

CONCLUSION



Plate 22: Elephant gate, Wat Ratburana, Ayutthaya

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CONCLUSION

Heritage is a social phenomenon. It is implicated in the complex social processes in which people – individuals or communities – identify those things that are of value to be kept for future generations. These include practices and traditions and the web of meanings that reinforce belonging and communality and act to ‘make place’. Many communities today are facing new cultural, social and economic challenges. One of these is an increased plurality of memories and the necessity for understandings of the past that allow for multiple representations. If we recognise that the processes that people use to engage with and define their own pasts are as revealing as those pasts themselves, within the heritage context this allows an equal emphasis to be placed on culture as tradition, and culture as communication. Together they incorporate being in place, destiny, history, continuity and sharing, and reinforce the role of impulses, choices, change and variation (Eriksen 2001: 132). Traditions can become linked to objects and secure their continuity. They are also integral elements of emerging socio-historical configurations, which provide individuals and groups with distinct identities and new opportunities. They help fabricate heritage (Hobsbawm 1987; Bond & Gilliam 1994: 14), but more importantly they are themselves a *part* of heritage. Broader understandings of heritage that incorporate traditions and ways of life that inform identity at the community level can only enrich the way in which people live and experience their environment. There are increasing attempts by communities to assert and reaffirm life ways and practices, belonging and being in place. This reinforces the nexus between place and social action, where human agency and action result in a meaningful construction of place (Tilley 1994; see Giddens 1991 for a discussion of human agency).

This broader understanding of heritage is consistent with community expressions at each study location. The communities at Avebury, Magnetic Island and Ayutthaya reinforce that people create place in a way that is intrinsically local, particular and

personal. Belonging to a locale and/or to a 'local' community is a greater cultural reality than is the association with nation, tied as it is to elementary social processes that mediate the experience of collectivity and the creation of community (Cohen 1982: 10; Lovell 1998: 6). World Heritage has little relevance in such constructions of place, community and belonging, particularly when it is understood that communities can be read as 'structures of feeling', inflected with closeness and familiarity (Appadurai 1996: 199). Community and belonging arise from a process that is contextualised by people's immediate conditions and everyday existences. Yet they remain linked with national, international and globalising processes.

Community, Place & Landscape

Culture, place, community and identity are not given but are constituted, and can be understood as fluid and relational. Place and identity are imbued with cultural meaning and fundamentally involved with bodily experience, remembering and imagination. Cultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being', belonging to the future as much as to the past. It does not pre-exist to transcend place, time, history and culture (Ward 2003: 87). Places can trigger acts of self-reflection, 'inspiring thoughts about who one presently is, or memories of who one used to be, or musings about who one might become' (Basso 1996: 55). Hence the desire to protect something is as implicated with ensuring the future as it is with maintaining the past.

The connectedness between people and places can create what Giddens has identified as a place-based 'environment of trust' in kin relations, local communities, cosmology, and tradition (Rodman 2003: 213). Places have potential for reminiscences, continuing meanings, and recreation of the past. The symbolic and practical continuity with a locality can give meaning to a place and recreate it through personal history and the memory of lived experiences. This process of recreation means that a single place can have multiple meanings and values and multiple recreations. Connerton (1987: 2) argues that 'we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect in the present'. This is not simply because present circumstance influence our recollections of the past, but also because factors from our past can influence, or

distort, how we experience the present. Hence memory can be integral to the forging of social bonds in the present, and for the future. Belonging to a particular group can offer a preferred strategy or avenue of belonging among several others (Lovell 1998: 4). This is exemplified within the various Ayutthaya communities considered. The Muslim, Christian and elephant rider communities each create their own landscapes of emplacement, imposing both bodily experiences and memories on the physical terrain to create (or recreate) a link with the past that reaffirms not only who they are, but reinforces their aspirations for the future.

There is a danger in assuming that identity – and identification within a landscape – requires a time-depth and rootedness to be valid (see Bender 2001 for a detailed discussion of the relationship between landscapes, diaspora and movement). Landscapes can themselves be semi-imagined or informed by memories of other places. In any instance there is a nexus, a negotiation, between personal experience and memory and environmental spaces, that lead to the creation of a sense of place. There is an easing of old experiences into the new environment, which may at times be hostile. Landscapes can be shaped by myth, and vice versa, in a process that is not only localised in relation to place, but through reflections of imagined and recreated archetypal landscapes (Cosgrove 1995: 281–282). Identity, whether personal or group, is created through engagement with particular places in a landscape, and through recognising and understanding the semiotics that may constitute the meanings associated with these places. On various scales social identity can be formed by appropriating a landscape and its elements. This also acknowledges that a peoples' sense of place may not be contingent on rootedness, or 'staying put'; home and the centre of the world may not be fixed, as is obviously the case for nomadic communities (Bender 2001: 7).

