institutions encountered in non-Western countries. Westerners might thus expect either to find in Thai society an absence of antiquarianism or the antiquarianism they were familiar with. This expectation would arise out of a consensus view of what constituted proper knowledge. In such cases the veneer of modernity acts as a mirror, confirming the expectation that the familiar discourse is universal. Local difference is experienced by the Westerner as local failure to pursue knowledge properly.

WESTERN ANTIQUARIANISM IN PERSON

It might be rewarding to look for antiquarianism, as we know it, among early Western visitors to Thailand. The first Western travellers in Southeast Asia, beginning with the Portuguese in the late fifteenth century, carried with them an idea of a land of treasure, the fabled Golden Khersonesus, first articulated by Claudius Ptolemy (A.D. 90-168). They failed to find it, though Malacca was favoured by some as its site. The opulence witnessed by Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch traders in the Southeast Asian courts

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served to sustain the myth. It was a time when travellers still expected to encounter wonders. The first detailed accounts of Thailand to be published date, however, from the Enlightenment when wonders had become suspect among the educated of Europe. The rapidly expanding readership for travel accounts was looking for what has been called 'scientific travel' (Campbell 1988: 260). This is not to say the earliest accounts were based on sober observation. Jeremias van Vliet's fanciful seventeenth century record of Ayudhya, for instance, makes much of the 'treasures' said to be buried beneath the 'idols' and temples and of the slaves buried to guard them (1910: 74-5). Rather, it meant an approach in the tradition of natural history which strove for detailed, authoritative, and objective reporting of what was encountered and not elaborations on its unfathomable strangeness.

It was not until the entry of professional art historians into the field in the early 1900s that accounts appeared which were exclusively devoted to antiquities. Before that, and continuing as a genre into the present, were more general accounts in which antiquities were among the many features of the country experienced by the traveller. They took their place alongside accounts of the customs of the people, their houses, food, crops, and the natural landscape and its resources, the climate, and so on. The accounts were by missionaries, Western diplomats, Western advisors to the Thai government, by explorers, and by more casual travellers. Such was the eclecticism of the European natural history tradition.

The Western observer was often assiduous in measuring and counting, important elements of the natural historian's approach. There is a sense that they were more at home describing the material culture of the Thais than in describing the Thai themselves. They would provide a detailed breakdown of the building materials used for a particular structure but often neglect to detail what people did in it. Confronted by a reclining Buddha image, a ceremonial sala, or an ancient *chedi* their first instinct seemed to be to pace it out, a spectacle which must have intrigued their hosts. Frank Vincent provided his readers not only with the measured length of the Petchaburi reclining Buddha but also with the measurements of its feet and ears (1873: 143), as if these statistics somehow captured its significance. At Khorat in the 1880s the surveyor James McCarthy found it worthwhile to carry out a count of every individual crenelle (there were 133) and loophole (3,961) of the town's decaying walls (1900: 26).

The mostly Western membership of the Siam Society either travelled widely in Thailand or were posted in the provinces. They were in a position to make just the kind of first hand observations valued by natural history. In his exhortation to the

Society's members the indefatigable Colonel Gerini (1904a) suggested 217 topics of interest. Under the letter 'a' were to be found aboriginal, agriculture, alchemy, alimentation, amulets, ancient cities, animals, Annamese, anthropology, archaeology, architecture, arms, arts, and astrology. 'Every casual observer,' urged Gerini, 'even if not interested in the subject, can help by merely noting down such facts as fall under his knowledge' (1904a: 1). In other contexts observations of a more focussed kind were made. Diplomats, for their part, detailed the fortifications on the Menam River and the political institutions in the capital (Terwiel 1989). Peripatetic Christian missionaries commonly attempted to census the population and determine the ethnicity of individual villages.

The missionary attitude, particularly that of the Protestants, belongs in a special category. The missionaries had taken the trouble to appreciate something of the religious nature of the Thai relationship with Buddha images and temples. Their object seems partly to have been the gathering of objective evidence so they could then prove to the Thai that the images were not empowered phenomena (the deployment, in other words, of 'natural history' against the divine). A group of American Presbyterians told an old monk that the images were, 'objects of pity rather than of adoration. They cannot take care of themselves, cannot hold themselves up; what can they do for you or for us?' (House 1884: 102).

A feature of Western antiquarian discourse which, significantly, was missing in that of the Thai royal antiquarians, was the attention paid to secular as well as religious remains. In the Phuket area Bourke (1905) gave his attention to old tin mines, stone celts, a buried boat, gold ornaments, and pottery, in addition to temples, religious sculpture, and inscriptions. By the early 1900s the old walls which enclosed most Thai towns were also attracting Western antiquarian interest (e.g., Bock 1986, Gairdner 1918, Graham 1924).

That prior to the nineteenth century Western accounts make very little mention of antiquities is attributable largely to the most spectacular ruins being some distance inland while the Westerners were confined mostly to the coast and the capital. This was the case in Southeast Asia generally (Savage 1984: 294). The ruins of Sukhothai, Phimai and Kamphaeng Phet, like the more famous Southeast Asian 'Big Three', Angkor, Pagan, and the Borobudur, long remained unknown to Western sojourners.

By the late 1880s there began to appear a more scholarly type of antiquarian among the Westerners resident in Thailand. Among these were Colonel Gerini and some of

the other members of the Siam Society. Some of them had travelled widely within the country and had a fair grasp of the range of antiquities it contained. Like their contemporaries in Britain they were beginning to refer to their activities as archaeology though their interests were mainly art historical and epigraphical. It is clear that in setting out the aims of the Society what Frankfurter referred to as 'archaeological' was actually art historical (1904a: 3). On occasion they excavated for antiquities but there was nothing particularly archaeological about their digging.

Western antiquarians operating in Thailand were in a peculiar position: they were not in a Western colony. When in 1906 the Siam Society noted that it 'works under certain disadvantages' compared to equivalent bodies in Asia the closest it came to specifying what these might be was to note the lack of a 'central authority from which these researches can be directed' (Frankfurter 1905: 107). This was not a problem for the Asiatic Society of Bengal (established 1784) and its branch in Malaya, or for the Batavia Society and the Royal Institution for Philology, Geography and Ethnography of Netherlands India. They operated in a totally different context. They could expect a certain amount of cooperation and support from their colonial governments and they had strong ties with the metropolitan learned societies, museums, and universities. They were, of course, part of the colonial project itself. The Siam Society was under Thai royal patronage but its relations with the state were in no way comparable to those of the other Asian bodies (it is interesting that Quaritch Wales, an English resident of Thailand and Siam Society member was sponsored by the government of Malaya to carry out archaeological investigations there, a level of support he never received in Thailand [Wales 1940]). The Fine Arts Department of the Thai government (established 1912) had some links with the Society but pursued an agenda quite separate from it. In the colonies, by contrast, state agencies such as the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient (established 1898) in Vietnam and Cambodia, the Archaeological Survey of India (1861), and the Archaeological Service of Indonesia (1913) were run by Europeans who not only belonged to the local learned societies but shared the same culture, education, and often the same class background as the societie s'members.

In addition to producing an account of the Thai past the antiquarians produced a parallel account of the Thai experience of it. The popular view among Westerners in Thailand was that the Thai were not interested in the past until, in the words of W.A. Graham (at one time Assistant to the Ministry of Agriculture and president of the Siam Society 1921-25), they 'awoke some twenty-five years or so ago to a great interest in

the subject (1924: 177). He was speaking of royalty and the elite. Ordinary Thais continued on in their apathy and neglect:

> The ruins of Ayuthia, a city less than 150 years ago the centre of the Siamese universe, were, until the beginning of the present century, objects accounted entirely without interest even by the people of the thriving modern town but a few hundred yards distant, and, except for the idle speculation of an occasional European sightseer from Bangkok and for the investigations of the above-mentioned Savants, were left to the undisturbed occupancy of a few monks of contemplative turn and of Chinese market gardeners who cleared away patches of the all-enveloping jungle and planted orchards of custard-apples amid the refuse of broken bricks, tiles, stucco and pottery which covered the ground in all directions.
>
> <div align="right">1924: 177</div>

This had been the view of Ernest Young who found Ayudhya in the late nineteenth century to be 'a heap of ruined temples and dwellings, an attraction for travellers, but of little importance to the people themselves' (1986: 1). But it was not the experience of Maxwell Sommerville's party some decades earlier:

> As we retrace our steps towards the river we meet in the early morning light many little groups of reverent worshippers (mostly women) wending their way through the jungle with baskets and trays garnished with rice, sweetmeats, cooked bamboo, and other delicacies, with which they hope to propitiate a deity to whom millions and millions of sincere disciples have looked, and have felt that they were blessed.
>
> <div align="right">1897: 127-28</div>

The 'deity' in question was Phra Mongkon Bopit, a giant bronze Buddha image still at the time *in situ* within the ruins of its *viharn,* damaged by the collapse of the structure's roof during the sack of the city in 1767 (see Figure 3). Today, the restored statue inside the rebuilt *viharn* (the work was carried out in 1951) continues to attract thousands of pilgrims.

The subtext of Graham's censorial discourse is that the ruined ancient monuments had truly been abandoned by Thai society, only to be rescued from oblivion by the advent of Western and Thai antiquarianism (which he would probably have seen as the same thing). Even if he had been aware of the continuous religious significance of the ruins, most of which were of temples, he might not have seen this as relevant or might have thought the apparent disrespect for the fabric of the ruins - much of which had been recycled for the building of Bangkok - belied the reality of such significance.

Such attitudes were not peculiar to Thailand but are related to one of the central tenets of Western antiquarianism abroad, namely, that Westerners have a better appreciation of the material remains of the non-Western past than do the current inhabitants of that sphere. Edward Said would have it that, for the Orientalist, one of the manifestations of the present degeneracy of Orientals is that they are incapable of revealing their own past (1985: 56-7). Either the local people have degenerated too far from the peak of culture achieved by their ancestors or, it is maintained, they are not the true descendents of the ancient builders and artists. For John Lloyd Stephens in Central America in the 1840s the ruins there were, according to Hinsley (1989: 82), 'an empty stage for the North American explorer to fill with actors and scenarios'. By the 'detachment' of the ruins from the local population such explorers foreshadowed their own intention to acquire and remove them (Hinsley 1989: 82). Or, one might add, to monopolize the interpretation of them.

I would suggest there is more to this than the Orientalist presumption that 'It is Europe that articulates the Orient' (Said 1985: 57). The antiquarians who took this line in Southeast Asia, particularly where spectacular monumental ruins were concerned, were essentially the same people who at home, in England for instance, were trying to secure management control of ancient churches in the face of clergy and parishioners who displayed their vulgarity by wanting to rebuild them for current needs (see Chapter 1). Certainly it was imperialism but it was also a case of an emergent alliance of discourses on the material past (i.e., antiquarianism, archaeology, art history, architectural history) seeking to establish its authority over the interpretation of antiquities and to ensure its privileged access to them.

But to return, as it were, to the jungle. At Angkor in Cambodia Frank Vincent encountered the 'Leper King', a stone figure which the local people venerated:

> The natives have, with (for them) astonishing forethought, placed a small grass thatch over this statue. They have somewhat naturalised (if a foreigner) and very much travestied their royal ancestor (if indeed such he be) by blackening his teeth, rouging his lips, and gilding his forehead.

> 1873: 244

The 'natives' do not appear in person in this section of text. It was, indeed, only rarely that evidence of links between them and ruins found their way into books. For the most part the local inhabitants were presented to the reader as path-cutters, guides, bearers and cooks. They played a colourful but minor role in a narrative which was all about the Western explorer's experience, not about theirs. And yet we know (Chapter

2) that invariably these ruins were venerated locally. What we see here is perhaps the tip of a wedge which would be driven, by local elites as well as Western heritage managers, between local people and the remnants of antiquity in the local landscape.

THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE ORIENTALIST

You cannot have an exoticist myth and relentlessly interrogate it at the same time. Not, at least, without producing the sort of contradictory accounts the West produced on Thailand. A deconstruction of these accounts along Orientalist (Said 1985) lines would no doubt show that the Thailand presented by the natural historian was as much a European invention as that presented by the travel writer. But one can detect tension between the discourses of European interpretation as well. The Western desire for an exotic Thailand conflicted with the project of natural history which was to render it objectively familiar. The ambivalence experienced by the observer/reporter is the simultaneous desire for myth and truth.

One strain of Western writing on Thailand which runs through the nineteenth century and persists into the present is that which conflates the new and the old. Among the travellers (though not the dedicated antiquarians of the late 1800s) the whole landscape, not merely the obvious antiquities it contained, was old. Apart from finding the towns largely dirty and ramshackle and many of the temple buildings unfinished or deteriorating, the contemporary Thai architecture itself, apart from the few recent structures in a Western or hybrid style, was found to be very different from that of the West. More than different, it was not modern. For most, an unfavourable comparison with the West was irresistible: Thai architecture was primitive or antiquated. As part of the non-Western world, Thailand, almost by definition, was a ruin.

Whereas in the West the old and the new were easily separated, in Thailand they were not. Surrounded by the overgrown ruins of Ayudhya, Maxwell Sommerville was moved by this lack of a contrast:

> Ancient ruined forums, palaces, and amphitheatres in Europe stand generally in strong contrast with the modern cities that have been created around them or in their vicinity. Here in the silence of this forest jungle, itself a ruin, the scene is weird. The brighter light now discloses more distinctly the palace walls, towers, topes, and spiral pagodas, closely overgrown by flowering plants, orchids, and numerous tropical trees. We realize that we are in the midst of

relics of an Asiatic race, the remnants of whose architecture have a charm of being unlike any that we have seen in Europe, Africa, Ceylon, or India.

1897: 126

For Sommerville the jungle was a ruin into which blended the crumbling ruins of Ayudhya. The jungle, of course, has always been a Western metaphor for decay and degeneracy of the tropics and it is fitting the two (i.e., jungle and ruins) should be found juxtaposed in Western accounts. The observer often became most lyrical when describing the way vines and tree roots embraced and strangled the ruins of Ayudhya and Angkor. The jungle destroys the creations of men. Yet the jungle setting could also enhance the ruins it contained: 'its [Ayudhya's] ruins attest its greatness, and it is well that nature, kinder far than man, has hid the rents of ruin with a tapestry of flowers and clinging vines, making that more beautiful which was so, hiding the work of the iconoclast' (Child 1892: 82). But even out of the jungle travellers failed to perceive a 'strong contrast' between the old and the new. Very often the built landscape was described without distinguishing between what was a recently constructed palace or temple and what was an ancient one. The similarities of this approach to the ethnographer's device of the ethnographic present are striking and significant.

The Past, as the West knew it, was that which had led inexorably to its own superior civilization. One would not expect to find that sort of heroic progression in Thailand. Thailand manifestly *was* the past; exquisite in its way but, nevertheless, a living remnant of an early stage in the West's development. Thailand was one of those places where time stood still. 'White sojourners wrote their own geography of Southeast Asia', observes Savage (1984: 16), meaning they understood the place in their own terms. As far as antiquities were concerned, they might be said to have produced a landscape in which the present and past were seamlessly at one.

The ambivalence I have mentioned is that wherein a longing for what is exotic shares room with a critique of the exotic. Not content with constructing Thailand as a place of exotic decay and ruin some Western writers disparaged it for being precisely that. The ambivalence is neatly encapsulated in a comment by Jacob Child who found Ayudhya a 'wreck of buildings in "ruinous perfection"' (1892: 77).

Some found that it was only the surface decoration of Thai buildings which was notable and for this reason the buildings made poor ruins. According to the 'account of a gentleman' quoted by Bowring:

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> The only visible remains of the old city are a large number of wats, in different stages of decay... As the beauty of a Siamese temple consists not in its architecture, but in the quantity of arabesque work with which the brick and stucco walls are covered, it soon yields to the power of time and weather, and becomes, if neglected, an unsightly heap of bricks and woodwork, overgrown with parasitical plants.

Bowring 1969: 17

It was a view echoed by Somerset Maugham. In the midst of 'mouldering temples and crumbling pagodas' at Lopburi he complained: 'There is no elegance of line in these ruins and the decoration of doors and windows, robbed by time of their gold and tinsel, is mean and tawdry' (1986: 27). Child, incidentally, found the 'form' of Thai architecture to be good; the reason its appearance, 'gorgeous... at a distance', did not stand up to closer inspection was that the material used in construction was 'both common and perishable' (1892: 80).

Another view was that, even though the antiquated architecture might confirm the relative primitiveness of the Thais themselves it was only proper that it should be like this and deplorable when it was not. I refer here to the view that more recent Thai architecture was aesthetically inferior to older and ancient architecture, a view still current today. Time, however, might correct this. Though many of the ruined structures at Ayudhya were several hundred years old, in the 'account of a gentleman' quoted in Bowring, 'the ruins have not yet attained a sufficient age to compensate for their uninteresting appearance' (1969: 18).

Those Westerners for whom a thousand year old *chedi* might look almost indistinguishable from a twenty year old one were not, of course, art historians or archaeologists for whom this sort of distinction was their bread and butter. These specialists can be credited with inserting a time dimension into the picture.

THE THAI THEATRE OF WESTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

The Western discipline of archaeology has invested heavily in maintaining a global uniformity of practice. To speak of a locally distinctive Thai archaeology or to question whether archaeology is the proper term for it goes in the face of the idea of archaeology as a universal form of knowledge which can be practised well or poorly, but not differently. In resisting the universalizing tendency I deal separately with the

two practices, looking at the Western practice in this section and the Thai practice in the section which follows.

Modern archaeology was not practised by Westerners in Thailand until the 1950s. Art historical studies carried out from the late 1800s, often under the name of archaeology, created a data base of inscriptions and monuments. The art historical and epigraphic work began with people like Colonel Gerini, a resident in Thailand for 25 years (from 1881) as a naval adviser. At the inauguration of the Siam Society in 1904 he called for reports on the discovery of antiquities from Westerners in the provinces, these contributions to be read at the Society's meetings. The Society was intent on establishing the sort of information network common to the European learned societies in their early days. In the imperial setting these networks enabled a flow of information from 'remote' corners of the world back to the metropolitan nerve centres. These were the years in which fields of scholarship in the West were consolidating themselves into disciplines. A critical function of the nerve centre was to bring colonial scholarship within the fold of the various disciplines. Workers at the periphery fed data to the centre and the centre kept the periphery abreast of advances in methodology and theory.

The anomalous position of Western scholars in sovereign Thailand was to an important extent corrected by the French, operating from the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient in Hanoi. One of the tasks of the Ecole was to compile an inventory of the antiquities of the Indochinese Union. Their work extended into Thailand, Etienne Aymonier and Lunet de Lajonquiere travelling across the Khorat Plateau in the first decade of the present century in quest of Khmer monuments. The Siam Society appears to have maintained fairly close relations with the Ecole Francaise (e.g., Frankfurter 1904b: 223). The second director of the EFEO, Georges Coedes, was appointed to the National Library of Thailand in 1917 under Prince Damrong and began working on inscriptions there. In the 1920s he was engaged in classifying the collection of the National Museum in Bangkok. The EFEO undertook excavations at two sites in Thailand in 1927. While people like Quaritch Wales and Reginald le May carried out surveys and excavations at historic-period sites in the 1930s it was the French who defined standards and provided much of the synthesis. Woodward (1978: 74) in his review of art historical study in Thailand shows how Jean Boisselier, working in Thailand from 1964, brought with him the 'Stern method' of chronological stylistic analysis of art. The method had achieved the 'status of a revealed religion' in the West and Woodward shows how this methodology influenced Thai scholars and Westerners, such as A.B. Griswold, working in Thailand. Several Thais in this

century have travelled to Paris to study art history. French restoration experts have assisted in reconstruction of ancient monuments in Thailand, notably those of the Khmer-style *prasat* at Phimai and Phanom Rung in the Northeast.

Art historians and epigraphers were thus at work more than half a century before what is recognized in the West as modern archaeology began in Thailand. Their casual approach to excavation consisted of 'clearing' architectural remains. In addition to hacking away vegetation it entailed the removal of deposits which had built up around monuments, obscuring their lower regions. It also meant digging around in the vicinity of ruins in the hope of recovering art works and inscriptions. Because the object of this digging was simply to reveal and recover antiquities rather to than learn about them from their stratigraphic context and from accompanying occupation debris (e.g., food remains, artefacts other than 'art') their digging was not what we understand as modern archaeology.

The early dominance of art history and epigraphy is illustrated by the fact that when in 1968 the American archaeologist Bennet Bronson excavated the protohistoric mound at Chansen in Central Thailand almost nothing was known about this period (first millennium A.D.) except for its art history and inscriptions. Of the previous work in Central Thailand, 'almost all concentrated on architectural sites, inscriptions, and surface-collected artistic objects' (Bronson 1976: 6). The framework which this work produced proved useless for his purposes.

> A last shortcoming of the five-period scheme [Early, Funan, Dvaravati, Lopburi, Sukhothai] is implicit in the fact that its inventors were trained as epigraphers or art historians--almost nothing except statues and inscriptions can be fitted into it. If a site proves to contain a sufficient quantity of sculpture and standing architecture it can tentatively be dated as Lopburi or Dvaravati. But if, like most sites in the area, it does not, then the field archaeologist is helpless. He cannot differentiate between Funan and Lopburi. He can hardly, in fact, differentiate between early prehistoric sites with pottery in them and sites abandoned only a hundred years ago.

> 1976: 10-11

Archaeology got off to such a slow start in Thailand because of the late discovery of Thai prehistory. Art historical excavation and epigraphy were, in a sense, mutually supportive. As in Europe, it was only when scholars began trying to unravel prehistory, a realm in which there was no recourse to ancient texts, that the methodology of archaeology - in particular, seriation and stratigraphic excavation - was developed. Why, then, was the study of prehistory initiated so late in Thailand? Western antiquarians and art historians in Thailand were aware that prehistoric sites

were being researched in India, China, and Indonesia all through the first half of the twentieth century. In the former two places a deep prehistory had been revealed, complete with human fossil remains and stone artefact assemblages dating to the Pleistocene. In Vietnam, in their excavation of numerous cave deposits in the Bac Bo region in the 1920s, Madeleine Colani and Henri Mansuy had identified two stone technological traditions which they termed the Hoabinhian and Bacsonian, belonging to pre-agricultural peoples. It was accepted that, logically, Thailand must also have a prehistory. The stone celts which, though they came to light in 'exceedingly rare dribblets' (Gerini 1904b: 214), were evidence of it. But in the absence of other hard evidence of their presence, the early prehistoric inhabitants of Thailand remained notional inhabitants of a time when, in the words of Graham, 'neolithic man hunted through the jungles' (1924: 178).

The absence of a colonial archaeological service in Thailand comparable to the Ecole in Hanoi is fundamentally important in explaining this vacuum. There were no equivalents of Colani and Mansuy (they operated from the Geological Service of the Indochinese Union) with geological or archaeological interests who would have known where to look for evidence of prehistory. People like Gerini were strangers to the Thai landscape and lacked the familiarity with it which they would have enjoyed in the countries of their birth. This shortcoming was compensated for in colonial Asia by the higher density of Westerners in the provinces and, in Vietnam for instance, by the heavy emphasis given to field survey by the colonial archaeological services. Had there been a colonial infrastructure of settlers and administrators, the significance of prehistoric pottery and stone implements routinely dug up by Thai farmers might have been appreciated. As it was, the only pre-war excavations of prehistoric sites in Thailand were Fritz Sarasin's (1933) amateurish investigations of cave deposits in the Chiang Mai and Ratburi areas which suffered bady from his lack of experience with flaked-stone technology.

The Dutch colonial-based archaeologist H. R. Van Heekeren was the first to take an educated interest in Thai prehistory. A prisoner under the Japanese in the Kanchanaburi region, west Central Thailand, he recognized prehistoric stone artefacts in river gravels there, collected a few of them, and returned in the 1959 with the Thai-Danish team to investigate the area's prehistory. A team from the Peabody Museum at Harvard University under Karl Heider reconnoitred the Pleistocene terraces there in 1956 (Heider 1958a). On another front, P.D.R. Williams-Hunt (1950) while serving in the British air force had identified hundreds of prehistoric moated settlement sites in the Mun Valley of the Northeast from aerial photographs (aerial photography had been

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used by the French to identify ancient canals in the Mekong Delta in the 1930s [Higham 1989: 26]). No systematic fieldwork took place, however, prior to the project of the Thai-Danish Expedition, under Per Sorensen, which involved a field survey and excavation programme in two river valleys in Kanchanaburi Province (Sorensen 1988).

This was the beginning of major shift which saw the work of Western scholars resident in Thailand eclipsed by the direct involvement by metropolitan archaeologists from America, Britain, and New Zealand working on joint projects with Thai archaeologists, most of whom were associated with the Fine Arts Department. Notable among these were the Thai-British project in Central Thailand (1965-7) under William Watson and Helmut Loofs-Wissowa, Chester Gorman's (University of Hawaii) investigation of cave deposits in the Mae Hongson area of the North in the mid-1960s, Don Bayard's (University of Hawaii) excavations at Non Nok Tha (1965,1966, 1968), Charles Higham's (University of Otago) project in the Northeast in the 1970s, and the University of Pennsylvania project at Ban Chiang 1974-5 (see Higham [1989] for a review of these and other projects).

By the 1950s the Western discipline of archaeology was sufficiently established and mobile for universities and museums to venture as far afield as Thailand with their research programme. Additionally, by the 1960s archaeology had a foothold in the Western 'colonies' of the Pacific rim, Hawaii, New Zealand, and Australia, and archaeologists in these centres were inclined to regard Southeast Asia as their proper field. The technology of communications allowed metropolitan archaeologists to operate without the local support of a colonial archaeological service or of the Euro-American Schools of Archaeology which were a familiar feature of the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern scene. More than this, Western archaeology had a set of questions - the origins of agriculture and metallury not the least notable among them - which some practitioners were eager to seek answers for off the beaten track. In short, Thailand became a theatre for Western archaeology.

A CASE OF ALTERNATIVE AGENDAS

I want, now, to step back a century or so and ask what had become of royal antiquarianism. There was, by the late nineteenth century, a form of antiquarianism being practised by the Thai royalty and nobility which amalgamated elements of Western antiquarianism with indigenous beliefs and habits. By the second half of the twentieth century there existed in the country many of the familiar trappings of a

Western style archaeology. These included a government archaeological agency (the FAD), government-sponsored archaeological surveys and excavations, a degree course in archaeology at Silpakorn University, a number of Thai practitioners holding degrees in archaeology from Western universities, and a considerable amount of professional and popular literature on archaeology. One narrative - an alluring one for the Westerner - linking this development with royal antiquarianism would give primary agency to the archaeological discourse and its obvious attractions. Archaeology's ability to peel back the layers of Thailand's remote past and produce increasingly detailed accounts of prehistoric life would inevitably win it acceptance, at least in educated and elite Thai society, just as it might appear to have done in other parts of the non-Western world.

There are grounds, however, to be wary of conferring this degree of agency on archaeology. Mindful of Reynold's (1973: 64) observation that Thai historians in the nineteenth century were rulers and administrators and that 'history was a kind of political intelligence' closely related to current matters of state, I am inclined, instead, to look more carefully at the political context in which 'archaeology' was taken up by the Thais.

In his Royal Assignments King Mongkut set aside time for the study of various subjects included astronomy, languages, astrology, and the field known as *borankadi*. *Borankadi* is sometimes rendered in English as 'archaeology' (e.g. Charoenwongsa 1983: 6) though it fits better into what I have termed royal antiquarianism. In 1907 King Chulalongkorn formed the *Borankadi Samoson,* translated by Vella (1978: 239) as the Historical Research Society and by Charoenwongsa (1983: 6) as the 'Archaeological Club'. My concern is with what was done under the name of *borankadi* though I note, in passing, that by the second half of the nineteenth century many Western antiquarians in Thailand were calling themselves archaeologists. This was in deference, no doubt, to the success which the archaeological discourse in the West was beginning to have in securing credit as being the Science of the material past with a more powerful truth-claim than antiquarianism. Much of what was done under the category of *borankadi* consisted of the collection and study of inscriptions. These were gathered from an increasingly large number of early historic sites, usually places where ruins of early Buddhist and pre-Buddhist monuments occurred. The single most famous incident of this project of collection was the journey made in 1833 by Mongkut, while still a monk, to the ruins of Sukhothai among which he discovered the Ramkhamhaeng inscription. Regardless of the status of its authenticity the enormous use made of this text in defining and legitimating the concept of Buddhist

kingship by the present dynasty and the modern state provides a perfect example of how archaeological remains could become 'political intelligence'.

Prince Damrong was the moving force in the *Borankadi Samoson*. He presided over the Royal Academy and the National Library. The French Consul General, Fernand Pila, urged Damrong to carry out research on Buddhist monuments and Georges Coedes worked with him at the National Library, advising and assisting the work on ancient inscriptions (Brezeale 1971: 43-4). Damrong skilfully picked up the rationale and methodology of art history and archaeology as practised by the French and brought it into the service of the Thai state. After ending his 23 years as Interior Minister in 1915 Damrong travelled the country recording and collecting antiquities and instructing provincial officials on the need for their conservation. What he accomplished for centralized government as Interior Minister under Rama V, establishing and administering the provincial bureaucratic infrastructure which made effective the rule of Bangkok in the countryside, he now did for the past of the new nation (Craig Reynolds, pers. comm.). Gathering together and inventorying historical and prehistorical raw materials from all parts of the country he gave them a new coherence. This coherence consisted of the synonymity they assumed with the Thai Past, a category whose boundaries were congruent with the geopolitical boundaries of the nation. Provincial governors and other officials were requested by Damrong to put out feelers and to report finds to the centre. Archaeology gave a new dimension to the long established practice of collecting and interrogating old texts for present purposes; it focussed attention on the importance of historical *place,* in addition to historical text, as a unifier.

Before he became king in 1910 Vajiravudh had continued the tradition of royal antiquarianism by visiting many of the monumental ruins in the country. In 1912 he established the Fine Arts Department. The activities of the National Museum and the National Library were supplemented in 1924 by the founding of the Archaeological Service. This institution was chiefly concerned with recording and 'restoring' ancient monuments (see Chapter 6). It had no research function and was staffed by Thais with no professional grounding in art history or archaeology. In contrast to many of the European countries where governments were reluctant to support archaeological endeavours or to give official protection to antiquities, in Thailand the reverse was true. The state, in the Sixth Reign, took a leadership role in the discovery and management of antiquities. The field was very much an institutionalized one. It was not a field of amateur endeavour. There were only two Thais present at the inaugural meeting of the Siam Society in 1904 (*Journal of the Siam Society* 1904 Vol. 1: 209).

The Society regretted 'the almost complete absence of Siamese from its membership list' in 1906 (Belholme 1906: 115) - two years later there were only six Thais among the Society's 98 members (*Journal of the Siam Society* 1908 Vol. 5: 55-6). This aspect of the Society's early days seems pointedly absent from the recent volume on its history (The Siam Society, 1989).

It is significant that art historical scholarship found a much more fertile field for development in Thailand in the first half of the present century than did archaeology. A key figure was M.C. Subhadradis Diskul, a son of Damrong, who studied art history under Philippe Stern in Paris and at the Institute of Archaeology, London. Back in Bangkok he established the Faculty of Archaeology (concerned mostly with art history) at Silpakorn University. In the 1950s he and his students were carrying out excavations at historic sites (e.g., U Thong). These excavations were intended to uncover structures and objects of art historical interest and were confined to sites of the historical period. They were not archaeological excavations in the sense of employing an archaeological methodology explicitly designed to reveal ancient life. In many ways, this work continued Damrong's agenda. Significantly, also, there was no equivalent development of prehistoric archaeology. Westerners in Asian colonies all around Thailand were using archaeology to probe the prehistoric past and it must be assumed that many educated Thais were aware of this. Surely men like Damrong, had they wished to, would have been able acquire the expertise to initiate prehistoric studies in Thailand.

Actually, what Thais saw of prehistoric archaeology as it was practised in the world around them may have given them cause to avoid it. Another way of putting this is that it offered no relevant 'political intelligence'. It was an archaeology informed and, indeed, driven by the theory of social evolution and the doctrine of progress. In the second half of the nineteenth century a world prehistory was being written by archaeologists in which Oriental societies like those of Thailand could be shown to occupy one or another of the stages through which societies might develop in a linear progression. Since the industrial Occident alone was at the pinnacle of this progression the most the prehistory of the Orient could hope to reveal was the unflattering narrative of how its people had reached the present, inferior, developmental stages which they now occupied. And there were other, perhaps more pressing causes for concern. Archaeology in some areas was showing itself to be an intensely ideological enterprise. In India, the nineteenth century British archaeologists who sought state support pointed out their subject's potential to undermine aspects of local society:

Cunningham also thought that a search for Buddhist ruins would demonstrate that Brahminism was not the only paramount religion in India and this knowledge would facilitate the propagation of Christianity there. Second, 'it would show that India had generally had been divided into petty chiefships, which had invariably been the case upon every successful invasion; while whenever she had been under one ruler, she had always repelled foreign conquest with determined resolution' [Alexander Cunningham] (1848). In other words, he was trying to justify the systematic archaeological exploration of India on the grounds that politically it would help the British to rule India and lead to an easier acceptance of Christianity in the country.

Chakrabarti 1982: 332

While archaeological probing of the pre-Buddhist past might provide material useful in promoting the idea of the centralized polity, the Thai royalty and elite might equally have seen it as having the potential to undermine the Buddhist kingship by uncovering tangible reminders of a time which predated it. On the other hand, this might have simply cautioned the need for such studies to be carried out under state guidance.

The question of racial origins was one of the pet obsessions of Western archaeology and was shared by at least some Western sojourners in Thailand:

> Siamese Archaeology, primitive though it be, has already proved of use in corroborating or correcting theories of students as to the origin and the racial affinities of former inhabitants of the country, and regarding the important question of the relative importance, from time to time and in different localities, of the Brahman and Buddhist religions.

Graham 1924: 188

Graham was anticipating. What passed for archaeology in Thailand at the time had nothing to say about origins apart from art historical speculation on Indian, Khmer, and Mon influence. Still, the notion of Western archaeologists or even Thai archaeologists busying themselves with the 'racial affinities of former inhabitants' would not have sat easily with the project of consolidating a dynastic state by stressing homogeneity through time and space. What archaeology was offering to do for the Thai past its companion science, anthropometry, would do for its present racial geography: 'It would be of interest if such [anthropometric] measurements were taken up country in the recesses of the valleys where the Thai race especially had preserved something of its original purity' (Gerini in a comment to the General Meeting of the Siam Society in 1904, *Journal of the Siam Society* 1904 Vol. 1: 212). Again, Colonel Gerini's enthusiasm would hardly be shared by a state where the 'conceptual conflation of monarchy and nation' (Anderson 1978: 213) meant a policy of de-emphasizing the distinctiveness of ethnic minorities.

The doctrine of progress was the ideological engine which drove modern archaeology through the early years of its development in Europe, so much so that it became defined as 'the science of progress in prehistoric times' (Trigger 1981: 142). A possible Thai response to the social evolutionary schema would have been to seek archaeological evidence for an equivalent progression by stages from savagery to civilization in their own past. Instead, they took the course of demonstrating that civilization was intrinsic to their society. We see this in King Mongkut's energetic defence of Buddhism against the critique of the Christian missionaries. In the first half of the present century the Thai state drew upon the array of ancient monuments spread across the country which, thanks largely to Damrong, were now realizable assets, to develop an argument for continuity rather than evolution. The state was looking back through time to find a mirror image of itself, not a snapshot series of increasingly primitive versions. King Vajiravudh seemed to appropriate the Western concept of progress and turn it around to suit his purposes. For him the archaeological record was replete with evidence - the magnificence of the ruins he had seen at Sukhothai being a prime example - that the Thai race had achieved great progress and this progress was in danger of being lost if his subjects copied the West too much and failed to protect their heritage.

> He expressed the hope that, because of his account [1908] of the Thai past, "the Thai will become more aware that our race is not a new race, is not a race of jungle folk, or to use the English word, 'uncivilized.'" To put it simply, the King believed, and sought to persuade others to believe, that the Thai had a proud past, a past worthy of emulation in the present...

> Vella 1978: 204

Progress was a steady state rather than a process. It was a state achieved by the Thai in their remote past. The state, in its discourse of heritage (see below) would concentrate on the ruins of former capitals and on Buddhist monuments where the past was a familiar and recognizable landscape or, to invert Lowenthal's (1985) phrase, where the past was *not* a foreign country. What Benedict Anderson refers to as a 'fundamental mystification about the nature and origins of the modern Thai state' (Anderson 1978: 215) comes into play more in the shadowland back beyond this - in prehistory, in other words.

It has been convenient for the Thai state not to dwell on the country's prehistory but it is also perhaps consonant with Thai Buddhism. In saying that 'Prehistory seems remote indeed' to the contemporary Thai, Charoenwongsa (1983: 5) is contrasting remote time with that more tangible time populated by Buddhist monuments. The

monuments are a corollary of Buddhist historiographic writing which frequently extends back to the time Buddhism arrived in the country. That 'The great perennial questions of the *whence* and *whither* of mankind have never at any time aroused violent curiosity in the average Siamese' Graham attributed to their religion, particularly their belief in reincarnation (1924: 176). He was probably right, and we would be wise to consider the sense of continuity fusing the past with the present partly as a matter of religious sensibility and not merely as a production of state ideology. But the sub-text of Graham's statement is the presumption that these 'great perennial questions' had much meaning outside of the middle class European mind and its need to know where *it* came from. In speaking of prehistory, we do well to remember that this field or category was an invention of European modernism and its global application was always Eurocentric. To reiterate a point made earlier (Chapter 2), it is wrong to say the Thais had no knowledge of or interest in what Western modernism knows as prehistoric sites and prehistoric times. Many of their settlements and temples were superimposed on prehistoric remains and their spirit cults provided a knowledge and connection to this prehistory. Craig Reynolds observes that the *tamnan* genre of historical writing occupies the place, so to speak, of the Western practice of prehistory (Reynolds pers. comm.). We may take it that what Graham meant was that the Thais did not have a knowledge or discourse of prehistory which European intellectuality would consider legitimate. Rather than asking why the Thais did *not* have this second kind of knowledge or interest we would do better to ask why they *would* have had it. Furthermore, why, in the end, did they have it? My own answer to this is that they assimilated a Western discourse which, due to the expansiveness of Western prehistorians, they could not avoid being exposed to.

