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CHAPTER TEN

WHERE THE VALUE LIES: THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALITY TO THE IMMATERIAL ASPECTS OF HERITAGE

JOHN CARMAN

Introduction

Archaeology—once purely the province of students of the most ancient human societies, and generally perceived as focusing upon the deep past—is today understood as a wider study, "an approach, a set of methods, ideas and perspectives which are used to investigate the past through its material remains" (Bailey et al. 2009, 2). Indeed for some, archaeology is not about the past at all, but instead can be seen as the science of studying material culture. As such, archaeologists are concerned for all classes of material, and in all its forms. There is as much interest in studying an abandoned twentieth century Council flat (Buchli and Lucas 2001), a twentieth century protest camp, nuclear test facilities (Schofield et al. 2006) or road islands (roundabouts) and supermarkets (Graves-Brown 2007) as a Neolithic flint scatter or an Egyptian Old Kingdom tomb. The corollary is that there is as much interest in studying material from the distant past as in studying those objects that come from our own age. But archaeologists are interested in much more than "things"—the physical objects, materials and remains themselves. They are interested in the ideas, thoughts and social relationships in which these objects are embedded and which they represent—both in the past and in the present. Indeed, there is a very specific interest in the "life cycle" of such material amongst archaeologists, even as purely physical objects (see for example Schiffer 1972), and this interest brings even the most ancient object into the present (Schiffer 1987; Gosden and Marshall 1999; Holtorf 2002).

Archaeologists, then, study material culture from the past, but are equally interested in it as a part of our present. In doing so, archaeology is

a discipline concerned with the very nature of material culture—both as "material" and as that elusive phenomenon called "culture". No other discipline combines such interests. This is an argument for retaining archaeology as a key contributor to the study of heritage and its understanding—and here, "heritage" is always to be understood not as a gift from the past but as a creation of the present. This paper will seek to make the argument for the involvement of archaeology in heritage by approaching it from apparently contradictory, but nevertheless linked, directions: that heritage is inevitably more intangible a phenomenon than tangible, and yet that its intangibility needs to attach to something tangible in order to exist at all. In doing so, this chapter will address the intangibility of the tangible and the tangibility of the intangible.

Castles of Stone

There is perhaps no more tangible heritage object than the castle of brick or stone. Castles are a widespread type of structure: they are found all over the world, built of all kinds of materials. They generally fall within the category of "heritage" because few cultures build or use castles any more and they have an abundant capacity for survival: they tend to be fairly robust structures.

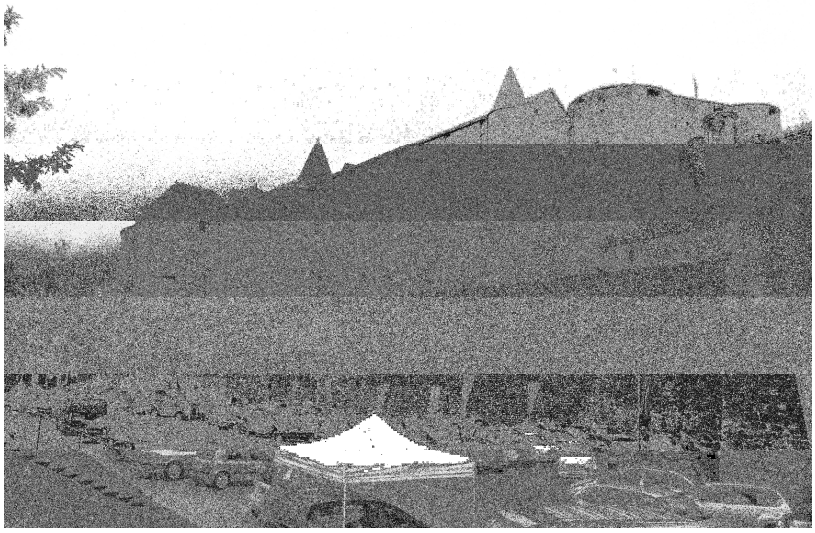

Figure 10.1: Sedan Fortress, France

The great fortress at Sedan in north-eastern France dates from the thirteenth century, and it was developed to meet new challenges and new technologies of siege warfare from then until the twentieth century (Figure 10.1). At its height—in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—it was nearly treble its present size and was for a long part of its history the largest fortress in Europe. It never fell to siege or assault, and played a part in every major war in Western Europe from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries: only the advent of long-range artillery and air-power made it obsolete as a site of defence. It is remembered particularly for the great battle that was fought around it in 1870, as part of the Franco-Prussian conflict of that year, the last of the so-called Wars of German Unification. The battle at Sedan ranks sufficiently high in local, and indeed French national, memory to have an entire room devoted to it in the museum contained within the fortress. Sedan is located within France and represents the final victory of that war of German over French troops, and yet the event is celebrated in a monument in the town square, in other monuments elsewhere and especially in the nearby military cemetery with a large obelisk.