Amit (2002: 16) assures that it is a mistake to conclude that modes of community that are 'newly formed' or episodic and partial necessarily constitute 'shallow and less deeply felt attachments' than those that are longer established. For example, non-indigenous communities in settler countries are often erroneously perceived to lack a sense of belonging or strong sense of locality (in the Australian context see Creamer

1994: 138; Truscott 2000: 23). This has particular resonance for all three study locations. The Magnetic Island community is one that is characterised by relatively recent arrivals and a form of 'extended' membership involving Townsville residents who regularly weekend on the island. For many, dislocation from both place and past has become a process of re-location and re-creation of social identity. The elephant riders of Ban Chang at Ayutthaya have formed a new community in a new place. Through reassertions of traditional identity based on shared practices and origins they are creating places and landscapes that mesh the past, present and future in an intricate web of meanings. This web reaches across space to incorporate other remembered and experienced places that are symbolically and pragmatically important. The long-term residents at Avebury find themselves engaged in a struggle for authenticity of voice and belonging, faced with alternative creations of place, values and meanings by recent arrivals to the village.

In all three communities there is evidence of the overlaying of old memories and traditions on new environments. On the one hand there are the multi-generational attachments of the oldtimer residents of Avebury, or of the Muslim and Catholic communities at Ayutthaya who assert ancestral connections with the ancient Ayutthaya kingdom. On the other hand, there are the 'blow-ins' of Avebury, and the relatively recently established communities at Magnetic Island and Ban Chang. The expressions of attachment and community and place making, however, reiterate that the depth of attachments and values are not dependent on, or necessarily validated by, a longevity of experience of that place. Although attachments can certainly be reinforced by the transmission of knowledge, memory and experiences from one generation to the next, many people arrive newly at a place and create attachments and weave stories into the landscape that can be as strong as those formed by people with a continuity of ancestral ties. As Tuan so rightly points out: 'Many years in one place may leave few memory traces that we can or wish to recall; an intense experience of short duration, on the other hand, can alter our lives' (Tuan 1979: 185). Indeed, the norm of human experience today is one of movement and new or reattachment to place, rather than rootedness (Ward 2003: 86). Moving in or through a given place, the body imposes its own implaced past into its present experience: its "local history"

is literally a history of locales' (Casey 1987: 194). This has wide implications for understanding emplacement. The assertion of a mobility of 'placeness' refutes attempts by heritage practitioners who seek to legitimate belonging through longevity of occupation or genetic ties.

Places and landscapes are fluid and multi-layered. They enmesh individual and community sentiment, experiences, conceptual ownerships, emplacement and a lived and variously engaged environment into a complex concept of identity and belonging. They are formed and expressed through the interaction of people, places and things, grounded in ideas, memories, histories, beliefs and values. Although the product of social processes, they are embedded in the natural environment, negating attempts to set apart or oppose natural biological phenomena from cultural knowledge as separate levels of reality. Ellen tells us that 'effective constructions of the environment may be less those that are objectively correct than those which invest parts of nature with value "beyond themselves"'. In a practical sense, our knowledge of the environment cannot be separated from our experience of it and relationship with it. It has been shown that the pragmatic knowledge by which people live is replete not only with elements that are practical and technical, but also with understandings that can be construed as impractical and unrealistic: 'in one form or another, such views are present in all systems of ritual and belief, but they are noticeably and strangely absent from contemporary development planning' (Ellen 1996: 16).