Another preoccupation of Western archaeology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the concept of diffusion ('diffusionism' was developed by ethnologists such as Friedrich Ratzel, Franz Boas, and Grafton Elliot Smith and from there found its way into the work of such archaeologists as V. Gordon Childe - see Trigger [1989: 150-55]). In essence this involved a belief that key cultural traits or innovations such as plant and animal domestication, pottery manufacture, and metallurgy must have been inventions unique to particular cultures or culture areas, subsequently spreading out from these hubs by a process of diffusion. There were core areas of genius to which most new developments in prehistory could be traced and China was one of these. In Orientalist discourse the 'modern Orientals were degraded remnants of former greatness' (Said 1985: 233). A refinement of this dictum distinguished between the historically civilized nations like China, whose former brilliance had sadly faded, and the nations of the 'peripheral' Orient where culture was

not merely degenerate but was derivative. Southeast Asia fitted into the second of these categories. Accordingly, Western scholarship was sceptical of any claim to historical originality on the part of plagiaristic peoples like the Thai. Nineteenth century Western antiquarian discourse had it that the Thais received their civilization from India and China. Thence came art, architecture, technology, the system of language, religion, and the structure of the early state polity. It is not difficult to see how this view meshed with Western imperial ambitions. Such countries which were by nature passive receivers would now be privileged to receive the benefits of Western civilization.

Essentially what a Western-style prehistory offered to undertake for Thailand was a fleshing out of this model. Thais do not generally deny their historical links with China but the long-standing tension over the place of ethnic Chinese in Thai society and the twentieth century Cold War have been components of the complex knot of affinity and suspicion which constitutesSino-Thai relations. It is scarcely surprising that the Thais did not rush to be included in this enterprise. Nor would one expect any community engaged in the business of nation state formation to warm to the idea of an historical dependence on a larger neighbour. It is instructive that the anti-Chinese rhetoric and policy of Vajiravudh's reign (1910-25) coincided with the intense nationalism of the time.

Much had changed in archaeological theory by the 1950s when the first Western archaeological projects were mounted in Thailand. But the first of these, involving Sorenson's excavations in the Kanchanaburi area, was still situated firmly within a diffusionist framework. Debate centred on the relationship of the 'neolithic' culture found there (dated between 2,500 and 1,500 BC) with the Lungshanoid of northern China and whether the former had arrived in Kanchanaburi by a direct route from northern China or via intermediate stations (see discussion in Solheim 1966: 36-8).

Only a few years later, work carried out at prehistoric sites in Northeast Thailand triggered a radical revision in thinking. Digging by Bayard at the mounded site of Non Nok Tha began in 1966 and revealed graves containing pottery and bronze artefacts. In 1967 Wilhelm Solheim, the project director, published a date of 2,300 BC for bronze manufacture at the site in both Thai (*Silapakon*) and English (*Science*) journals. By 1970 Solheim was speaking of a 'local evolution of metallurgy in Southeast Asia' and cautioning that the assumption that China was 'the first civilized country in the Far East and the source of much of the technological and economic portion of Asian cultures, outside of India' must now be in doubt (1970: 156).

Solheim's student, Chester Gorman, began his excavation of Spirit Cave in Northern Thailand in 1966 and recovered remains of leguminous plants and nuts from a deposit with a basal date of *c*. 9,000 BC. The possibility was raised that these species were domesticates. Solheim (1970) proclaimed plant domestication at the site by 9,700 BC to be an established fact. Were this true - it is now held to be highly doubtful - Thailand would have been one of the world's first centres of plant domestication.

Western archaeologists now championed the cause of local innovation over diffusion from abroad. In their writing, the new interpretation was contrasted with such earlier pronouncements as that by Julian Steward, that civilization in the humid tropics tended to be later than and derivative of the civilization of irrigated areas, by Georges Coedes, that the prehistoric Indochinese were 'lacking in creative genius', and by Graeme Clark that mainland Southeast Asia as a whole merited study because it was a 'kind of funnel' for a north-south spread of people (Bayard 1979: 14). In its more extreme form the new interpretation threw the direction of diffusion into reverse so that now China was borrowing agriculture and metallurgy from Thailand. The fixation upon inventions and migrations of cultural traits across geographical space was, however, still entrenched. Welch's (1985) review of Western archaeological thinking on the 'problem' of change in the Southeast Asian past traces what he sees as a progression from Heine-Geldern's 1930s diffusionist model, which involved actual population movement into the area from India and China, to the models of the early 1980s which embraced the idea of 'internal restructuring'. The latter concept accommodates exposure to and borrowing of outside influence within a process emphasizing the integrity of society.

One can hardly fail to notice that this shift in archaeological interpretation coincided with the transition of Southeast Asia from colonial to post-colonial status. Western archaeologists were now on sufferance in these countries and one wonders whether this was a consideration in the shift. Thailand's status did not, of course, change but the Western archaeologists undertaking projects there were equally under sufferance and it would hardly be surprising if they deferred to nationalist sensitivities in arriving at their interpretations. There was something faintly patronizing and self-serving in the enthusiasm of the new wave of archaeologists to heap derision on the old school of diffusionists. They implicitly, sometimes explicitly, commended themselves to the Thais as sympathetic and anti-imperial. This took place, also, within a context of competitiveness between the different Western teams working in the country. The impression I received during my period of affiliation with the Archaeology Division of

the FAD was that the Thais gently played off one national team against another, encouraging the idea that each enjoyed a special relationship with them.

From the late 1950s Western prehistorians were required to work in association with Thais. Chin You-di of the National Museum, who has been called the father of Thai prehistoric research (Solheim 1987: 177), worked on the three 1959 Kanchanaburi expeditions. At Chansen seven junior staff of the Museum, together with one student and one faculty member from Silpakorn University worked and trained with Bronson during the 1968-9 excavation. A large number of Thais trained on the Ban Chiang project, several of them continuing their studies at the University of Pennsylvania following the excavations. Thus developed a coterie of Thai prehistoric archaeologists, concentrated for the most part within the FAD. The Thai prehistorians also worked independently. Chin You-di, for instance, surveyed for prehistoric sites in the Kanchanaburi area in 1958-9 and continued work at Ban Kao after the Thai-Danish Expedition had left. The FAD excavated at Ban Chiang in 1967 and 1972 (e.g., Suthiragsa 1979) prior to the beginning of the FAD/University of Pennsylvania project there in 1974. The Thai prehistorians, Western-trained for the most part, in a sense mediated between Western archaeology and Thai society. Clearly this was true at the local level in the way they liaised with rural communities in areas where surveys and excavations were carried out. But they also provided a link with the government and the Thai press.

I proceed, now, to look in some detail at the role which Ban Chiang played in the relationship between the discourse of archaeology and the state discourse of national heritage. Ban Chiang is important since it was only really there that Thailand confronted its prehistory.

THE PREHISTORY UNDER ONE'S HOUSE

In 1957 archaeological material was discovered by people of the village occupying the ancient mound of Ban Chiang (Charoenwongsa 1982: 13), situated in the poorest part of the country, the Northeast. The site attracted little attention until 1966 when the son of the American ambassador visited the village and noticed sherds of painted pottery eroding out of a road surface. FAD archaeologists carried out a test excavation the following year and some of the sherds they recovered found their way to a dating laboratory in the United States where thermoluminescence tests returned dates in the 5,000-3,000 BC range. The University of Pennsylvania, which had already sponsored the Chansen excavation, at the behest of the State Department (Lyons and

Rainey 1982: 8), now joined with the FAD to carry out major excavations at Ban Chiang under the co-directorship of Chester Gorman and Pisit Charoenwongsa. The project began in 1974.

By this time the Americans had by far the largest involvement in Thai archaeology, reflecting the close alliance between the two countries after the Second World War and particularly during the Vietnam War (c.1965-1972). Froelich Rainey, at the time Director of the University Museum at Pennsylvania, spoke of the Museum's early commitment to Thailand as flowing from a realization that there would be 'increasing problems' for their work in the Middle East; they were also moved by the 'friendly atmosphere in Thailand' and the cooperative attitude of Thai officials (Lyons and Rainey 1982: 6). This sense of amity was no doubt strengthened by the way in which the early results of the project flattered Thai national esteem. There was, firstly, the matter of the early dates. Gorman and Charoenwongsa (1976) associated the first appearance of bronze at Ban Chiang with their Phase I which dated (radiocarbon from charcoal) from 3,500 BC. News of the earlier dating and the idea of Thailand being the original centre for development of metallurgy was picked up and publicized in 1975 by *The New York Times,* the *Washington Post, Time* magazine and *Newsweek.* The early evidence of inventiveness which the archaeologists uncovered would very likely have struck a chord, either at the time or in the following decade, with the theme of 'ingenuity and energy', those very qualities specified in state publications from the 1980s as ingredients of Thai culture which would lead the country toward NIC status (Reynolds 1991: 16).

In the University Museum's publication, *Expedition,* Gorman and Charoenwongsa contrasted the remains of the 'technologically innovative, and for the 4th millennium B.C. amazingly advanced society' (1976: 19) they had discovered with that more pessimistic assessment of prehistoric Southeast Asians produced by scholars such as Coedes and Grahame Clark. Not until the Americans began work in Thailand was it possible to reject the 'traditional belief that Java Man's descendants had squatted in their caves until they were taught the rudiments of civilization by more intelligent outsiders' (1976: 15). The editorial to this issue of *Expedition* detailed, almost gloatingly, how the Ban Chiang discoveries disproved China's innovative primacy and suggested bronze metallurgy moved from Thailand to China. Given that the American-Thai alliance was anti-communist, was directed against China and its Indo-Chinese allies, and that at the time of the Ban Chiang excavations parts of the Northeast were in the hands of Thai communist insurgents, it can hardly be claimed that the American interpretation of Ban Chiang had no political context.

There is also a suggestion that American archaeology's ability to see through the 'Southeast Asian *cul-de-sac* ' model attributed to French, Dutch, and British archaeologists - this is the sense I take from Gorman and Charoenwongsa (1976: 5-6) - was related to America's not having been a major colonial power. Lyons also invoked this in her proposition that an especially close relationship developed between American archaeologists and the Thais. The Americans were able to rub shoulders with the Thai villagers; they lived, worked, ate, and drank with them: 'Perfectly normal American procedure, and understood and welcomed by the thoroughly independent, never colonized Thais' (Lyons and Rainey 1982: 10).

The stratigraphic complexity of the site, particularly the vertical relocation of charcoal by ground-dwelling beetles in the deposit and by intrusive graves, made the radiocarbon sequence difficult to interpret. However, consensus now seems to be that the first appearance of bronze should be revised down to *c.* 2,000-1,500 BC (Higham 1989: 130). Ban Chiang has thus lost its pre-eminence as a 'first' in metallurgy.

In their writing, the Western archaeologists neglected to point out that it could not be assumed the prehistoric occupants of Ban Chiang were in any way related to the Thai of modern Thailand. In most of their reports in scientific journals they made at most only indirect reference to the prehistoric people whose remains they were excavating. Solheim referred to the 'Neolithic culture of Southeast Asia', and the 'carriers of this culture' (1966: 38) and Gorman chose to refer to the 'Hoabinhian technocomplex' at Spirit Cave rather than to the Hoabinhians (1972). Reference became more personalized in papers prepared for a wider audience. Here the prehistoric occupants of Ban Chiang were a 'society', 'the initial settlers' of the site, 'the group', and 'the early villagers' (Gorman and Charoenwongsa 1976). Their terminology ensured a certain neutrality for archaeologists. If modern Thais appropriated the remains and accomplishments of the prehistoric people as Thai (the Tai are believed to have entered the area of modern Thailand long after the prehistoric period), the archaeologists could not be held responsible except in that they failed to anticipate or refute such an interpretation.

How, one might ask, did Thai society receive the news of the revelations at Ban Chiang? Each of the different discourses on the Thai past made its own reading of the site. The discourse of Buddhism, for instance, took the prehistoric remains into its own meaning system in a novel way. The extensive potholing of the mound by villagers-turned-'looters' had meant that by 1974 there were few undisturbed sections

of the deposit available for archaeological excavation. One of these was in the compound of Wat Po Si Nai. The large pits here were left open after excavation, exposing to view several burials, large numbers of Ban Chiang-ware pots and sherds, and various other remains. The monks erected a pavilion over the pits and turned them into a museum. Within this pavilion and adjacent to the pits, when I visited the museum in 1990, were Buddha images, offerings, and various items of ritual paraphernalia. There was also a stall selling lottery tickets, presumably the power vested in the place by the prehistoric remains conferring propitiousness upon it. It is clear that in some way the prehistoric remains have been brought within the scope of Buddhist discourse.

The appropriation of the site by the discourse of antiquarianism is addressed later (Chapter 6) in the context of an examination of looting as an archaeological site management problem. What I turn to now is the treatment of Ban Chiang by an emergent state discourse of heritage. In maintaining that the state now has a discourse on the material past which is different from that of antiquarianism, archaeology, or art history, and in calling it the discourse of 'heritage', I am emphasizing the manner in which the new nation state *identifies* with Thailand's material past in a way which is rather different from that of the antiquarians, archaeologists, or art historians. Under the terms of the heritage discourse the old and ancient artefacts which the antiquarians, archaeologists, and art historians collect and/or study are seen as constitutive of the nation's self. In this discourse of identity the other three discourses are *enlisted* by the state as sources of material (as discoverers and circulators of old and ancient artefacts) rather than being *appointed* by the state to speak for it. It can be distiguished from royal antiquarianism, a personal pursuit of kings and princes, by the presence, at its core, of the nation state.

The treatment of Ban Chiang by the heritage discourse involved a rather different reading of the same site, the same prehistoric remains, to that which I have presented in the preceding pages. I would blame any sense of *deja vu* in what follows on discourse plurality rather than on a personal tendency towards repetition.

Any apprehension the state may have had about how prehistorians would interpret a site like Ban Chiang were soon dispelled by the heroic cast given by prehistorians, Western and Thai alike, to the prehistoric innovators at the site. The early TL dates for the site were picked up on by the Thai press and the site was vaunted, on the basis of the association between the pottery and bronze there, as proving the world's first bronze metallurgy had developed in Thailand. The dates soon even appeared on T-

shirts celebrating the site. Ban Chiang thus now held the prospect of bolstering national esteem provided that a certain issue could be resolved: were the prehistoric inhabitants Thai? If not, and it must have been clear that there were strong arguments that they were not, could they be *made* Thai? By way of what the academy in the West would consider loose scholarship, this could be accomplished. An article in the magazine *Sawaddi,* published by the American expatriate community in Thailand, is illustrative. In it the author used work by linguist Paul Benedict from the 1960s. Benedict analysed loan-words in Chinese and what he called the Austro-Thai language stock. His findings suggested to him that there had been 'extensive cultural contact' between the two peoples and that the Chinese had been the 'recipients rather than the donors' in this exchange (Benedict 1967 quoted in Solheim 1970: 157). In the *Sawaddi* article (Di Crocco 1985), Benedict's work is taken to indicate that the prehistoric Austro-Thai, the inhabitants of such places as Non Nok Tha and Ban Chiang, had been driven into China from where they returned to reoccupy Thailand at a later date. Apart from the interruption this northward movement represented the Thai had been in continuous occupation of the country since prehistory.

> And if they were speakers of Austro-Thai, and were living in what is now Thailand, must they not have been Thai? Could it be that the Thai people have been living in their homeland all along? Instead of filtering southward from China along the river valleys, as has traditionally been thought and taught, could they actually have been driven northward by more warlike peoples, such as the Mon and the Khmer?
>
> ... In recent months an increasing number of Thai scholars have expressed the view that perhaps basically the same people have been living in Thailand since the Neolithic time. They raise the question recently posed by Sujit Wongthes in the Thai-language magazine *Thai Art and Culture* : why did the Thai have to come from anywhere? After all, they could have been living in what is now Thailand long before they became politically dominant.

<div align="right">Di Crocco 1985: 33-4</div>

It is this argument rather than any more scholarly treatment which found its way into an outline of Thai history in the National Identity Board's *Thai Life* magazine in 1981 (Vol 1[1]: 4).

The retrospectivity of the state discourse elevates the early metal age cultural tradition of Ban Chiang to the level of a civilization. In 1972 the National Museum in Bangkok held an exhibition to publicize the Ban Chiang discoveries. It was reported as showing that the Thai Neolithic/Bronze Age began 7,000 years ago 'which would place this civilization at an earlier time in history than the equivalent culture in China' (*Bangkok Post* 26th August 1972). This interpretation was echoed in the popular

press. The *Bangkok World* quoted a representative of the Society for the Conservation of National Treasures and Environment as saying 'there were more than 200 ancient towns in northeast Thailand which could represent the first civilization in Asia if not the world' (28th August 1972). And again, 'While, at that time [5-7,000 years ago], man was running around naked in other parts of the world, people in the Ban Chiang area were sufficiently developed to know how to dress' (*Bangkok World* 4th June 1972). Thai archaeologists also provided good copy, witness the following statement by one who had worked at the site: 'Judging in terms of technological advancement, the pre-historic man at Ban Chieng knew how to make bronze many centuries before those in India and China' (Kuakun 1975: 115). Related to this has been a tendency among certain Thai archaeologists and historians to refer to late prehistoric settlements such as the moated sites of the Northeast as cities (e.g., Vallibhotama 1989). The absence of clear archaeological manifestations of prehistoric urbanism are attributed to destruction by modern land development or to over-zealous restoration (e.g., Saraya 1987: 40, Vallibhotama 1989: 40).

The task of melding prehistoric Ban Chiang to the Thai nation was probably aided by the process, normal to most local populations, whereby they personalize ancient landscapes by projecting onto them their own local identity. The symbolism inherent in the presence of prehistoric archaeological deposits under the very houses of Thai citizens may, in this way, have been a stronger argument for the Thainess of these remains than the wil_y historical reconstructions of people like Sujit Wongthes. Even if the occupants of the houses - such is the case at Ban Chiang - are known to have arrived from Laos only two hundred years ago (Gorman and Charoenwongsa 1976: 17). An FAD official interviewed for *Thai Life* magazine apparently believed that villagers in the Ban Chiang area were the direct descendants of the prehistoric inhabitants whose remains had been excavated there:

> Accordingly, no matter how many renowned authorities imprint their expert opinion on the recovered artefacts, ultimately it is the present inhabitants' direct cultural heritage. The prehistoric civilization belongs to the villagers; they lived with it, it is part of them.

Thai Life 1981 1(1): 68

The magnitude of the government's commitment, both in personnel and funding, to the joint project at Ban Chiang would suggest that by 1974 the Thai state was able to accommodate prehistoric remains within its construct of Thai culture history. More than just putting the royal seal of approval on prehistoric investigations there, the visit of the King and Queen to the site of the FAD's 1972 excavation at Ban Chiang may

have been an act of recognition, a symbolic gathering of the site into the fold (Keyes [1991: 280] uses the term 'pantheon') of Thai national heritage. Such seems to be the sense taken from the visit by the local schoolmaster:

> "Not until His Majesty the King visited the excavations, did we come to understand that the pottery was not just a curio to sell to rich foreigners," Chalerm said. "When His Majesty visited, we knew what was in our soil held great meaning for our country."

Bangkok Post   13th June 1973

Meanwhile, there was among Western and, to a lesser extent, Thai prehistorians a sense of embarrassment at the meaning the state discourse took from the site and there was a move to distance themselves from this reading. The fifth millennium B.C. thermoluminescence dates on pottery from Ban Chiang which were known to the Fine Arts Department by 1968 and were published in 1972 (Bronson and Han 1972) were subsequently treated as problematic or erroneous by archaeologists. There ensued a minor controversy within the profession over the manner in which publicity of the site had departed from the known facts and the extent to which the profession was to blame for it. In 1983, Loofs-Wissowa concluded that 'a veritable conspiracy is afoot amongst journalists, certain scholars, and officials in Thailand, the U.S.A., and maybe other countries, to keep dates for early bronze up and critics of them down' (1983: 10). Solheim found this claim 'ludicrous' (1983: 20). Bayard and Charoenwongsa could assert that 'the dating of bronze to 4,000 or 5,000 B.C. is an artefact of the media and not the current opinion of the excavators' (1983: 16) but the media had not plucked these dates out of thin air. The media had no interest in Ban Chiang until archaeologists publicized their work there.

I would maintain that part of the significance of Ban Chiang is that it was there that it first became clear that prehistorians would not be able to travel comfortably alongside the state discourse. Western archaeologists would be able to maintain an illusion of ideological neutrality but their Thai counterparts were in a much more difficult and compromising position. Ultimately, the promise Ban Chiang and other prehistoric sites had seemed to offer of contributing to the national identity project - more recent, monumental sites such as Sukhothai were exemplary in this respect - was not lived up to. The subsequent official neglect of prehistory, both at the level of research funding and protection afforded to prehistoric sites followed, I would argue, from this. There is the sense that prehistorians cannot quite cater to the demands placed upon the prehistoric past by the state's interpretation. However fascinating the

prehistoric evidence is for archaeologists it never quite matches up to the image of an early civilization.

The New Natives Look Back

ABORIGINES AS SIGNS

When the Europeans first encountered Australia at the beginning of the seventeenth century Europe had already been been sending ships around the Cape of Good Hope and into Asian waters for over a hundred years. These voyagers were driven by a commitment to commerce and Christianity. The world beyond Europe's periphery was still thought to be populated by Wonders and Marvels. Wonder, as a discourse, would not properly be laid to rest until the great scientific voyages of discovery which were still a century away. Yet there was system in the often detailed observations the voyagers of the seventeenth century made of the new lands. They were, in fact, skilled in reading a system of signs which was essential to Europe in categorizing newly encountered lands and the societies living there (Defert 1982). Central to this system was material culture and the other products of human labour. It is possible, indeed conventional, to know people by their products though 'knowing', of course, is always subjective.

In the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1623 Jan Carstenz observed the material culture of the Aborigines, compared it to that found in New Guinea, and took away with him to Batavia a collection which included shields, weapons, and a man (Mulvaney 1958: 132). The objective was to find out what type of people the Aborigines were. In other words, to 'place' them. Were they warlike, for instance? What was the capability of their weapons? What did they eat? Did they cultivate? These were all relevant questions for people like the Dutch who needed to know what sort of reception they could expect to encounter in any particular place and what the inhabitants might offer in the way of trade. Europe's Scientific Revolution brought with it a new variety of voyager, epitomised by James Cook, who was as interested in the classifications of

science as in those of commerce and religion (White 1981: 4-5). But the voyagers of
Tasman's day were akin to those of Cook's in that their mission was to observe the
natives rather than to study their culture from the inside which, given the usually
fleeting nature of their stay, would not have been possible. 'Thus the peoples
discovered are not submitted to an analysis of their internal cohesion; they are exposed
to an inventory' (Defert 1982: 13).

The inventory could be carried out even when the people were not around. Jan
Carstenz examined the interiors of the 'wretched huts' of Aborigines on Cape York,
finding pebbles, human bones, and some resin (Mulvaney 1977: 263). On the
Australian west coast in 1688 and 1699 William Dampier examined camp sites to
discover what food people ate and James Cook did the same at Botany Bay in 1770.
By examining the food near the Aborigines' fires and observing the contents of their
huts Cook determined that they were a people who did not store food but, rather,
subsisted from day to day (Horton 1991: 10). It was fortunate that objects as well as
people could function as signs because Aborigines could prove extremely elusive.
Tasman failed to catch sight of any in Tasmania and De Vlamingh, despite six weeks
on the west coast and sixteen sorties on land by groups of his party, never saw a soul
(Mulvaney 1958: 133).

The Aborigines were also remote conceptually. From the European point of view
they were as far removed from the civilized state as it was possible to imagine. It was
fitting that in a continent which nature had invested with such oddities as the kangaroo
the human occupants, too, would be a bizarre discovery, apt to be consigned to the
lowest link in the Enlightenment Chain of Being. By the time of their first settlement
Europeans were thus disposed to observe the Aborigines and their products,
conceptually, from a great distance. The Aboriginal population around the early
centres of European settlement declined rapidly in the face of introduced disease and
settler violence. This meant that Europeans would soon more commonly see the
products of Aborigines in the landscape - the rock engravings around Sydney
Harbour, for instance, the carved trees and the shell middens - than they would see the
Aborigines themselves.

A gap was beginning to open up between Aboriginal reality and European images
of Aboriginal culture. The European images were based partly on what we would call
their archaeological traces in the landscape and it was an image of what they imagined
Aboriginal culture had been like before it was 'degraded'. Another reason Aborigines
were leaving the landscape was that they were being attracted to the European

settlements in order to trade and barter for the European goods they desired. In European eyes, the more European products and habits the Aborigines took up the less Aboriginal they became. A reduced population of Sydney Aborigines was still occupying some of the sandstone rockshelters near the harbour in the mid-nineteenth century but within a few more decades they had disappeared and their presence had become a memory. The archaeological shadow of the people on the landscape began to become more real than the people themselves.

The reading of signs became a more complex business between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The voyagers began operating within the context of science, particularly natural science. Europe's Scientific Revolution and the changes in outlook which accompanied it led them to see themselves as fundamentally different from and superior to the people they encountered in their explorations (Adas 1989). Seeing other peoples through the eyes of science they sensed that their observation was privileged. The Enlightenment viewpoint was leading them to see human society as part of the natural rather than the divine order and the native peoples of the Other World came to be included as subjects within the project of natural history.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF ABORIGINES

Carl Solander was chosen by Banks as a member of the team of natural scientists and illustrators on Cook's first voyage so that, as a pupil of Linnaeus, he might guide them in using the new biological nomenclature of his teacher in classifying the previously unrecorded plants and animals they would encounter. The choice of Solander is a good indication of the extent to which natural history would be the guiding rationale of the voyage. In his instructions from the Admiralty, Cook was told 'carefully to observe the Nature of the Soil, and the Products thereof' and, equally, to observe the Beasts and Fowls, fishes and Minerals (Beaglehole 1955: cclxxxii). 'You are likewise to observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition and number of the Natives' (1955: cclxxxiii). His observation and representation of the natives was similar to the approach he used with plants and animals. As Kaeppler (1988) observes, it was an approach concerned with cataloguing the varieties of mankind.

The way in which pursuance of natural history went hand in hand with the project of colonization is seen from the time of Australia's settlement in 1788. Settlement constituted an intervention in the condition of the continent in a way that the presence of voyager scientists had not. To possess the new land effectively it was necessary to

know it and it was in this pursuance of power via knowledge that settler scientists fanned out across the land. Botanists, zoologists, entomologists, geologists all inventoried the land and its resources. If the mapping of the coastline by Baudin and Flinders and the charting of Broken Bay, Botany Bay, and Port Jackson by Hunter (in 1788-89) permitted Europeans safe entry to the land then the mapping of the interior in the course of overland expeditions, like those of Thomas Mitchell in 1835 and 1836, allowed Europeans to inhabit it.

The systematic manner in which the description, illustration, and collection of the native's artefacts was carried out by the voyager scientists distinguished them from their predecessors. The collection of Aboriginal artefacts was to become more systematic still as is shown by a comparison of the collecting on Cook's first voyage with that carried out by the Russians in Port Jackson in 1814-1822 (Barratt 1981: 82). British possession was merely notional until the landscape with its rivers, mountains, and plains could be mapped with a degree of precision. Hence the elevated position of surveyors in colonial society. Onto the base maps produced by the early exploratory expeditions was gradually drawn the configuration of European landuse: the land grants, roads, reserves, and townsites. The function of the colonial museums which were being founded by the mid-nineteenth century was to be repositories for the collections of rocks, plants (living plants were assembled in the museum's equivalent, the botanical garden), and animals collected by natural scientists. There, classified and arranged in Foucaultian 'tables' (Foucault 1973), they defined, delimited, and made sense of the elements of Australian nature.

The 'official' collections in the Australian colonies were made by the various museums where, following the British Museum (founded 1753), they shared space with natural history specimens. It is entirely consistent with the European view of Aborigines as being at once close to nature and remote from European civilization that they (i.e., the remains of their dead) and their artefacts should be included in the museums along with the products of nature. In Sydney, the Australian Museum was founded in 1827 but until the first curator of ethnology, W.W. Thorpe, was appointed in 1906 responsibility for Aboriginal artefacts fell to the other scientists. The museum obtained 41 artefacts from the Mitchell expeditions and the artist, George Angas, presented 21 artefacts from his own collection in 1853 (Specht 1980). In Victoria the 96 wooden artefacts comprising the Beechworth collection appear to have been obtained in the 1850s or 60s (Cooper 1975, 1979). Cooper notes that such objects were sometimes purchased from Aborigines, sometimes stolen from campsites. They

were recovered after skirmishes with Europeans or after tribal fights, and were sometimes taken from Aboriginal graves.

Acquisition became more difficult as Aborigines became more 'remote' and the authenticity of artefacts in current production and use became suspect as Aboriginal culture was seen to be progressively 'contaminated' by European influence. In the 1870s it was difficult for Brough-Smyth to obtain baskets in Victoria of the type made in the early days of contact. Those currently being made at the Coranderrk mission were being fitted with handles copied from European baskets in order to better appeal to European customers (Cooper 1975: 8-9, 1979: 20). In European eyes, innovation, whether in the Aborigines' lifestyle or their products, was interpreted as contamination. Alternative sources of authenticity were found in the graves of Aborigines from which stylistically 'pure' personal ornaments and implements could be obtained and from archaeological deposits and surface sites which by the late 1880s were attracting attention as a source of stone tools. 'Pure' material culture could also still be sampled in the interior and north of the continent and collections were made in the course of ethnological expeditions by, among others, Baldwin Spencer and, later, Donald Thompson.

Much of the ethnological fieldwork at the Australian Museum under Thorpe (until 1932) and in McCarthy's early years consisted of collecting stone artefacts from archaeological sites, especially from those on the New South Wales coast where they could easily be obtained from middens. The artefacts but not the sites were treated as ethnological phenomena. The sites were simply sources of artefacts and they were 'mined' without regard to, or record of, internal structure. Numerous midden and rockshelter deposits were 'dug' simply to obtain greater numbers of artefacts than were available on the surface or, increasingly, because those on the surface had already been picked over. There was thus little or no difference between the collecting carried out by the museums and that undertaken by private individuals. Even 'official' excavations like that carried out by Thorpe and the recently formed Anthropology Society of New South Wales in 1930 were little more than hunts for artefacts (Shepherd 1982: 19, 47). Artefact collecting appears to have been seen by museums as part of the larger effort to 'salvage' material and information on the Aboriginal 'race' which was believed to be speeding to its extinction.

The artefact collections were arranged by museums using classificatory methods borrowed from the natural sciences. At the National Museum of Victoria, Baldwin Spencer (Director from 1899), whose Oxford degree was in biology, used taxonomic

criteria to group artefacts together: shields in one display case, boomerangs in another (Mulvaney 1990a: 121). At the Australian Museum McCarthy was influenced by the classificatory systems of his natural science colleagues to attempt a definitive typology of stone artefacts. Under what Mulvaney calls the 'adverse impact' (1977: 263) of the theorists of social evolutionism such as Tylor, Lubbock, and Sollas the framework used from the 1870s for classification was basically functional. The function of artefacts which had been observed among contemporary stone tool-using Aborigines served as a reference and variations in form were attributed to the vagaries of available raw material. Another school, the so called Materialists, maintained that form was entirely attributable to raw material, that stages corresponding to the divisions of the European Palaeolithic did not occur in Aboriginal prehistory and, implicitly, that cultural change was also absent (see McCarthy 1949: 305-7). Later, Etheridge and others classified assemblages according to formal attributes and after the 1930s McCarthy and Tindale began to identify a succession of stone tool cultures and thereby introduced the dynamic of change in Aboriginal prehistory.

Stone artefacts remained the major focus of archaeological study after professionalization in the 1960s, being used to plot chronological change and to elucidate technological practices and trade and exchange systems. It is not difficult to show (see below) how changes in the classification of artefacts have reflected changing European conceptions of the Aborigines. But taken as a whole, all these efforts in a sense represent the movement of Aboriginal products into a European system of meaning. The stone artefact classification schemas all have in common an attempt to make sense of the artefacts in Western terms, the terms available in the discourses of Western natural science, ethnology, and archaeology. The objective, of course, has been to rediscover the significance of the artefacts within past Aboriginal society. But immanent in the movement itself is the transformation of the artefacts into a radically different context of meaning: they become data, are broken down into attributes to be spun through computers, are represented in tables, lodged in museums. They become, in this sense, artefacts of our own culture.

This chapter is about the various ways Europeans have, over time, understood and dealt with those products of the Aboriginal past which we have now come to refer to as their archaeological heritage. It would be wrong, in discussing the collection and classification by Europeans of Aboriginal artefacts, to see this as a one-way traffic and, hence, ignore the fact that Aborigines were simultaneously acquiring and classifying European artefacts. In Chapter 3 I argued that rather than disintegrating in the face of European culture Aboriginal culture has reworked itself in a process

generically identical to the way Europeans reworked their metropolitan culture to accommodate the reality of the Australian setting. I suggested that the Aborigines' appetite for certain European commodities was not a sign of Europeanization, that they were not helplessly swamped by an irresistable flood of European products and practices as their own culture atrophied. Rather, that it was a reaching for the new and a desire to be part of the good life as the good life was being redefined. A careful examination of the sort of objects which changed hands during Cook's voyages shows how each side was selective in what it desired (Kaeppler 1988). If we look at the exchange transactions between Aborigines and Europeans at Port Jackson in the decades after 1788 we find that they included 'gifting', bartering for curiosities, name exchange, and the provision of services and we find that the transactions were socially determined on both sides (McBryde 1989). Selectivity on the Aboriginal side favoured steel hatchets, tobacco, liquor, bread, blankets, and certain types of European clothing. Confronted with a large range of European artefacts at Port Jackson the Aborigines' desires were focussed and specific. European dresses, jackets, trousers were worn mainly to win favour from Europeans (Barratt 1981: 65, Laracy 1980: 179) but there is a suggestion that hats and scarves were objects of genuine desire (Laracy 1980: 179). Bread was favoured over other European foods. Blankets were sought by Aboriginal women but were recontextualized as garments and as slings for carrying babies on their backs (Barratt 1981: 66).

The nature of 'gifting' and exchange as culturally mediated transaction is discussed by Kaeppler (1988) and Thomas (1991) and it becomes apparent that from the outset it was one of the ways the visitors and the visited (or the settlers and the indigenes) became culturally 'entangled' (Thomas 1991). By the time Europeans were collecting stone artefacts Aborigines were rejecting them in favour of steel hatchets and flaked glass artefacts. Europeans categorized Aborigines as users of stone artefacts while Aborigines, presumably, saw themselves as users of steel and glass. The white image of Aborigines thus always backdated them.

SHADOWS ON THE LANDSCAPE

It was the earth scientists more than the ethnologists who first saw Aboriginal archaeological sites ('*in situ* artefacts', they were sometimes called), as interesting in their own right. People like R. Etheridge, palaeontologist at the Australian Museum from 1887, and Edwyn Statham, an engineer with the Department of Works (NSW), came upon these places in the last decades of the nineteenth century while carrying out

fieldwork. The sites seemed to demand not so much explanation as the sort of descriptive recording they would use for fossils or rock formations. Carved trees, shell middens, axe grinding-grooves, rock engravings and various other sites were consequently described and marked on maps. Campbell recorded and photographed numerous rock art sites in NSW in the 1880s and 90s. William Anderson recorded shell middens on the South Coast of NSW (Sullivan 1981) as did Statham on the North Coast, the latter devising a means of calculating shell volumes (Statham 1892). In Victoria, the museum scientist von Blandowski described the Mt William axe quarry in 1854, obtained information from Aborigines about it, and reported on its geology and the chemical composition of its stone (Mulvaney 1977: 263).

Non-professional 'enthusiasts' also played a part. In the 1880s the landowner, James Dawson, and the Presbyterian pastor, Peter Macpherson, independently reported on the oven mounds of the Western District of Victoria. They described the distribution of the mounds and 'opened' some of them to reveal their contents and the manner of deposition, very much in the way English barrows were dug into earlier in the century. Through the activities of professional and amateur collectors from the late 1800s an extensive word-of-mouth knowledge of the distribution of artefact-bearing prehistoric sites was built up, especially in the southeast of the continent. Surveys were carried out to locate sites as a prelude and corollary to the first stratigraphic excavations carried out in the 1930s by Tindale in South Australia and McCarthy in New South Wales. The surveys were systematic to the extent that they targetted particular areas - McCarthy and his associates covered the tributary valleys of the Hawkesbury River one by one, recording rock shelters - and that information on a common set of attributes was collected. The museums began to keep inventories of recorded sites. The surveys and inventories represented a movement of these phenomena into the European system of meaning equivalent to that involving portable artefacts. In a rudimentary way, types were being defined and patterns read into the distribution of sites in the landscape. With Mulvaney's survey work on the lower Glenelg in Victoria in the late 1950s such surveys became an established part of the archaeological discourse. They were as fundamental to the taking possession of the Aboriginal archaeological record as the cartographic surveys had been in taking possession of the landscape.

Natural scientists investigated a wide range of archaeological deposits in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They were not interested in Aboriginal history, as such, but in the time depth of human occupation on the continent. The uniformitarianism of Lyell was now an established geological doctrine and many of them were also aware

of the work of Boucher de Perthes and others in demonstrating the contemporaneity of human artefacts with extinct fauna in Europe. Etheridge excavated deposits at Long Bay, Dee Why, and Port Jackson looking for evidence of Aborigines in the Pleistocene. Geologists like William Anderson excavated deposits bearing extinct marsupial fauna partly to determine how the Aborigines could be situated geologically. At Shea's Creek, near Botany Bay, Etheridge and others found artefacts in deposits belonging to a phase of lower sea level but neither they nor any of their scientist colleagues were able to find definitive evidence of Pleistocene occupation in Australia. Soon after the turn of the century they stopped looking. So, on the one hand, archaeological sites were phenomena in nature which required recording and, on the other, certain of them offered potential for answering significant questions in Australia's natural history. They attended to these phenomena within their respective discourses (i.e., geology, palaeontology) partly because, in the absence of archaeologists, it was not clear in which discourse they properly belonged.