This is no doubt compounded by a failure to acknowledge the 'sense of place' that is ostensibly sought through the cultural heritage endeavour, yet is somehow deflated and muted in efforts at engagement. One of the challenges is engaging with the conceptual, imagined dimension to the construction of all communities, and the capacity for empathy and affinity for people and place that are grounded in social relations and practices. A sense of place is intrinsically derived from how people feel and what they do and experience, as much as it is precipitated by the physical 'thinginess' of place. These intangible dimensions of lifeworlds at Avebury, Magnetic Island and Ayutthaya include people's actions, often founded on traditional practices, where these give meaning to the daily lives of people. For example, for Magnetic

Islanders, the experience of swimming, fishing, picnicking and walking on the beach, boating and snorkelling are social practices that reinforce a stable, authentic and ahistorical platform for the reinforcement of identity. Together with a sense of community and belonging, these are the heritage values, places and practices that the islanders wish to retain and pass on to their children. At Magnetic Island, there has been a failure to acknowledge the fusion between place and environmental meaning, where an understanding of place and feeling about place arises in embodied experience and practice. The social meaning so accruing is ascribed in both material and symbolic terms. The tangible aspects are fundamental; however, the intangible 'values' of objects – found in their potential to carry and express symbolic meaning – are perhaps more important. The process is one of objectification which places both meaning and value into elements of the environment, and thus renders the environment as a wholly cultural construction (Morphy 1990).

The meanings, experiences and local stories at all locales are reinforced in places of community meeting, interaction and exchange. Cultural and social activities – whether organised festivals, events or just day-to-day recreational experiences and practices – not only enhance community identity, but reinforce the closely intertwined relationship of the community with the broader environment, both natural and constructed. They more than strengthen the 'attachment of the local story to the environment' (Hull et al. 2001: 337), they create a mutually interactive engagement between people, place and landscape. The end result is one that supports that the linkages between people and place are not simply territorial but are deeply metaphysical (Malkki 1997: 56). For many communities their cultural and social values are inseparable from their knowledge, experience and understanding of place, and of the broader landscape within which community and home are conceptualised.

In each of the communities I worked with, various physical features are connected by narratives of lived experience, accruing significance through their integration into the surrounding landscape and their enmeshment in the complex web of social understandings that merge memory, experience, practice and narrative into a sense of place and community. These include megaliths and henges, beaches and the bush, and

ancient ruins. For some, part of the process of growing up has involved experiencing and learning a unique complex of relationships with the places and people who inhabit the surrounding landscape. In so doing they learn who they are. For others, memories of other places are overlain on new landscapes. In both cases, the memory of landscape comes to serve as a memory of community, sociality and 'collective morality perpetuated through time' (Lovell 1998: 15).

The process of engagement and interpretation becomes one in which the landscape is socialised through human practice, action and understanding, containing places where social memory becomes encoded. The landscape becomes a mnemonic for ancestral generations and creates a continuity with the present (Morphy 1995: 234). However, it is necessary to distinguish between landscapes of memory and landscape as memory where the former is based on historical attributes and the latter on the reproduction of the present in the form of the past.

Changing Places

There has been considerable discussion of the manner in which landscapes, buildings, places and localities have lost, or are in the process of losing, their meaning and significance – particularly in contemporary Western and capitalist society. A landscape that is stripped of sedimented human meanings can be considered to be epiphenomenal and irrelevant, and becomes 'open for exploitation and homogenous in its potential exchange value for any particular project. It becomes desanctified, set apart from people, myth and history, something to be controlled and used' (Tilley 1994: 21). To varying degrees a combination of heritage approaches, tourism and development are influencing the lives of the communities at the three study locations. The result is similar – the marginalisation of contemporary community meanings, particularly those that arise through practice and experience. At Ayutthaya and Avebury this has resulted in the creation of a monolithic, mono-thematic past. The criticisms of similar attempts to freeze or mummify the past and make it something that is over and done with have recognised the limitations in making the past something that can be investigated, packaged and presented. The goal becomes one of creating origin myths in opposition to a sense of ongoing historical process (Bender

1992: 735). Contrary to the creation of a mono-thematic past, Rowlands (1994: 130) asserts that 'the possession of a collective heritage puts the fragmentations of modern society firmly in its contingent and ephemeral place by placing identity within a sense of enduring time and place'.

The impact of global processes may be one of those 'post-modern ironies' that results in an increased awareness not only of place, but also of the centrality of being-in-place to self, identity and community. This reaffirms that community is both process and product of place-making. The resultant sense of place is an essential component of how people experience community (Gray 2002: 39–40). Particularly in times of cultural change, it is to be expected that people will desire to cling to the meanings that once held their immediate community together. These form the cultural texture of everyday life and become explicit consensual symbols of historical belonging (Arizipe 2002: 33). Jacobs (1996: 5) refers to Said's notion of the enmeshment of such places and events as a 'geography of struggles' where these struggles

are not simply about control of territory articulated through the clear binaries of colonial constructs. They are formed out of the cohabitation of variously empowered people and the meanings they ascribe to localities and places. They are constituted from the way in which the global and the local always already inhabit one another. They are products of the disparate and contradictory geographies of identification produced under modernity. These struggles produce promiscuous geographies of dwelling in place in which the categories of Self and Other, here and there, past and present, constantly solicit one another.

Both Avebury and Magnetic Island have experienced social change in the past few decades, due to the influx of new residents and the emphasis on recreational activities. The influx of people from an urban background, and those seeking to either commute from the fringes or retire, has challenged established securities and certainties of longer term residents, with a concomitant effect on the expression of local identity (see Garner 2001). Faced with change, place and community are more intensively threatened in that the attack is on their chosen 'being'. A. Cohen (1985: 109) reinforces this interpretation, noting that 'one often finds in such communities the prospect of change being regarded ominously, as if change inevitably means loss. A

frequent and glib description of what is feared may be lost is 'way of life'; part of what is meant is the sense of self.' Paramount to this self identity is the maintenance of a stable community. In the absence of the 'right people' a place or thing can lose its meaning. People create and reinforce their sense of belonging by being part of a group and as this is important, it is something they desire to protect (Tuan 1979: 140).

An interesting avenue of investigation, and one which requires further interrogation than is possible within the constraints of this project, is the way in which communities assess and deal with change. For example, the various reactions to development proposals appear to be lesser in circumstances where people have grown up in a place and experienced an ongoing series of incremental changes. One such change in all places has been the addition of each locale to the World Heritage list. It is perhaps therefore not surprising that those who knew a place as their own before it attracted international attention would place less emphasis on the physical attributes that have attracted global interest and significance than those who chose to live in that place with prior cognisance of its World Heritage listing. (This suggests productive arenas for future investigations of differential community engagement with World Heritage listing). Fore-warned is perhaps truly fore-armed. This is arguably the case at Avebury, where the newcomer residents indicate a much greater degree of support for and interest in protecting the 'Neolithic landscape' as a heritage entity than does the oldtimer community. It is in the face of such conflicting priorities that the assertion of community authenticity and boundaries takes on greater importance.

One consequence, and not just at Avebury, is an attempt to affirm the status of oldtimer/insider in opposition to the newcomer/outsider. The debate is one of a highly subjective, often contradictory negotiation of identity. Garner (2001: 135), for example, discusses the re-creation of a moral universe in the dialectic between 'outsider relativism and local absolutism' that exists in the context of land ownership, as being one way in which to understand different uses of community identity (in his case within an English village). However he cautions that 'absolutism and concomitant moral indignation' are not the sole reserve of the locals, and can be

equally expressed in the discourses of so-called 'outsiders', such as environmentalists or heritage advocates.

The Picnic Bay jetty at Magnetic Island highlights a quintessential characteristic of community attachments – places become more explicitly saturated with meaning when they are threatened. This may well be the clichéd 'you don't know what you have got until it's gone' response – or almost gone, or attacked as was the case with the community reaction at Avebury to the paint damage to the megaliths. It remains true, however, that most of the places that we value for ourselves, our communities, our children – are not likely to be the big, grand, spectacular, monumental. In fact, they are so much a part of our lives that we do not talk about them. The Buddhists I interviewed at Ayutthaya did not find it necessary to refer to their practice of Buddhism as something of importance in their lives. It was not threatened. The Muslim and Catholic communities on the other hand, living as minorities within a Buddhist state, find it essential to assert their identity through the practice and continuing heritage of Islam and Catholicism. They are every day reminded of how fragile the embodied processes of their lived heritage can be. Often the things that those outside the community consider mundane, ordinary and non-spectacular are the things that are most precious to those within a community.

As Henry asserts 'global forces do not exist except in how they are articulated and experienced in local situations' (1999: 233). The relationship is not necessarily hegemonic, but there is a complex interplay between the global and the local that is not always a contest for the primacy of one over the other (Wilk 1995: 111). Dominant, global ideas can be used, and often transformed into local lexicons, as an integral part of power relationships that serve to link localities to the wider world (Gupta & Ferguson 1997: 5; see also A. Cohen 1982; Friedman 1992; Hall 2000; B. Kapferer 1995b: 57; Rodman 2003). And as Eriksen (2001: 131) highlights, even the strengthening of local cultures is 'irretrievably a hybrid activity as it draws on organisational and technological resources of modernity'.