The failure to find Aboriginal remains in recognizably Pleistocene deposits led many to conclude that the Aborigines had come to Australia in recent times. Some also subscribed to the view that certain of the remains attributed to Aborigines actually belonged to a prior 'race' of people, an idea which in various forms has been canvassed on and off up to the present day. George Grey attributed the rock paintings he discovered in the northwest of Western Australia in 1838 to a previous and superior 'Malayan' race (Mulvaney 1958: 147). Mulvaney observes that Grey's account of this cave art sparked a lengthy speculation in the literature on other possible origins. He cites the example of W. Hull who 'produced Egyptian, Hindu, Brahminical, Persian and Druidical artistic and symbolic elements from the cave walls' (1958: 147). Similarly, A. Carroll, editor of *Science of Man,* in 1892 attributed this art to 'the hand of the stranger' (1958: 306). Aboriginal rock art was problematic because it might appear to be the product a culture 'higher' than that credited to the Aborigines. The choice was either to dismiss it as unimpressive or to invoke outside agents. A letter to *The Science of Man* in 1898 from a J.G.F. Evans observes that the 'tumuli or barrows' encountered by Grey in 1837 on the northern coast were 'silent witnesses' pointing to 'a race superior to that found at the present time' (Vol 1[5]: 107).

These claims belong to an internationally widespread genre of strategies aimed at disassociating indigenous people from the archaeological remains of their predecessors. It has been deployed, particularly, in cases where the remains have been of a type generally accorded respect by Westerners on the basis of their grandeur or aesthetic appeal. The marvellous remains are juxtaposed with an image of the local

indigenes as manifestly inferior in intelligence and creativity. The nineteenth century Moundbuilder debate in the United States is a prime example of this. So, also, was the insistence of white colonists in Rhodesia that the Zimbabwe ruins were the work of non-Africans, even after it was demonstrated archaeologically that they were of Bantu origin (Garlake 1983). Strategies like this have also been found useful by collectors of antiquities who wish to acquire and expatriate items from indigenous space (Hinsley 1989). There is a variation of this genre in which it is explained that the indigenes have degenerated culturally since the time the admired items were produced and are now without the taste to appreciate them, at least not to the same extent as the foreign antiquarian.

The study of the Aboriginal material past within the natural history discourse persisted long after the nineteenth century. We find it in the Royal Geographic Society (Queensland branch) expeditions to the Carnarvon Ranges in 1937, 1938, and 1940 during which Aboriginal rock art sites and stone artefact scatters were recorded (Elkin 1940). In the expedition report, the botanical details provided for the plants assumed to have been eaten by Aborigines in the region and of plants depicted in the art lend a natural history gloss to the enterprise (Goddard 1941). Also, the priority given to economic and ecological explanation over social theory in Australian archaeology from the 1960s suggests a degree of amity between natural history and the archaeological discourse (see Thomas 1981).

Natural history provided the context in which Aboriginal antiquities first became widely appreciated by science and by the public in Australia. Natural history, of course, had a social context and the nature of this context warrants examination.

ABORIGINAL ANTIQUITIES AND THE PROJECT OF COLONIZATION

What meaning did science read into Aboriginal archaeological sites in the period from the latter half of the nineteenth century until about 1930? Firstly, those with an interest in science were connected through a metropolitan-periphery relationship with the hubs of learning in Europe and North America, a relationship similar to that maintained by foreign scholars in Thailand in this period. For the most part they were following the agenda of theories set by metropolitan writers. By far the most significant body of theory was that of evolutionism.

It was not Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) which inspired ethnologists, archaeologists, and the scientific community generally, in the period 1860-90, to believe that that human history consisted of an evolutionary progression along a line leading from the savage state to industrial civilization via stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization. What inspired them was the eighteenth century belief in progress and perfectibility. When they were eventually accepted as authentic, the Palaeolithic sites discovered in Europe in the valley of the Somme, at Kents Cavern, and elsewhere in the first half of the nineteenth century were taken as a proof of the reality of social evolution. The Stone Age artefacts dug up by pioneers of prehistoric archaeology like Boucher de Perthes helped in picturing the material culture of the Savage stage of evolution. Though the theories of the evolutionist ethnologist, E.P. Tylor, were essentially to do with the evolution of the human mind he was disposed to stress the material, artefactual side of culture rather than the social or ideational side (Stocking 1968: 89).

What came to be known as 'the comparative method' was founded on the belief that human progress could be documented by reference to numerous human societies which, because of local circumstances or accident, had stalled in their evolutionary development. They now remained as living examples of the stages of Savagery and Barbarism. It was in the great enterprise of documenting this living museum in the non-Western world that, in Australia, A.W. Howitt (1830-1908), his collaborator, Lorimer Frison (1832-1907), and Baldwin Spencer (1860-1929) set out to systematically observe 'traditional' Aborigines and to feed illustrative data from the field back to the evolutionist ethnologists in Europe and America. Mulvaney draws attention to a petition, written by J.G. Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough,* and signed by Tylor and 76 English anthropologists, scientists, and politicians, calling for the governments of Victoria and South Australia to support Spencer and Gillen's 1901 transcontinental expedition. It begins, 'We, the undersigned, being convinced that the scientific study of the institutions and beliefs of savages is of the greatest importance for the understanding of the early history of mankind...' (Mulvaney 1990b: 108). There seemed little point in applying the sort of archaeological methodology being developed in Europe to Aboriginal sites. It could provide only a very incomplete picture of a lifestyle that was, in detail, readily observable in the present. As with pre-1960s Western versions of Thai prehistory, the recourse by many Australian workers to diffusionist theory to account for particular Aboriginal artefact types was testimony to the ingrained view that Aboriginal society and Aboriginal products stood for developmental inertia rather than inventiveness.

In Australian museums, artefacts collected from living Aborigines and from archaeological sites were treated as equivalent. They were collected by the same people and were displayed together. The failure to draw a distinction between them reflected the static view of Aboriginal culture. In 1898 the editor of *Science of Man* petitioned the journal's subscribers in words redolent with the sense that Aboriginal culture in its entirety was an antiquity:

> This Society wishes to obtain from all dwellers in this country everything they know about its antiquities, will all such therefore send us everything they know about the blacks, their dialects, customs, ceremonies, their drawings, markings, carvings, and paintings, with photographs and accurate drawings of all bora grounds, burial places, and all other similar things, and send them to us so that they may be put on record and thus prevent their being lost or forgotten.

Science of Man 1898 1(4): 78

The artefacts of the present Aborigines could only be the same as those of previous generations since all occupied the uniform space of the 'savage' stage in human development. It might be appropriate in Europe to order ancient objects into 'ages' - Thomsen's museum opened in 1819 with its collection of antiquities arranged according to the Three Age system - but in Australia there was only the Stone Age. Europe had a history whereas Aborigines *were* history.

What meaning did Aboriginal remains have for the settler community in general? It was almost as if cultural evolutionism had been *designed* to support and justify the colonial project in Australia. Previously, settlers had believed Aborigines were eminently inferior to themselves and had treated them accordingly. Now they could prove it. Aboriginal artefacts were symbolic, in a sense, of what logically would be swept away by the tide of European civilization. If the voyagers and other early observers of Aboriginal artefacts could maintain a relatively neutral interest in them and the people who made them, in the colonial setting this was no longer possible. The Aborigines by now were seen as a menace to white settlers and an obstacle to the whole colonial enterprise. Like the indigenous bush, they and what they stood for had to be eradicated to create space for civilization. It is revealing that in the period 1836 to 1841 only four Aboriginal artefacts were added to the Australian Museum's collection and none were added over the next twelve years (Specht 1980). Mulvaney (1985) tells us that none of the artefacts of wood or other perishable material in any Australian museum collection is likely to pre-date 1840 and few pre-date 1870: 'This means that traditional life was extinguished in many areas before Australian museums were able to collect representative specimens' (1985: 87-8). One wonders, though, whether it

also had to do with the attitude of Europeans to Aborigines in the settlement phase following 1788. Artefacts were brought back from across the advancing frontier by exploratory expeditions and many of these (e.g., the La Trobe collection) found their way to Europe. But in Australia, behind the frontier, there was little enthusiasm at this time at an official level for collecting and displaying Aboriginal artefacts.

This apparent hiatus in the collection of Aboriginal artefacts ended in the mid-nineteenth century but by this time a particular view of Aboriginal products had set in among European Australians. Michael Adas (1989) shows how as Western industrialization progressed though the nineteenth century Westerners came to consider inventiveness to be the hallmark of their societies. They saw technology, more than anything else, as the measure of their civilization's superiority. It put them, quite simply, in a different *class* to the rest of the world. In this context the 'primitiveness' of the Aboriginal material culture spoke of the inferiority of a dying race. Displayed in museums, Aboriginal artefacts emphasized the immense distance Australia had travelled since European settlement. Displayed at world fairs, those 'venues... that reduced cultures to their objects' (Breckenridge 1989: 202), in proximity to the machines and gadgetry of the industrialized nations, they spoke of the inevitability of the West's global dominance. Technology, along with race and evolutionism, could thus take the form of a discourse on Aborigines and their products.

Changes in the treatment by Europeans of the skeletal remains of Aborigines reflect different stages in the colonial project. The graves which were 'opened' by Philip and Hunter at Port Jackson in 1788 and by Oxley in 1820 in the interior of New South Wales were later carefully filled in, with the contents intact, after observations had been made. Compared with what was to follow, this level of disturbance was almost comparable to the explorer voyagers peering into the Aborigines' deserted huts. What did follow was the practice of collecting Aboriginal skeletal remains, much in the way artefacts were collected. It took the form of digging up human remains from isolated graves and burial grounds and of removing them from resting places in caves and rock shelters. Most of the remains were prehistoric. But the remains of recently dead Aborigines were also exhumed. In the well-known case of the Tasmanian Aborigine, William Lanney, his body was taken from the grave by a local doctor in 1896, the skull being sent to the University of Edinburgh. The skeletal remains went mostly to museums and university anatomy departments. During the period 1929-51 the remains of over 800 individuals were dug from graves along the Murray River by a private collector and lodged at the Anatomy Department of the University of Melbourne. Prior

to deacquisitioning in the 1980s, the National Museum of Victoria held the remains of 2600 Aborigines. The collection of Aboriginal skeletal remains was the gesture *par excellence* of a transition from the disengaged observation by voyagers and early colonial explorers to the intellectual and physical absorption of Aborigines as objects of science.

The appropriation of Aboriginal products into a European system of meaning through the act of collection and classification afforded a false sense of having penetrated a portion of the Aboriginal mind. Encompassing Aboriginal behaviour within our own understanding engenders what Breckenridge refers to as 'an illusion of cognitive control' (1989: 211) over the people themselves. It added, in however small a way, to the other means of encompassing them intellectually (e.g., through the discourse of race). It meshed with their being encompassed morally by the colonial legal system and physically by the white land-use system and by the network of missions and reserves.

ANTIQUARIANISM: THE SCOURGE OF CURIOSITY

From at least the last decades of the nineteenth century people were collecting stone artefacts from old Aboriginal camp sites and middens around the settled parts of Australia to form private collections. While they were in the tradition of ethnographic collection which had flourished on a private basis among the officers of the First Fleet (McBryde 1989: 176) their focus on the pre-contact stone technology of the Aborigines put them in a specialist category. These were a diverse group of men and women, many of them coming, like their counterparts in Britain, from the professions and the clergy, but they also numbered among them ordinary farmers and workmen. A.P. Elkin first developed an interest in Aborigines in 1918 when riding in a sulky through western NSW beside a fellow Anglican pastor with a passion for stone artefacts (Wise 1985: 26). His words evoke something of the context in which these people built their collections:

> Few hobbies can be more interesting for those who live in the bush than collecting relics and learning something of the habits of the extraordinarily primitive people to whom this country once belonged. When it is remembered that Australia is perhaps the only country in the world where a 1918 motor tyre may easily be punctured by a Paleolithic [sic] or Old Stone Age spear head, which in other countries would take deep digging to find, and that these remains are fast disappearing, it will be easily seen how important and fascinating it is to collect what remains before it is too late.

Wise 1985: 26

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I have chosen to treat these private collectors as antiquarians, representatives of a discourse distinct from that of natural science, ethnology, or, from the time it developed in the 1930s, archaeology. The basis for a tension which exists between antiquarianism and science has been addressed by Thomas (1991) in reference to the eighteenth century voyages of exploration through the Pacific islands. The natural scientists on these voyages defined the artefacts as scientific specimens. They disapproved of the collecting activities of the common sailors on their ships who were motivated by the prospect of commercial gain (there was a ready market for such exotica in Europe) and by 'curiosity'. We are familiar with curiosities as objects in the cabinets of Enlightenment humanists, but Thomas turns to Edmund Burke for a rendering of curiosity as an eighteenth century state of mind:

> The curious person represented by Burke does not assert a classificatory rule, or arrive at any idea of the import or origin of things; in his compelling image, curiosity is above all an infantile condition, and one which would apparently be disconnected from anything other than impressionistic judgement and from any analytic work upon phenomena, such as the classificatory project of natural history. The intellect is, as it were, overcome by desire, and rendered giddy by a succession of encounters with the novel.
>
> Thomas 1991: 127-28

While a tension certainly emerged in Australia between antiquarian collectors of stone tools and the proper science of archaeology it was not apparent until about the 1930s. Prior to this, and even after it, the relatively unstructured discourse of curiosity coexisted quite comfortably with that of natural science and ethnology. Part of the reason for this harmony may be found in a blurring of the boundary between curiosity and science among the collectors. Certainly, there were private collectors who operated in a fairly mechanical way but many others had a definite interest in natural history and ethnology, interests which informed their collecting. Many of them were keenly interested in classification and helped produce the early stone tool typologies (Mulvaney 1977). No committed collector can be entirely disinterested in classification since every collection is built and evaluated according to the types represented.

McCarthy's typology, *The Stone Implements of Australia* (1946), was intended partly to be a guide for collectors or, at least, appears to have been interpreted as such (Shepherd 1982: 46). Scholars like McCarthy could see value in the activities of private collectors because there was always the chance they would discover rare types (McCarthy 1938: 189). Not a few collectors liked to think of themselves as

participating, however modestly, in scientific endeavour and would have resented the idea that they were interested in commercial gain. Some made this point by donating their collections to state museums. By the 1950s these were bursting at the seams with stone artefacts. The collection which C.C. Towle, a Sydney antiquarian, bequeathed to the Australian Museum alone contained some 14,000 specimens (*Mankind* 1947 3[10]: 307).

The manner in which the collectors institutionalized themselves also speaks of a certain pretension to learning. Some of them worked within the museum structure as associates (McBryde 1986: 14) and many belonged to the Anthropological Society of Australasia (1895-1913) and especially to the Anthropological Society of NSW (1928-), both of which had close links with the Australian Museum. Like their more senior counterparts in Britain, such as the Society of Antiquaries, these learned societies provided a forum for collectors to exchange information, and to exhibit their collections. They also took it upon themselves to arrange collecting excursions to promising sites. Through the 1930s and 40s, as reported in *Mankind,* the Anthropological Society of NSW conducted excursions to view rock art or to collect stone artefacts, particularly from the shell middens around Sydney. Destinations included Port Kembla, Port Hacking, Lake Illawarra, and the northern beaches. The Australian Museum was nominated by the Society as 'repository' of artefacts collected on these trips (du Cros 1983: 36). Reports on the collecting activities of individual members were also published. W.H.P. Kinsela, for instance, made excursions to Canberra where he 'covered new ground' and 'added to his collection several good specimens' (*Mankind* 1932, 1[6]: 144). He went to Goulburn 'to investigate possibilities of collecting stone implements in that district and to search for an aboriginal burial ground he has heard about' (*Mankind* 1933, 1[7]: 168). Material from his collection, including 87 bone implements and two shell fish-hooks, was donated to the Australian Museum (*Mankind* 1942 3[3]: 87). In February 1929 Professor Radcliffe-Brown was informed that the Anthropological Society was planning a collecting trip - one of four that year - to the middens at Bellambi, near Wollongong, reputed to be 'the best collecting grounds in the Illawarra District'. The professor thought the excursion would be 'quite a good thing' but declined to attend himself. In the event over 60 people took part (letters in the Elkin papers, Sydney University Archives).

In NSW the sites in the Wollongong-Sydney-Newcastle area were those most targetted by collectors. Some enthusiasts ranged more widely. As a railway employee, C.C. Towle was able to amass a collection from sites all over the State. Regional

collections were also formed. Dr H.O. Lethbridge enlisted school children to help him collect from sites within a twenty mile radius of Narrandera and then further afield. With the help of his sons and local residents, R. Lindsay Black of Leeton set out to build a representative collection of artefacts from the sites of the far west of the State (McCarthy 1945a: 189). In South Australia , the collectors were particularly known for their enterprise:

> With increasing population and increasing interest there are more and more becoming involved and, armed with modern four-wheel-drive vehicles, some will drive 200 miles for a pirri point, 300 miles for a stone axe and 500 miles for a really good Aboriginal skull. If anyone hasn't the advantage of their own Land-Rover, South Australia provides a special service through one of its enterprising outback tour promoters who advertises in his circulars, "...points of interest include searching for Aboriginal artifacts of which large discoveries have been made on previous trips..."

> Edwards 1970: 164

In the words of Elkin quoted earlier there is a sense of national pride that, in Australia, not only did trees shed their bark instead of their leaves but Palaeolithic stone artefacts were to be found littering the surface of the ground instead of lying buried metres below the surface. Surface exposures provided something of a metaphor for the concept of 'flat time'. Private collectors did dig into archaeological deposits for artefacts and thousands of sites were destroyed in this way but they nevertheless saw the sites as being essentially two dimensional. An 'oven mound' in the Western District of Victoria, a midden deposit on the NSW coast, or a cave deposit in Queensland were all approached as uniform entities. John Mulvaney (1957) in the late 1950s had to argue strenuously in order to persuade non-professional enthusiasts such as his fellow members of the Anthropological Society of Victoria, most of them committed collectors, that stratified archaeological deposits existed in that state.

Stone artefact antiquarianism in Australia thus coexisted fairly comfortably with other European discourses on the Aboriginal material past. The advent of archaeology was to change this.

THE EMBRACE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The discourse which has dominated the field of Aboriginal heritage management in the late twentieth century is that of archaeology. The manner in which archaeology archieved this primacy and the relations between archaeology and other discourses on the Aboriginal past thus bear examination.

Among archaeologists there has been some difference of opinion as to how old archaeology is in Australia. Mulvaney uses Hale and Tindale's Devon Downs excavation to mark the beginning of the practice of archaeology proper. At Devon Downs stratigraphic principles were used for the first time to isolate distinct, chronologically ordered stone artefact 'cultures' which were equated with different human populations. Murray and White (1981), however, include the excavations carried out by natural scientists prior to 1910 and the subsequent classificatory studies by ethnologists and antiquarians within the ambit of archaeology, though stressing the lack of specialist training among these workers. They point to Mulvaney, appointed to the University of Melbourne in 1953, as the first prehistorian to practise in the country and date the beginnings of professionalization to the 1960s. Horton (1981) has argued that the dominance of the social evolutionist belief in the unchanging nature of Aboriginal culture meant that the study of their prehistory naturally fell to geologists and palaeontologists whose investigations he sees as archaeological. In Horton's (1981, 1991) inclusion in archaeology's lineage of these earth scientists, along with Philip and Hunter whose opening of Aboriginal burials in 1788 he refers to as 'archaeological excavations' (1991: 4), it is difficult not to see a young and perhaps insecure discipline projecting itself back in time and into minds where it really had no place.

My own interest lies in the formation of a self-consciously distinct discipline of archaeology in Australia and I take this process to have begun in about 1960. Some earlier investigators may have thought of themselves as archaeologists, but only a handful of them (Tindale and McCarthy from the 1930s and, later, Mulvaney) employed an archaeological methodology or situated their work within a distinctively archaeological body of theory. Perhaps the key component in the formation of any discipline is closure against amateurs and dabblers. In other words, against those without specific training. In the case of Australian archaeology this meant, in the first instance, closure against antiquarianism.

One of the main functions of the Anthropological Society of Victoria at the time Mulvaney returned to Melbourne in 1953, having just taken his archaeology degree at Cambridge, was to serve as a club for collectors of Aboriginal stone artefacts. Mulvaney coexisted with them - he had no choice - and benefitted from their extensive unwritten knowledge of the location of sites. He seems to have had a grudging admiration for them as a piece of Australiana in their own right: 'They were often rugged individualists, who free-ranged across state borders, untrammelled either by

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ethical considerations or by regulations' (1981: 18). However, he pressured the Anthropology Society to resolve that all artefacts collected by members during Society field excursions be lodged with the National Museum of Victoria, after first being exhibited at a Society meeting. In his first major fieldwork, a survey of the Lower Glenelg River, he visited the Bridgewater Caves and saw stratified deposits there which had been dug over and largely destroyed by collectors. 'It is tragic', he wrote, 'that such a site should have been so despoiled' (1990c: 159). His criticism of the collectors was that their digging destroyed the potential of deposits for archaeological excavation. Also, that their failure to record locational details meant the artefacts had little research value: 'Such collections are divorced from the contexts in which they were made, utilised and discarded, and can provide little information of a cultural or chronological character' (1957: 32).

Mulvaney's helplessness in the face of the competitive acquisitiveness of the collectors is well illustrated by the case of the individual who offered to show him 'a promising site, but only after he occupied several days scouring the area for artefacts for his own collection' (1981: 18). *This was in the mid-1950s.* A little more than ten years later the Victorian state legislature would prohibit such collection, placing executive control of protective legislation in the hands of archaeologists.

In New South Wales, McCarthy had been a collector himself up until the 1930s. As early as 1935, however, he was criticizing the work of private diggers on the grounds that it destroyed valuable evidence: 'This sort of thing has been going on for some time and has got to be stopped' (du Cros 1983: 47). Du Cros (1983) specifies the late 1930s as the point at which collectors began to be alienated from the Anthropological Society of NSW. The reason for this was substantially that McCarthy and the Australian Museum were urging the state government to protect Aboriginal sites, an eventuality which some collectors saw as inimical to their interests. The Bill which the Museum drafted at the government's request would have impeded private collection. On the whole, though, McCarthy tried to coexist with the collectors and even, at times, appears to have encouraged them (e.g., 1945a: 189), particularly if the artefacts were subsequently bequeathed to the museums.

The exclusion of antiquarians was part of the professionalization of archaeology. In the struggle to save the archaeological record from the predations of private collectors the latter became archaeology's Other and helped to give it an identity. The same process of closure was under way in Britain by the 1880s (Levine 1986: 38). Archaeology's strategy against antiquarianism has partly taken the form of portraying

it as an anachronism in the modern world. In the history of archaeology as written, for instance, by Glyn Daniel, antiquarianism is embraced, as a superseded form, within the unilinear narrative of archaeology's progress. The quest for a 'logic of progress' (Hinsley 1989: 80) in the development of archaeology denies authenticity to discourses on antiquities which are older than archaeology. They are presented as incomplete, forever falling short.

The advent of professional archaeology and the passage of legislation to protect archaeological sites by no means terminated antiquarianism in Australia. Safari tour operators in South Australia during the 1970s included on their itineraries visits to rich archaeological sites for stone artefact collecting (Ellis 1975: 10). In New South Wales in the same period illegal excavations were not uncommon, entire sites in the Hunter Valley being dug and sieved by collectors (Sullivan 1975b: 11). Antiquarianism has been pushed underground to some extent - it is illegal to offer Aboriginal artefacts for sale - but the practice continues to thrive in virtually every part of the country. One of archaeology's strategies for dealing with antiquarians has been an attempt to domesticate them by enlisting them as volunteers on archaeological projects. An effort was also made to channel their efforts into site recording (McCarthy 1966: 40-41).

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE NATION

When professionalized archaeology did appear in Australia it established itself with remarkable rapidity. In the late 1950s Mulvaney began teaching archaeology at Melbourne University. Golson was appointed to the Australian National University in 1960 and McBryde began teaching at the University of New England in the same year. In 1961 Richard Wright and Vincent Megaw were appointed by the University of Sydney and by this time Ian Crawford was working at the Museum of Western Australia. All of them had received their archaeological training and qualifications in Britain. Moves to set up the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies were taken in 1961 (it was established as a Statutory Body in 1964) and McCarthy appointed as its first Principal. It began funding archaeological research almost immediately and by 1965 had funded 12 projects. A conference was held at the Australian Museum in 1963 to define problems in Australian prehistory, an outcome of which was the convening of a committee to review the state of stone artefact typology.

The professional archaeologists were self-consciously separate from what had gone before, taking a jaundiced view of most of the earlier efforts in excavation and

typology (White and O'Connell 1982: 30). The difference in approach was dramatically apparent in the fact that most of the attention of the professionals went into constructing Aboriginal culture history, the very thing the natural scientists and antiquarians had eschewed. Deeply stratified sites were sought out, excavated to recognized standards of precision, and carbon dated.

How does one explain why the work of people like Tindale and McCarthy in the 1930s, which included both field survey and excavation, had not ignited a wave of archaeological investigation comparable to that in the 1960s? The literature of European and American archaeology was familiar to a number of people in Australia and a few, like Dermot Casey who returned to Melbourne in 1934, had field training in archaeology overseas. I would contend that a critical difference between the 1930s and the 1960s was that it was only in the latter that there was real *support* for Aboriginal archaeology in Australia. Most of the professional archaeologists who came to Australia in the 1960s did so because positions had been created in universities and museums. Once here, the wave of research they initiated was possible because it was funded, mostly by the AIAS and the Nuffield Foundation. The lack of support in the 1930s is epitomised by McCarthy having to undertake his surveys in the Hawkesbury and elsewhere in the Sydney region during weekends and vacations from his job at the Australian Museum. The notion of a wave of professional research in the 1960s is itself something of a misnomer since much of the work continued to be done by amateurs. Among others, Ian Sim (a Sydney public servant and bushwalker) and John Lough (a PMG worker) were funded by AIAS to survey rock art in the vicinity of Sydney. Robert Edwards (at that time a horticulturalist) was funded to survey rock art in the Flinders Ranges, and Percy Trezise was funded to do the same in the Laura area of Cape York. The recording work of these 1960s amateurs was essentially little different to that of their unfunded predecessors in the Sydney area in the 1930s and 40s (see Wright 1941).

Why did this support materialize? I believe Australia in 1960 was ready to embrace Aboriginal heritage as a unique component of Australian national culture. The role of nationalism will be dealt with in some detail later but I would mention here that the AIAS was established as a coordinating body in the salvage of information on 'traditional' Aboriginal culture which was perceived to be rapidly 'deteriorating' (McCarthy 1965a: 2-3). The rock art recording programme it sponsored might be seen in this context. But its more general commitment to archaeological research suggests that the salvage role was situated within a broader desire to append Aboriginal culture, or a certain representation of it, to what might be called national culture. Archaeology

was able to deliver to the nation the vestiges of Aboriginal culture fixed in the landscape. It must be stressed here that the version of Aboriginal culture re-presented for national consumption had little to do with the reality of Aboriginal culture as Aborigines lived it in the 1960s, it was one which consisted of a combination of prehistory, pre-contact and 'traditional' material culture, and a certain conception of authentic social and religious practices.

W.C. Wentworth, the politician mainly responsible for canvassing government support for the AIAS spoke of what was unique about '*our* Aboriginal society' (1968: emphasis added). He argued that because our universities were Australian they should be supporting Aboriginal studies (1968: 4). In this respect, given the nationalist underpinnings of the Australian National University (founded 1951), it may be significant that the first Australian academic appointment in archaeology was made there. The AIAS's project of salvage was essentially only different in scale from that attempted by the Anthropology Society of NSW in the 1930s, except that then it was directed at *the* Aborigines rather than *our* Aborigines (e.g., *Mankind* 1939 2[6]: 187).

W.E.H. Stanner was aware of the inclination of white Australians to selectively borrow from Aboriginal culture:

> I see it... as a sign of an affluent society enjoying the afterglow of an imagined past and as a reaching out for symbols and values that are not authentically its own but will do because it has none of its own that are equivalent.
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> 1969: 39

And yet the line between recognizing the value of Aboriginal culture and subsuming that culture under the nation is perilously thin. Stanner walked this line, especially in his public championing of the Aboriginal cause. I give, as an example, the occasion on which he urged the building of a museum of Aboriginal culture and history which would be a national memorial, standing in Canberra among other buildings 'concerned with Australian civilization' (1966: 43).

If the state supported archaeology in 1960 because it perceived a useful role for it, archaeology, for its part, explicitly supported the nationalist project. There has been a tendency to dwell on the remarkably strong Cambridge links of the establishment generation of Australian archaeologists, a tendency which risks obscuring the nationalist preoccupation of that generation (Murray and White [1981: 262] acknowledge this). I see this latter characteristic as being more significant. It was a

strong element in the public interface of the discipline through the 1970s and 80s and into the present. What was involved was not an appropriation of the Aboriginal past by Anglo-Saxon Australians but an appropriation of that past for and by the nation. In this act the geographic mass of Australia took on a meta-persona which subsumed the identity of all cultures within it. This is the sense I take from Mulvaney's statement that 'Australia is the last inhabited continent to discover *its* prehistory' (1964: 42, emphasis added). Mulvaney, an Australian by birth, has repeatedly rejected Aboriginal claims to exclusive, 'absolute custodianship' of Australian prehistory: 'I am also an Australian and I regard with pride the cultural achievements during the remote past of this continent and wish to study and analyse it as part of the inheritance of all Australians' (1981: 20).

Mulvaney's pride in the achievements of Australian archaeology stands forth in almost all his writing. There is a seeming determination to assert the independence of Australian prehistory. The image of Grahame Clark pointing his students off to the four corners of the globe in order to excavate evidence for a world prehistory meta-narrative (see Clark 1989) is countered by that of the students attempting the break the strictures of this empire. Speaking in one of the journals of the metropolitan archaeological establishment Mulvaney stated: 'I wish to redress the balance of Eurocentric distortion which relegated Aboriginal society to a backwater of human development and converted it into a storehouse of fossil customs' (1990a: 122). He cites such discoveries as the world's earliest evidence for human cremation at Lake Mungo and the ground-stone axes dating to 18-23,000 B.P. in Arnhem Land (1990a: 123-5) thus pitting himself against lingering social evolutionism and against Eurocentric models in 'world prehistory'. Just as a genuine admiration for Aboriginal culture no doubt lay behind Stanner's call for a special museum in Canberra, the pride of the first generation of professional archaeologists in their own achievement was matched by a genuine admiration for the achievements of prehistoric Aborigines.

One of the manifestations of a discipline's formation is the close communication maintained between its professionals. In contrast to the 'diverse and sadly discordant research interests' (Mulvaney 1981: 17) of McCarthy, Gill, and Tindale, in their respective capitals in the decades prior to 1960, the professional archaeologists had both an agreed methodology and began to build a body of local theory with a unanimity facilitated by their common academic background (mainly Cambridge), conference and seminar forums, and informal contacts. One gets a strong sense - in the writing of Mulvaney, especially - of a community spirit among the professionals.

The support which archaeology received from the state after 1960 was founded upon the discipline's claim to be the legitimate discourse on the material past. In Europe and America in the nineteenth century archaeology sought to establish its credentials as a 'proper' science at a time when science enjoyed unprecedented acclaim. Ethnology had struggled for admission to the British Association for the Advancement of Science for ten years prior to its inclusion in 1842 and the study of antiquities was not included till the 1850s (Morrell and Thackray 1981: 276, 284-5). Archaeology was weakly represented in the American Association for the Advancement of Science for the first few years after its foundation in 1847 but was a regular feature of congresses by 1852 and comprised roughly half the papers in the ethnology sub-section of Natural History by 1857. The inaugural congress of what is now ANZAAS was held in 1888. These events attracted great public interest and press coverage. The place which ethnology held in the Association from its early days was reflected in its appointment of Baldwin Spencer as Secretary in 1899 and as Congress President in 1921. Antiquarians had been indirectly involved through the participation in congresses by representatives of the Anthropological Societies - McCarthy, for instance, attended in 1939 on behalf of the ASNSW. One day was devoted to discussion of archaeology at the Sydney Congress in 1962 and the establishment of the discipline was acknowledged by the creation of Section 25a in 1975, a matter of considerable satisfaction to archaeologists. Post-1960 archaeologists in Australia saw themselves as a scientists and so accreditation by ANZAAS was important important to them. The scientific imperative in Australian archaeology was no doubt compounded by the influence of the ultra-positivist New Archaeology school from the late 1970s. More than anything else it was in this cloak of science that archaeology drew away from antiquarianism

From the 1930s a succession of state and federal administrations drew upon the advice of the anthropologist A.P. Elkin on matters of government policy towards Aborigines but only after he had exhaustively promoted the scientific credibility of his subject (Wise 1985). Subsequently, anthropological expertise was recognized in the settlement of Northern Territory land claims. For its part, the overtly political role of prehistoric archaeology was in heritage management. In this it was both advocate for state protection of the material past and arbiter, through its public archaeology and consulting arms, in significance assessment. This extension into public affairs increased pressure for academic qualifications as a verification of expertise and for the corporate professional identity which only a recognized discipline could provide.

There are those who choose to see Australian national identity as natural, as simply an inherent sense which people in the nation have of themselves (e.g., Price 1991). Much of the recent writing on nationalism, however, departs from the essentialist position, maintaining instead that the nation is an artefact or invention of the modern state (e.g., Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990). National identities, according to this reading, are no more natural than are nations. The nation state is a political entity originating in Europe in the eighteenth century and national identity is the sense of commonality which the state must foster in its population for the reason that such commonality is unlikely to have any more pre-existing reality than the nation state and its borders. This view of national identity as produced rather than given might seem to imply populations completely malleable in the hands of supremely powerful state apparatus. On the contrary, Hobsbawm (1990), for one, would maintain that the common people of Europe were actively engaged in nationalist movements as a means of improving the condition of their lives. But it is characteristic of the modern state to intervene routinely in almost every aspect of the lives of citizens and to seek to create a consensus of values to ensure their loyal support. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is crucial here, for he indicates how the modern state obtains consent (consensus) within the sphere of culture (Bocock 1986: 28); culture, in this context, meaning the arts and what we now know as the 'culture industry' (Adorno 1991), rather than the 'culture' of anthropology. The heritage discourse is situated securely within the former.

The transition from the pre-modern to the modern state happened more quickly in Australia than it did in Britain (Davidson 1988: 93). This was because of the absolute power enjoyed by the governors until 1825, because of the accustomed ability of administrations to control minutely the white population, and because Britain's refusal to legally recognize the prior occupation of the Aborigines meant the state was able to start from scratch (Davidson 1988: 93-94). There may be something here which accounts for a tendency for the state in Australia to be taken for granted: it was there virtually from the beginning.

In Australia the identity of the early colony (or, more properly, colonies) was marked by a tension between a pride in British ethnicity and a steadily increasing sense of being different.The settler colony in Australia was a 'fragment' of Britain both in the sense of reflecting a particular moment in the social history of the homeland (Hartz 1964) and, for the first hundred years or so, of consciously attempting to reproduce the homeland. An attempt was made, for instance, once the settlement potential of the

land was realized, to duplicate the English spatial framework of counties, hundreds, and parishes in New South Wales (Jeans 1974). But in reality colonial society, like the land, had been different from the outset. The class structure, the economy, the political process (especially in the period of direct colonial rule) all departed markedly from their counterparts in Britain. Given the radically original nature of the physical environment, coupled with the extent of geographic isolation from Britain, it is hardly surprising that as early as the 1850s a consciousness of being different from the British had developed (Blackton 1960). By 1881, 70% of the population was Australian-born (Eddy 1988: 144); by 1901 the proportion had increased to 77%.

In *Inventing Australia* (1981) Richard White has drawn attention to images of Australia which preceded nationhood. In 1788 there was the image of Australia as a place of exile for criminals and a "hell on earth". It was a view encouraged by the British judiciary as a deterrent to would-be law breakers. The official approval and sponsorship of free settler immigration brought with it a radical change of image, a major component of which was the 'working mans' paradise' where those without means could enjoy a high standard of living. It originated as a sales pitch for recruiting immigrants. Upon arrival, they would find that the colony, too, had slums and that only certain categories of skilled workers made good. Another element of the new image was a vision of Australia as an 'Arcadia', a pre-industrial version of England with contented peasants in the fields and squires on their horses. The power of this vision is evident in the frequency with which the landscape was described as 'parkland' and the persistence of attempts at closer settlement. In reality Australia was a place of sheep runs and towns.

By the 1890s the sense of distinctiveness found expression in literature and art in the form of an Australian 'type', a sturdy, independent individual who was an amalgam of the digger and the outback battler set against a bush backdrop. After the nation became a political reality with Federation in 1901 the uniqueness of the Australian character was further elaborated. What distinguished this myth-like image from previous images was that it was internally rather than externally produced and that it had its context in nation-building. Although the principle of nationalism is that the political entity should be based on a shared ethnicity, language and common history, few if any nation states have enjoyed homogeneity on all three counts. It has frequently been necessary to absorb ethnic minorities into the *ethnie* of the nation, national literate languages had to be promoted over the often myriad regional tongues, and history had to be rewritten. Australia had ethnic homogeneity, a common language, and even a degree of geographic boundedness rare among nations. What it

lacked was what Hobsbawm (1990: 73) identifies as the strongest known 'proto-national cement': historical depth. It was not the plain fact of this lack which was a problem - plenty of the new European nations had no history they could call their own - rather, it was the apparent impossibility of ever being able to fabricate it back beyond 1788. The brief span of history that the nation *could* claim as its own was under a great deal of pressure to provide events with the potential to galvanize collective identity. The elaboration of Anzac into a nationalistic cult of monumental scale provides the most striking example of such pressure. Since it was impossible to seek out deep historical roots it was necessary for the national spirit to make just the sort of a semi-miraculous appearance as took place at Gallipoli.