The use of the past in power tournaments is nothing new (see, for example, Meskell 1998), but the context of World Heritage provides fertile ground for those 'political conjuring acts' that manipulate the past as a visible symbol of earlier achievement and excellence to allow a transformation of complex evidence into more 'simple messages about national cultural identity' (Ucko 1994: xiv). This process is more easily facilitated when controlling agencies are embroiled in 'higher level' interests, such as 'world' identity. Meta-cultural influences serve to transform habitus into heritage and can easily subsume and diminish local dilemmas and concerns. Although local communities can generate contexts as they produce and reproduce their own locales, they are increasingly prisoners in the context-producing activities of the nation-state. Consequently their efforts to produce locality can seem feeble, even doomed. Hence, how communities produce the contexts within which their activities are given meaning and historical potential, and produce local subjects, is inseparable from the locality-producing capabilities of larger-scale social formations. Translocal power remains a key feature in the contextual relations of locales (Appadurai 1997: 186–187).

The potential for external influences directed by political and economic concerns is considerable within all three sets of communities. Interestingly, although World Heritage is implicated in each case, I suggest that similar impacts would arise in each place in the absence of this listing, as the interest at the national level is itself significant. The involvement of English Heritage and the National Trust at Avebury pre-dates its World Heritage listing and engages cultural heritage practices that give primacy to tangible heritage as the object for management and conservation. Over several centuries the interests of the villagers at Avebury have been subject to national concerns that have reflected a greater interest in the protection of the Neolithic monuments. Although the National Trust today has a much greater awareness of the needs and interests of the villagers (and the village landscape), the legislative and bureaucratic mechanisms that support the heritage protection of the Avebury landscape will continue to direct the future of the area and hence that of the village residents. The Magnetic Islanders are faced with the completion of the Nelly Bay development and the surety of a flow-on effect that will see further development on

the island. The economic imperatives and lobbying capacity of major development organisations are unlikely to be hindered by either the state or local governments, holding as they do to a history of pro-development leanings. At Ayutthaya, it remains likely that the Historical Park will be extended, and further communities evicted. The Ayutthaya Elephant Camp in the Historical Park is under threat of closure, and the most likely source of funding to maintain a number of artisan practices lies in the tourist industry with implications for the detrimental impacts of the minimisation of context that accompanies commodification.

As is suggested above, power struggles can often become manifest as one of competing histories: national and 'dominant' histories versus those elaborated by local communities. Although the dominant histories may incorporate the latter, they are timeless, general and pervasive, presenting the past as enduring and impenetrable. Community or 'folk' histories, on the other hand, are often seen as disjunctive, fragmented and contentious, characterised as incomplete and partisan, and more representative of the interests of a discrete parochial constituency (Bond and Gilliam 1995: 11–12). Attempts to create the most aesthetic and 'original' views of a landscape, and to 'conserve' the character of an area, can become part of a political play that seeks conformity between an idealised 'originality' and modern authenticity, reinforced 'through scientific, legal and quasi-legal designations and names such as ... archaeological landscape, prehistoric landscape, world heritage site, and archaeological park' (Ronayne 2001: 157). This process of creating the 'authentic' landscape is evident at both Ayutthaya and Avebury, where the policies of conservation management are engaged in configuring a 'heritage' landscape, thereby creating tensions and ambiguities in the conservation process. Both are examples of reconstructing the past to accommodate hegemonic social practices of the present (see Shack 1994: 116).

As Rodman (2003: 212) notes, the socio-cultural structuring of space, particularly in urban environments, has been crucially affected by the development of capitalism and the 'local state'. This has led to confrontation between the exchange values of entrepreneurs and the 'use' values of residents, such as the quality of life and non-

commodified dimensions of life that include quiet enjoyment or feeling at home. However, analysis of such 'tournaments' must include an understanding of the articulation between commodity values, place and symbolic universes of meaning, and how these are revealed when conflicts engage actors who are differentially empowered and resourced in contests of resistance. While these conflicts centre on the meanings invested in places, or derived from their interpretation, they reveal broader social struggles over deeply held collective myths. In this way, contested places come to act as loci for creating and disseminating, protesting and negotiating dominant cultural themes. The contestation is grounded in a realisation of the fundamental and recurring aspects of social life, but also in a recognition of the 'otherwise unexamined, ideological and social frameworks that structure practice' (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 245).