The near-universal literacy in Australia by the time of Federation made the production of a national identity relatively easy via the print media. As in Europe, school education, national rites (e.g., celebration of the 1888 centennial and after 1911, of Australia Day), and mobilization against external enemies helped turn a novel political entity, Australia, into a focus of deep-felt allegiance. In Australia, as elsewhere, the note of contrivance in the collective identity fostered by nationalism is apparent in the glaring disparity between the image and the reality. There was the difficulty of squaring a 'bush' identity with the reality of a population in which the majority were women, urban, and culturally British. The disparity between the vaunted honesty, egalitarianism, and mateship in the 1890s Australian 'type' and the cold reality of anti-Chinese thuggery on the goldfields, the racism of the White Australia ideology, and the cavalier dispossession of the Aborigines would seem to have been similarly problematic. But it is precisely such disparities that the mythologizing process covers over.

THE NEW NATIVES

Bernard Smith has detected a shift in the late 1890s from a nationalism which, 'exuberant and generous', had celebrated what seemed unique in the Australian landscape to a nationalism which changed into an 'anti-foreign chauvinism' (1975: 231). Conrad Martin's watercolours were attacked by Sydney Long for not being suggestive of the 'weird mystery' of the bush and the native-born Arthur Streeton became a culture-hero: 'To paint Australia you had to be Australian... Unless you were born with "Australian" eyes you could not hope to "see" the Australian landscape' (1975: 234). As to the weird mystery of the bush, it was not 'an intrinsic quality of Australian nature but a notion elaborated by Marcus Clarke' and 'By the

time Long received it the idea had become sufficiently acclimatized to appear as a quality native to the bush itself and not, as in truth it was, the distillation of a century of colonial experience of bush life' (1975: 234). The first of a series of translations thus began whereby the land's strangeness became an essential quality perceptible only to the Australian-born. First they could see the strangeness of the land, later it would come to reside in them as an essence. It was a process of translation by virtue of which European Australians were indigenized.

New natives were emerging. But what of the existing natives, the Aborigines? A complex tension has existed between the indigenizing function of Australian national identity and the reality of the Aborigines' existence. It is a tension which I do not pretend to fully understand but I am convinced that it lies at the heart of European dealings with the remains of the Aboriginal past. It is a tension characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand, until about the 1970s, Aborigines and Aboriginal culture were excluded from all but a very minor part in defining what it was to be Australian. On the other, there has been since the nineteenth century a grafting of certain elements of Aboriginal culture (or a white vision of that culture) onto the national identity. I will deal with the process of exclusion first.

The racism of cultural evolutionism proscribed Aboriginal society as a savage anachronism. Under these conditions Aborigines could be of little use to the project of nation formation except, as mentioned earlier, by holding them up as the Other of the settler society. The perceived primitiveness of the Aborigines, particularly in the area of technology, in this way served as a contrast to flatter the settlers' achievements. Once Europeans began usurping Aborigines as the indigenes the Aborigines became a potential threat to the new natives' authenticity. The Europeans dealt with this threat by seeking to control the perception of Aboriginal culture, most notably by creating the myth of the 'traditional Aborigines' (discussed in Chapter 3). Because Europeans occupied the space of nativeness first in the southeast of the continent a rationale was developed for invalidating any claim of Aborigines in that area to be 'real'. The heartland of the new natives was the southeast and so the 'real' Aborigines must be elsewhere: in the Outback, the interior, the north, the past. In the southeast their place was by taken, symbolically, by groups like the Australian Natives Association, a mutual insurance friendly society founded in 1871 whose membership was restricted the native-born.

The Aborigines were also excluded on purely racist grounds. In the decades spanning the turn of the century a common British ethnicity was central to national

identity, 'and to be British meant to be white' (Cole 1971: 516). The White Australia policy was designed to keep Australia white through the device of immigration control. The left-intellectuals of the 1930s-50s known as the 'radical nationalists'(e.g., Brian Fitzpatrick, Russell Ward, Robin Gollan, Geoffrey Searle) reacted against the Eurocentricism of the Australian middle class. But they drew for inspiration upon an anti-elitist national ethos which harked back to the 1890s ideal of the bushman and which had no place for Aborigines (see Rowse 1978, Turner 1979). Holding to the myth of egalitarianism and mateship forged on the frontier and in the bush they were chronically unable to exorcise the xenophobia and racism that permeated the worker tradition in Australia. The Aborigines remained as remote from the national character as ever. The critique of this myth mounted in the 1950s and 60s by the 'new critics' (e.g., Donald Horne) insisted on the middle-class, suburban essence of Australian culture, another arena in which there was no place for Aborigines. It is indicative of the total separation of Aboriginal culture from nationalist conceptions that Humphrey McQueen (1970), in his critique of labour ideology in Australian nationalism, virtually ignored Aborigines. In the history of national identity in Australia the centrality of the vision of racial purity can hardly be overstated: national identity was forged partly in *opposition* to Aborigines and Aboriginal culture. In the context of nationalism they were the antithesis of what 'being Australian' meant (White 1981: 15).

And yet Aboriginal culture provided far too rich a source of emblems to be ignored altogether. It was a source of original-sounding placenames from the earliest days of settlement. Depictions of Aborigines were introduced into the work of silversmiths and other decorative artists in the 1880s, along with native ferns, kangaroos, emus and emu eggs. The Aborigine with spear or boomerang in hand became a decorative motif, mostly serving as an indicator of white progress. At a more serious level, the sacred designs of Aborigines such as the Aranda found their way into the work of artists like Margaret Preston. During the 1930s, 40s and 50s the concentric circle motif of the Aranda *tjurunga* appeared on European secular objects ranging from book covers to caravan curtains (Jones 1992: 107). There was a limit, however, to how far these references might be taken. The controversy raised by the depiction of an Aborigine on the Victorian centenary stamp (Alomes 1988: 109) gives some indication of how opposed white society was to being identified with Aborigines as people.

In the 1930s the Jindyworobaks, a small artistic elite, sought roots for the true Australian spirit partly in Aboriginal culture. One of their number, Rex Ingamells, wrote in 1938 that this spirit might be found in 'An understanding of Australia's

history and traditions, primaeval, colonial, and modern' (quoted in Alomes and Jones 1991: 229). The continuity he invoked between pre-contact Aboriginal culture and the culture of the emergent nation finds a parallel in the more recent interest of the environmental conservation movement in Aboriginal culture. I hasten to add that theirs' is a motivated reading of Aboriginal culture and the Aboriginal past. It is a reading wherein Aboriginal landuse is at one with nature and not an intervention in nature, wherein Aborigines, in Morton's words, 'have come to assume a feminised role on the side of conservation interests' (1990: 48). This might be seen in the context of the unease of many in the West, especially since the 1960s, with the condition of urban society and of the concomitant romanticization of hunter-gatherers. In a broader historical sense, it was possible to romanticize Aboriginal hunter-gather lifestyle once it was a lifestyle which was no longer possible. In other words, the mythologized 'traditional' Aboriginal culture was no longer in competition with settler landuse.

An appreciation of the spirituality of Aborigines is advocated by some white Australians as a means to heal our own alienation from the Australian environment (Lattas 1990: 52). Aborigines may even be expected to provide a 'common sacred space' available to all Australians (1990: 60). Morton (1992) also comments on this desire of white Australians for the sacred aspect of Aborigines' relationship with the land. He finds in a nationalistic song by John Williams a claim of mythical descent from Aborigines: 'For not only does he sing about being like an Aborigine, he claims to be speaking for the new white tribe' (1992: 58).

From about the 1960s in Australia there has been a distinct swing towards a wholehearted grafting of Aboriginal culture (again, a mythologized version of it) onto the nation's corporate identity. I would suggest that the appropriateness to national identity of Aboriginal cultural references had always been apparent. But their use had until the late 1960s been severely constrained by the manner in which Aboriginal society had been constructed as the settler society's Other. However, the taint given to racism by the Nazi state together with the promotion, in the Western bloc, of the idea of civil liberty made discriminatory policies against Aborigines increasingly difficult to sustain in the post-war environment. Yet the impetus came from changes in the internal as well as the international climate of opinion. The 'new nationalism' espoused by the Whitlam government (1973-75) and its emphasis on cultural achievements provided an opportunity for the promotion of elements of Aboriginal culture (e.g., art, dance, music). But this was foreshadowed by a widespread recognition that the deplorable condition of Aborigines in modern Australia was a national scandal. Testimony to this was the 1967 referendum in which almost 90% of

the electorate voted power to the Federal government to act on Aboriginal matters. The assimilation policy was abandoned as the idea gained ground that Aboriginal culture was not inherently anachronistic.

The post-war influx of non-British European immigrants precipitated a shift, at least at an official level, to a pluralistic, multi-cultural ideology. The mono-ethnic construction of the national identity finally splintered. With this the major obstacle to identification with Aboriginal culture was removed. Or so it appeared. In reality it is doubtful whether any nation state would permit truly autonomous minority cultures, indigenous or otherwise, to exist within its boundaries and tolerate the potential erosion of national consensus this would imply. There are many indications that the programme of government-sponsored multi-culturalism is more integrative than pluralistic. In the state's presentation of minority cultures, the emphasis tends to be on art and performance rather than other social practices and institutions.

In the course of the 1960s and 70s legislation was enacted in the various states to give protection to Aboriginal archaeological and (in some cases) sacred sites. Conventionally this is seen as an outcome of the determined advocacy of a small band of archaeologists coupled with a gradual acceptance of the conservation ethic in the community at large. I reject this view, arguing instead that state intervention gave legal expression to a nationalistic appropriation of elements of Aboriginal culture which had long been in train. In the 1960s and 70s professional and amateur archaeologists were certainly important as advocates for protective legislation but they were successful only insofar as they could mesh the archaeological interest with nationalist interest. The information they could wring from archaeological sites, particularly by radiometric dating, enhanced the value of the 'archaeological resource' in the eyes of the public and the state. But this simply made it more attractive as a resource for nationalism.

THE ACT OF APPROPRIATION

It is instructive to consider just how long there had been pressure from some quarters in Australia for state protection of Aboriginal sites. In 1889 Robert Etheridge wrote that there was so little interest in these remains:

as almost to amount to a national disgrace. Their burial-mounds, "kitchen-middens", and other traces likely to become geologically interesting, are disappearing so fast... that ere long few or no traces will be left.

<div align="right">Etheridge 1889: 15</div>

In the Sydney area the attention given to rock art, most notably by the recording programmes of Campbell, led to the question of its protection being raised in the NSW parliament in 1905 (Hawke 1975: 7-8). The government was prompted to make provision in the Crown Lands Consolidation Act of 1913 for the creation of special reserves (e.g., Bobadeen) for the protection of art sites. Management of these, however, was left in the hands of local government which tended to be 'apathetic' unless it could turn the sites into tourist attractions (McCarthy 1938: 121; Wright 1941: 10). W. J. Walton, an amateur natural historian wrote to *Mankind* to say that after years of effort to get art sites in Warringah Shire protected three small reserves had been gazetted in 1932 (*Mankind* 1932 1[6]: 144). The Australian Museum at about this time was urging the Chief Secretary to take action to preserve the Brewarrina fish traps - the local Town Council had expressed an interest in such a move (*Mankind* 1933 1[7]: 168). It seems that in certain cases, where Aboriginal sites (mainly rock paintings and engravings) were spectacular, accessible, and on public land, local governments were prepared to consider them a local resource and a certain section of the public was interested in visiting them. It is clear, though, that the NSW Government did not consider them a state resource.

Local historical societies and field naturalists' clubs took an interest in the protection of some art sites as did bush-walkers' clubs (McCarthy 1938: 124). The first bush-walking club in NSW was formed in 1914 and as the movement grew in strength through the 1920s and 30s it engendered an interest in nature conservation (see Thompson 1986) and sometimes, as a corollary, in rock art sites occurring in the bush. (It would be wrong, though, to attribute to the bushwalkers the romantic vision of Aborigines held by the Jindyworobaks). Maps issued to 'hikers' by the Royal National Park Trust and the Railways Department (NSW) showed the location of rock engravings but no effort was made to protect them (Wright 1941: 10).

In the 1930s the Anthropological Society of NSW mounted a campaign to pressure the government to take responsibility for Aboriginal 'relics'. McCarthy had for some time been disturbed by the destruction of Aboriginal remains, particularly rock art sites, in the course of urban expansion and at the hands of vandals. In collaboration with Professor J.L. Shellshear, a retired anatomist from the University of Hong Kong, who arrived in Sydney in 1936, he began directing the Society's attention to

the need for protective legislation. A plea for legislation received 'strong support' at the Society's AGM in 1937 (*Mankind* 1938 2[5]: 138). McCarthy described the current *ad hoc* system of protection under the 1913 Act as 'extremely unsatisfactory' and insisted upon blanket protection for all 'sites of prehistoric or aboriginal origin' (1938: 121). The ASNSW strategy was to make representations to the government while simultaneously calling on the public to provide it with details of sites under threat. They then canvassed relevant State government departments (particularly the Lands Department, the Public Works Department, and the Main Roads Department) and local governments to take action. McCarthy, meanwhile, through the Australian Museum, in 1939 began submitting copies of protective legislation enacted in Britain, the United States, and South Africa to the Premier's Department. The Government called for a preliminary draft of legislation and this was drawn up by McCarthy and submitted in 1939 (du Cros 1983: 61). But war broke out and the Government changed in 1941 before any action had been taken. The campaign continued, however, and in 1947 the ASNSW appointed a sub-committee to draw up another draft of legislation which was duly submitted in 1949, again without result.

The ASNSW appears to have been instrumental at the 1937 meeting of ANZAAS in Auckland in having the Council forward a resolution to various governments which called their attention to the 'existing unsatisfactory state of affairs and asked that remedial action be taken' (*Mankind* 1938 2[5]: 138). The Australian Anthropological Association, formed in 1939, also provided a means of taking the protection issue to a broader forum (du Cros 1983: 61).

The pressure for legislative protection of Aboriginal remains in NSW thus seems to have been no less intense in the 1930s and 40s than it was in the 1960s (protection was finally enacted in 1970). Sharon Sullivan has maintained that it was not the addition of archaeologists to those demanding legislation which tipped the balance but an awareness by the government of 'growing public interest and support' for protection; by 1970 'such legislation had become an acceptable social goal' (1975a: 24). I would agree with this but would place 'public interest' and 'social goal' fairly firmly within the context of a shift in the construction of national identity and would suggest that the state was as much leading as being led by public interest.

In 1902 Etheridge called on landholders in Western NSW to send Aboriginal artefacts to the Australian Museum rather than allow them to be 'further disseminated over the world and lost to the people of the State' (see *Mankind* 1931 1[1]: 6). There is a clear sense here of these artefacts being the property of the nation. They were seen

as the property of science and of the nation but were not seen as the *heritage* of the nation. The latter embodies the understanding that they are *of* us. When the protective legislation was finally passed the rationale was that Aboriginal sites were our patrimony rather than our property, a distinction which, I maintain, is worth bearing in mind. In the earlier view, Aboriginal artefacts such as those in Museum collections 'are the State collections and the people's collections and are always available for study by workers desiring to do so' (McCarthy 1938: 122). The campaign in the 1940s to have the Customs Regulations amended to prohibit or control the export of Aboriginal artefacts seems mainly to have been intended to guarantee access to collections by local scholars, a far cry from the spirit of the UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970) which is concerned with the loss of 'cultural patrimony'. The 1940s concept of property was one which in no way implied a nationalistic identification with the material.

The rejection of European stone artefact typology by Kenyon and the Melbourne Materialist school which Mulvaney saw as informed by a 'bleak nationalism' (1977: 264). But this was the nationalism of distinctive Australian products rather than the nationalism of heritage. Even when remains were referred to as 'national monuments' (McCarthy 1938: 120) or 'national relics' (Wright 1941: 7) this was still not the same thing as 'national heritage'. Writing of a Sydney resident's gift to the State in 1941 of an area of land containing Aboriginal rock engravings, McCarthy extolled him thus: 'Mr Howe was a keen advocate of the permanent preservation of these relics because he realized their great historical and scientific value' (1947: 322). Such a statement would be almost unthinkable at the present time without also invoking their significance as national heritage. What was missing was the sense of identifying with their Australian essence.

This chapter has aimed to show that Europeans have been able to derive a number of different meanings from the Aboriginal material past. The earliest observers read Aboriginal products as a system of signs allowing Aborigines to be classified in terms of commerce and science. The discourse of natural history continued this process after settlement as did the related though particular discourses of archaeology and antiquarianism. These discourses could and did coexist, even in the work of the same people, though in the post-war era the totalizing ambition of archaeology saw a hardening of distinctions between proper science and curiosity. In the work of writers like Clifford (1988) and Thomas (1991) we are offered a vision of objects wherein the solidity lent to them by their material nature belies a surprising degree of instability at

the level of meaning. They readily acquire new meanings as they move from one culture to another and as they move through time: 'As socially and culturally salient entities, objects change in defiance of their material stability' (Thomas 1991: 125). The grafting of the Aboriginal material past onto the Australian national identity is a striking example of this instability. Objects which only a few decades previously had displayed the inferiority of the Aboriginal 'race' were now transformed into objects which rooted the white Australian nation more firmly into the continent's soil, landscape and history.

Living City, Dead City

HERITAGE AND OLD SIAM

Focussing on 'traditional' discourses on the material past in Thailand I tried to show in Chapter 2 that old and ancient artefacts are seen and valued not so much for their materiality as for what they signify and for the powers that reside in them and animate them. At another level of 'traditional' discourse certain of these artefacts serve as fields of merit for the pious Buddhist. The availability of decaying temple buildings as subjects for meritorious acts of maintenance and rebuilding has been an essential means of spiritual and social betterment for the individual. Here, it was found, was a system of significance radically different to that underwriting the West's modern discourses on the material past within which materiality takes clear precedence.

Towards the end of Chapter 2 evidence was presented to show that from the mid-nineteenth century the rationalist Buddhism of the urban elite tended to oppose the spirit beliefs which largely underpinned the relationship rural and non-elite Thais had with the material remains of the past. Chapter 4 traced the changing fortunes of the 'official' discourses on the material past (focussing on antiquarianism and archaeology) and concluded with the appearance of the state's own discourse which I termed a heritage discourse. While the term 'heritage' is appropriate for this discourse with its main concern of providing the new national community with emblems of a common past there may be a risk of confusion with the category 'heritage management'. In this latter, 'heritage' is held to be a value-neutral: 'heritage' simply denotes the material past and 'management' denotes the conservation of it. I maintain, though, that this claim of neutrality cannot be sustained, in the West or anywhere else.

The management of the past is always implicated in current considerations of politics and power. The discipline of archaeology keeps close company with the heritage discourse, providing, as it were, its work force. The engagement of archaeology in the interests of the modern state have been set out by others (e.g., Silberman 1982, Shanks and Tilley 1987, Trigger 1981, 1984,). Trigger has shown how even the Anglo-American New Archaeology movement of the 1960s and 70s shared with Soviet Marxist archaeology (from 1929) the characteristic of being an archaeology with a 'world mission' (1984: 365). In what follows it is assumed that the practice of archaeology and the practice of heritage management are value-laden rather than value-neutral. The power relations of which neither is innocent differ in detail but I see no distortion arising from an understanding that 'heritage' as a category is always interested in the politics of the present. The extent to which Thailand differs in this respect from Australia is merely a matter of manner and degree (see Chapters 5 and 7).

In this chapter I look at the heritage discourse in action, as it were, in what are probably the two major heritage management issues in Thailand today: the illegal acquisition of antiquities (more commonly, 'looting'), and the restoration projects undertaken by the state through the FAD. I also want to look at the question of whether and how the 'traditional' discourses of animism and Buddhism (particularly pious as opposed to rational Buddhism) coexist with the heritage discourse. Before beginning, though, it is in order to briefly examine the emergence of the Thai nation state, that development which has so deeply coloured the visible Past in Thailand today.

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century the polity known as Siam shared with the pre-colonial states of mainland Southeast Asia the characteristic that effective power was highly concentrated in the capital and faded rapidly towards the periphery. The peripheral provinces (Lan Na in the north, the Malay territories in the south, and Cambodia in the east) were actually semi-independent tributary states suspended within the overlapping sovereignties of Siam, Burma, Vietnam, and China. Instead of borders, the states of the Southeast Asian mainland had these shadowy areas of overlapping sovereignty where a state's influence waxed or waned according to the fluctuating strength of the centre. Like Japan, Siam under King Mongkut opened itself to trade after a long period of virtual isolation from the West. It became clear to Mongkut's successor, Chulalongkorn, that unless he could transform his polity into a cohesive Western-style nation Siam risked being absorbed by one or another of the European colonial powers. In place of ill-defined marchlands the new state needed

hard borders. Survey teams went out and borders were drawn. By the 1880s the new 'geo-body' (Thongchai 1987) of Siam had been mapped, but in order to make it a reality the space of the new nation needed to be filled with an infrastructure of centralized provincial administration of the kind which Prince Damrong's Ministry of the Interior set about establishing.

The 'ethnic core' (Smith 1986: 212) of the new nation consisted of the Tai linguistic-cultural group occupying Central Siam. Around it, well within the national boundaries, were the Malay, Lao, Khmer, and hill tribe minorities. Such ethnic and genetic heterogeneity of population has more often than not characterized modern nation states. Europe, for instance, has 69 ethnic groups, only 24 of them in the 1970s having states of their own. Despite this, nation states often find their *raison d'etre,* their appearance of being natural and solid rather than produced and fragile, in ethnicity (Smith 1981). They develop a myth-like shared ethnicity the corollary of which is an equally mythologized history. 'Imagined communities' (Anderson 1983) find it necessary to imagine their history. Central to this process in Thailand has been a construct I shall refer to as Old Siam. Old Siam is a projection of the national community and national culture back through time. A motivated reading of the solid traces of the past finds in them familiar national traits and institutions either alive or prefigured. The past becomes a shared property the sharing of which fosters social solidarity and patriotism.

In Thailand the key concept of the *chat,* a Sanskrit word for caste or shared descent which has been elaborated to stand for the Tai cultural-linguistic community, first came into use in the 1880s. It was promoted energetically in the Sixth Reign as the unique community constituting the nation. The *chat* was a component of an inseparable trinity whose other parts were Buddhism and the monarchy. By 'the conceptual conflation of monarchy and nation' (Anderson 1978: 213) King Vajiravudh and the ruling nobility intended this official ideology to ensure their permanent place at the head of new nation (see Kesboonchoo 1986). By sponsoring the restoration of ancient monuments which they assiduously visited, by promoting the reproduction of 'traditional' architecture and art in modern buildings, and in other ways, they coopted the material past into their programme.

The programme ultimately failed, to the extent that the monarchy lost power, by the coup of 1932, to a grouping of the non-aristocratic bureaucratic elite who were soon to be dominated by the military. The function of Old Siam now became that of conflating the new political establishment and the nation. The original Sixth Reign ideology of

official nationalism was, and continues to be, used to legitimate the establishment's rule by emphasizing continuity with the past and portraying itself as the natural embodiment of traditional Thai values. This is illustrated in the attention given by Thai governments after 1939 to promoting a national Thai culture (see Reynolds 1991). The Cultural Mandates (1938-44) prescribed a code of behaviour on citizens based on a mixture of 'traditional' Thai values and Western conventions. Successive governments, through agencies such as the Department of Public Information and the later National Identity Board and National Culture Commission (established 1979), have constructed the concept of a 'Thai way' as a reference point for negating alternative ways (e.g., other forms of government) which have the potential to destabilize the establishment's hold. These ways are seen as being 'not Thai'.

Following 1957 the government of Sarit Thanarat rehabilitated the monarchy and the higher aristocracy and orchestrated a return to the royal form of Buddhism (Jackson 1989: 27-9). The centrality given to Buddhism and kingship in the formulation of Thai nationalism, sets it off from the Western model (e.g., Ishii 1986, Murashima 1988). They are key components of Old Siam, constantly being discovered in or projected onto ancient monuments (see Keyes 1991). Steeped as it is in a vision of past glory, Old Siam might seem a curiously Orientalist construction. It might seem to reproduce the perception of those nineteenth century Western travellers (Chapter 4) for whom exoticism and the past were inseparable, for whom, indeed, Siam was the past. This is not the case. For the Orientalist the history of the East is all downhill: 'Their great moments were in the past' (Said 1985: 35). The message of Old Siam, on the contrary, is that the greatness of the present is mirrored in the past. There is no possibility of degeneration here; the past *leads up to* the present.

THE PROBLEM WITH LOOTING

Most of the prehistoric and early historic ceramics one sees for sale in the antique shops of Bangkok and Chiang Mai have been dug out of archaeological deposits in contravention of the Ancient Monuments, Antiquities, and National Museums Act, 1961 (also relevant is the law enacted by the National Executive Council in 1972 prohibiting the buying, selling, and export of artefacts from Ban Chiang and ordering the registration of those already in private hands). Most of the bronze and gold ornaments, glass and ceramic beads, amulets and Buddha images, fragments of decorative architectural sculpture in stone and stucco, and fragments of carved wood from temples which now all glitter behind plate glass in the shops of Thai cities have

also been illegally obtained. The antiquities market in Thailand is well established and flourishing. A transactional chain can be traced back from the customer-collector to the antique retailer or dealer, the provincial and local agent, to the villagers who dig for the artefacts or the gangs who steal them from abandoned temples and ancient monuments. An agent calls at villages on his or her regular sweep through a district buying from farmers those finds made fortuitously in the course of ploughing or in the occasional, often seasonal, pot-holing of local mound sites. This is the antiquities trade in its most simple form. At a more organized level, groups of diggers operate as teams and are employed on a wage or commission basis to work on larger sites, normally after a fee for digging rights has been paid to the landowner and considerations paid to local police and, perhaps, the village headman.

Ban Chiang was the first site to be the target of large scale illicit digging. The discovery there in 1971 of good examples of the strikingly decorated red-on-buff Bronze Age pottery caught the attention of collectors. Some pieces found their way to Bangkok, 'and immediately the rush was on' (Lyons and Rainey 1982: 7). Dealers and collectors from the capital and other towns hurried to obtain good examples of Ban Chiang ware while prices were still low. The Northeastern provinces are the country's poorest and even the few baht initially offered for pots by dealers was sufficient motivation for the villagers to dig. Within a year almost every house compound in Ban Chiang had been mined.

By mid-1972 good Ban Chiang ware was fetching up to 45,000 baht in Bangkok (*Bangkok World* 4th June 1972). Though only a small fraction of the antique shop price tag was paid to the village diggers a number of the people of Ban Chiang, by village standards, became rich overnight (see Van Esterik 1978: 73). Mounded sites of comparable age to Ban Chiang are widespread in this part of the Northeast and by 1973 hundreds of these were also being mined for their pottery. Carrying out a regional survey in 1975, an American archaeologist found that only the remote sites remained untouched (Schauffler 1976: 29). Even with these, a small test pit excavated by the survey team would invite systematic looting within days of the team's departure. 'Professional looters' took an increasing role, among them a team of Ban Chiang villagers who moved around the region searching for new sites after the Ban Chiang deposits had been exhausted. Given their local knowledge, their contacts, and their readiness to pay for information, these local entrepreneurs were more than a match for the archaeologists drafted into the region by the FAD. Speaking of the archaeological surveys of the 1970s, Wichakana says the looters always beat the archaeologists to the sites (1984: 548).

Since Ban Chiang, prehistoric artefacts have held their place in an antiquities market which grew steadily during the 1970s and 80s. There are now estimated to be over a thousand antique shops in Bangkok (National Museum official, pers. comm.). Collecting has broadened to take in ceramics and other artefact types from all parts of the country. There has been intensive illicit digging at sites in the Sukhothai-Sisatchanalai area for the celadon for which they are famous. In the village of Muang Kao, situated in the ruins of Sukhothai, eight households out of 241 in the late 1970s made at least a partial living by buying ceramics dug up by other villagers and selling them on to dealers from the cities (Vongvipak 1980: 21-22).

Elsewhere, glass and ceramic beads have become a target for diggers. Found in sites of the proto-historic and historic periods, some of them tradeware items from India, they are popularly believed to have magical properties. Most of the sites recorded by Glover (1982-83) in west-central Thailand had been or were still being dug for beads while he was in the field. At one mounded site up to one thousand people were reported to have been digging simultaneously (1982-83: 99). At another large mound 'well-organized teams' had been digging continuously for more than two years (1982-83: 100). Glover warned that unless unauthorized digging was curbed an archaeological understanding of the region's history might prove to be impossible. Bead-hunting arguably entails the greatest destruction of archaeological deposits because diggers are more inclined to work systematically over a site rather than pot-hole it. Given the small size of many of the beads they have found it useful to employ screening and wet sieving techniques borrowed from archaeologists.

Writing of the illegal removal of 'art objects' from above-ground sites (e.g., abandoned or ruined *wat*) Woodward voiced the concern and pessimism of many art historians and archaeologists regarding the phenomenon (1978). Noting the results of a field inspection of Khmer-style sanctuaries in the southern provinces of the Northeast, where as many as 90% of the monuments were 'severely damaged', he remarked: 'At the worst moments, it may seem that there is little left worth preserving' (1978: 92). The English language newspapers in Thailand carry regular reports on such losses. That occupied *wat* are not immune was illustrated, in August 1988, by the 'decapitation' and theft of the heads from two Buddha images at the famous Bangkok temple, Wat Po. The two antique dealers from River City (a modern shopping plaza on the Chao Phraya known for its dozens of up-market antique shops) who were charged had been running a syndicate targeting temples. A police spokesperson said:

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the suspects showed customers catalogues containing colour photographs of artifacts taken mainly from Northeastern temples. The customers, mainly foreigners, marked down their orders and left the rest to the "cutting teams" which would get the items from the temples.

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Nor are sites in FAD Historical Parks and other closely-managed precincts immune. In 1977 decorative stucco facing from the famous Khmer-style Phra Prang Sam Yot and from a structure in the Wat Mahathat ruins in the same Central Thai city, Lopburi, went missing. Structural damage sustained by ancient 'monuments' in the course of such removals have on occasion weakened them to the point of collapse.

In the case of prehistoric sites, the archaeologist's complaint against illicit digging is not that artefacts are simply removed from deposits. This, after all, is precisely what archaeologists do themselves. It is the *way* the illicit digging is done which makes it anathema. Specifically, the archaeologist objects to the lack of regard to the internal structure of deposits. These structures, if traced and recorded by proper methodology, have the potential to yield volumes of data on past behaviour at a site, on the natural environment in which the people lived, and on the physical processes acting on the remains after they were deposited.

In a sense archaeology is defined by its concern for context. To be interested in artefacts without any contextual information is antiquarianism, and is perhaps found in certain types of art history or the art market.

Hodder 1986: 120

There is no question that the impact of illegal digging on the archaeological record in Thailand has been devastating. My own impression, as an observer on FAD and other archaeological field surveys in the North and the North-east, and from conversations with a number of Western and Thai archaeologists, is that perhaps half or more of the prehistoric and non-monumental historic and proto-historic sites have been affected. The impact in some parts of the country, however, has been greater than in others. Richard Wilen believes the area northeast of Non Khai (in the Northeast) where he has worked has seen relatively little illicit digging, perhaps because of its isolation (pers. comm. 1989).

The pejorative term 'looting' has been generally applied by archaeologists in the West, as in Thailand, to the phenomenon of illegal or non-archaeological digging and one can understand why. I question, though, whether part of the anger in the

archaeologist's response to the phenomenon is not to do with the fact that it is the discourse of antiquarianism which has produced it. Earlier, in Chapter 1, I looked at how the emergent discourse of archaeology in the West established its preeminence over antiquarianism as the legitimate knowledge of the material past by a process of closure and depreciation. Antiquarianism was not Science. Archaeology was successful in its bid for legitimacy but the antiquarian collector did not go away. To what extent, then, is 'looting' the ghost of antiquarianism come back to haunt archaeology? It may be useful to look for an answer to the United States, where a far more solidly established discourse of archaeology to that in Thailand has been confronted by 'looting'.

Concern among archaeologists about illicit digging of prehistoric Indian sites dates from late last century and caused them to lobby for site protection in the form of the federal Antiquities Act, 1906. Pothunting has been 'rife' in the Southwest since the early twentieth century, 'endemic' in the Southeast since the 1930s Depression (Fagan 1988: 73). It has been escalating since the 1960s, perhaps due to a surge in prices following a highly publicized New York auction in 1971 (Hingston 1990: 28). In 1987 a report by the General Accounting Office estimated that 32% of the 135,815 recorded sites on Federal Lands in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, had been 'looted' (*Cultural Resources: Problems Protecting and Preserving Federal Archaeological Resources*).

Archaeologists in the United States have made their position on 'looting' quite clear. Pothunters are held to be guilty of plundering and pillaging. They are 'ravagers' (Fagan 1988: 15). They have 'attacked', 'assaulted', 'ransacked', 'invaded', and 'overrun' archaeological sites and the lands containing them (Society for American Archaeology 1990: 8). The profession's mounting alarm has culminated in the Society for American Archaeology 's (1990) counter-offensive against 'looting'.

The energetic vilification of 'looters' has not been matched by an effort to situate the phenomenon historically with any accuracy. I suspect this is because if 'looting' were to be traced back through time it would turn into something else: antiquarianism. How, one might ask, did antiquarianism become 'looting'? A clue may lie in archaeology's rhetoric. The terms for describing pothunters in the previous paragraph belong to the language of warfare as, for that matter, does the term 'looting'. 'Looting' is perceived as an attack on archaeology aimed at archaeology's most precious resource, its data. Archaeology and antiquarianism have, indeed, long been in combat and the SAA's new campaign is not the profession's first. Previously,

archæology's strategy has been to write antiquarianism out of history by the device of making it appear to have been subsumed by archaeology. In general works on the history of the discipline such as Willey and Sabloff's (1980) the myriad of people with an interest in prehistoric artefacts and sites have been sifted through, in the manner of Whig history, to find those whose approach has had similarities to or has seemed to intimate the coming of modern archaeology. The exclusion of those who were simply unadorned antiquarians has obscured the fact that for every Cyrus Thomas who went out to survey and excavate mounds as archaeological phenomena in the late nineteenth century there were dozens, perhaps hundreds, of collectors for whom the sites were significant only as sources of pottery.

Antiquarianism is erased from history, in many accounts, by glossing it as archaeology. By denying it the status of a separate discourse or, at best, confining it to the past, it has been possible to deny its *ongoing* existence as anything except an aberration of archaeology, motivated purely by economic gain and crass materialism. Wildesen defines archaeology in its early days thus: 'it consisted of finding exotic artifacts, bringing them home to put on display, and writing a book about one's adventures' (1984: 5). This, of course, is a definition of antiquarianism. The obfuscation may not be deliberate but it is certainly endemic in the archaeological treatment of 'looting'. In one account looting is described as 'destructive archaeological activity' (Miller 1981: 37). It may be destructive of archaeological evidence but it is patently not archaeological activity. It is antiquarian activity.

Not surprisingly, there has been little discussion of what drives the antiquities market. What is the nature of the desire to possess antiquities? The SAA report suggests collectors are motivated by 'materialism' and a desire for social 'recognition' (1990: 12). It fails to address the possibility that collectors obtain a genuine satisfaction from the artefacts. Vitelli's contention that 'Pillaged objects have irretrievably lost their contexts, are by definition severely damaged, and are curios - pretty, perhaps, but dumb' (1980: 558) is wishful thinking. From the antiquarian's point of view - within, that is, the discourse of antiquarianism - they are undamaged and entirely satisfactory. One wonders whether archaeology's partisan and superficial treatment of collecting is not underwritten by a fear that behind the collector lurks an alternative value system.

Wishful may also be the assumption that society as a whole supports the archaeologist's position. Pothunting is part of the rural economy in some areas, supplementing seasonal incomes, and was established as such as early as the 1890s

economic downturn when unemployed silver-miners took to pot-hunting with official sanction (Wade 1985: 175). It provided income for farmers during the Depression of the 1930s (Harrington 1991:28). The frequent reluctance of courts to take a severe line with international antiquities smugglers (Koczka 1989) hints at a broad base of sympathy for collectors in the judiciary. In the Pacific Northwest the fight against 'looting' seems to have been hampered by 'misguided' local support for hobby collectors (Osborn 1990: 29). One writer goes so far as to suggest that archaeologists may be out of tune with an American ethic which sees Indian antiquities as things to collect and own (Schneider 1990: 30). A New York commercial gallery director when questioned by a journalist about the ethics of selling antiquities responded: 'We do not sell, we expose people to culturally uplifting objects' (*New York Times Magazine* July 16, 1989). My point is that the archaeologist's is a sectoral rather than a universal view.

Tension exists between archaeologists and antiquarians over what the former call 'looting' not merely because the two compete for access to and ownership of antiquities. It is also because they compete over the determination of what those objects mean. Clifford observes that the story of how 'primitive' art was picked up by the Modernists (Picasso and others began collecting and imitating 'primitive' art from about 1910) is 'a history not of redemption or of discovery but of reclassification' (1988: 196). By a 'taxonomic shift' the objects became art whereas previously they were ethnographic items. What better illustration of a point made earlier (at the conclusion of Chapter 5) that objects change their meaning 'in defiance of their material stability' (Thomas 1991: 125). Prehistoric utilitarian or religious objects are antiquities for the antiquarian, art for the Modernist, frontier exotica for the pioneer, and data for the archaeologist.

THE PAST IN CIRCULATION

Having attempted to prise 'the problem of looting' free from the conceptual constraints archaeologists have imposed on it I now set out to reconsider the phenomenon as it occurs in Thailand. I am wary of a tendency on the part of heritage managers to represent 'looting' in Thailand as a departure from traditional practice and to account for it by some variation of what, in reference to environmental degradation, Kunstadter (1989) calls the 'theory of moral collapse'. My contention is that antiquities of various types are, and have been, routinely taken up by Thais and recontextualized within the belief systems of the present. The objects may enter into an

overt form of circulation as part of an established commercial trade (the antiquities trade, for instance, or the trade in amulets). But there is a much larger, less obvious form of circulation, whereby all these objects, in life trajectories spanning thousands of years, are being moved, physically and conceptually, through space, time, and society.