Breakdowns in the integrity of local communities through state policies and globalising forces has led to an increased importance of the symbolic or conceptual elaboration of community and locality. 'What is at issue in the interaction between change and communities are the ways in which the construction and deconstruction of the latter provides a means for people to apprehend and locate themselves within a world that never stands still' (Amit 2002: 12). I remain aware of Turner's point that communities are not static concepts, but that community members may at any point in time interpret this as otherwise. That is, communities may well conceive that all change is external and hence perceive it as a threat to the stasis and cohesion of the group (Turner 1974: 24). So while community may well serve as a resource to conceptualise and respond to change, faced with a social world that is continually in a process of 'becoming', a sense of attachment and place is a buffer against a changing world. This is encapsulated in embodied and 'emplaced' connections grounded in shared experiences, relationships, histories, locales and practices. People come to perceive themselves as experiencing political, economic and life-cycle changes together through the sense of a complex and sometimes ambivalent mutuality. It is engagement with such understandings that provides ground for reconceptualising the basis of community (Amit 2002: 14–15).

However, it remains clear that the continual formation and reformations of places in the modern world, the intervention of government and the state, and the 'global penetration of capital' will have an influence on the way people form and retain attachments to places (Aziz 2001: 121). Certainly, the communities at each of the study locales are faced with multiple impacts that include new technologies, the fragmentation of the working class, changed working environments, mass consumerism, increasing tourism and immigration. A global result is the widening of the gap between culturally homogenous nations and increasingly diversified, pluralistic and multicultural societies. In the process, the complexity of the fabric of social and cultural life is being revealed and the previously ignored identities of communities is being acknowledged – resulting in new narratives, but ones that are equally as interpretative and equally valid.

My discussion has reinforced that World Heritage listing is often treated with indifference or ambivalence by local residents, which is in contrast to national approaches and contrary to the understandings of many heritage management approaches. At the national level listing is a means of participating in a global cultural (and economic) competition, seeking to build hegemony through conforming to universal standards by which cultural differences can be defined. However, the social processes that define and re-assert identity at the local level reinforce that local ideas and ways of being remain active in globalising contexts. It is clear that universalising standards, such as World Heritage, have little relevance in the creation of meaning and value in the day-to-day lives of communities living in the World Heritage places of this study. It is also apparent that 'World Heritage' does not necessarily exist as a well-conceived and apprehended concept. The attitudes expressed by the communities contradict much of the conventional wisdom propounded by heritage conservationists and managing agencies, including the placing of pride in living in a World Heritage listed site (but see Evans 2002). The values placed by communities are often not in accord with those assigned by heritage professionals. However, as briefly discussed above, there may be greater support for World Heritage and convergence with established heritage management approaches in places where people have taken up residency after the World Heritage listing. Equally, the support could increase in

communities that have actively participated in the listing process, such a consultation process being encouraged in contemporary World Heritage nominations. There are also instances, for example as applied in the anti-development protests at Nelly Bay, where World Heritage is activated by the community as a political tool. This may have a unique resonance in Australia, as outside of the obligation of the government as a States Party under the World Heritage Convention, there are commonwealth legislative implications. The recent lobbying by a group of Magnetic Islanders, which includes scientists and heritage professionals, to have the island assessed as a World Heritage property in its own right has no doubt been influenced by the potential for increased protection under the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Changing Practices

It remains apparent that the cultural heritage management policies that guide the understanding and protection of heritage in all three study locales sanction a definition of heritage that engages with physical aspects of the past. The local narratives and traditional practices that play such an integral role in the lifeworlds and lived experiences of local communities, albeit tacitly acknowledged, are paid little heed in assessments of heritage value. The prevalence of approaches to cultural heritage that privilege tangible heritage and the protection of certain 'values', and that separate natural and cultural heritage, occur at the expense of a holistic understanding of heritage and of the experiences and practices that give meaning and identity to local communities. The recent adoption of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage will undoubtedly provide the benefit of protecting certain traditions and practices, and this is not to be disparaged. However, by placing emphasis on the threatened and the 'more special', it engages in a universalising practice of spectacularisation that enhances national narratives and does little for more local and less significant concerns. In addition, by reinforcing the separation between tangible and intangible heritage it does not advance the cause of a more inclusive approach in cultural heritage practice. Rather it retains the separation of interest that sees tangible heritage as the realm of 'traditional' heritage practitioners, while intangible heritage is

divorced from the interests of such practitioners and remains the proper interest of anthropologists, ethnologists, musicologists and folk historians.