To begin with, it has long been a custom of rural Thais to keep in their possession chance finds of antiquities as heirlooms and charms. Prince Damrong was able to obtain old coins from locals in the Kanchanaburi region 'which were dug up some years before' (1904: 7). More recently, Bayard's survey team were shown prehistoric pottery and stone and bronze axes by villagers in the Pa Mong area of the Northeast: 'Many of the artefacts shown to us were of course heirlooms, found by a grandfather or an uncle twenty years ago and 30km distant' (1980: 8). It became standard practice for archaeologists conducting field surveys to call at villages and to track down sites by asking people where they had found the ancient artefacts in their possession. In the Kanchanaburi area in 1957 a Neolithic site was reported to Heider's party by a monk on the basis of artefacts ploughed up by villagers 40 years previously (Heider 1958b: 57). Artefacts held by villagers at Chansen were photographed when the site was recorded in 1966 (Bronson 1976: 5). Even in the remote and rugged limestone country of Mae Hongson, Gorman enquired at villages for sherds during his search for prehistoric cave deposits (Gorman 1970: 89). The point here is that long before the advent of antiquarian collecting, ordinary Thais were accustomed to dealing with ancient artefacts.

People collected them for the magical power they possessed. Fortuitously discovered prehistoric polished stone adzes were kept as charms, those in the Kanchanaburi area being 'kept usually in the freshwater jars as a protection against illness and lightning' (Sorensen 1988: 4). In Phuket they were apparently ground up to a powder and taken as medicine (Bourke 1905: 12). Similar practices have been reported from elsewhere in Southeast Asia and further afield. In Sab̯ah such artefacts were valued as charms and worn as amulets (Evans 1913: 155), in peninsula Malaysia they were used as 'cattle-charms' and to inspire fighting buffaloes with courage (Linehan 1940: 18). Here are ancient artefacts, then, which though they may not be traded, have been recycled into present belief systems.

The institution of Buddhism in Thailand has played a role in gathering together antiquities and redefining them, much in the manner of modern museums (where objects are gathered and redefined as exhibits). Old or ancient Buddha images, whole

or fragmented, may be discovered when ploughing fields or digging drainage ditches and are often taken to the local *wat* where they can be properly venerated and cared for. The same gathering process has occurred on a larger scale. Rama I is credited by Damrong with undertaking to 'rescue' ancient images which lay 'scattered and mutilated in ruins in the Ayudhya, Lopburi, and Sukhothai areas (1973: 28). The scale of the rescue was vast, one Bangkok *wat* receiving a thousand images in this way (Wells 1975: 39). Rescue, in this sense, is recycling. The old images represent a form of capital. Their presence in the new capital of Rama I lent legitimacy to the new dynasty and, besides this, many of the individual images were known for the efficacy of their power. We see here a circulation of sacred commodities similar to that described by Geary (1986) for medieval saints' relics in Europe. Speaking of the relocation of Buddha images from old Chiang Saen to Bangkok, McCarthy notes 'It was looked upon as desecration that they should be allowed to moulder away in ruins' (1900: 138). It was also, perhaps, looked upon as a waste of the images' potential as a field of merit.

As well as keeping and preserving palm-leaf texts in their libraries *wat* served as 'repositories' of folklore, medicinal learning, and language (Tambiah 1976: 207). As noted in Chapter 4, some abbots have established *wat* museums. In addition to taking in and caring for Buddha images, *sema* stones, and fragments of carved stone gathered in from fields and ruins in the locality monks have gone out actively seeking items for their museums. The abbot of Wat Supatanaram, in Ubon, assembled a collection of Khmer architectural sculpture in this way. After his death in 1955 individual pieces were used as markers in the ash interment ground of the *wat* (*Bangkok Post* 4th Jan 1989). One is struck by the similarity of the FAD's semi open-air storerooms at Phimai and behind the *prasat* at Phanom Rung to these *wat* 'museums'.

An important aspect of the circulation of Buddhist sacred objects concerns the practice of breaking into or digging under old *chedi* to retrieve the sacred amulets and treasure (e.g., gold ornaments) sealed within them. It is common to see in the grounds of abandoned temples *chedi* into which burrow-like holes have been dug. Rama VI complained about this (Vella 1978: 205). These 'treasure-hunters', according to Chin You-di, had been responsible for most of the destruction at Sukhothai and Chiang Saen and were 'The worst enemies of the ancient monuments in this land' (1959: 27). Chin You-di contrasted the 'pious Buddhists' who placed amulets and treasure within *chedi* with the 'vandals' who subsequently went digging for them (1959: 27). But the distinction is problematic. In the first place, the damage done by treasure-seekers to

the structure of a *chedi* or to the archaeological context of a ruin is purely incidental to their quest. They cannot, therefore, be vandals. They seek Buddhist sacra (i.e., amulets which are animated by power) and treasure: the supernatural efficacy of the one and the cash convertibility of the other. In the modern economy amulets are also convertible to cash and antiquities such as ceramics, previously worthless, are a new form of treasure.

Tambiah quotes A. B. Griswold on the question of why huge numbers of amulets were often sealed inside stupas and giant Buddha images:

> They were a sort of electric charge, suffusing the stupa or the statue with *teja* [fiery energy].... they were intended to assure the durability, the invulnerability, of the Reminder that contained them: and even if they failed in that, and the Reminder were ever broken open, *they would pour forth* in an explosion of fiery energy, *tega,* conferring their benefits as reminders and protectors far and wide upon future generations.

Tambiah 1984: 204 (emphasis added)

Those breaking open such ancient *chedi* might, it seems, be seen as releasing the amulets and enabling them to 'pour forth' into the greater world, 'conferring their benefits'. The fact that, if not kept by the discoverer, they might 'pour forth' through the hands of dealers and collectors is beside the point. This would in no way diminish them as sacra because amulets and votive images are sacralized independently of the *chedi* which contain them.

The discovery of hidden sacred objects is something of a popular theme in Buddhist Thailand. There are well-known cases where statues have semi-miraculously been revealed after long periods of encasement. At one point in the peripatetic career of the Emerald Buddha jewel an old *chedi* in Chiang Rai was split open by a lightening strike and inside was found what appeared to be a stucco Buddha image covered with gold leaf. Later the outer surface of the image cracked to reveal the Emerald Buddha inside. In a similar fashion, a stucco statue being moved from the ruins of an old *wat* at Bangkok Port to a new *viharn* fell and was cracked when a crane hook snapped (Heinze 1977: 143). After a night in the rain, gold became visible through the stucco and the solid gold Golden Buddha was revealed. Other such cases exist and originate in the practice of protecting by disguise images too large to hide from looters during the Burmese wars. In Kukrit Pramoj's *Red Bamboo* what turns out to be the mere plaster shell of the village *wat* 's Ugly Father shatters after having disguised and sheltered the inner treasure for 300 years (1961: 88).

Because of the agency attributed to sacred images and objects the pious perceive these discoveries to be cases of the images or objects in question revealing themselves. In the discourses of the divine there is always a sense in which sacred objects participate actively in their own circulation. Another aspect of the process of circulation is that rediscovery may have been foreshadowed. It is possible amulets were first placed in *chedi* as 'propaganda for the remote future'; the faith dies out, people discover the amulets and the faith is reborn (Coedes 1926-27: 6).

Geary's (1986) treatment of the movement of saints' relics in medieval Europe as a circulation of sacred commodities provides a conceptual framework which might be applied to sacred objects in Thailand. If, as Geary maintains, theft and gift-giving were the more common forms of property-circulation in medieval Europe then theft cannot surely, in such a context, be construed as aberrant behaviour. Geary also includes plunder in war within the category of theft. In McCarthy's (1900) graphic account of Haw temple depredations around Luang Prabang in the Laotian marchlands of late nineteenth century Siam we read of stupa being demolished and temple grounds dug up in a search for treasure (cf. Hall 1989 on the plundering of temples in the Cham kingdoms of early Vietnam). We saw earlier (Chapter 2) that wars were fought over those Buddha images in Thailand which became state paladia. The ability to capture these images was testimony both to the victor's merit and the vanquished's insufficiency of merit. Success in discovering buried amulets is similarly dependent on one's store of merit (Coedes 1926-27: 164).

The antiquities trade in Thailand is driven by collector demand but the trade is supplied, at ground level, almost wholly by non-elite Thais who are not themselves antiquarians or part of the antiquarian discourse. These people who go out hunting and digging for antiquities do so within the contexts of animism and Buddhism. For them the significance of 'archaeological sites' lies not in the ruins and ancient artefacts present there but in the spirits and powers which dwell there. In the early 1980s at Ban Koh Noi near Sisatchanalai, an area famous for the production of Sawankalok celadon, Rick Fordham-Edwards (pers. comm.) observed that when villagers returned from pot-hunting excursions in the surrounding countryside they kept some   of their finds for sale, placed some in the shrine of their household guardian spirit, and deposited some at the village *wat* . Similarly, a FAD survey in Kanchanaburi found that some of the artefacts dug from a cave deposit in that area were taken to the abbot of the local *wat* and some were sold to tourists (Charoenwongsa and Natapintu 1987: 32). At Ban Koh Noi propitiatory offerings were made at spirit shrines before leaving on pot-hunting excursions to ensure success, and similar offerings were made at

shrines to appease the spirits of particular pieces of land where digging was carried out.

It seems that both the spirit world and the *wat* are involved in this new aspect of rural economy. It involves highly unpredictable returns, often involves disturbance of burials, and consequently calls for religious rituals to ensure luck and spiritual protection. Glover reports a case of mound diggers taking the trouble to stack bones from disturbed burials beneath and around a *chedi* and of the placing of bones from disturbed archaeological deposits in a spirit shrine along with recovered pots (1982-83: 99). Also interesting is that monks seeking to 'salvage' old religious objects sometime dig in places revealed in dreams, with spirit guardians in some cases revealing the location of the treasure they protect (see the Mulasasana Chronicle quoted in Griswold 1975: 12).

The most obvious way the material past has circulated has been through antiquarian collecting. It is likely that much of the material in early royal museums and in the few private collections maintained by the elite came from provincial *wat* or from provincial officials who had heard of fortuitous discoveries in their local areas. The number of private collections was probably quite small and limited to the elite of the aristocracy and upper bureaucracy.

> Outside of the National Museum and a few Buddhist temples, there were probably not more than ten really first-rate collections of local art, and several of these were not so much real collections as masses of dusty relics that had been handed down through successive generations and kept out of ancestral devotion rather than real admiration.

Warren 1976: 93

There were some Western collectors, Carl Bock (1986) and Reginald le May (1926) being two, who acquired old Buddha images from ancient centres while travelling in the North. The number of Western collectors increased as the century progressed and supply matched demand. Coedes (1939) mentions being offered two heads from Buddha images by a Chinese pedlar in Bangkok and Maugham was offered 'innumerable' Buddha heads in Ayudhya (1986: 96). In the 1950s there were shops in Bangkok's Chinese quarter selling old Buddha images, paintings, furniture, and both Thai and Chinese ceramics (Warren 1976: 94). It seems these were the successors of those late nineteenth 'pawnshops' which Young spoke of which sold 'curios' but were not, at that time, specifically catering to the antiquarian taste (1986: 18).

Antiquarian collecting operates within the context of international capitalism. The capitalist ethic of free enterprise acts as a counter to legislative efforts to curtail pothunting (Cockrell 1980: 335). The same is found in other 'markets', notably those of narcotics and armaments, where a strong consumer demand often virtually nullifies what official efforts are made (selectively in the case of armaments) at curbing or eradicating the traffic. Coincidentally, perhaps, armed pothunters operating in parts of Latin America seem often to be allied with drug dealers. The same might prove to be the case in Thailand, particularly where the lines of supply of Burmese antiquities coincide with those of raw heroin production. The capitalist context is also evident in the significance of Oriental ceramics as one of the so-called 'alternative investments' (alternative to stocks, bonds, and futures).

There has been a tendency for 'looting' to be presented by the Thai press and officialdom as a case of Thailand's heritage is being looted by foreign collectors. It is claimed that it was Western greed for antiquities that started the removal of heads from Buddha images (Amranand 1989: 54). Princess Chumbot enhanced her Suan Pakkad collection in the early 1970s by acquiring Ban Chiang ceramics. She has stated that her motivation was to prevent 'souvenir-hunting G.I.s' at Udorn air base taking it all out of the country (Lyons and Rainey 1982: 7). The 1988 national campaign for the return of the vishnu lintel from the Chicago Art Institute (Keyes 1991: 268-73) demonstrated the emotional potency of the issue of antiquity exports and its potential to galvanize patriotic sentiment. All this, however, tends to deflect attention from the importance of collectors within the Thai elite and middle class. In seeking to style themselves on the old elite they have copied the former's allegiance to court ritual and royal Buddhism (Jackson 1989). I suggest that antiquarian collecting is also a pursuit eminently suited to the grooming of the 'establishment' and the example of aristocratic collectors such as Princess Chumbot has been energetically taken up by non-aristocratic aspirants to establishment position. It is impossible to know the volume of antiquities exported from Thailand but my personal impression is that the internal antiquities trade easily eclipses it.

Antiquities have a place in the ideological device, Old Siam. If Ban Chiang became an emblem of an emergent, 'imagined' national identity (Chapter 4) then Ban Chiang ceramics must share in that glamour. The Ban Chiang decorative motifs and representations of the Phanom Rung lintel which find their way onto T-shirts become media for circulating emblems of national consciousness. It may not be too much to suppose that for the same reason, and despite legislation to the contrary, the state actually has an interest in the circulation of antiquities by way of antiquarian collecting.

The state may consider that the artefacts are far more useful out of the ground and in antique shops, on shelves in middle class Bangkok homes, or on display in the National Museum - it may not greatly matter which - than hidden in the ground where they cannot perform. I would suggest this partly explains failure of government to take really effective steps to control the antiquities trade.

CHEDI: RESTORATION BY ENCASEMENT

When Mongkut came to the throne in 1851 one of his priorities was the restoration of the Phra Pathom *chedi* at Nakhon Pathom, 50 kilometres east of Bangkok. This *chedi* may have incorporated elements of a similar structure dating from the first millennium A.D. Mon-speaking Dvaravati settlement, traces of which punctuate the landscape surrounding the present-day small town. The Dvaravati settlement is held to mark the entry point of Buddhism into Thailand from Sri Lanka. Certainly, it seems the *chedi* had undergone a number of restorations prior to the nineteenth century (Wells 1975: 37).

In 1854, the year Mongkut began his restoration, the *chedi* stood 40 metres high and was a ruin, though it still enshrined a relic of the Buddha and was a site of pilgrimage. Archille Clarac would have it that Mongkut decided to 'restore' the original structure but, prevented from doing this by its deteriorated condition, instead built a huge 127 metres high cupola-style *chedi*, (Figure 4) three times the size of the original, to completely enclose it (1981: 65). By 'restore', Clarac apparently means the rehabilitation of the original, which is taken to be the 1854 structure. Clarac's understanding of 'restoration' is thus that which emerged in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries among a certain elite of architects and antiquaries who held that certain old buildings and monuments were important as art historical documents. Nothing should be done in the name of renovation or rebuilding which would obscure or diminish the truth of the original. The function of restoration was to stabilize the original and rid it of unsympathetic accretions.

The restoration that Mongkut had in mind was, I suggest, something quite different. His intention is eloquently stated in the disparity in size between the 'original' *chedi* and the rebuilt version and in his act of placing on the topmost of the terraces encircling the base of the new *chedi* a miniature replica of the original. The replica clearly shows the extent to which the new structure departed from the architectural style of the original. Resting there like a tiny pimple on the great mass of

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the new *chedi* towering over it, it testifies dramatically to the magnitude of Mongkut's achievement. Rather than being deflected from an intention to restore the original structure, Mongkut carried through a classic act of Thai restoration, a restoration of the *idea* or *spirit* of the original *chedi* rather than of the physical fabric of the 'original'. It was the religious prestige of the Phra Pathom *chedi,* deriving ultimately from the relic it encased, which Mongkut restored.

In re-presenting the 'original', he produced a copy. In copying a sacred object, in the Thai Buddhist context, it is more important to be true to the sacredness of the original than to be true to its materiality. In his work on Buddhist iconography, Griswold was at pains to point out that statues and other images of the Buddha were not idols. They were reminders (see Chapter 2). Every Buddha image is a copy of an older one, Griswold tells us.

> The copy, however, does not have to *look* like the model; it has to *be* like it. As with successive editions of a book with the same text, the format may change.

<p align="right">Griswold 1976: 13</p>

In the present context it might be said that the new, expanded version of the *chedi* seeks to remind us of the old rather than to reproduce the old. The old *chedi,* in the same way, was a reminder of earlier *chedi* on this spot and all of these, from the earliest to the latest, are reminders of the original stupas in India built to contain relics from the Buddha's cremation pyre. And these stupas, of course, were reminders of the Buddha's relics and of the Buddha himself. At Phra Pathom, the diminutive replica of the 1854 *chedi* placed on the terrace serves as the kind of reminder with which we are more familiar, a reminder of the encased *chedi* 's materiality.It is also relevant to note what Griswold had to say about the copying of Buddha images. Copying, he tells us, does not require precision and what precision there is 'tends to diminish as the change in scale increases' (1975: 60).

Two further aspects of what I take to be the indigenous Thai conception of restoration as it applies to Buddhist structures deserve mention. These concern, respectively, the *object* of restoration and the *act* of restoration. The object of restoration is the *chedi* or temple building which, it will be recalled (from Chapter 2), occupies a sacred place. There is evidence to show that Buddhist structures were often built on key points in the pre-existing animist landscape (see Chapter 2). The Buddhist sacred topography (Keyes 1975) fits itself to an older sacred topography and acts of building or restoration at points in this topography at once recognize, honour, and *mark* these points. In those religious architectural systems where spirit takes

<p align="center">175</p>

The labels in the figure read:

32.40 m.   1.20 m.

3.15 m.
18.80 × 18.80 m.

28.10 m.   3.75 m.
1.50 m.

Ø 56.64 m.

ground level

41.50 m.

120.45 m.
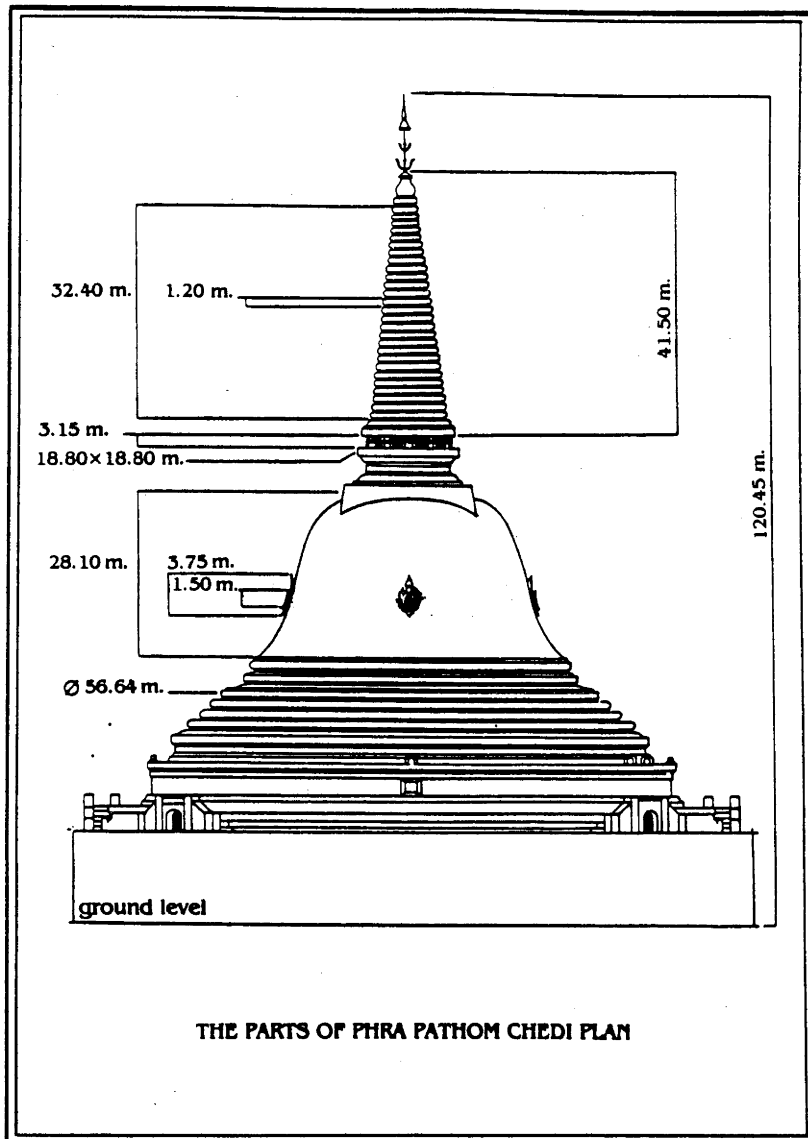
THE PARTS OF PHRA PATHOM CHEDI PLAN

FIGURE 4   Elevation drawing of Phra pathom *chedi,* at Nakhon Pathom, Central Thailand

precedence over fabric (i.e., building fabric) the concept of the 'original' which underwrites the Western conservation ethic is difficult to maintain. In the case of Phra Pathom, both the 'original' 1854 *chedi* and Mongkut's restoration of it are but incidents in a long continuum which thousands of years ago may have begun with the building of a simple bamboo spirit shrine on the site of the later *chedi*. My point here is that the structures have a sacred and symbolic existence which transcends and outlasts their physical fabric and it is the former rather than the latter which is the object of restoration.

Turning now to the act of restoration. Construction at Nakhon Pathom lasted sixteen years during which Mongkut and Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong, the supervisor of works, lavished their money on the project and, afterwards, on the donation of land and temple slaves for the *chedi's* maintenance (Phirotthirarach 1983: 95). Justifying the outlay was the enormous merit which accrued from the undertaking, but it would be wrong to think that temporal wealth was the only prerequisite for the act. The decision to carry out a major restoration is based on an assessment of one's merit. Mongkut believed his store of merit was equal to the task and the completion of the project confirmed the truth of this in the eyes of the world, even though he died in 1868, two years before the *chedi* was completed by his son, King Chulalongkorn. It is largely merit which determines and underwrites social position in Thailand. The Phra Pathom restoration can be taken as having redounded to Mongkut's reputation as king and to have enhanced the prestige of his dynasty.

That one must have merit in order to embark upon a major restoration is partly due to the fact one is acting upon empowered objects (bearing in mind that the power of a relic or image radiates to its enclosing structure). One is acting upon objects which, also, may have powerful and potentially dangerous spirit guardians. The power of the Phra Pathom *chedi* was displayed by the glowing light which occasionally appeared around it and by the drum which could be heard sounding within it over the course of the restoration (Phirottirarach 1983: 95-96). Guardian spirits may play a mediating role in restoration, as happened in 1901 when the three guardian deities of the That Phanom shrine in Northeast Thailand possessed a female medium from the local village and through her demanded that the monk, Khru Virocana, be permitted to carry out the restoration he was proposing - those obstructing him would have their throats cut (Pruess 1976: 72). The situation at That Phanom was that the villages were so in awe of the shrine's power that not only were they afraid to restore it, they avoided climbing on or stepping upon the *debris* of the ruin for fear of retribution (Pruess 1976: 70). The sites dug by rural Thais seeking artefacts to supply the antiquities trade

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also have resident spirits, 'looting' thus taking place at the interface between the discourses of animism and antiquarianism.

Restoration of *chedi* by the act of encasement is not disrespectful of the original structure: respect for the original is expressed in the consumption of it. The expensive encasement of the 1854 Phra Pathom *chedi* was direct testimony to the great merit it was credited with by Mongkut and the community generally.

Characteristic features of Thai restoration practice seen in the Phra Pathom example seem to have been long established. This is indicated in *The Nan Chronicle* (Churatana 1966) which charts the history of the Phu Phiang Chae Haeng *chedi* at Nan, 180 kilometres east of Chiang Mai, from the time of its founding in A.D. 1357. The chronicle was written in 1894 by an official at the court of Nan. While it blends myth and legend with 'historical' events, it nevertheless might be expected to reflect ideals regarding the building and repair of religious structures. The chronicle tells us the first *chedi* was built on a hill to cover a pit into which seven Buddha relics had been placed together with twenty gold and twenty silver amulets. Subsequently, over a period of 489 years, the *chedi* was twice reduced to ruins and underwent three (perhaps four) rebuildings. In the first of these, that of 1421, a *chedi* six *wa* high (1*wa* = *c*. 2 metres) was built by the governor of Nan, encasing the remains of the first *chedi* which over a period of 64 years had been reduced to something resembling an 'ant-hill'. This second *chedi* was itself encased only eight years later by a *chedi* (10*wa* in diameter by 17*wa* high) erected by a new governor. Major restorations were then carried out in 1560, 1611, 1629, 1795, and 1820. The 1611 event entailed the dismantling and reconstruction of the top half of the *chedi* which was then more than 23*wa* high, about the same as its present-day height.

In 1625 the *chedi* was gilded, a process which, the chronicler records, consumed almost two kilograms of gold leaf. The practice of placing gold leaf on Buddha images, *chedi* , temple doorways, and other sacred structures is one of the most common devotional and merit-making acts performed in Thailand. Substitutes for gold leaf are found in the gold-coloured mosaic tiles placed over the surface of Phra Pathom as part of its most recent restoration in the 1970s. Phu Phiang Chae Haeng *chedi* is currently covered with copper sheets. Minor *chedi* restorations often entail the application of a fresh skin of stucco or, these days, cement. Encasement by brick, resurfacing with stucco or cement, sheathing with copper, and gilding are but variations (in scale) of a single practice.

FIGURE 5   A section view of the interior of a ruined *chedi* at Wat Klang Muang, near
Lampun, in the north of Thailand. In profile can be seen (centre) a portion of the
stucco shell of an earlier *chedi* encased by the brickwork of the later, enlarged
structure.

Archaeological evidence of *chedi* encasement is plentiful. A smaller *chedi* will sometimes be exposed within the body of a larger one which has fractured or crumbled. Sometimes a series of *chedi* encasing each other like onion rings will be exposed in this way. In the San Pa Tong area near Lampun I observed in 1990 two instances in which the good condition of the stucco 'skin' on an inner *chedi* suggested they were not in need of repair at the time they were encased (Figure 5).

The life of a *chedi* is one of disintegration and accumulation. Physical decay is a constant, if gradual, process observable over decades and generations. Sudden disintegration may be taken as a lesson, as in 1847 when the *that* at Nongkhai collapsed into the Mekong River. This incident, the *That Phanom Chronicle* tells us, gave cause for 'wise persons to reflect upon the laws of impermanence and transformation that govern all conditioned elements' (Pruess 1976: 69). The radiant power of a structure may itself hasten disintegration as people souvenir empowered fragments of it. Local people were in the habit of mixing beeswax with 'detritus' from the That Phanom shrine to make amulets to carry for good luck when they undertook journeys (Pruess 1976: 70, cf Terweil 1965: 81). Here we have further indication that the physical integrity of religious structures is not paramount in Thai local practice. Fragmentation and dispersal may actually increase the fame and prestige of a shrine (cf. Geary [1986 : 183] on the fragmentation and 'parceling out' of saints' relics in medieval Europe).

A temple enters upon the slippery slope of decline when support is withheld by a community which perceives that it and/or its monks have lost merit (see Chapter 2). Lack of support in the form of periodic minor maintenance speeds disintegration. Under such circumstances the *chedi's* brickwork may be scavenged by farmers to be recycled as building material. In the early years of railway construction (from 1892) ruined *chedi* and derelict temple buildings adjacent to the lines were used as ballast for embankments (Damrong 1904; Graham 1924: 178).

So much for disintegration. *Chedi* undergo accumulation because they are a field of merit. People come to rub gold leaf on them in the hope of a cure from sickness or they may contribute new bricks for their restoration. People thus give to some *chedi* and take from others (e.g., they scavenge bricks or rob them of amulets). People make decisions as to which *chedi* to restore and which to neglect. In effect they are deciding which parts of the sacred-historical topography are relevant in the present. Those which are relevant are made current and kept current by the act of encasement or

surface layering which may be taken as a metaphor for the community's bestowal of meaning on them.

OLD TEMPLES REACTIVATED

There is often something about villages in the Thai countryside which, to me, suggests not just long duration but also sympathy with nature. The configuration of houses, pathways, and fields seems to fit so well that it appears to have emerged out of the landscape and to have been there since time immemorial. It was thus a surprise for me to learn that most villages have been there no longer than the 1880s (Wijeyewardene 1984: 96). The nineteenth century landscape apparently was vastly less populated than it is today (Siam in 1825 had less than five million people compared to the 60 million in 1991). Even in the Central Plain, prior to 1850, people were scarce, 'The Thai clung to the main watercourses, avoiding the plains between' (Sharp and Hanks 1978: 35). It was a landscape in which there were many vacant niches. Not just areas never populated but areas which had lost their population. In the early modern era, especially in the 1880s and 1890s, great migrations of population occurred as people opened up and settled new farmlands, and produced crops to supply the rapidly expanding export market for rice (Johnston 1981). In peacetime, whole blocs of local population were sometimes moved to places where labour was needed (Kemp 1981: 4). In the wars between states and principalities populations were captured and carried off to be settled down elsewhere. People, indeed, were wealth. 'Wars', Wijeyewardene tells us, 'were fought for population' (1987: 35).

With particular reference to northern Thailand, Wijeyewardene has addressed the question of how, under conditions such as these, 'cultural continuity was maintained':

> Very briefly, the hypothesis is that captured populations were moved to the site of ruined habitations... Invariably such sites have obviously consecrated places (given building practices it is these and irrigation canals which are most likely to survive), and as still happens when there is a newly formed community, the residence of monks is actively sought. The core of the hypothesis is the likelihood that the monks speak the language of the "region".... whatever the language of the new settlers.

1987: 35

The sites of temples and former temples thus constitute part of the way the landscape is culturally imprinted.

> Nothing was to be gained by serious interference with the network of monasteries. They were the grid on which the political demography of the region was articulated over many centuries.

<div align="right">1987: 36</div>

Wijeyewardene is mostly concerned with the processes of change and continuity of language. But he gives us a clue as to how continuity was maintained in the cultural and sacred landscape. In its state of abandonment the landscape retained an imprint which was read by the resettling population. It was easier to revitalize lands which had once been cultivated and irrigated, and where the traces of canals survived, than to break entirely new ground (Wijeyewardene 1984: 105). Other considerations also inform the resettlement of the sacred topography. The remains of old spirit shrines identify important spirit sites and, where the buildings of a temple are in ruins or have disappeared from sight, *sema* stones mark the boundaries of the consecrated ground. These are signs of some importance given a consciousness that the landscape has, in a sense, a life of its own, centred on the points of a grid which are animated by enduring power and sacredness. People need to know and read these signs because a resettling population does not break new ground on this plane, either. It is not entering a spiritual void.

The matter of continuity in the cultural landscape was raised towards the end of Chapter 2 with respect to spirit cults. It was found not so much to be the case that spirits occupy ruins as that of spirits (and probably spirit shrines) being there prior to the religious structures, now in ruins. Also, that these structures are there partly *because* of the pre-existing spirits. Put another way, the spirit shrines and the Hindu or Buddhist structures 'honour' an enduring sense of place. The overlay this represents is a major theme of the present work. Even as the significance of an old place is recognized and honoured in the present a new layer of meaning is being placed over it. We see this at Sukhothai. Woodward notes that the term *klang muang*, meaning the middle of the city, is used in Ramkhamhaeng's inscription to denote the places at Sukhothai where there were such 'primary features' ('things-in-the-middle') as *viharn*, ponds, and relics of the Buddha (1991: 429). But the term also had sacred associations in its pre-Buddhist context, one text using it to refer to the location of a spirit shrine. Hence, 'An extant structural and spatial framework was given a Buddhist content, and the use of the expression *klang muang*, it is proposed, spans both the animist and Buddhist eras' (Woodward 1991: 430; cf. Gosling [1983: 17] on the honouring of *phi* at Sukhothai).

We see this process also at Phanom Rung where a spirit cult almost certainly existed prior to the ninth century A.D. when people in this outpost of the Ankorean empire began to worship *linga* there (Keyes 1991: 273). The shrine built on the hill in the eleventh century has features testifying to the worship of Siva. It later came to serve the cult of Vishnu. With the collapse of the Ankorean empire in the fifteenth century the significance of the shrine became purely local and after people in the area took up Theravada Buddhism, annual Buddhist festivals were held there and a Buddhist temple was built nearby (Keyes 1991: 276 - note also that the temple complex at Angkor was occupied by Buddhist monks under the patronage of Bangkok in the nineteenth century [Reynolds 1979: 201-2]). The latest layer of meaning came in the present century, perhaps beginning with the visit there of Prince Damrong in 1924, and culminated in the state's restoration of the ruins of the shrine, completed in 1988, and their entry 'into the pantheon of material objects deemed to embody the national heritage' (Keyes 1991: 280).

To return to the question of temple reactivation, there are a number of reasons for temple decline and abandonment other than emigration and, equally, resettlement of a previously abandoned landscape is likely to result in only certain temples being reactivated. In using the term 'reactivation' I do not mean to suggest that those abandoned sites which are not chosen to become active monasteries are without sacredness or power. Unless it has been specifically and seriously defiled or polluted, consecrated ground remains consecrated. Where it does occur, though, reactivation provides us with an interesting form of restoration.

Restoration of abandoned temples embodies essentially the same principles as apply in the restoration of *chedi*. What is restored is not the physical fabric of the abandoned temples, but the spiritual life which has animated the place. Monks will again pray in reactivated temples, villagers will make offerings there, and it will again be a focus of day to day religious life. The new structures may incorporate recycled building material salvaged from the ruins of the former structures, or may use surviving foundations or walls. The *bot* will be erected within the boundaries marked by surviving *sema*. There may also be a large *chedi* still standing which may be resurfaced or encased. In pre-modern times, when most *bot* and *viharn* were made of wood, the *chedi* might survive long after the former had perished (alternatively old wooden elements might, upon restoration, be encased in brick [Larsen 1988: 2]).

The first act of restoration may be the building of a simple shelter over an *in situ* Buddha image. One commonly sees such shelters, many consisting only of a

makeshift roof of thatch or a few sheets of iron, barely large enough to cover the image. They attest to a general feeling that a Buddha image should not be left exposed to the elements. Intervention on a larger scale might see a temporary roof built to cover the ruins of a *bot* or *viharn* . In the normal course of events the fund-raising activities of an energetic abbot and local community would lead to a more permanent structure rivalling or even eclipsing the original which may be represented only by a floor and perhaps a metre or so of crumbling brick wall. A good example of this is to be seen at the twelfth century Wat Chedi Luang in Chiang Saen, an ancient walled town on the edge of the Mekong north of Chiang Rai. The town and its reputed 75 temples had lain deserted since the Burmese were driven out in 1804 (le May 1926: 213). Towards the end of the nineteenth century one of the measures taken by Bangkok in affirming the outer limits of its 'geo-body' (Thongchai 1987) was to encourage the resettlement of Chiang Saen (Wijeyewardene 1991: 164). The reactivation of temples such as Wat Chedi Luang might have been a way of showing the flag. When he was there in 1882, Carl Bock recorded that local people had recently gilded some of the Buddha images in the ruins of abandoned *wat* and made offerings of flowers and rice to them (Bock 1986: 335). Two temples had been 'restored' and had resident monks prior to Reginald le May's visit in 1914 though others were still covered in 'jungle' (le May 1926: 214).

Bock also spent time at Fang, a small walled town near the Burmese border west of Chiang Rai. At the beginning of his sojourn there in 1884 the town was in the process of being resettled. The jungle was being cleared for gardens and some monks had arrived from Chiang Mai with the intention of building a temple to house the Buddha images with which the ground around the several temple ruins was 'thickly strewn' (Bock 1986: 276-7). Bock attended a ceremony at a *wat* where a bamboo structure with a low thatch roof had been erected amid the ruins (1986: 349). In 1990 I was unable to find a trace of any of the ruined temples of Fang mentioned by Bock. There were, however, three modern *wat* inside the former walls (which themselves had been almost entirely demolished and used as 'road base') and four outside. I could only surmise that the brickwork and masonry *debris* which Bock had clambered over 106 years previously had been recycled and that the *chedi* which he had rifled for Buddha images lay beneath the white, smoothly plastered, surfaces of the *chedi* of the modern *wat*.

Large-scale restorations undertaken by zealous monks and local communities raise the possibility of conflict with the FAD. As would be expected, many candidates for reactivation are very old and otherwise notable and come under the protection of the

FAD as gazetted Ancient Monuments. At Ayudhya a compromise was reached between the FAD and the monks and nuns who reactivated the ruins of the Wat Yai Chai Mongkul, founded in 1592 and burned by the Burmese when they sacked the city in 1767. I was told by Somchart Chungsiriarak, a restoration architect with the FAD, that some monks and nuns had set up camp in the ruins in the 1960s and in about 1975 had asked for FAD approval to rebuild a *viharn* (this consent was required as the ruins are a classified Ancient Monument). The FAD consented with the proviso that their own Division of Architecture produce the design. The resulting structure is of white plastered brick with an old style tiled roof. It rests on the floor of the original *viharn* and stands freely within the surviving portions of the back and side walls of the original structure. The monks were thus able to have their new *viharn* and the art historians, archaeologists, and conservation architects were able to have the remains of the old one. Behind the *wat's* surviving giant *chedi*, which has been restored only minimally, the ruins of a large *sala* have been incorporated into a formal rose garden. Potted flower plants are perched on each of the *sala's* several truncated brick pillars and carefully tended flowering trees and shrubs adorn other parts of the ruin precinct. It is, indeed, in Archille Clarac's words, an 'attractive ensemble' (1981: 83).

What is missing from the previous paragraph is the presence of the state's heritage discourse. The state seeks to identify itself with a certain conception of an enduring Thai polity and civilization by patronizing and publicizing the ruins of former capitals and other ancient 'monuments' which make up the construct 'Old Siam'. It thus has an interest in maintaining these remains in a recognizably old condition. It would oppose a reactivation of Wat Yai Chai Mongkul which resulted in a temple which, to all inten ts and purposes, looked new. And this is precisely what restoration by reactivation often result in. As at Fang, it may be impossible to discern any suggestion of the ancient beneath the buildings designed in the modern style. Ancient brickwork which has disappeared behind a veneer of pastel pink bathroom tiles is anathema to this discourse which valorizes the visibly antique. In order to perform its ideological function, Old Siam needs to be seen.

I thus distinguish three discourses active in Thailand, each of which holds its own conception of restoration. Each in its own way brings the material past into the present. The first, that which I have mainly been concerned with in this and the previous section, belongs to the pious, mostly non-elite, Buddhists. The second, which is common among Western conservation professionals and enthusiasts, belongs to archaeologists and art historians (including many of the professionals on the staff of the FAD), together with a small building conservation lobby. Their conception of

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restoration comes closest to the idea of Western conservation and seeks to integrate the past into the present as an archaeological or art historical document. The third discourse belongs to the state which looks to the past for visible emblems of the Thai nation. In the following section I look at what is perhaps the best-known example of a restoration undertaken by the state.

A degree of slippage between the three categories should be acknowledged. Pious Buddhists, for instance, are not immune to the patriotic appeal of the heritage discourse. Also, there is the interesting case of the Lan Na monk, Kruba Siwichai, whose campaign to resist Bangkok's extension of control over the northern Sangha in the 1920s included the restoration (by creating concrete copies of deteriorated wooden structures) of numerous well-known Buddhist monuments in that region in a manner which emphasized the northern style and made them icons of regional identity (Larsen 1988: 7; Tambiah 1984: 304). Kruba seems to have borrowed from the heritage discourse to attempt at a regional level what the state was doing at a national level. The professionals in the FAD, for their part, often seem to move between discourses as they try to find a balance between the demands of the state's heritage programme and their allegiance to the largely Western-derived conservation ethic of their respective disciplines.

THE PERFORMANCE OF SUKHOTHAI

Spread over an area of several square kilometres on the piedmont of north Central Thailand are the remains of the ancient centre of Sukhothai. In the period 1975-1988 these remains were the subject of the largest state restoration project undertaken in Thailand then or since. Tai speakers appear to have arrived in the area of present-day Laos and Thailand in about the tenth century A.D. They captured the settlement at Sukhothai, an outpost of the Angkorean empire, in the mid-thirteenth century (see Gosling 1990 for a brief review of the history of settlement at Sukhothai). Over the next two centuries, until it was conquered by Ayudhya in 1438, an extensive complex of Buddhist temples was built, mostly inside a walled precinct of some 3km². The FAD has recorded 193 structures at Sukhothai, comprising the remains of *chedi, bot,* and *viharn* together with ancient reservoirs and a small number of secular structures including kilns. The houses and palaces of the settlement appear to have been constructed of bamboo, wood, and thatch and have left no detectable remains.

Rama I 'discovered' the jungle-infested ruins in the late eighteenth century and removed hundreds of the stylistically distinctive bronze and stone Buddha images to

Bangkok (Diskul 1988: 7) in what might be seen as part of his consolidation of the new dynasty and capital. The ruins were periodically rediscovered by his successors. In 1833, prior to his ascendency as Rama IV (r.1851-68), Mongkut visited the ruins and brought back to Bangkok a stele inscribed by the first king of Sukhothai, Ramkhamhaeng. This described in some detail the natural environment of Sukhothai, the glory of its temples, and a community benevolently ruled over by its Buddhist monarch. Thus began Ramkhamhaeng's rise as a culture hero, a model of Buddhist kingship and the father of the Thai state. School children now know Sukhothai as Thailand's first capital.

General Phibunsongkhram's government undertook the restoration of a large number of the ruined structures in 1953, simultaneously registering 74 of them as Ancient Monuments (Dhida 1987: 37; registration was under the terms of the Ancient Monuments, Antiquities, and National Museums Act, 1935 which superseded a similar law of 1923; the present Act dates from 1961). The restoration involved a good deal of rebuilding and reinforcing. The sites were cleared of jungle, a symbolic and meritorious act also carried out to a limited extent during earlier visits by royal antiquarians. In 1978 the Sukhothai Historical Park Development Project was initiated by the government with an US$11 million budget and an overseeing committee of FAD personnel, academics, government and public figures, and UNESCO representatives. This committee drew up a Master Plan for the site (UNESCO 1982) under which a 70km^2 tract of land containing all the registered monuments would be dedicated to the Park. The Park would be cleared and landscaped to recreate the natural environment described in the Ramkhamhaeng inscription.

King Mongkut's restoration of Phra Pathom conformed to the concept of restoration held by pious Buddhists in that it restored the spirit rather than the materiality of the original (i.e., 1854) *chedi* . This departs from the restoration concept of Western and Thai archaeologists, art historians and their allies (I will refer to this group as 'the professionals') which privileges the physical fabric of the original and seeks to conserve it. The state, at Sukhothai, sought to restore the *look* of an 'original' which was a construction based partly on Ramkhamhaeng's inscription and partly upon an expectation of what Thailand's first capital should have looked like. It is instructive to observe the tension which developed between the state's programme of restoration and the restorations envisaged by professionals and pious Buddhists.

According to the Master Plan the restoration of structures would be carried out in accordance with the Venice Charter (UNESCO 1982: 50). The ruins would be cleared

of vegetation and rubble. Reconstruction of missing or partly missing elements of structures would be permitted but only using ancient materials; modern material would only be used where it was necessary to consolidate structurally critical elements. By 1982 a total of 52 sites had been cleared, cleaned and restored and it was possible to assess the results. Even while the project was in progress a controversy began to develop over the extent of restoration. The FAD was criticised by some academic archaeologists and art historians for reconstructing missing elements where there was no evidence of the original form. The sometimes pointed exchanges between the art historian, M.C. Subhadradis Diskul, and the FAD's Project Director, Nikom Musigakama, at a conference at Sukhothai in 1987 (Ishizawa *et al.* 1988) illustrate the conflict over restoration methodology - specifically, over whether the FAD restoration was actually a rebuilding. Whether it was the missing head of a Buddha which had been 'restored' (i.e., recreated) or the missing top portion of a *chedi* it is clear that many of the professionals considered that Sukhothai had been substantially rebuilt. Gosling observed that the 'repairs' aimed more at 'beautification than historical restoration' (1990: 29-31).

In what seems to have been a response to criticism the FAD produced the Bangkok Charter (General Guide-lines for Archaeological Conservation) in 1985 (FAD 1985). It provided greater flexibility than the Venice Charter, specifically by making 'reconstruction' a key component of restoration (FAD 1985: 21). It is significant that this document states that FAD guidelines for restoration prior to the Bangkok Charter derived from Prince Damrong (FAD 1985: 20). This would tally with the idea of Damrong's having a key founding role in the Thai heritage discourse, under the terms of which Sukhothai was synonymous with Ramkhamhaeng's Sukhothai. But herein lies a problem.

Elizabeth Gosling's art historical research at Sukhothai revealed, to her surprise, that most of the surviving Buddhist structures there dated from about 100 years after Ramkhamhaeng (1990: 29). The 'sleekly stylized' high-classic sculpture which had become famous as the Sukhothai Style was younger than the 'fleshy and life-like, crudely executed' stuccos which had recently come to light - it was this latter style which probably typified the art of Ramkhamhaeng's time (1990: 31). But, needless to say, it was the high-classic style which had been the benchmark for the FAD restorations, not only in the 1970s and 80s but earlier. In the 1950s, for instance, Michael Sullivan (1957) watched workmen restoring a giant seated Buddha at Wat Sri Chum, Sukhothai, in a convincing version of the high-classic style.

By 1987 the FAD was prepared to concede that the Sukhothai Project could be considered a mistake as well as a success (Musigakama 1988a: 13). Yet it seems clear that the 'mistake' - what was perceived by the critics to be over-restoration - flowed directly from the main aim of the project, the revival of a certain conception of Sukhothai. Given the official equivalence of Sukhothai and Ramkhamhaeng it was natural that when the FAD set out to 'refurbish' Sukhothai 'it was Ram Khamhaeng's Sukhothai they wanted to reproduce' (Gosling 1990: 29).

Much official discussion of the Sukhothai Project has centred on the aim of restoring 'life' to the ruins (see UNESCO 1982, FAD 1985). The staging of festivals and ceremonies at the site has been in pursuance of this aim. Loy Krathong is an annual festival during which Thais place small floats containing flowers and incense on rivers, lakes, ponds, and *klongs* all over the country. A spectacular 're-enactment' of the original Sukhothai Loy Krathong - the festival was supposed to have first been performed there - attracted half a million people. This and other festivals, such as the periodic sound-and-light shows and the 1983 ceremony marking the 700th anniversary of the Thai alphabet (the invention of which is credited to Ramkhamhaeng), are intended to revive the spirit of Ramkhamhaeng's Sukhothai. From the state's viewpoint, these spectacles 'have begun to bear a close link with the history of Sukhothai' (UNESCO 1982: 30). From the viewpoint of the critics among the professionals, however, Sukhothai had begun to bear a close resemblance to the spectacles. History, they felt, had been replaced with spectacle.

The park-like setting was an essential ingredient of the project. A UNESCO representative described the transformation: 'Today, looking across neatly mowed lawns, one can clearly recognize the shapes of many monuments that in 1978 were just overgrown heaps of rubble' (Upraity 1985: 45). By no means everybody has shared in his satisfaction. The manicured lawns, in fact, have become something of a symbol of what many see as wrong with the Historical Park concept or, as Vallibhotama puts it, 'the "historical garden" epidemic' (1987: 33). The FAD has 'transformed the historical site into a beautiful public park' (Patya 1988: 67), in the open spaces between the monuments the archaeological traces of the centre's 'urban planning' have been destroyed in the creation of a 'mythical park' (Dhida 1987: 40). The country's treasures have been 'rebuilt to look like movie sets or amusement parks' (*Muang Boran* 1987 13[4]: 14).

Neither the state's concept of restoration nor that of the pious Buddhists gives precedence to authenticity in the shape of original material fabric. But the programs of

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the two actually differ radically and the tension between them at Sukhothai stemmed partly from the state's intention of raising the site from the level of local to the level of national significance (cf. Keyes [1991: 276-82] on the transformation of Phanom Rung from local to national history; also Hanks 1967).

For Ramkhamhaeng's Sukhothai to be able to perform the function which the state had allotted to it the stage needed to be cleared. Perhaps even more essential than the park-like setting was the removal of that which was extraneous to Ramkhamhaeng's Sukhothai, namely, the people who were living within the precinct of the ruins when the restoration project began.

> Looking after this old site has meant not only the restoration of old stones, but a new life for its inhabitants, who now have good water supplies, electricity, telecommunications, roads, schools and a hospital. The city has come a full cycle, and is once again the earthly paradise depicted in a 1292 Sukhothai inscription.

> Anam 1989: 13

Here, embedded in UNESCO rhetoric, is the ideal of Ramkhamhaeng's capital along with a myth of a different kind. What Anam is referring to is the FAD's resettlement policy. When the royal antiquarians made their journeys to Sukhothai we are told they rediscovered the ruins of Ramkhamhaeng's capital lying forgotten in the jungle (Musigakama 1988b: 118). This is not strictly so. Sukhothai was not deserted after being conquered in 1438 and brought within the Ayudhyan state. Its population was moved out for eight years from 1584 as part of Ayudhya's strategy against Burmese incursions; but the settlement there was revived in 1592 at which time 'changes and improvement' were made which included additions to the defensive walls (Musigakama 1988b: 118). It was again deserted for a time after 1765, following a Burmese invasion, but was presumably a functioning town again in 1786 when Rama I ordered the population moved to the more easily defensible site of the present town (Muang Sukhothai) on the Yom river, twelve kilometres away. A village, Muang Kao, took the place of the town on the site of old Sukhothai. In the 1970s this village had been in place about five generations (UNESCO 1982: 42) which would make it about as old as most other Thai villages.

In 1977 Muang Kao had a population of about 3,000 people, with 300 houses, 52 shops, five temples, three schools and 14 rice mills (Vongvipak 1980: 13). It also had a sawmill (UNESCO 1982: 27-28). All this was was situated within the ancient walls. The village was supported by rice agriculture which was first grown for export there about 1910 (Vongvipak 1980: 14). Some 30% of the 70km^2 area of the Historical
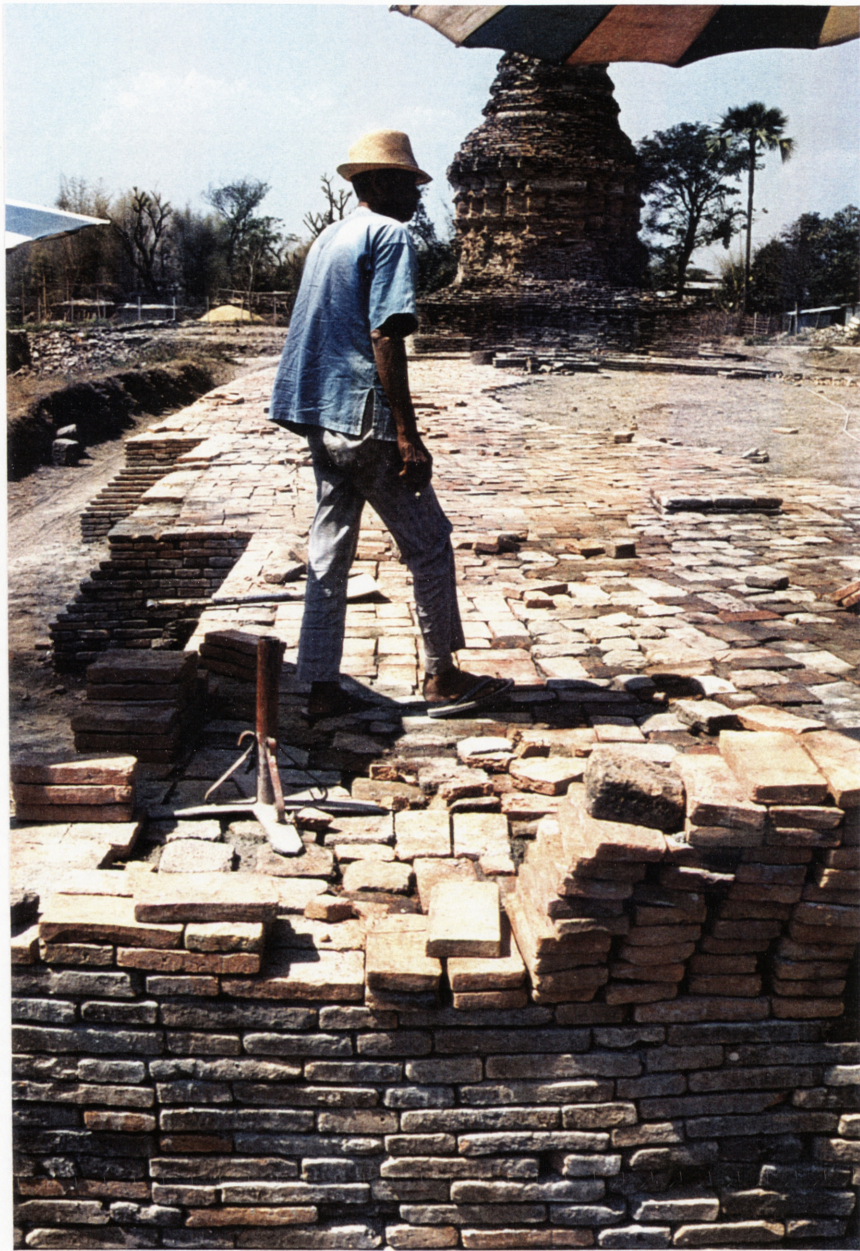
FIGURE 6   A Fine Arts Department restoration-reconstruction under way in 1990 at Wat Klang Muang, near Lampun, in the north of Thailand. The foundation platform of a *viharn* has been exposed and partly reconstructed using a mixture of original and new bricks.

Park was devoted to agriculture in the late 1970s (UNESCO 1982: 50), some of the farmers having full title to their land, others holding 'settlers' rights' (UNESCO 1982: 28). The first resettlement occurred in 1971 when the FAD moved more than 100 people to a less obtrusive area within the walls. In the late 1970s the villagers were prohibited from grazing their buffaloes around the monuments because of the dung they left and banned from wallowing them in the ancient reservoirs (Vongvipak 1980: 54). The Master Plan foreshadowed the removal of 70 households to an area outside the walls (FAD 1985: 5).

Local opposition to these and others relocations, leading to death threats against Project Director Musigakama, has tended to be glossed over by most officials and restorationists or has disappeared behind statements proclaiming the social and economic benefits the project is said to have brought to local people (e.g., Sungkasoobun 1985: 43) and the boost which local people are said to feel it has given to their morale (Samosorn 1987: 22). I would contend that the isolation of the major monuments of Sukhothai from the local inhabitants was a necessary part of a genre of restoration which, in this case, sought to create an atmosphere 'so serene that once in its vicinity you will feel as if you were living again in the Sukhothai of seven hundred years ago' (Lufan 1987: 36).

The local population would appear to have been engaged, to some extent, in but the latest of a long series of reactivations of Sukhothai. There is evidence of some of the Sukhothai structures having been restored several times in the pre-modern past. No doubt some of these were in the context of the reactivation of temples after either they, the town, or both had been abandoned (FAD 1985: 4; Ishizawa *et al.* 1988: 30). Of the five active modern-style temples of Muang Kao in 1977 the main one was situated within the remains of an ancient temple and constituted the village's 'political and socio-economic centre' (Vongvipak 1980: 14). This and the other active temples have been relocated. 'Our problem', as a state restorationist told a 1986 conference, 'is that most Buddhist monks and Buddhist people tend to build new Buddhist temples in the area of the dead monuments' (Ishizawa and Kono 1987: 32). Perhaps somebody forgot to tell the monks and the people that the 'monuments' were dead.

It is significant that Thai visitors to Sukhothai have consistently been described officially as tourists rather than pilgrims. The Master Plan (UNESCO 1982: 63-68) estimates that 100,000 Thais 'visit' Sukhothai every year and though it notes that 24% of these visit on Buddhist festivals it makes no other mention of the religious context of visitation. We know that people still come to put gold leaf on Buddha images (see

discussion in Ishizawa *et al.* 1988: 24-30) and though, according to Musigakama, the monuments are 'dead' the local people 'still believe and pay respect' to them (Ishizawa *et al.* 1988: 25). If the heritage discourse has no brief with pilgrims is it because the power in the ruins which attracts pilgrims in some way competes with the power of the state?

LIVING CITY, DEAD CITY

What has happened to Sukhothai is different only in minor detail to what has or is happening to other ancient centres such as Phimai, Phanom Rung, Sisatchanalai, and Kamphangphet which find themselves in Historical Parks. In a small corner of Bangkok the same scenario is being played out on a smaller scale. The Phra Sumen Fort is one of only two survivors of the fourteen forts erected on the wall built around the new capital in the First Reign (1782-1809). The wall (2.7 metre thick) itself has gone, its bricks, some of which had been salvaged from the ruins of Ayudhya, having again been recycled. Perhaps they lie hidden beneath the stucco of the walls of the shophouses and other buildings which now cram this busy and colourful riverside precinct. If you walked, as I did on a number of occasions, in off the street, following the narrow path along the outside of the fort's wall, you came to a small enclave of squatter's shacks huddled in the space between the back of the fort and the edge of the river. The people who lived in them venerated a tree which had taken root in the lower wall of the fort, placing garlands on it and tying saffron ribbons around its trunk. Offerings were also made at two or three small spirit shrines placed in the crenellations next to the tree. Inside one of these, next to a small vase of plastic flowers and flanked by miniature china figures kneeling in homage, was a framed picture of King Chulalongkorn. In 1991, however, on a large sign that went up in front of the fort was, ominously, an artist's impression of the same fort looking rather cleaner and set in a small landscaped park. Soon after, the shacks were cleared away, the tree was cut down, and all that remained of the fort's former neighbours were the spirit shines, still in place but broken and overturned.

This congested quarter of Bangkok can certainly use a new park and the fort will, under the terms of its restoration, be accessible to a wider audience. One might say that the fort is being delivered from the inhabitants of its immediate vicinity into the hands of the urban quarter and the city as a whole. One could speculate that the shanty dwellers were too close to it and too ignorant of the city's history to see the fort as anything but a familiar old object and the locale of neighbourhood spirits. It will now be returned to History. Parts of the city wall may be recreated (as have sections of the

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walls of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Khorat) so that a certain vision of the nineteenth
century city is more complete and compelling. The state and the professionals, for all
their differences, seem to be hastening Thailand toward a situation where, in Ian
Hodder's words, "Individuals do not 'live' art and culture any more - they consume
its performance" (Hodder 1986: 165).

In 1988 a Thai speaker at a seminar on the Sukhothai restoration had this to say:

> a properly "dead" city that is isolated from modern communities can be more
> easily planned for its restoration or revival than a "part-living and part-dead" or
> a fully "living" city.

<div align="right">Patya 1988: 57</div>

The manner in which Southeast Asian heritage managers over the last decade have
toyed with, employed, and questioned the twin concepts of the 'living city' and the
'dead city' highlight, I suggest, the problematic nature of their relationship with their
respective communities. Particularly those local communities, like the one at
Sukhothai, unlucky enough to be attached to a place which is about to become
Heritage.

By the second half of the 1980s the FAD was carrying out restoration projects on
old towns such as Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Chiang Saen where the presence of living
communities was impossible to conceal or ignore. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia
heritage managers had had to contend with opposition or apathy from local
communities living in places subject to restoration (e.g., Old Banten and Trowulan in
Indonesia, the Spanish walled city of Intramuros in Manila, Malacca in Malaysia). The
'living city - dead city' duality seems to have arisen out of this climate. At regional
forums (e.g., SPAFA 1988a, 1988b, 1989) there has been broad agreement that dead
cities are those not located within current urban contexts. At the level of individual
monuments, 1956 out of c .3,000 registered in Indonesia were considered to be
'living' - presumably mostly mosques and Balinese temples (Tjandrasasmita 1988:
209) while in Thailand, most pre-Rattanakosin monuments were now 'dead'
(Rojpojchanarat 1988: 40). By seeking to make a clear distinction between 'living' and
'dead' cities and by relocating residents and controlling the activities of those who
remain, the 'dead' cities are effectively rendered so by the restorationists.

It seems to me that what this duality effects is a clearing of space, physically and
conceptually, for the management of the past by the discourses of modernism
(namely, heritage, archaeology, art history, restoration architecture). The other, older

discourses are not difficult to detect, as I have tried to show. It is the universalizing tendency of the newer discourses, both in the West and the East, which renders the older ones invisible or trivial and enables statements like the following:

> Living people must be informed of the benefits of ancient cities to their lives - this way the existing community will be reunitied with the ancient places and find them charming and worthwhile.

<div align="right">Chihara 1987: 128</div>

Prisoners of Heritage?

THE GAP COMPLETE

In the course of the nineteenth century, Aborigines left or were removed from much of the Australian landscape. This meant the physical separation of Aborigines from the traces of their long occupation of the land, whether these were in the form of painted rock shelters, ceremonial earth circles (*bora* grounds), carved trees, or shell midden deposits. Concurrently, in the European mind, these traces which might have stood as memorials to the Aborigines were actually being cut loose from any conceptual connection with the 'dying race'. Many Europeans simply did not see the remains but for others who did, who rode past past them as they mustered their sheep or cattle, they belonged to the days of the old blacks seen as being only faintly akin to the Aborigines living in squalor on the edge of their local town.

So there came to be two categories of Aborigines: the 'old blacks' who were authentic but gone, and the 'half-caste, quarter-caste blacks' of the here-and-now who were present but inauthentic. As the generations of European settlers passed by the conceptual gap widened. The physical remains of Aboriginal occupation dwindled and faded in a landscape setting which was increasingly European. The painted caves, *bora* grounds, and shell middens were now surrounded by sheep paddocks, by-passed by roads, and shared space with such European products as farm houses, road signs, telegraph poles, shearing sheds, and fences. Meanwhile, the Aborigines who in the early days of settlement were to be seen on the edge of town were moved onto missions and reserves where, partly out of sight they were partly forgotten. Substituting for the presence of Aborigines in the European landscape were borrowed Aboriginal place names, themselves cut adrift from real Aboriginal language by mispronunciation and loss of meaning. Echoing my point in Chapter 5, the place names lent a suggestion of continuity and authenticity to the European settlements.

At another level the remains of the Aboriginal past became, for some Europeans at least, objects of interest, even acquisitive interest. Even as the living Aborigines were being 'forgotten' the products of their ancestors were being 'discovered'. This was made possible because as the objects moved into European systems of knowledge the Aboriginal 'taint' upon them was replaced by the respectable veneer of science or by the allure of curiosity. It would seem indisputable that archaeology, by moving these objects further than ever into the realm of science, contributed in a major way to the widening of the gap. By the 1970s the conceptual dissociation of living Aborigines from the material traces of their past was, for most white Australians, complete. This can be seen both in the legislation enacted to protect the traces and in the attitude of archaeologists to site protection and management. Central to both was the appropriation of the objects for Australian national identity. In Chapter 5 I have argued the case for a convergence, by the 1970s, of the discourses of archaeology and heritage. Here I will look in some detail at what was to be done with the 'archaeological heritage' (a term which encapsulates the convergence).

The 1968 Conference on Prehistoric Monuments and Antiquities in Australia, held in Canberra and organized by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, provides an insight into archaeology's attitude to Aboriginal heritage management at the time. The contributors to the conference were almost all professional or semi-professional archaeologists (see McCarthy 1970a), an indication that archaeology had assumed authority in the area of management as a 'natural' extension of its academic authority. After all, who better to advise and administer the management of the archaeological heritage than archaeologists? Two things are striking in the tone of the conference papers. The first is the articulation of the idea of national heritage. For McCarthy, legislation was essential for the protection of 'our heritage of Aboriginal antiquities' (1970b: xiii). Mulvaney, similarly, urged the protection of 'this national heritage' (1970: 117) and took issue with the attitude of artefact collectors: 'Their values are surely distorted if they feel free to treat national possessions in such cavalier fashion' (1970: 115). Edwards asked for government support 'to perpetuate this valuable, centuries-old heritage which our young nation has adopted' (Edwards 1970: 159). There is surely a sense here in which archaeology was invoking national patrimony in order to advance its sectoral interest, the protection of the archaeological record. Equally, though, for archaeologists like Mulvaney, there was a deep belief in archaeology's potential to foster human unity and cross-cultural understanding (see also Golson 1975), an ideal with an affinity to Grahame Clark's internationalism - Mulvaney quotes him at the end of his paper (1970:120). It would be wrong to disregard

the effects of the Second World War on the generation of archaeologists who lived through it and of the legacy of universalism which the war experience left in its wake.

It is unlikely that archaeologists consciously set out to exploit nationalist sentiment. Rather, I suggest they perceived the interests of archaeology as overlapping or even being coterminous with the interests of the nation. This raises a question of the manner in which the discourses of archaeology and heritage converged. As far as I am aware, archaeologists in Australia see the practice of archaeology taking place within broadly the same arena as the practice of heritage management. The two are not conceived as separate. The common conception may be that heritage management is informed by the discipline of archaeology and is an offshoot, even a client, of archaeology. Against this understanding I have proposed Heritage as being a discourse in its own right, one which is informed more by the priorities of the state than those of archaeology.

The other point which, in retrospect, is striking about the 1968 conference is the lack of reference to any link between archaeological remains in those parts of Australia longest colonized by Europeans and the Aborigines who lived there. In the papers on New South Wales (McCarthy 1970c), Queensland (Colliver 1970), Victoria (Gill 1970), and Tasmania (Lourandos 1970) the possibility of an Aboriginal interest in these remains was not raised. This was in line with the established conceptualization of such remains as strictly archaeological. In this part of Australia - and it will be borne in mind that this is where archaeology had begun and where its practice was still concentrated - phenomena like shell middens, cave and rock shelter deposits, and rock art were readily manipulated within the archaeological discourse using methods and theory carried over from European and American prehistoric archaeology. Carved trees, stone arrangements, and *bora* grounds were also easily accommodated by workers like McCarthy who were familiar with the fields of natural history and ethnology. But for most professional archaeologists these ritual objects or places sat somewhat uncomfortably among the more usual archaeological phenomena and, significantly, attracted very little research interest.

Ucko (1983a: 14) has perceived a concurrence of nationalism in this tendency for archaeologists to distance the remains of the Aboriginal past from living Aborigines (1983a: 14, 19; cf. his comments on heritage management in Zimbabwe [1983b]). This seems correct, to the extent that Australian national consciousness was being consolidated by the exclusion of living, 'non-traditional' Aborigines and the replacement of them by a mythologized Aboriginality which was off in the desert or back in the past. I refer again to one of the themes developed in Chapter 2, namely that

the European refusal to accept the legitimacy of change in Aboriginal cultures was partly a 'primitivist' (Torgovnick 1990) longing for our own, long-departed, premodern state. As the changing Aboriginal cultures, especially in the southeast, came to be seen as increasingly unsuitable as targets for this form of nostalgia European Australians turned in part to the remains of those past Aborigines who *had* been suitable. Longing for the primitive seems to coincide with nationalism in late twentieth century Australia. We commodify and historicize Aboriginal culture, blurring temporal and cultural boundaries so that it becomes, somehow, 'our' past. The actions of archaeologists - their role in this project - should be seen as reflecting their society's dominant values, hegemonically installed, and to this extent were 'unconscious'. The contrary notion of archaeology as value-neutral may be simply part of the discipline's positivist baggage and is a powerful myth which obfuscates the political content of heritage management practice.

For the parts of the country where colonial penetration had been later and less intense there was a degree of acknowledgement that a connection did exist between Aborigines and the remains of the Aboriginal past. The polarization of the situation in northern and southern Australia will be expanded upon later.

Turning to the legislation, a current of nationalism is evident, similar to that voiced by archaeologists. Introducing protective legislation into the NSW House of Assembly in 1969 the government minister responsible warned that if 'our more valuable relic areas are not protected... we will, as a nation, be immeasurably impoverished' (*Hansard* No. 81: 2,190-91). In the Victorian parliament the Minister introducing the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Bill in 1972 argued that 'These relics should be regarded as the cultural heritage of the people of the land of their origin' (*Hansard* No. 19: 5,001). We can take it he meant the present citizenry. A Member of the House commended this bill, saying 'we are concerned with the history of Aborigines as part of the history of Australia' (*Hansard* No. 20: 5,407). The same rhetoric of nationalist appropriation accompanied protective legislation through the parliaments of Queensland (Trigger 1980: 151) and Western Australia (Hawke 1975: 15). A feature of the introduction of protective laws in Australia was that it met little or no opposition in parliament. There was almost no debate of the relevant provisions of the NSW Bill and not a word of query or opposition to the idea of protection. The Australian Heritage Commission Bill similarly passed through Federal Parliament without controversy. My impression is that by this point in time Aboriginal remains were seen as so obviously a part of national heritage that the need to afford them state protection was beyond question.

I have argued earlier (Chapter 5) that we should look to the construction of Australian national identity, more than any other factor, in explaining the move by the state to protect the remains of the Aboriginal past. Alternatively, it might be argued that this move was an inevitable step in the modern state's inexorable extension of regulatory control over all aspects of Australia's physical environment. Historically, this latter process took the form of the state proclaiming its ownership of various aspects of the environment in principle and fact, and hence its right to dispose of them. First the land itself and then mineral resources, followed by timber. Extension of state control over native wildlife, flora, and 'scenic' landscape (i.e., wild and uncleared terrain) came later. Native fauna was protected by law in the colonies by the end of the nineteenth century, native flora was protected by 1927 in NSW and by 1939 in other states. Protection of nature as a non-commercial (or indirectly-commercial) resource sometimes only occurred after lobbying by community groups. But was it, perhaps, latent in the principle of state resource ownership?

One of the arguments used by McCarthy (1938: 120; 1970b: xi) in advocating protection of the remains of the Aboriginal past was that it was a logical progression from native fauna and flora protection. Surely, though, such a progression could be actualised only after these remains were able to be construed as a resource - in this case, a resource for the construction of national identity.

The legislation did not specify archaeology as the appropriate executive expertise for the management of the Aboriginal 'archaeological heritage'. In most cases the nominated executive authority (e.g., the National Parks and Wildlife Service in NSW) was to be served by an advisory committee on which archaeologists would have only minority representation. But in the offices established to execute the Acts archaeologists were from the beginning appointed to the senior positions (i.e., the 'professional' positions) and they have maintained a virtual monopoly in this area ever since. The legislation brought this about indirectly by specification of the nature of the remains to be protected. It specified them as archaeological heritage. The remains were referred to in the Acts as Aboriginal as well as archaeological (e.g., the Victorian and NSW Acts) but they were firmly situated within the realm of past Aboriginal culture, and hence within the domain of archaeology, by the use of the word 'relics'. Sullivan (1975a: 28) has made the point that the omission of any mention of Aborigines in the 1970 NSW Act represented a 'genuine lack of awareness' of any connection between Aborigines and sites. In states like NSW the legislation thus rendered sites comparable to the ancient monuments of Europe which nation states there had protected and

managed as national heritage since the previous century. By designating them 'relics' the state, in effect, nominated archaeology as the official management expertise.

PRISONERS OF HERITAGE

It is almost normal now to speak of the appropriation of the heritage of peoples on the periphery of world systems by those at the metropolitan centres. Also, of the appropriation of the heritage of indigenous minorities by colonizing majorities, and of that of underclasses by power elites (the latter two instances are examined in detail in the Latin American context by Rowe and Schelling [1991]). The obvious evidence of appropriation is found in the collections of antiquities and ethnological specimens in museums and in 'monuments' fenced off and managed by state antiquities agencies. In a more indirect way it is evidenced by the laws which now regulate access to heritage properties and the treatment of them (e.g., the Thai state's attempts to control the 'destructive' rebuilding of temples). It is also found in the listing of properties on state heritage inventories and in the exercise of management control via funding and the invocation of international conventions (e.g., the forthcoming Unesco-Japanese 'rescue' of Angkor from decay and the Cambodians). But of greater consequence and prevalence is the appropriation of the meaning of the remains of the past.

I have earlier suggested that the discourses of antiquarianism and archaeology commodify the physical remains of the human past by stressing their materiality (see Chapter 1). The discourse of heritage does the same, its particular interest being the monumentalization of the past. It is interesting to observe the way the heritage discourse has attempted to stabilise Aboriginal 'antiquities' by controlling the range of meanings they may have. This control tends, however, to be screened off from view by the seemingly innocent programme of recording and by the bustle of activity it generates.

Once the Aboriginal material past had been defined as heritage it then remained to decide what form protection should take. From an archaeological point of view the priority was to locate and record as many Aboriginal sites as possible. The heritage agencies established by the legislation took over the site lists which the museums and anthropology societies had been compiling for decades and set about enlarging them. This was achieved partly through systems of honorary wardens (South Australia had 183 wardens in 1972, eight of whom were Aborigines [Ellis 1975: 8]), existing National Park rangers (e.g., in NSW), or, in the case of Victoria, through an existing

system of inspectors of noxious weeds. The heritage agencies appear disarmingly value-neutral since all they seem to be doing is recording and protecting sites.

Funding to carry out recording programmes in specific areas was sought by the agencies from the AIAS and this, in a curious way, brought the archaeologist heritage managers of the southern states within the salvage enterprise which had motivated the founding of the Institute in 1961 and dominated its early years (see also Chapter 5). By the early 1970s, partly as an outcome of the 1972 *National Seminar on Aboriginal Antiquities in Australia,* the Institute was committed to a programme aimed at recording all sites of sacred significance to Aborigines (Edwards 1975: 112). This added national coordination and scale to the recording of Dreaming sites which had already been the subject of anthropological attention for many years.

Unlike the middens and *bora* grounds of the southeast of the continent the Dreaming sites were not referred to as relics. One reason for this was that they consisted almost entirely of natural landscape features of Dreaming significance. Another was the recognition that they remained part of the living culture of Aborigines - given their nature, it would have been impossible otherwise to identify them. However, a commonality did exist at one level between them and the southeastern 'relic' sites: both were considered to be heritage. While they could exist only in the minds of living Aborigines their 'pastness' lay in the understanding that they were a component of an ancient and unchanging Dreaming now in some danger of loss through the erosion of 'traditional' culture in the north. This understanding was given expression in one of the contributions to the 1972 conference:

> It should be remembered also that today there are no more chapters being written in 'the book of sites'. Obviously new trees particularly of introduced species will not have any traditional mytho-totemic significance....
> Occasionally an Aboriginal at the request of a European may still execute a painting on a rock face in Arnhem Land or touch up a painting that is fading, but there is nothing spontaneous about his act within the context of his traditional ceremonial life.

<div style="text-align: right">Milliken 1975: 21</div>

It seems that a number of factors conspired to relegate sacred sites to the past. One was the structural-functional tradition in anthropology spoken of earlier (Chapter 3) and its denial of historical process. The Northern Territory Land Rights Act of 1976 was informed by this tradition and valorized these sites by pinning land claims to them. Another was the air of anteriority which typically accompanies the dealings of archaeologists with Fourth World peoples. And, obviously linked to this tendency,

was the inbuilt propensity of the new heritage management to reify Aboriginal culture and fix it in the past tense.

Any attempt to analyse the particular heritage management style which developed in the southeast in the 1970s and has remained essentially unchanged since must come to grips with the north-south dynamic in Aboriginal studies. On the one hand we have the archaeological discipline with its core located solidly in the southeast but extending gradually northwards. The focus of archaeological fieldwork for a long time remained in the southeast but from the mid-1960s expeditions were mounted to carry out excavations in the Northern Territory (e.g., Mulvaney at Ingaladdi [1975: 184-89] and Carmel White in Arnhem Land [1971]) and the arid zone of central Western Australia (Gould 1969). Gould began combining his archaeology with ethnographic observations and by the 1970s this approach had become almost routine for archaeologists operating in the north (e.g. Schrire 1972, Jones 1981, Meehan 1977). There is some basis for seeing this work as part of the salvage enterprise, addressing as it did the concern that it might soon be too late to observe those aspects of 'traditional' behaviour of special interest to archaeologists. The type of ethnography of stone artefact technology carried out by Hayden (e.g., 1979), for instance, had for some years been a priority of the AIAS (see McCarthy 1968: 40). But 'ethnoarchaeology', to the extent that it assumed (within certain limits) that Aboriginal behaviour in the present could be read as our early hunter-gather past, also belongs to that part of primitivism that appropriates 'traditional' societies as a living text for universal history.