The nature/culture dichotomy is one that remains on the international heritage agenda for resolution. However, it is constrained by a number of mitigating factors. The most significant is the failure within both natural and cultural heritage practice to comprehensively engage with the way in which people attribute meaning and value to the natural environment. Various approaches are indicative of a way forward, such as engagements with cultural landscapes and understandings within natural heritage practitioners of the valuable contributions of indigenous people. However, they remain restricted in their application and do little to understand or protect the meanings, cultural processes and practices through which people place value on the environment. Another constraint is the perennial separation of assessment and management regimes, processes and legislation that maintain the disconnection of nature and culture as distinct realms in heritage practice.

In general heritage practice, there is a lack of engagement with the reality that any formal process of attributing 'significance' is simply an overlay on the significance that the place has already accrued through the relationship with its inhabitants. This local significance is accrued through the strength and persistence of historical memories, narratives, cultural traditions and contemporary practices. Reinforced by an intimate association between lifeways, culture and nature, these are of equal if not greater significance for communities than notions of national or international heritage value. Equally, we cannot forget that in the formal process of identifying heritage and attaching some sort of 'value', it renders it susceptible to external influences (tourism for example) with consequences for those people who today live in or are associated in various ways with that 'heritage' place. Unfortunately, these communities can become subsumed in a 'sanctioned' interpretation of a place's significance, where heritage rhetoric presents and authorises a single version of an otherwise multi-layered narrative. Ironically where attempts do exist to find the essence of social significance they are paradoxical. 'Social value', predicated on a community's own statement of meaning and significance, can only be valid while it remains outside a formal

assessment system that identifies and ranks some places (and values) as more special or important than others.

There is a need for broader professional heritage consultation approaches that move away from the community 'education' agenda pursued by heritage practitioners and heritage agencies. Although education is important, we must remain aware of its capacity to influence, even manipulate, public opinion and community expressions of values. Integral to the emphasis on education is a reliance on the sense that the community at large (the public), can be resourced to provide support for pre-existing conservation ideologies. This is applied across both cultural and natural conservation arenas; however, such approaches rely on reinforcement of professional opinion, and allow little room for the introduction of new, potentially conflicting views from the community. This is a contradiction that must be resolved before community values can be understood, accepted, and actively supported, especially when the opinions of the community may be at odds with those of entrenched professional conservation views and practice.

This may perhaps partly explain the reason why in all three study locations there exists a community perception that their opinions are ignored by the establishment. There is a perception by some locals that while they remain outside of the prevailing 'scientific' discourse, and cannot speak with the 'authentic' voice of an archaeologist or marine scientist, that their contributions to any debate is considered trivial. However, while criticisms are made of management bodies and of the proprietary activities of heritage professionals and scientists, it is clear that the communities retain a warm relationship with and respect for the heritage values that are identified in the process. The attachments described by the communities include stories of past and present enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef, of the ancient temples of Ayutthaya and the henge monument at Avebury. The point is that local communities may readily acknowledge and respect values that are attributed in the course of formal attributions of heritage significance, including World Heritage listing. However, these do not necessarily form an important component of their own suite of values, even when applied to the same places and objects. The Avebury villagers, for example, in

explaining their attachments to the megaliths can readily accept they have scientific significance as unique Neolithic objects. But it is their emplacement in the local village landscape that accrues significance for the village community. Stories of playing hide and seek are more vividly expressed than are ponderings on the Neolithic origins of the stone circle. Hence, there is not necessarily a concern with asserting the validity of professionally attributed heritage meanings, but on the reality and priority of those professionally determined meanings to the communities concerned. The significance of place to a local community does not necessarily preclude other levels of significance, but clearly the experiences that people have at levels other than the local are necessarily different. The creation and reinforcement of 'local' identity and meaning is irrespective of the place's significance to other groups, and these communities and their attachments to places can be affected and potentially compromised when their associations and values are not heard, not understood or are ignored.

I have asserted that a continuing constraint to more inclusive approaches to heritage lies in the lack of methodological and theoretical approaches for engaging with a reconceptualised heritage that includes contemporary community attachments, practices and values. To move forward, there is a need to go beyond 'knowing' that a community attributes meaning and value to a place, and to understand how and why those meanings and values have been formed, retained and transmitted. I have attempted to show that using ethnographic approaches and understandings, can resolve these methodological and analytical lacunae. To understand how people form attachments to place and what communities value to pass on and retain for their children and future generations it is necessary to give voice to that community. I propose that this can best be done within the community, through approaches that allow an investigation of a particular area of interest, but retain an informality of structure. Talking to people one-on-one or in small groups, and within a setting familiar to those interviewed, was invaluable – as was the opportunity to live within the various community environments and participate more closely in the day-to-day lives of the people with whom I worked. This challenges the primacy of the commonly applied practice of community workshops as a tool to explicate 'social

value'. While such workshops are often informative, and certainly expedient, they can be less effective in providing nuanced information and exploring the more personal and emotive aspects that reinforce 'being in place'.