Interestingly, archaeological work in the north did not result in a discussion within the archaeological discipline of what contemporary meaning 'archaeological' sites had for Aborigines. The archaeologists in the north were adventurous in the context of international archaeology to the extent that their work was ethnographically informed. But in a methodology rendered problematic by the need to control for the element of change in Aboriginal practice over time, the Aborigines' role was to assist in the interpretation of archaeological data, not to bring to archaeology an alternative discourse on the significance of prehistoric remains. Gould's (1980) *Living Archaeology* was, for instance, not about the recontextualization of archaeological remains by living people but about bringing living people within the context of archaeology.

As archaeology extended north and, in so doing, contributed to the classification of the remains of the Aboriginal past there as prehistoric, it was matched, in a sense, by

the extension southwards of the Dreamtime site as a conceptual category. The New South Wales and the South Australian legislation which had originally made no provision for the existence of or protection of Dreamtime sites was amended in the mid- and late-1970s to make provision for them. In 1973 the AIAS funded an anthropologist to work among Aborigines on the North Coast of NSW recording Dreamtime and other sites of significance to Aborigines (Creamer 1980). The 1972 conference maintained that there could be few such sites in Victoria and none in Tasmania (Edwards 1975: 118) but the fact of their recognition in NSW represented a major departure from the long-established European view that all Aboriginal sites in the State were archaeological relics.

Rock art researchers acted as a bridge, to some extent, for the entry of the idea of Dreamtime significance into the archaeological discourse. While rock art sites had been recorded since the late nineteenth century in NSW it was only in the 1960s, when recording of rock art began in areas like the Kimberley and Pilbara of Western Australia and the North Flinders Ranges in South Australia, that archaeologists encountered local Aborigines who could relate to them the stories belonging to the designs and the ceremonial significance of the places. No such contacts were established by archaeologists in NSW or Victoria (though linguists such as Louise Hercus were busy recording 'traditional' information in these areas).

In the developments outlined here there is an appearance that the conceptual gap between living Aborigines and the remains of the Aboriginal past was being closed. Aborigines were being brought into heritage management as interpreters and in some states participated in site recording and protection. Most of this accommodation took place well after the protective legislation had been drafted and enacted and it might be seen in the context of the 'new deal' for Aborigines introduced by the Whitlam Labor government, elected in 1972. A wave of Aboriginal activism accompanied and followed this change in state policy, a change which saw the official abandonment of assimilation in favour of integration. The change to what Ucko (1983a: 22) refers to as a more 'humane' approach to Aborigines may appear to have led, by the 1980s, to a situation in which Aborigines were participating freely in the management of the physical vestiges of their own past. What had happened, however, is that the relationship between Aborigines and these remains had been constrained to flow along only one possible channel, that of 'heritage'. Aborigines were only admitted to the management process after the heritage discourse was established as dominant. Consequently, those Aborigines who joined the management agencies were

constrained, effectively 'locked in', to a discursive formation whose function was one of appropriation.

While seeming to have been given a degree of custodianship over the remains of their past Aborigines were, in a sense, imprisoned by heritage. Central to this process was the role played by the site inventories. In the pages which follow I attempt to give these power-laden devices the attention which they richly deserve.

UNDER THE GRID

Aboriginal heritage inventories came into being in the 1960s in Australia but, as noted earlier, had their origins further back, in the archaeological surveys of the 1930s and ultimately in the classificatory systems of natural science. They may present themselves as being nothing more than collective representations of the archaeological record but, like all collections, they are artefacts in their own right, saying at least as much about the culture or discourse which produces them as about the items they contain.

At one level the inventory can be seen simply as a hoard of places, much like a directory of addresses. The protective legislation in States such as NSW gave blanket protection to all Aboriginal sites irrespective of whether or not they had been recorded. The heritage agencies, however, took recording to be a first priority and directed much of their energy to compiling and maintaining the maps, site cards and, later, computer data bases which constituted the Site Registers. But more was involved than this. The places were classified at the same time as they were 'collected' and it was through classification that they become meaningful to Europeans.

Taking a step back to look at inventories as descendants of the much earlier natural history collections, we may note that it is the essence of natural history that collection and classification are inseparable. By the assembly of a population of objects - be they fossils, orchids, insects, or molluscs - the order which is believed to exist in them is believed to be revealed. Michel Foucault (1973: 22, 128) has furnished us with the 'grid' as a concept to describe the way nature came to be viewed in the seventeenth century in Europe. The grid is a horizontal space in which taxonomic classification takes place. Objects, collected and laid out according to observable, measurable attributes, are arranged in a way which reveals their natural order. The order is believed to be encoded within the world, merely waiting to be discovered, but

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Foucault helps us see that the grid does more than simply facilitate order's manifestation. The grid is actually a discursive device and order appears only when viewed through it. Order is *given* to 'the continuity and tangle of nature' (Foucault 1973: 73) by discourse.

In essentially the same way, a heritage inventory is a grid laid down over what we understand to be the archaeological record. Viewed through it, the remains of the past seem to coalesce into types (e.g., site types). We allow that the continued application of archaeological analysis may necessitate subdivision of types, or even their reclassification, as analysis reveals new truth in the data. But we do not allow that the entire inventory is a discursive device and merely an artefact of archaeology. In other words, that the archaeological order displayed by the inventory is immanent in us rather than in the objects. And we do not allow that Aborigines may view these phenomena through an entirely different grid. The function of the heritage inventories is actually to discipline the vestiges of the past, to impose order upon them. They are 'apparatuses of knowledge' (Foucault 1980: 106) which, in this case, reconstitute Aboriginal artefacts as European artefacts. They perform, indeed, one of those 'domestications of the exotic' (Said 1985: 60) by which the West has sought to know and control the Other.

My interpretation here also draws upon the work of people like Clifford (1988) and Thomas (1991). They have concerned themselves with collections of material culture assembled by ethnographers. But rather than sharing the original collectors' intention (i.e., the study of the subject 'primitive' culture which produced the artefacts) they are interested in the dynamic relationship between the subject culture, the ethnographer, and the culture to which the ethnographer belongs. The intercourse between these three is what the collections really speak of and represent. In a similar way, I am interested here in the inventories rather than what they claim to contain.

In Thomas's (1989) writing on the history of Pacific ethnography the Bishop Museum in Honolulu takes on the aspect of a collector of cultures. It sent anthropologists out to dozens of island destinations charged with the task of capturing the resident cultures in the form of ethnographic accounts. The ethnographies broke the cultures down into the components (under headings such as geography, European contact, social organization, rank, warfare) of an 'objectified classification'. They were thus not totally unlike those classifications achieved in natural history (also a major subject of the museum's enterprise), or in archaeology, and material culture

studies (1989: 43). The important thing, for present purposes, is what the museum considered the collection to be:

> The project of ethnography was not to be reduced to some partial or motivated interpretation, grounded in a set of intellectual interests, but rather entailed a total appropriation in knowledge of the object: the task was to capture and authoritatively depict the cultures of a group of islands.

<div align="right">Thomas 1989: 44</div>

There is every indication that the archaeological heritage inventories are likewise not commonly seen by white Australian heritage managers as motivated interpretations of the Aboriginal material past.

The records which heritage inventories contain are of places rather than of societies. But places, like the objects which Thomas describes in the following, may be quite unstable entities.

> insistence upon the fact that objects pass through social transformations effects a deconstruction of the essentialist notion that the identity of material things is fixed in their structure and form. Hence, while certain influential theorists of material culture have stressed the objectivity of the artifact, I can only recognize the reverse: the mutability of things in recontextualization. Axes, old cars, striped condoms, are never things embodying pure or original templates or intentions. The use of a truck in the New Guinea highlands as the "big-man's" prestige valuable is no distortion of a straightforward machine-commodity; any thing shifts through phases, within which it can be used at certain times as a claim about design, a new product, a potential way of getting cash, a marker not just of status but a certain kind of taste (stylish *old* Jaguars versus the more common new kind), an aggressive way of expressing taste against its absence, a means of violence or seduction, and later a marker of a period, a relic, a souvenir; all this as well as a way of cutting a tree, traveling somewhere, or having safe sex.

<div align="right">Thomas 1991: 28-29</div>

I maintain that given the nature of human behaviour, meaning, in relation to place, is always multiple and mutable. The pagan-Christian sites of significance stand as examples of this as do places like Sukhothai which are at once spirit sites, Buddhist sacred sites, and icons of national identity. I will go on, later, to show that the Aboriginal places 'contained' by the NSW heritage inventory have a meaning-full existence outside the inventory which contradicts the meaning given to them by the inventory. For the moment I wish to explore, a little more, the heritage inventories within their own terms of reference.

There has been a general awareness that the significance of a place in terms of its archaeological research potential may be expected to change as the questions archaeologists ask of their data change or are reformulated (e.g., Bowdler 1984). Post-processual archaeology, however, recognizes that artefacts do not reflect past human behaviour directly. Hodder (1986), for instance, attends to the symbolic meaning of artefacts and seems able, or at least willing, to address the sort of complexity of which Thomas speaks. But this thinking has not led to changes in the heritage inventory process despite the fact that it might be possible to envisage inventories which address such complexity by a more flexible, less hard-edged system of categories. Yet the inventory problematic does not actually reside here in the effort to approximate the prehistoric social context of objects and places. It lies in the continuity between the present and the past in the realm of people-artefact relations.

The repeated recontextualization of a thing can, according to Thomas (above), eventually see it become a period marker, a relic, or a souvenir. If this is so then some of the ancient objects and places in our inventories might themselves have been cast in such roles in ancient times. Heritage managers themselves, of course, are engaged in precisely this kind of transaction. They have done no more than undertake the latest recontextualization of objects and places which have passed into their hands.

THE NEW SOUTH WALES INVENTORY

The small Aboriginal heritage unit established within the NPWS under the terms of the 1970 Act was charged under the Act with responsibility for maintaining a register of Aboriginal 'relics' in the state. The agency immediately set about this task but the inventory was by no means created out of a vacuum. Site recording programmes had been carried out by natural scientists like Campbell, who located and photographed rock art sites in the Sydney area in the 1890s. An advance in systematisation occurred in the 1930s when McCarthy (appointed to the Australian Museum's Ethnology Department in 1932), in collaboration with the Anthropological Society of NSW, began systematically combing the tributary valleys of the Hawkesbury, Georges and other rivers for rock art sites which were recorded, plotted on the best available topographic survey maps, and catalogued on a site list which the Museum had begun to maintain. An alternative source of sites for the list were the occasional discoveries made by members of the ASNSW and the general public who since 1929 had been

FIGURE 7 Part of the Aboriginal Sites Register at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW) in Sydney.

FIGURE 8 Emblems of the nation. An Aborigine in 'traditional' guise with Ayers Rock in the background (postcard c.1960s).

urged by the Society to notify it of rock carvings, carved trees, burials and other Aboriginal remains. On occasion McCarthy and the ASNSW recorders were also able to recruit bushwalkers to help locate sites in bushland around Sydney (Wright 1941: 11). The site list was dominated by rock art sites and coastal middens but McCarthy also compiled a catalogue of carved trees which comprised 700-1,000 trees on 131 sites (1945b: 199).

This recording effort should not be disassociated from the commitment of people like McCarthy to achieving state protection for Aboriginal remains. In a real sense the recording effort anticipated and even pre-empted legislative protection. The key device here was the site list which, though it had only semi-official status, brought the remains out of the bush and into an arena where they could be 'observed' more easily, quantified, and appreciated as a resource for archaeological research and, ultimately, a resource for the building of national identity.

The recording work continued through the 1940s. The ASNSW formed a special committee to systematically record all the rock art of the Sydney area (*Mankind* 1947 3[10]: 303). With the beginning of professional archaeology in the 1960s there was a new development in fieldwork: the regional survey. Isabel McBryde's (1974) regional survey took in the area comprising the New England tablelands and the North Coast. With her students she located and recorded hundreds of archaeological sites which had been unknown or unattended to by several generations of European settlers. She gleaned information on sites from local collectors of Aboriginal stone artefacts and also sifted through the recollections of dozens of landholders who had encountered remains they knew to be Aboriginal in their local areas. She established relations with local historical societies, using their records of the activities of Aborigines as witnessed by early settlers and relocated many of the places mentioned in their files or known of by their members. Some sites were already known to the Australian Museum and had been recorded by McCarthy and others. These, too, were located and rerecorded. The regional survey, in one of its aspects, amounted to a reworking by the archaeological discourse of previous European knowledge of Aboriginal remains.

During the 1960s McBryde had become aware through occasional encounters with Aborigines that a considerable amount of the religious lore which Radcliffe-Brown (1929) had recorded on the North Coast in the 1920s was still extant. By 1970 she had begun visiting old 'missions' like Burnt Bridge where many of the older people were still fluent in their own languages and where she was told about sacred places.

Conscious, however, of her lack of anthropological expertise, she was diffident about recording these places (McBryde pers. comm.). For their part, the young linguists who had been sent out to salvage what remained of the languages before they 'disappeared' had tended to be told that the recording of 'mythology' was not in their brief.

The result of all this was that when the NSW site inventory was established in 1970 what went onto it were archaeological sites. The sites were not, with the exception of such ritual places as stone arrangements and *bora* grounds, seen to require interpretation by Aborigines. The gap which had opened up between Aborigines and their products meant that by now it was unremarkable that site classification should make no reference to the Aborigines currently living their lives in the State. The classification was perceived to be purely objective, involving a simple recognition of the order believed to be inherent within the remains. A shell midden, for instance, presented itself to observation as such. The sites were self-defining.

To appreciate how it came about in 1973 that the 'mythological site' category was added to the NPWS inventory it is necessary to refer again to the project of salvaging 'traditional' Aboriginal culture, especially as it was embarked upon by the AIAS in its early years. The Institute acted as something of a forum for anthropologists, archaeologists and heritage managers from all parts of the country by the late 1960s and it was natural that the concept of the Dreaming site would attain common currency. This was helped by a tendency for the Institute under McCarthy's principalship to promote a pan-continental approach to the recording of Aboriginal sites along with the idea that a 'traditional' belief system could be classed, along with archaeological sites, as 'heritage'. In the Institute's own inventory, established by 1965, for the grand project of recording all Aboriginal sites in Australia sacred sites fell neatly into line with the archaeological categories:

Archaeological deposits	Fish traps
Axe grinding grooves	Multi-trait sites
Burials and coffins	Natural sacred sites
Carved trees	Quarries
Cave paintings	Radio-carbon dates
Ceremonial grounds	Rock engravings
Collections	Stone arrangements
Canoe/shield/container trees	Surface campsites
	Wells

AIAS Newsletter 1965 2(2): 20

What stood in for sacred sites in the AIAS register were recordings of the geographical location and extent of the sites together with anthropological recordings of their significance. What stood in for them, in other words, were anthropological texts, just as archaeological texts stood in for the physical remains of the Aboriginal past. The connection between living Aborigines and the representations in the inventories was a tenuous one. This being the case one might expect Aborigines to have taken little interest in the recording-classificatory project. The crucial factor which impelled them to take an interest was the move which placed the entire body of recordings under the category 'heritage'. The heritage:culture equation meant that these recordings came to play a role for Europeans in defining what Aboriginal culture was. In this context the tenuous links between Aborigines and the sites, as represented, were serious indeed. Aborigines now had to contend with the possibility that white people had erected a construction of Aboriginality, suffused with power, which was essentially independent of them.

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE: THE ONE AND THE MANY

An aspect of the mutability of material culture is the tendency for different alignments of class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality to draw different meanings from it. In present-day Australia, the control exercised over the remains of the Aboriginal past by the discourses of archaeology and heritage ensure that these remains have been recontextualized as archaeological data and national properties. This monopolization must be covert because the whole concept of heritage in a place like Australia necessarily embraces, in public, the ideal of plurality. The danger is averted by the deployment of such screening devices as the concept of social significance.

The Burra Charter (the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, 1979) holds that conservation policy should be formulated only after a site's cultural significance has been assessed. It defines cultural significance as 'the aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations' (Burra Charter, Article 1.2). This would appear to allow, for instance, the accommodation of the Aboriginal interest in a value-neutral context. However, a closer reading of the Charter reveals that it is overdetermined to the extent that the understanding of conservation built into it is culturally specific:

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> *Conservation* is based on a respect for the existing *fabric* and should involve the least possible physical intervention. It should not distort the evidence provided by the fabric.
>
> Burra Charter, Article 3

In effect this means that the Aboriginal interest should be accommodated, providing that it is compatible with a conservation ethic which privileges fabric.

As Wei and Aass (1989) have shown with reference to China, there are understandings of conservation, arguably held by the majority of the world's population, which do not give priority to material fabric. The second sentence of Article 3 betrays the Charter's archaeological genealogy. Fabric is privileged because it constitutes evidence. The meaning of the site is seen to reside in its physical fabric rather, say, than in the spiritual essence of the place occupied by the physical remains. Rather than admitting the specific disciplinary and cultural genealogy of this view it has tended to be put forward by bodies such as UNESCO and ICOMOS as universal (cf. Byrne 1991: 273-76). It is precisely on this point that Aborigines in some parts of Australia come into conflict with archaeologists. One such conflict pitted a group of Kimberley (Western Australia) Aborigines who wished to continue the periodic practice of ritually repainting Wandjina spirit-beings against elements of the local white community and certain archaeological heritage managers. The latter regarded the Wandjina figures as unique works of art and equated repainting with damage. The Aborigines regarded the Wandjina and the depictions of them as a single category and saw periodic repainting as an essential part of their continuing relationship with them (Bowdler 1988). Later I will argue that the recent site management conflicts on the North Coast of NSW also centre on an Aboriginal understanding of the meaning of sites which is opposed to the archaeological meaning.

Another form of apparent accommodation was effected by modification of the inventory. The register of Aboriginal sites established by the NSW government under its legislation of 1970 was based on long-established archaeological site categories and made no provision for sites of spiritual significance to contemporary Aborigines. Then, in 1974, the Act was amended to allow for the protection of natural landscape features which had this type of significance. This, as noted earlier, represented a movement to the south of the sacred site as an officially recognized category from northern Australia where it had long ago been brought to European consciousness, mainly through the work of anthropologists.

It is interesting to contrast the situation in Western Australia with that in NSW. In both places the State anthropological societies had played a leading role in establishing inventories. In both places the societies worked closely with the State museums and their inventories or catalogues formed the basis of the institutionalized inventories subsequently established under law. In Perth, however, the focus of the society's interest was anthropology whereas in Sydney it was antiquarianism and archaeology. The ASWA was dominated by Ronald and Catherine Berndt who began teaching anthropology at the University of Western Australia in 1955 and whose interest in Aboriginal 'mythology' and art may have influenced the character of the ASWA's site list (the list was begun in 1960 [see Dix 1975]). The same emphasis on Dreaming sites and art sites, many of which had Dreaming associations, was carried over into the register established by the Western Australian Museum under the terms of the Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1972. This gave protection to 'any place, including any sacred, ritual or ceremonial site, which is of importance or of special significance to persons of Aboriginal descent' (Flood 1989: 81). As archaeology became established at the museum and university in Perth in the 1970s the presence of sites of an archaeological nature on the inventory increased.

What effectively had happened in Australia was that two types of inventory developed. One, that found in Western Australia and the Northern Territory (where the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act, 1978, had established a register of sacred sites), which sought to salvage places important within ongoing Aboriginal culture as well as places of archaeological significance and another, that found in states like NSW and Victoria, which sought to salvage only the latter.

It might appear that the difference between the inventories in the two states was simply a product of the disciplinary interests of those in Aboriginal studies. Those researchers who were becoming aware of the continuing existence of Dreamtime stories (linked to Dreamtime sites) among Aboriginal communities in places like the North Coast of NSW, people like Louise Hercus, Malcolm Calley, Isabel McBryde, and Russell Hausfeld were not in positions of power in the anthropological establishment and this aspect of their work was not widely publicized. It might, however, be argued that it was only a matter of time before their work would result in the NSW Aboriginal Sites Register opening to admit sites of spiritual importance to Aborigines. Alternatively, the inclusion of these sites could be seen as reflecting the surge of Aboriginal activism in the 1970s and the inclusion within this of a demand for a voice in how the remains of their past were treated. By appearing to marry the Dreaming sites to the existing site inventory and by subsuming Aboriginal concern for

such sites within the single programme of heritage conservation the particular, exotic relationship of these sites with the Aboriginal historical landscape could be domesticated.

The sort of analysis I employ here could make it seem that those most sympathetic to the claims of the indigenous minority were those most deviously engaged in disempowering them. I refer in particular to the role played by Sharon Sullivan (1975a, 1983), the archaeologist in charge of the Aboriginal heritage office of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the NSW agency with legislative responsibility for Aboriginal sites. She was instrumental in obtaining government approval to give Aborigines a majority voice on her agency's consultative committee and for employment of several Aborigines as 'sites officers'. In their time, these were radical innovations and were achieved in the face of opposition and suspicion by many bureaucrats and some archaeologists. The power relations I am attempting to describe here are often only visible in retrospect. I was personally engaged on a number of NPWS projects during the early 1980s which involved working with Aborigines in NSW (Byrne 1983). While frequently troubled by the opacity of the archaeology-Aboriginal connection, I was certainly not thinking along the lines developed in this thesis.

The final act of accommodation I wish to mention here is that which obligated consultant archaeologists carrying out field surveys and impact assessments ahead of development projects to establish the significance to local Aborigines of all sites found. In almost all cases the subject of these investigations were prehistoric 'archaeological' sites. Again, the move was radical for its time and seemed to give Aborigines a direct voice in management of their cultural property. But again, also, it had the effect of subsuming the Aboriginal view within the archaeological. The Aboriginal view was filtered through the archaeological discourse. Archaeologists went into the field with their Foucaultian grid and required Aborigines to view the sites through it and tell what they saw. Clearly, the terms of reference were predetermined.

A 'CULTURAL REVIVAL' IN NEW SOUTH WALES

In 1973 the AIAS made a grant to the NPWS of New South Wales to employ anthropologist, Howard Creamer, and Ray Kelly, an Aborigine from the mid-North Coast of the state, to carry out fieldwork among the Aboriginal communities of NSW in order to record any 'sites of significance' (the term had become synonymous with

'sacred sites' and 'Dreaming sites') which still existed. Thus began a project which ran for more than ten years, during which several other Aborigines were recruited on to the team and over 600 sites of significance were recorded. Hundreds of reports on sites and site complexes were prepared and lodged in the state's Aboriginal Sites Register. These included detailed field recordings of places together with transcripts of stories related by mainly older Aborigines. In addition to several short conference papers and articles by members of the team dating from the early years of the project Creamer prepared a major retrospective report on the ten-year period 1973-83 (Creamer 1984) together with a more theoretical interpretation of the project (Creamer 1988).

In Chapter 3 I attempted to develop a picture of the relationship which Aborigines on the North Coast of NSW have with what I called the Aboriginal historical landscape and how they construct that landscape. I suggested that an Aboriginal historical landscape exists concurrently with a European one but is only, at best, semi-visible to Europeans. Its existence is necessarily 'underground' because of the marginalization of Aborigines over the last two hundred years. To most Europeans it is unknown, just as the Aboriginal side of the events of those two centuries is unknown. It is a landscape populated by places and things rendered significant by Aboriginal people's memories and by surviving physical traces. Some of the traces are thousands of years old, some date back only a generation or so. They are variously celebrated, respected, dreaded, forgotten, discovered, and resignified.

This is not, however, the understanding which the survey team led by Creamer and Kelly (hereafter, 'the Survey') took into the field in 1973. Theirs was a salvage brief: the recovery of surviving 'traditional' knowledge and the sacred sites associated with it. Largely ignoring the landscape signified during the post-contact period, their job, as Creamer saw it, was to 'act now to preserve what still remains of the culture' (1975: 18). 'Culture' was understood to be that which existed at the time of contact and which had been dissipating ever since. The question hovering over their project from its inception was whether or not 'sacred sites' still existed in NSW. Convinced that NSW Aborigines had to all intents and purposes lost their culture, there was scepticism among bureaucrats and many anthropologists as to what the Survey could hope to achieve. It was thus with some satisfaction that the Survey was soon able to report that it had recorded authentic Dreamtime stories from Aboriginal elders and with their help had identified natural landscape feature 'sacred sites' (e.g., Creamer 1975, Kelly 1975).

The Survey chose to begin its work on the North Coast of the State because of indications from McBryde's (1974) work that sacred sites and Dreamtime knowledge still existed there. European pastoral occupation of the New England tablelands had begun in 1832 and of the coastal valleys a few years later. By the late 1840s most of the grazing land had been taken up. North Coast Aborigines had thus been in a post-contact environment for almost 150 years by the time the Survey began its work. Despite massive dislocation some tribal groups had been able to stay on in their original territories though, after the 1880s, the people were mainly confined to reserves. As in other parts of the state, initiation ceremonies had ceased by the early 1900s except in a few places, like the Macleay Valley, where they continued to be held irregularly and in modified form up until 1935 (Creamer 1984: 8.9-8.10). In the late 1920s Radcliffe-Brown (1929) had recorded Dreamtime stories and the location of totemic sites on parts of the North Coast as had the linguist Gerhardt Laves (n.d.) in 1929-30. Similar material was recorded by the anthropologist Malcolm Calley (1958), the amateur ethnographer Marjorie Oakes in the 1960s and 70s (Oakes 1975), Roland Robinson (1965), and several linguists, including Margaret Sharpe, beginning work in the 1960s (see Sharpe [1985] for synopsis of this work). When Russell Hausfeld was manager of the Aboriginal reserve at Woodenbong in the late 1950s many of the people there still spoke a dialect of Banjalung and most were aware of their totemic affiliation (1963: 48). Laves, for his part, apparently worked with old initiated men who were bilingual.

The Dreamtime stories Laves recorded were a mixture of what appear to be pre-contact and recent elements. The stories often were anchored to new landscape features like roads, bridges, and European settlements and they incorporated accounts of encounters between known individuals in the recent past and spirit-beings. The impression from Laves' notes is that the 'traditional' had been reworked rather than lost. The Survey, however, appears to have been less concerned to record this dynamic, emergent side of North Coast Aboriginal culture than with the salvaging of the 'traditional' knowledge. What was recorded were mostly those fragments bearing the stamp of the pre-contact. Creamer observed that the 'reduced flow of information' (1984: 9.13) meant that in later versions of stories there was less detail on the names of actors, the specific location of the places involved, and the order of events (1984: 9.11-9.13). The original Dreaming stories, as a religious genre, were seen to have atrophied. More story sites tended to be known in the vicinity of Aboriginal communities which continued to be based within their former tribal country (e.g., the reserve-based communities at Bellbrook on the Macleay and Mulli Mulli at Woodenbong) than in other areas. Sites such as mountains, which were dominant

landscape features, continued to be known as sacred because of their high visibility (Creamer 1984: 9.5) whereas many less visible places were not. Nevertheless, working with older Aborigines in various parts of the state, a number of whom died during the period of the Survey's work, large numbers of 'traditional' stories and sites were recorded. By 1984 some 164 natural landscape features of Dreaming significance had been recorded together with 94 ceremonial sites consisting mostly of *bora* grounds and places associated with increase rites (Creamer 1984: 7.5)

Even the more knowledgeable of the younger generation of Aborigines in the 1970s (i.e., those who were middle-aged and not elders) knew of Dreamtime sites mainly because older people had pointed them out from a distance. Ray Kelly was a case in point. His father had been one of the young men put through an initiation in 1935 at the Long Gully site near Bellbrook.

> I was born in 1938. During the first sixteen years of my life, my father had pointed out many sites to me throughout our own tribal area without ever passing on the relevant sacred information.

Kelly 1979: 79

The witholding of such information from non-initiates is quite normal in Aboriginal society. But Kelly belonged to a generation born after initiations had ceased and sacred knowledge was thus more than just secret 'inside' knowledge held by the initiated. It was knowledge locked up, as if were, in the past.

The question of whether the 'traditional' survived in NSW was clearly derived from that essentialist view of Aboriginal culture which had erected the traditional-urban, tribal-detribalized duality reviewed in Chapter 3. In retrospect, it seems that by setting out to refute the 'non-traditional' categorization of NSW Aboriginal culture the Survey was perpetuating the discourse which had produced the categorization. Perhaps the Survey was in a no-win situation. If it failed to record 'traditional' knowledge and sites the essentialist assessment of NSW Aboriginal culture as impoverished would be confirmed. If they succeeded in discovering the 'traditional' the picture which emerged would still, by comparison to 'tribal' Aborigines of Northern Australia, be one of a depauperate culture. It is not difficult to see, though, that in the early 1970s the Survey's seemingly bold project assumed a heroic guise. It was saving knowledge which might otherwise be lost and was thus sanctioned by a salvage-oriented AIAS. For Kelly, the European certainty that no 'sacred sites' existed in NSW was taken as a challenge (Kelly 1980: 79). For him the recording of

'traditional' knowledge demonstrated that NSW Aborigines were 'real' in European terms.

A fundamentally important aspect of the Survey was that it saw itself not as simply a recorder of traditional knowledge and sites but as an active agent in promoting awareness of them among NSW Aborigines. The rationale for this was that 'traditional' ways could be adapted to present conditions, serving as a resource for building an affirmative, confident Aboriginality. To explain why these 'traditional' ways had not been drawn upon as a source of Aboriginality prior to the Survey both Creamer (1975: 19, 1980: 89) and Kelly (1975) had recourse to the formula of the 'cultural bind'. According to this, post-contact Aborigines faced a choice between holding onto or abandoning tradition. The impediments to the former included the fact that they had lost access to many of their pre-contact religious sites and that 'traditional' ritual and even language was suppressed by the authorities on the missions and reserves. But even when they chose the latter course Aborigines found they were still not accepted by European society. So they 'drifted along doing neither' (Kelly 1975: 14). The result, according to this formula, was a sort of cultural dysfunction. European ways were avoided but, at the same time, old people stopped passing on traditional knowledge. A 'breakdown' in transmission (Creamer 1988: 51) occurred. Against this background the Survey consciously set out to serve as a bridge between the old people, who were the repositories of 'traditional' culture, and the younger generations. They sought to accomplish by artificial means what Aboriginal society, caught in the 'cultural bind', had supposedly been unable to do:

> our job on the survey is to act now to preserve what remains of the culture, to give the elders a means to communicate their knowledge in an atmosphere of trust and understanding, and then to feed back the results of our work in a simple and effective way that can be instantly grasped by the 'grass-roots' Aboriginal people.

> Creamer 1975: 18

The intervention which the Survey set out to effect was conceived in the context of a 'cultural revival'. Creamer referred in 1975 to the need to 'facilitate a cultural renaissance' (1975: 22), a concept which remained central to the Survey's rationale thereafter (it was referred to repeatedly in reports and publications up until 1988). Kelly stated his position quite clearly: 'What I want very desperately is for our people to have a chance to build a modern Aboriginal culture out of our tribal traditions' (1980: 80). He was conscious of his mediating role.

I feel that we need to get all our people to become knowledgeable about Aboriginal history and culture - things that only a few of us seem to be interested in at present. To get them interested and knowledgeable, we have to make sure first that the knowledge is preserved in its Aboriginal meaning and then fed back into the people generally. I see this as the task of the Sacred Sites Survey which we are undertaking in N.S.W. No doubt our bosses at the Institute of Aboriginal Studies think the knowledge has been well preserved, but I think that although they have the facts they do not have the true Aboriginal meaning. They are only preserving a white man's interpretation - about as good as our understanding of what it is to be an Eskimo.

Kelly 1975: 16

When he was young, initiated men in the Macleay Valley had given him glimpses of the world of secret knowledge. In 1973 he 'faced an exciting challenge: could I persuade the old men to tell me what they knew?' (Kelly 1979: 79). What they passed on to him he would preserve.

This raised the issue of initiation ceremonies, the cessation of which had been a fundamental reason for the 'breakdown' in transmission. When the Survey began there were still eight men alive who had gone through the 1935 initiation near Bellbrook. In 1980 Creamer reported:

The Survey team is assisting these elders to protect their sacred sites, and through a series of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Workshops the team plans to encourage a revival of interest in these ceremonies and their meaning and importance in Aboriginal society.

Creamer 1980: 89

It is unclear whether Creamer and Kelly saw their intervention as precipitating the 'cultural revival' or as being simply concurrent with it. Certainly, in Creamer's eyes, the Survey's interest was reciprocated by Aborigines who were 'allowing us to record and help revitalise their culture' (1980: 93). There is not space here to address the 'cultural revival' phenomena of the 1970s in its wider Australian context, except to note its manifestation in the promotion of Aboriginal arts. In the introduction to the volume, *Preserving Indigenous Cultures: a New Role for Museums,* Robert Edwards (1980) spoke of a new atmosphere of Aboriginal self-confidence following the 1967 referendum:

Self determination brought with it a strong desire to re-identify with traditional culture and history. But it was not until the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council was formed in 1973 that the slow and difficult task of rebuilding and strengthening the culture was begun.

1980: 2

One of the aims of the Board was 'to stimulate developments in the arts where traditional cultural practices have been disrupted or stopped' (Edwards 1980: 3). How different, really, was this revival from the sort of 'Aboriginal display' which was organized by the Manager of the La Perouse reserve, Sydney, in the early 1930s for tourists from the cruise ship Mariposa? (Kennedy 1932). On this occasion *gunyahs* were constructed, spears and boomerangs were thrown, a sandstone rockshelter on the reserve was decorated with hand stencils, and a *corroboree* was enacted. Of the Aborigines who were under his supervision, the Manager reported that 'although being several generations removed from their ancient life, it was wonderful what they knew of their old customs' (Kennedy 1932: 86). Here the authenticity of primitivism is elevated above the authenticity of the actual modern culture of La Perouse which, incidentally, was later recorded by the Aborigines themselves (*La Perouse* 1988).

Similarly, in the white response to Aboriginal art over the last decades we see an obsessive desire for what Eric Michaels (1989: 33) called 'archaism'. Paintings are evaluated by the art market's 'discourses of exotica' (Michaels 1989: 30) which equate traditionalism with authenticity. The work of Albert Namatjira and other Hermannsburg watercolourists was for a long time seen by whites as in the Western romantic tradition and, hence, as non-Aboriginal and inauthentic (Kleinert 1992). Concurrent with the recent surge of international interest in Aboriginal art, though foreshadowed in the 1950s by T.G.H. Strehlow (Megaw and Megaw 1992: 7), there has been a move to reinterpret the Hermannsburg school, seeing in it a continuity of Aranda religious links to land. This move has been criticised by Jones (1992) and others who see the real significance of these artists as lying precisely in their departure from tradition. Pre-existing motifs are desanctified (Jones 1992: 100) and they 'represent a more analytical, even disengaged, view of Aranda country' (1992: 109). This line of interpretation and counter-interpretation seems, however, unable to free itself from the diametric alternatives that this art (and the 'cultural revival' [Jones 1992: 97] undertaken by the Western Desert acrylic 'dot painters') can only be either 'traditional' or elicited by the Western art market. The sense I take from commentators like Morton (1992) and Michaels (1989) is that the real significance of what is happening lies in *transformation*. Out of a dialogue between Aboriginal and white culture emerges something unprecedented and inventive.

I would like to move this understanding into my analysis of the 'cultural revival' as we find it in the work of the Survey in NSW. Rather than a partial vacuum (Creamer 1988: 56) being created by the depletion of a traditional body of knowledge I suggest

that as the old knowledge became inappropriate under conditions of rapid change the space was filled by new ways of relating to landscape. This new historical landscape was not elicited by any heritage recording programme but had been building since the time of contact and had been fed by a rich and often terrible history of events. The time-frame of the purported cultural revival is much more recent. Something novel has certainly been going on in this time frame but rather than a revival of culture coming after a 'hiatus in cultural continuity' (Creamer 1984: 9.9) I see it as something rather more radical: a borrowing by Aborigines of elements of the white discourse of heritage.

A COUNTER-APPROPRIATION

The Survey's programme gradually changed over the period from 1973. The emphasis moved from the recording of sacred 'mythological' natural landscape features, *bora* grounds, and other 'traditional' sites to the recording of massacre sites, missions, and camping places belonging to the post-contact period. Also to the recording of prehistoric 'archaeological' sites which Aborigines were increasingly asking to have listed and protected. By 1984 Creamer reported that post-contact sites accounted for at least half of the 578 the sites the Survey had recorded (1984: 7.5).

T.G.H. Strehlow spoke in his journal of 'a terrible silence' which fell over Central Australia in the 1930s as he witnessed the last complete performances of Aranda ceremonies (Jones 1992: 125). This silence was clearly a matter of perception. For Aborigines on the North Coast of NSW the post-contact period was not a silent vacuum but a time of intense activity. As old country was lost new country opened up, in the sense that the radically changed landscape was resignified by Aborigines. In this way they continued, almost subversively, to live in a culturally authentic Aboriginal landscape. Apart from those who withdrew into the forested mountains, for most Aborigines the landscape they now lived in was one they shared (on inequitable terms, certainly) with whites. It had both limitations and potential. Foraging, for instance, was curtailed but cultivation became a possibility. The potential was progressively reduced by the attitude of white settlers and by government policy but, still, it cannot be said that the Aboriginal cultural landscape in the post-contact period was any less populated with points of interest and endeavour than was that of the white settlers. No doubt there were areas of overlap, but essentially the post-contact landscape meant one thing to Aborigines and another thing to whites. If by using the word 'shared' I risk seeming to trivialize the injustice and brutality handed out to Aborigines on the North Coast it is in an effort to recognize Aboriginal agency in the post-contact world.

Specifically, agency in the interpretation of events and the signification of space. Authenticity for them, I argue, lay in the cultural present rather than in the past.

In Chapter 3 I looked briefly at the sort of places which made up the Aboriginal landscape in the post-contact period. These included fringe camps, missions, and Christmas camps along with those sacred and ritual places carried over from the pre-contact past. There are elements of continuity with the old times to be found in the nature of many of these places. Some of the contemporary coastal fishing camps, for instance, were actually superimposed on prehistoric sites. Other places were unprecedented: there were cricket pitches, mission churches, massacre sites. We have tended to treat Aboriginal post-contact sites as equivalent to or even as part of European colonial archaeology. We grant that Dreaming sites are culturally Aboriginal but see the post-contact sites as belonging to a culture which is only marginally Aboriginal and whose products, as with the early white perception of Namatjira's watercolours, have become part of a larger 'Australian' culture.

In asserting that the 'European' elements in modern Aboriginal culture are not a symptom of a loss of Aboriginality, one could cite the continuation into the new landscape of the supernatural in a way which incorporates or domesticates European elements. The rock outcrop above the Woodenbong reserve which is a pre-existing Dreaming site now incorporates two bulls' heads believed to be reincarnated ancestors (Creamer 1984: 5.3). A story was related to Laves of a young white fellow who swam in the waterhole at the Bull Paddock near Grafton which Birugan, a syncretic deity with the attributes of Jesus, had been associated with. He nearly drowned but an Aboriginal cleverman, Doctor Billy, saved him (Laves n.d.: 1253). Many of the places recorded by Laves in 1929-30 on the North Coast invest 'European' places (e.g., the Grafton bridge, the Urunga racecourse) with specific supernatural qualities. These ostensibly European artefacts have been taken over into the Aboriginal landscape and inscribed with Aboriginal meanings. Interestingly, in the three Banjalung stories published by Malcolm Calley (1958) there is not a trace of the post-contact world. One wonders whether some ethnographic filtering process was used to arrive at the essential-traditional.

The concept of sedimentation put forward in Chapter 1 and illustrated by reference to the entry of early Christianity into the pagan landscape of Europe would seem to have application here. The overlaying of the Aboriginal landscape with the materiality and symbolism of European artefacts seems to colonize and domesticate that landscape, and even to eradicate it. But the older discourse which animated places and

objects in the landscape continued to murmur and often engaged the new discourse in its own terms of reference. Thomas's notion of 'entanglement' (1991) captures the nature of this dialectic. In my view, the changes which the Survey underwent in its later years represented an insistence by North Coast Aborigines that their actual historical landscape, rather than the landscape of primitivism, be granted recognition.

There is no question that the from the late 1970s the emphasis in the Survey's work was shifting to the recording of post-contact sites. Table 3 shows that between 1974 and 1984 the proportion of 'traditional' Dreaming and ceremonial sites in the Survey's site list fell sharply. The trend was towards the recording of mission sites, mission cemeteries, other post-contact burial grounds, and post-contact camps.

	1984	1984 %	1974 %
Mythological (natural landscape features)	168	29	43
Ceremonial (e.g., *bora*)	94	16	22
Cemeteries and burial grounds	92	16	12
Post-contact missions and camps	65	11	n.a.
Carved and scarred trees	48	8	8
Resource places	29	5	n.a.
Rock art sites	26	5	10
Massacre and battle sites	25	4	2
Other	31	6	3
	578	100	100

Table 3: The number of sites recorded by the Survey of Sacred and Significant Sites in NSW up until 1984 (adapted from Creamer 1984: 7.5)

Creamer tell us the survey initially concentrated on 'traditional' sites because the old people with knowledge of them were dying without passing on their knowledge and because such sites were, at the time, privileged in anthropological discourse (Creamer 1984: 4.6). However, he links the Survey's shift to post-contact sites not to a growing interest by anthropology in the culture of this period but to the 'cultural revival'. Places of significance to NSW Aborigines had primarily been 'traditional' sites,

However the spectrum of 'significance' extends to other sites which are now gaining a contemporary importance as the awareness of their heritage grows among Aboriginal people.

<div align="right">Creamer 1980: 91</div>

Yet Aborigines had raised the issue of the post-contact burial grounds in the first days of the Survey's fieldwork:

> When I first approached the old men there [at Bellbrook] in 1973 and asked where their sacred sites were, their response was, "There aren't any". They said, "The only sacred site we have here is the mission cemetery".

<div align="right">Kelly 1979: 79</div>

Kelly read this as the familiar evasive response to queries about restricted knowledge (cf. Kelly 1975: 20-21). It might alternatively be read as an order of precedence which placed the current above the 'traditional'. Aborigines in subsequent years continued to ask for the recording and protection of post-contact cemeteries and burial grounds (Creamer 1984: 5.13). By 1984 Creamer states that, out of all the site types, cemeteries and post-contact settlements 'currently receive the most attention from Aboriginal people' (1984: 8.11). One interpretation of what Creamer tells us was a common response to queries about 'sites of significance', namely, that 'these were things of the past and that the old ways were all gone' (1984: 4.2), is that this 'traditional' world in its purity had been left behind by Aborigines, only to find, presumably to the surprise of many of them, that it had now been occupied by anthropologists.

There are thus grounds for suggesting that post-contact sites had always (i.e., at and prior to 1973, when the Survey began) been the focus of Aboriginal attention and that the 'cultural revival' never had much meaning outside of the Survey's rhetoric. What was changing was that Aborigines were beginning to exploit the potential of the heritage discourse and to readjust the Survey's agenda. This is suggested in one of Kelly's observations:

> More Aboriginal people are asking for this [protection for sites] than those who have information to give us, and they often ask for it even when there is no traditional tribal significance in what they want protected. This can make it difficult for us, and take up time that we would otherwise spend on actual site-recording.

<div align="right">Kelly 1980: 80</div>

Upon encountering the Survey in 1973 NSW Aborigines were immediately made aware that the Survey, through the legislation and the institution which empowered it, had the ability to protect certain places of interest to them. Their wish to take advantage of this was evident when, in 1973, the Thungutti elders withheld information on 'traditional' sites in the Macleay Valley until Kelly had constructed a fence around the old Bellbrook mission cemetery to protect it (Kelly 1979: 79). They may not have fully understood the Survey's desire for this information but they evidently understood that it had a value which could be transacted.

In 1973 the Survey brought the white discourse of heritage to NSW Aborigines, complete with its tendency to commodify and its appetite for the 'traditional'. By the end of the decade the Survey was undergoing a radical shift which would take it partly within the actual Aboriginal cultural-historical landscape. It would now endeavour to 'construct [site] types as far as possible around actual Aboriginal perceptions of land' (Creamer 1984: 6.9). There are grounds for suspecting, though, that by this time they had already lost the initiative to North Coast Aborigines.

TALKING BACK FROM THE PERIPHERY

In the course of the 1980s consultant archaeologists and the Aboriginal heritage unit in the NPWS found themselves engaged in several incidents where North Coast Aborigines attempted to save shell middens and other prehistoric 'archaeological' sites from development. In these incidents Aborigines rejected or contested expert archaeological advice. The best known case centred on the remains of a large, mounded midden on the estuary of the Richmond River at Ballina. In the following, I draw partly upon a recent paper by Klim Gollan (NPWS archaeologist for the Northeast Region) which reviews and interprets the conflict over the Ballina midden (Gollan 1992) and partly upon conversations with some of those involved.

When Bailey (1975) carried out an archaeological excavation of one of the midden mounds at Ballina in the early 1970s he reported the largest surviving mounds to be up to 400 metres long and 4 metres high. The shell (mainly the oyster, *Crassostrea commercialis*) had accumulated over a period of 2,000 years up until the mid-nineteenth century when white settlers reported Aborigines as still using it (Bailey 1975: 46). Aboriginal use probably stopped shortly thereafter. By the early 1980s the only surviving mound was 120 metres long by 2 metres high. The disappearance of the others was testimony to a century and a half of 'mining' by European settlers for

building lime and road base (Statham 1892) and, more recently, to the bulldozing associated with the construction of housing estates, roads, a golf course, and an artificial lake. The early European exploitation of the midden took place during a period when Aborigines were being confined on missions, the closest of which were at Coraki and Cabbage Tree Island (Figure 2). From the 1950s, in addition to these, there was a substantial Aboriginal presence in Lismore and, to a lesser extent, in Ballina itself.

The surge of land 'development' in the 1970s and 80s involved consultant archaeologists and the NPWS in several impact-assessment studies of the Ballina site. Most of these included some attempt to establish the significance of the middens to local Aborigines. Gollan notes the 'apparent disinterest' of Aborigines during the 1970s in the process of impact assessment (1992: 8). He offers two reasons for this (1992: 11). The first is that Aborigines, perceiving themselves to be the rightful owners of Aboriginal cultural property, rejected a statutory impact-assessment and conservation process based on the principle of Crown ownership of this property (established under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1970). The second is that this process has operated under the further principle of compensation for loss. Degradation of the midden through land development was compensated for mainly by providing funds for further archaeological research aimed at salvaging the remaining evidence contained in the site. In other words, the discipline of archaeology was compensated for the loss of Aboriginal sites. That the compensatory principle favoured archaeologists rather than Aborigines was, of course, due to the success of the archaeological discourse in having such remains defined as an archaeological resource.

In the late 1980s it became apparent that the local Aboriginal community, now acting mainly through the Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council (established under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983), had radically changed its attitude. It now strenuously opposed any further degradation of the midden or of those adjacent areas where flaked stone artefacts had been recorded and where they believed Aboriginal burials existed. The Jali also made known the existence of a Dreaming story, centred on goanna and black snake spirit-beings, which was associated with part of the site. In 1988, dissatisfied with the response of NPWS and the Ballina Shire Council, the Jali applied to the Federal Government for an Emergency Declaration over the site under the terms of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act, 1984. The Federal Government appointed a conciliator to lead negotiations between the parties involved, the outcome (reached in 1992) of which was that an area of land

incorporating the more significant part of the site should be acquired and vested in the Local Aboriginal Land Council.

At Ballina the Aborigines challenged both the principle of Crown ownership and the concept of archaeological expertise (Gollan 1992: 14). I want to look at certain aspects of this case which seem to me to bear rather heavily on themes developed in this thesis. To begin with, it appears that the assumption of a closed circuit existing between the discourse of heritage and Aborigines is false. A closed circuit seemed to existed in the 1970s when, for instance, the Creamer-Kelly survey established a conduit along which 'traditional' information and sites flowed out of the reservoir of North Coast Aboriginal culture and into the reservoir of national heritage. But people like the Jali have been able to break into this circuit partly through having learned something about Heritage themselves. Flowing back along the circuit, apparently, has been a knowledge of the power-laden discourse of heritage, a knowledge which has now enabled the Jali to manipulate and perhaps even to modify it. Nor is this an entirely new strategy for Aborigines. Morris (1988) shows how the Thungutti Aborigines of the Macleay Valley developed an 'oppositional culture' during the period when the Aborigine's Welfare Board (1936-68) ran the reserves of NSW to an assimilationist agenda. The Thungutti observed and accumulated knowledge about the oppressive state apparatuses and used it not simply to resist institutional domination but to actually transform those apparatuses. Something very similar, I suggest, has been effected by the Jali.

To me, the most interesting aspect of what happened at Ballina, and seems to be happening in other parts of NSW, was the way Aborigines inscribed the midden with spiritual meaning. What had been an archaeological midden site (and had been classified as such in the NPWS Register) became a goanna and black snake story site. Jali people visiting the site reported being able to feel the place's power. The assertion by the Jali that burials were present in part of the site - their presence has not been archaeologically determined - has invested the place with a further spiritual element. During the conflict phase in the late 1980s some Aborigines spoke of these burials being of Aborigines killed in a massacre by Europeans. What is more important here than whether the presence of the burials can be determined archaeologically, or whether the massacre can be determined historically, is that both assertions have had the effect of personalizing the site. The site is no longer a place which simply stands as objective testimony to the actions of prehistoric Aborigines, remote in time and lifestyle from the Jali of today. The spiritual aspect of the site is to do with the here-and-now and it is not something open to empirical investigation. The Jali know the
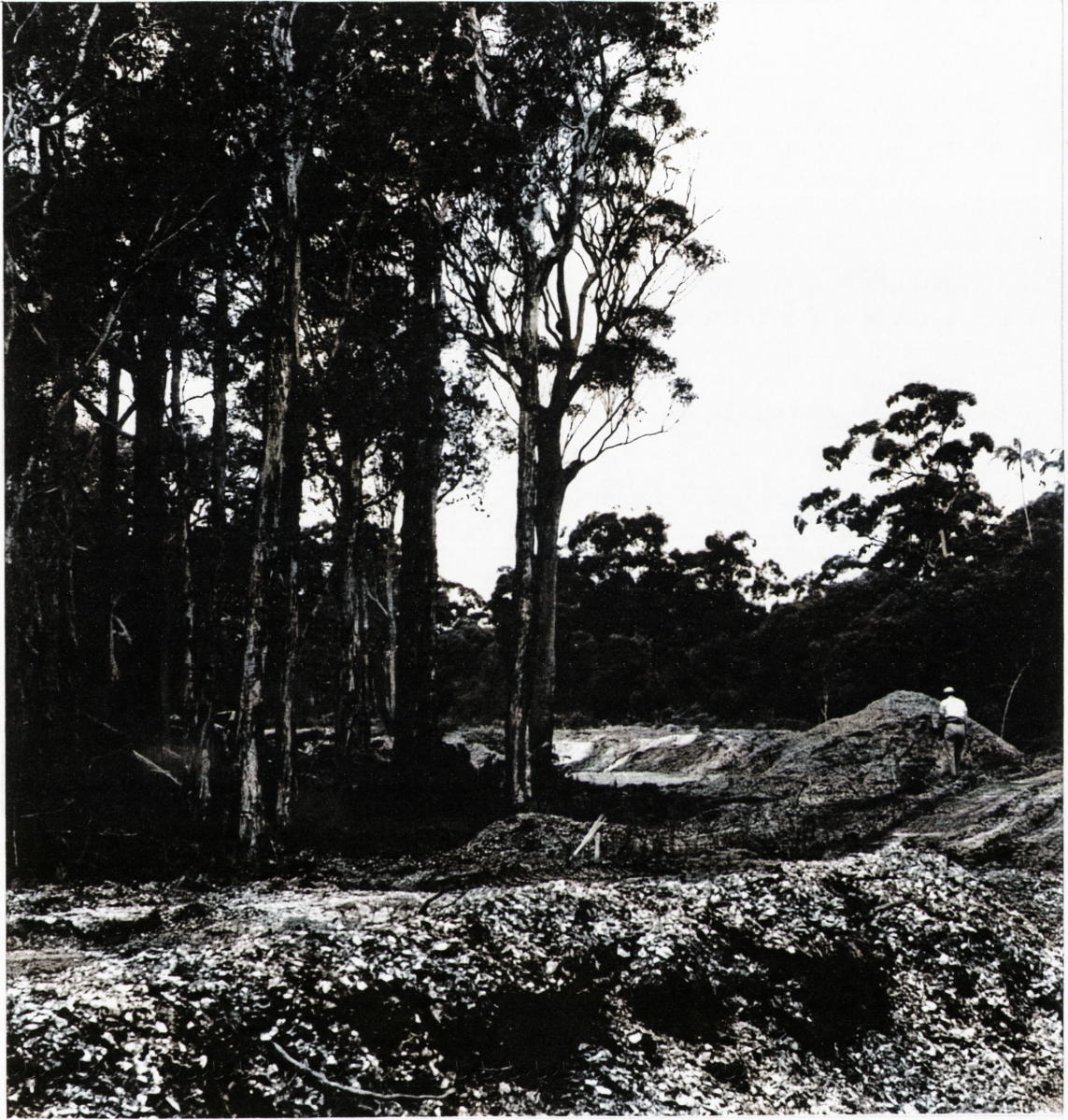
FIGURE 9   The midden at Woody Head on the Lower Clarence after being bulldozed in 1963 to be used as base material for a new road (photograph, Isabel McBryde).

place is powerful because they can feel it. Regardless of what, if anything, local Aborigines thought of the site in, say the 1930s or 1960s, it has now been brought 'up to date' as a part of the Jali's present culture. At Ballina and elsewhere Aborigines have also tended to personalize 'archaeological' sites by seeming to connect the damage and destruction suffered by many of the sites with the violence inflicted on the Aborigines of the contact period. I have more than once been present when Aborigines have regarded the poor remnants of a midden not merely with sorrow but with sympathy.

In the closing decades of the present century the neat *archaeological:sacred* duality erected by a previous generation of archaeologists is coming unstuck. The sacred is beginning to show through the hard (materialist) shell of the archaeological. Even those mainstays of archaeological discourse, the stone artefacts, are looking less stable. McBryde observes that the famous Mt William hatchet stone quarry in Victoria appears to have had certain characteristics of a sacred place and she compares the highly valued, widely traded stone to those stone blades from the Nillipidji quarry in Arnhem Land which increased in prestige with distance from the source 'until they acquired an almost spiritual quality' (1981: 194).

It is not uncommon for white Australians to voice their suspicion that Aborigines 'invent' sacred sites in order to block land development. This complaint rests on the essentialist posture which situates Aboriginal authenticity always in the past. It is a posture which refuses contemporary Aborigines the right to invest places with significance, constraining them, instead, to simply restate that which was signified by their ancestors. Such ground rules, if applied to modern European society, would disallow the contemporary widespread interest in environmental conservation which has emerged only in recent decades.

I want, at this point, to refer back to Chapter 3 and my discussion of some of the more recent anthropology of Aboriginal cultures in Australia's north. What is revealed is that they reconfigure their Dreaming stories, social relations, and links to land in the course of their lives. It appears, moreover, that this degree of malleability is not a symptom of cultural disintegration resulting from contact with the West but is a quality inherent in the nature of their society. Perhaps of all societies. This would seem to suggest that the actions of the Jali at Ballina were not out of the ordinary. Archaeologists have given the vestiges of pre-contact Aboriginal occupation on the North Coast a high profile over the last thirty years or so, leading to their incorporation into the national Heritage. Aborigines are now engaged in the process

of incorporating them into their own cultural landscape, 'bringing up to date', as it were.

Some white Australians would argue that post-contact events dislocated the North Coast Aborigines from their land and they have no right now to claim places like the Ballina middens or, indeed, any cultural remains, as being significant to them. There is no question that the post-contact era was a time of movement. The movement of people to the edges of the early European settlements, their often forced movement onto missions and reserves, the government's shifting of people from one reserve to another, often across tribal boundaries, the Welfare Board's removal of young children to distant foster homes and institutions. And then the movements of those who, often after generations, retraced their steps. The circumstances of this movement were unprecedented but movement itself has not been foreign to Aboriginal society. There are normal processes by which, presumably in pre-contact times, people established ties to new land. Even without this sort of movement there would be the constant resignification of the cultural landscape as generation succeeds generation. I submit that there is some context here for the events at Ballina.

I have found it difficult, lately, when thinking about 'heritage management' on the North Coast, not to occasionally recall the valleys in Northern Thailand. The phases of depopulation and resettlement and the reinterpretations of the cultural landscape mentioned in the previous chapter were all part of land-use history there. The ability of people to re-read   previous settlements enabled continuity in change. As far as I am aware, nobody has suggested that, because of the history of movement and dislocation, the claims of these villagers to cultural space are inauthentic.

In 1971 John Mulvaney was concerned to clarify the relationship between archaeologists and Aborigines:

> Even at the risk of a new paternalism, prehistorians are obliged to inform Aboriginal owners about the significance and meaning of much ancestral data. Due to cultural and population changes through time, for example, sites of great archaeological significance possess no traditional or current community relevance, or their ancient art forms are meaningless.

1990b:135

A little more than twenty years on this view is far more problematical. Aborigines in NSW seem increasingly to insist that they are the experts on Aboriginal sites. At Ballina this involved asserting values in the site which were not amenable to archaeological investigation. Elsewhere it seems to amount to a trivialization of those

remains most valued by archaeologists. When I have been present at sites with Aborigines during field surveys I have often been struck by the way they have depreciated the value of flaked stone artefacts, focussing instead on the possibility of burials, 'canoe-trees' (trees bearing scars from removal of bark for making canoes), or rock art sites. Has this something to do with stone artefact analysis in archaeology having discoursed this category of artefacts into almost total obscurity. My impression is that Aborigines, like most non-archaeologists, do not understand what stone artefact researchers are talking about. Nor, I suspect, do they want to know. What they do seem to understand is the power that this sort of discourse can confer.

The archaeologist, often these days in the company of an Aboriginal representative, arrives at a site carrying graph pads and artefact recording forms. It is as if he already knows what the site is about. The Aborigine would be quite correct in thinking the meaning of the site had been predetermined. In the face of spirit-beings or less defined magical properties, however, the discourse of archaeology breaks down.

In the field of subaltern and colonial/post-colonial studies the concept of talking back, or writing back, has been useful in describing the way disempowered groups may gain a degree of power and control over their lives by appropriating, reworking, and redirecting the power-laden discourses of the West. The Jali have spoken back in the language of heritage, insisting that the Ballina midden site is valuable to them because it is their heritage. They have used the compensatory principle but redirected in to themselves. The lesson I take from Ballina is that the modern Western discourses of archaeology and heritage, for all their hegemonic authority, are not unbreachable.

The Past of Others

GLOBALIZING THE CONSERVATION ETHIC

One of my main concerns has been with the way that the remains of antiquity in the non-Western world have been harvested by Euro-America. In this I have been less concerned with the mass movement of antiquities into Western markets and museums than with the proposition that the West, in a sense, has captured the material past of the non-West in its local setting. That is to say that the fairly coherent set of ideas and conventions regarding the way antiquities should be seen and treated which had gained dominance in the West in the course of the nineteenth century was exported to the colonies and even to places, like Thailand, which escaped actual colonial annexation. This discursive formation which I refer to as the conservation ethic has taken root in the various non-Western heritage agencies which themselves are modelled on those of the West.

There is more than one way of accounting for the appearance of the conservation ethic in almost every corner of the globe. The Western heritage establishment (represented by ICOMOS) takes the universalist position that an appreciation of archaeological and architectural remains as archaeological and architectural entities, a respect for the physical/material integrity of these remains and a desire to conserve them, are common to all human societies. This rationale has allowed the Venice Charter, which developed specifically out of the Euro-American historical experience, to be promoted globally. The universalist ambit would have it that this historical specificity is merely coincidental. Implicit in this the assumption that the Charter, or something very similar, could as easily have developed out of the Chinese, Thai, Bedouin, or Maori historical experience. The universalist account has stood almost unquestioned, though recent murmurings of dissent (e.g., Wei and Aass 1989) point

to the local particularity of concepts and practices relating to archaeological and
architectural remains

It is easy to see how a debate on this matter could develop along classic West/non-
West lines. The most compelling alternative to universal reference would be an
account putting forward Western imperialism as the means of ideology transfer. In this
view, the presence in the four corners of the post-colonial world of heritage agencies
espousing approximations of the conservation ethic would be attributed to colonial
implantation of Western values and mechanisms. It is a process which would be seen
as resulting in a clear disjunction between indigenous practice and an exported
Western discourse of heritage operated by Western educated post-colonial elites.

But it is perhaps more likely that those in the Western heritage establishment who
are dissatisfied with the universalist account will seek an alternative explanation in a
common historical development experience rather than in common human nature.
Specifically, the heritage discourse would be seen as one of the manifestations of
modernism. What I understand as modernism in the West is the coalescence of those
developments which had their roots in the breakdown of the feudal order: the
rationalization of law (by constitution) and religion (the Reformation), and the
protection of the bourgeoisie who embodied market and economic rationality and
produced the capitalism of northwest Europe (Chirot 1985: 187). It has became an
article of faith in Western social science (cf. Weber) that modernization means or is
accompanied by urbanization, industrialization, and secularization. Also, that non-
Western societies which are on this path might just as easily be said to be
Westernizing.

Not surprisingly, many in the non-West reject this account. They do not, for
instance, see their industrialism as transforming them into Western societies. Rather
than seeing modernity as a process they may see it almost as an environment through
which there are many possible paths with many possible outcomes. Industrialization in
Thailand might be identified as the Other within, as it was in Meiji Japan (Najita 1989:
13). Yet there is no more reason to think it will produce Western modernism than there
was to think the 1932 coup against King Prajadhipok would produce Western-style
liberal democracy. But the meshing of modernity with universal reference (Bourricaud
1987) has made it almost impossible for the West to conceive of an alternative
modernity. By the eighteenth century the literate elite of Europe, at least, had become
accustomed, as a result of the discovery of the Other World, to 'an irremediable
human pluralism' (Anderson 1983: 67). The doctine of progress, however, gave order

to this pluralism and, in a sense, neutralized it. I would suggest that there is actually little difference between the universalist and the 'common experience' explanations for the global manifestation of the conservation ethic. One finds it inherent in universal human nature, the other finds it in a human condition produced by a universalized modernism.

Let us look more closely at one aspect of the West's modern experience: secularization. During the Enlightenment (the metadiscourse of modernism) evolutionary thinking took numerous forms, forms which had in common the understanding that nature rather than God was the moving force and that progress lay in the use of reason in the control of nature. Henry Vyverberg (1989: 204-5) points to the French Enlightenment's anti-religious bias as a major impediment to recognition of the uniqueness of exotic cultures. The Enlightenment, after all,

> was a conscious and deliberate break with past errors and the deficiencies of exotic, primitive peoples. Against these presumed claims upon the human spirit the Enlightenment proposed a new and exciting positive force: the power of human reason. Reason became the medium through which human beings could and should deliberately distance themselves from superstition, obscurantism, and a whole litany of imperfect or malignant beliefs, practices, and institutions across the ages and throughout the world.
>
> Vyverberg 1989: 204-5

The same bias against the divine permeates Western heritage management. It aspires to pluralism but, as I have tried to demonstrate in the previous chapters, it is really not at all comfortable with spirit and relic cults, with emotionally charged attachment to 'archaeological' remains, even with orthodox Buddhism; in other words, with the non-rational perspectives which the West sees as pre-modern.

There is an expectation that if non-Western societies do not currently embrace the discourse of heritage then they soon will. Behind this, surely,   is a disposition to view the society of the Other as fragile, its pre-modern beliefs systems liable to disintegrate on contact with the West. Such 'endangered authenticities' (Clifford 1988: 5) as the Aboriginal cultures of Australia's southeast are expected to adapt themselves to heritage values rather than to manipulate heritage discourse to suit the current priorities of their struggle with the dominant colonial culture.

There is a startling contradiction in the Western modernist position when we consider its relations with the Other world. Edward Said (1985) shows how the West

has sought at once to know this world empirically and to imagine it. The West advocates modernity in the Orient and simultaneously longs for the Orient as a realm of Wonder and a source of exotica. 'The Orient at large...vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in - or fear of - novelty' (Said 1985: 59). In both Thailand and Aboriginal Australia we find cultural productions (dances, music, art, 'ruins') designed to satisfy the tourist. I would wish to include here the 'internal' as well as the foreign tourist, in recognition of the way the middle class of the Philippines and Thailand now travel within their countries and become spectators of versions of local practices performed specifically for them. Whatever the internal function of it is, this 'traditional', non-threatening, easily digested version answers the West's desire for a 'recognizable Other'. Homi Bhabha sees in this desire an essential ambivalence; a quest for an Other 'as *a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite* ' (Bhabha 1984: 126). What is involved here is a mythologizing of the non-West as a site of the familiar but also of the exotic. It seems clear, for instance, that Western travellers in Siam in the nineteenth century, and even today, see the remains of ancient Buddhist and Khmer religious structures as exotic ruins. They do not see them - and one assumes they do not want to - as part of a current religious practice which conceives them as dynamic, empowered, often magical. Rather, they are seen as almost the same as the ruined churches of Europe. But not quite.

The West's avoidance of what is radically different in the material past of the Other world is surprising. It should be familiar terrain, given its similarity to those European discourses, paganism and early Christianity, which are not so remote in the European past. The fact that it fails to recall these, the fact that it elicits only blankness, suggests a rupture in the collective memory. Is this rupture, I wonder, not that of the divide separating the pre-Modern from the Modern? This takes us into the domain of primitivism which Torgovnick (1990) and others define, partly, as the Modern longing for its own past. In this they follow Lukacs (1971) whose term, 'transcendental homelessness', encapsulates this particular sense of disjunction. The possibility of contacting this aspect of our past is denied by the dictates of rationality. These 'superstitous' practices are never really tangible or real for us because they are not reasonable. So the Modern tourist in what Henry James called 'the visitable past' must be content with these exotic 'hollowed out' ruins.

In the Australian context the settler society has been drawn to Aboriginal culture by way of a primitivism that finds in that culture only those exotic aspects which conform to its idea of a oneness with nature. The Dreaming, the mysteriousness of sacred sites

which are unadorned natural rock outcrops or waterholes, or the dances where people mimic animals. But there is more to this than primitivism. In his seminal work on the invention of tradition in Quebec, Richard Handler (1985) stresses the importance of originality in the characterization of a nation's culture. Those culture traits which come from outside the nation are inadequate because they are borrowed. Those which derive from inside are 'authentic'. The 'traditional' Aboriginal culture thus mediates between the settlers and the soil. In the process of becoming what I have called 'the new natives', white Australians have reified 'traditional' Aboriginal culture as a source of national authenticity. The stark reality of contemporary Aboriginal lives always threatens, however, to break into this construct with the truth (of deaths in custody, violence on the North Queensland reserves, or simply with the truth of modern, innovative, urban Aboriginality). Herein lies the construct's instability. The importance of Aboriginal 'archaeological' heritage may reside in its apparent, inherent, stability.

HERITAGE BEYOND MODERNISM

Must it be this way? In looking at heritage after modernism I am asking not what will remain of those vestiges of the human past which populate the landscape we were born into but how we will relate to them. I have characterised heritage as that discourse on the material past concerned with the modern nation state's sense of belonging. I am allowing here, though, the possibility that the discourse of heritage may be rethought, that it is amenable to capture and modification. I have suggested that this is now happening on the North Coast of New South Wales, in Australia. No doubt it is happening under a variety of conditions elsewhere. What most concerns me is the possibility that the discourse could be undermined by or made to address the local.

The local, as I use the term here, means several things. It means the lower side of the national-local duality. Currently, the heritage discourse tends to raise the meaning and control of 'heritage sites' from a local to a national level. As an adjunct, it may raise them still higher, into the rarified air of World Heritage. Local communities, however, are rarely passive and may find ways to contest these transactions. I also use 'local' in a Eurocentric sense to mean the periphery of the global reach of the conservation ethic. In this latter sense the local refers to the non-West, a realm where the conservation ethic may have a very unsteady hold; a realm where the competing discourses of the divine are by no means out of business. It is conceivable that the controlling, Western rationale of the heritage discourse may be altered by a

combination of pressure from the edge (i.e., the periphery speaking back) and pressure from within.

Without having to enter the debate over whether it is correct or incorrect to say that the Modern era is over, there are grounds to look to Post-modernism, as a critical approach, to counter the conservation ethic in its more dogmatic form. Post-modernism will surely not allow the conservation ethic's claim of naturalness and universality to go unchallenged. Norman Bryson is representative of that aspect of Post-modernism which has attacked the tradition of art history that places images in museums in order to allow 'unmediated communion' between the viewer and the 'pure form':

> From these and related activities has emerged the notion of art as a matter of perceptual purity: timeless, sequestered from the social domain, universal. Post-modernism has involved moving beyond this episteme and acknowledging the fact that the visual field we inhabit is one of meanings and not just shapes, that it is permeated by verbal and visual discourses, by signs; and that these signs are socially constructed, as are we.

> Bryson 1988: 107

The heritage discourse maintains that the only real issue in the management of the material past is how to preserve it. 'Heritage' sites are held to be pure forms and our treatment of them and enjoyment of them is not seen to be mediated by relations of power. The practice of heritage management, it follows, is also seen to be a pure practice. Certainly, it may be acknowledged that the state has its own agenda for the material past but this is seen as acting on the professional heritage manager, as it were, from the outside. The practice remains pure in the sense that, in itself, it knows how to proceed when not interfered with by political interests. One of the things I have tried to show in the preceding chapters is that archaeology and heritage management are implicated in the political from the *inside*. The core belief of heritage managers, the conservation ethic, is not only culturally specific, in terms of being Eurocentric, it is also ideological and class specific. In Australia it is implicated in the colonial project. In Thailand it is implicated in the consolidation of the state and in the movement to modernise pious, 'superstitious' Buddhist practice.

If the practice of heritage management and of archaeology has been widely seen as value-neutral, particularly in the liberal democracies of the West, it is because they operate within the sphere of culture rather than, say, the sphere of law enforcement. However, it is precisely through the sphere of culture that the modern state has been

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shown by Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks,* to operate to ensure active popular consent. The very taken-for-granted naturalness of the conservation ethic should alert us to its hegemonic underpinning.

What may undermine the conservation ethic more seriously than Post-modern critique, though, may be its obvious lack of fit in the societies of the non-West. In Thailand the conservation ethic has little constituency, even among the urban elite. This realization came to me only gradually during my period of fieldwork in Thailand. At that time (1989-90) the country was experiencing an economic growth rate of twelve percent and you could not but be constantly aware of the pace of change. Experienced 'Asia hands' spoke of the Chiang Mai of the mid-1980s with the wistful nostalgia of the elderly recalling their youth. A metaphor for this growth was the way, on the fringes of villages and towns, the chequer board of bunded rice fields was literally being filled in, one square at a time, with soil brought in on trucks. On these squares, with their ground level now a metre higher, there would rise one more restaurant, petrol station, or row of shophouses. Where, I wondered, was this fill coming from? There were tell-tale fresh gouges in hillsides and, once, when I was accompanying an archaeological survey team in the Northeast, I realized that some of the prehistoric mound sites were being 'borrowed' for this purpose. In a similar way, abandoned temples and stupas had been demolished in the late nineteenth century to provide bricks and rubble for the building of the railways. Did anyone mourn the loss of these vestiges of the past? Very likely some did. But not, I suggest, to the extent of outweighing the popularity of the new.

I am not suggesting here that Thais, rural or urban, are unconcerned about the environmental consequences of rapid development. During my fieldwork the press regularly reported public opposition to proposed dams and industrial pollution of rivers. Yet, however much the heritage discourse might tend to equate nature conservation with conservation of cultural property, I would insist that there are fundamental distinctions. One of these is that the meaning and value of old places - I have in mind old temples - has more to do with what they represent and with their spiritual essence/power than with the actual fabric of the structures. Local Thais do not seem to experience the sense of loss which heritage conservationists do at the destruction or covering over of old fabric, particularly when it enables merit-making or the raising of a new structure. They do not appear to believe that what we see as the degradation of the place has actually made the place, or themselves, poorer.

In the end, perhaps, the choice is between the material richness of the material past and the richness of local practice.

Appendix 1

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)
ANZAAS	Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science
ASNSW	Anthropological Society of New South Wales
ASWA	Anthropological Society of Western Australia
Baht	Unit of Thai currency (A$1 = B18 in 1993)
Bora	*Bora* rings are raised-earth circles which were used by Aborigines in Southeastern Australia in initiation rituals
Bot	Congregation hall of a temple used by monks. Place where monks are ordained
Chat	Nation, race (Thai). Concept/expression common in Sixth Reign, probably originating in Fifth Reign
Chedi	A Thai stupa
Corroboree	A generic term in English for Aboriginal dance ceremonies
FAD	Fine Arts Department of the Thai Government. Its Archaeology and Architecture Divisions implement the FAD's archaeological heritage management policies
Farang	A non-Thai person
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
Kathin	Buddhist ceremony in which robes are presented to the monks at the end of the Rains
Klong	Canal. Especially common in Central Thailand where as well as providing drainage and irrigation, they were the main transportation routes

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Midden	An archaeological deposit formed mainly of shells and representing the camps of coastal groups
Mimi	A word commonly used among some NSW Aborigines for spirits which manifest themselves as small, moving lights, often seen at night from a distance. Has passed into colloquial Australian, more commonly as min-min ('ghost light' - *Australian National Dictionary* [1988])
Muang	Territorial-political unit including several villages and/or a town
NSW	New South Wales
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW)
Phi	Spirits of an animistic nature. These spirits reside in natural landscape features such as trees and mountains. Spirit belief pre-dates Buddhism in Thailand
PMG	Postmaster General, office of the. Government department dealing with post and telecommunications.
Prang	A spire which features in Khmer religious architecture but is also found in many Thai temple complexes
Prasat	A Khmer or Khmer-style tower-sanctuary
Rattanakosin	The dynasty of Bangkok kings. Hence, Rattanakosin period (1782-) and Rattanakosin Island, the 17km^2 area between the Chao Phraya River and the Lod Canal which contains the Grand Palace and Royal Chapel, Wat Po and Wat Mahthat, and the former palaces converted into Silpakorn University and the National Museum
Sala	An open-sided pavillion found, among other places, in Thai temple and house compounds
Sangha	The Thai Buddhist monkhood
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
Sema	Marker stones placed around and at the axes of the sanctified area of the ordination hall, the *bot* , in a temple compound
Sophia Project	The Sophia Project on the Study and Preservation of Historic Cities of Southeast Asia, Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University, Tokyo. Has organized several conferences on the restoration of ancient monuments
SPAFA	Seamo's Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts inaugurated in Phnom Penh in 1972. Maintains a secretariat in Bangkok
Tai	A family of languages the speakers of which may refer to themselves as "Tai'
Thai	Citizens of the Kingdom of Thailand. Includes Tai and minority ethnic/language groups (e.g., Lao, Shan)

Thailand	The new name adopted for Siam in 1939
That	A reliquary shrine as found in the Northeast which takes the form of a solid tower with a square section
Viharn	Congregation hall for lay people at temple. A hall-like building. Buddha images and other sacred objects are kept here. Sometimes called a 'preaching hall'
Wa	Linear measure. 1 *wa* = *c*. 2 metres
Wat	Buddhist temple/monastery
Yowies	Malevolent spirit being, occurring particularly in forests and mountains of Eastern NSW. Has passed into Australian colloquial usage (possibly merging with the *yeti*), meaning 'ape-like monster' (*The Concise Oxford National Dictionary*)

Appendix 2

THE CHAKRI DYNASTY

DYNASTIC NAME		REIGN
Rama I	Phra Phuttha Yotfah Chulalok	1782-180
Rama II	Phra Phuttha Lertlah	1808-1824
Rama III	Phra Nang Klao	1824-1851
Rama IV	Mongkut	1851-1868
Rama V	Chulalongkorn	1868-1910
Rama VI	Vajiravudh	1910-1925
Rama VII	Prajadhpok	1925-1935
Rama VIII	Ananda Mahidol	1935-1946
Rama IX	Phumipol Adulyadej	1949-

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