While recognising the constraints, and indeed challenges, in engaging with multiple communities, this comparative approach has resulted in analytical outcomes that are meaningful and effective. Although the results reinforce the unique and specific character of each community (and that community's varying constructions), the use of comparison has shown that there are consistencies with the way people create meaning in places and landscapes, and construct identity. The values and identities that evolve in the process are necessarily different. However, the meanings and relationships that enmesh people, community, events, practices, situations and objects are grounded in social and cultural processes that continually construct and reconstruct places and landscapes. A 'sense of place' is implicated in an ongoing social process of emplacement and of 'becoming'. More particularly, there is an emphasis on the mutually constitutive interaction between people, place and community. The way people live within an environment, and the practices that are inculcated in daily lifeworlds, reinforce identity. A consistently identified structure of signification across all locations in this study has been the construction of community as a primary reinforcer of identity. This relies on a notion of relational group identity that encompasses both difference and sameness. It is inseparable from interactions with others, and from place. It implicates memory, nostalgia and emplaced and embodied practices as processes that define ways of being, and 'ways of becoming'. In all three study locations, it is also evident that the community's lived existence is enmeshed in extra-local contexts that involve other lives, power structures, discourses and socio-cultural worlds.

It is in this extra-local, global context that a commonality is shared by all three sets of communities. All are directly or indirectly affected by heritage management ideologies and processes that are grounded in the prevailing Western scientific paradigm that continues to be centralised, authorised, and disseminated by seminal international organisations: UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICROM and IUCN. Although

World Heritage listing epitomises this overlaying of a primarily positivist regime of practices, the universalising approaches enshrined in the listing process operate within 'smaller worlds' through the practices of heritage professionals and the bureaucratic processes of heritage management agencies. Despite rhetoric at both the international and national level that encourages change, these heritage management processes and practices continue to place emphasis on tangible heritage, separate natural and cultural heritage, and pay little attention to the way in which contemporary communities form attachments to places and landscapes.

My analysis of much of this information has valuably relied on a number of theoretical platforms, particularly the experiential understandings that can be gained through a phenomenological approach. The role of perception, both as constituted and constitutive, is integral to the explication of the way in which place, meaning, senses and action continuously interact in a process of creation and recreation. Place and landscape are given personal dimension through the lived experiences of individuals, but remain inseparable from their everyday engagement with the world. This implicates individual lives and experiences in a web of social interactions and meanings that reaches out from the immediate community and locale to engage with broader national and global influences. By complementing this phenomenological approach with the understanding of life as a series of transformations, it is possible to understand the way in which material and social relations are situational and influenced by processes of change. 'Being' is hence more readily understood as 'becoming'. Place, memory, community and identity are all mutable. Because all are reliant on social processes, they are also inseparable from power relations and the inevitable negotiations that accompany hegemonic encounters.

One such 'encounter' is played out in approaches to heritage that focus on the material elements of a place and on community attachments as being an add-on set of 'values' that enhance the importance of the material aspects. The meanings that different communities give to places cannot be readily superimposed on formal significance assessment processes. The meanings so inscribed are inseparable from the people who attribute them and gain significance within that context. The end result is likely to be

one of conflict with other attributions of heritage significance. However, the concern must ultimately be with the contextual framework of each knowledge system, and not with the validity of one claim over another.

Ultimately, any attempt to come to grips with heritage at a community level, and to incorporate a greater understanding of traditional practices as 'heritage', requires more methodical and consistent approaches to contemporary community values, as espoused by those who lay claim to that heritage. This also recognises that heritage is not just a thing of the past, it is something that is still (and continuously) in the making. Needless to say, the process must also be inclusive of community determination and control in outcomes and management decisions. In addition, it must recognise that communities and the way in which people attach significance to experiences, emotions, practices, objects and places are neither static nor absolute. People, places, values and actions are implicated in an ongoing process where 'being here' is more commonly one of 'becoming here'. Picnicking on the beach, riding elephants, or sliding down megaliths are all part of that becoming, and are part of our cultural heritage.