These monuments do not mark French success, as do many military monuments, but instead the valour of French soldiers and the suffering of both soldiers and civilians at the hands of the invader. The current obelisk at Sedan is not the original that was first raised in the 1890s: it is a replacement raised after the Second World War when again Sedan fell to German forces. In 1941, the original was destroyed and replaced with a German monument in suitable neo-classical (even brutalist) style overtly celebrating a German victory on what was then seen (at least by the German high command) as German soil. The increasingly dilapidated condition of the Nazi monument testifies to the attitude now taken towards it by the Sedan authorities.

All these objects—the fortress, the French and German memorials, and other sites in the area that recall the battle—are tangible objects that are also solid and robust: but this is, of course, not the significance they carry. Their status as "historic monuments" or as "heritage" lies instead in the ideas they represent, which are alternative ideas about a past event that in itself is now unrecoverable in any physical sense and therefore quite intangible. At Sedan, to the intangibility of past action is added the intangibility of ideas about that past action—of valour in defeat, of claims to territory, of long-term rivalry between France and Germany. Those rival ideas themselves—in an era of European integration (or at least cooperation)—now find their place as part of the past: this is intangibility squared, as ideas about ideas also become part of the shared past.

Inevitable Intangibility

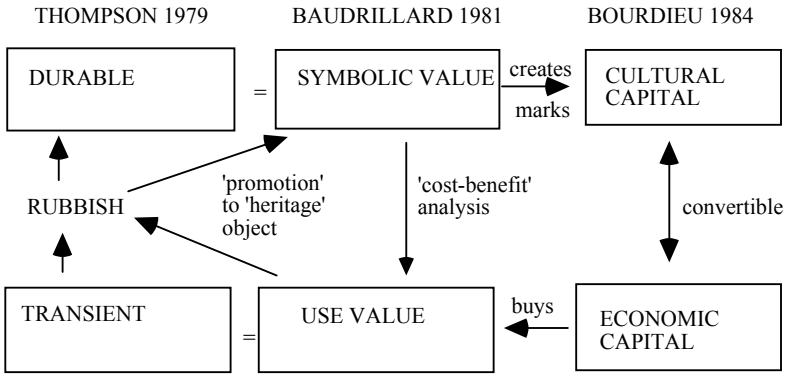

Figure 10.2: A model of heritage

The idea that there is less that is "tangible" about heritage than there is "intangible" is not new. Heritage, to put it simply, is something (or a group of somethings) "promoted" out of the everyday to a special cognitive realm where we think about it differently. The origin for this model (discussed in more detail in Carman 2002, 167–175; 2005c, 51–53) lies in Michael Thompson's *Rubbish Theory* (1979). This offers a mechanism for this "promotion" process out of one cognitive category of material to another, via his third category of rubbish, which is material we choose to treat as if it is not there. For Thompson, material is "real" but what makes things what they are is not their physical form but the ideas we have about them. The same applies in Jean Baudrillard's (1981) distinction between the realm of use and exchange values and of symbolic values: any object is merely an object, but it becomes what it represents because of the way we treat it and think about it. Accordingly, a simple gold finger-ring carrying a solitaire diamond as decoration given by a lover to his beloved on promise of marriage becomes a different object—an "engagement ring", carrying the particular association of the couple's relationship and requiring the performance of specific rituals in its presence (the expression of a desire to view it, admiration and praise, the offer of congratulations). These ideas map rather well onto Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) consideration of the interchangeability of, and people's differential access to, economic and cultural capital. Here, "cultural capital" defines one's status in the world and the ability to operate in particular social milieus, and also indicates one's ability to distinguish

objects of cultural worth. The exchange of objects of cultural worth for economic value, or the ability to pay for expensive education, provides mechanisms by which the economic and cultural realms may interact.

Heritage is therefore inevitably a realm of ideas rather than a collection of things. Any object can become a heritage object: it has nothing to do with the physical attributes of the object, but rather what we hold to be important about it. This is the same point that Cornelius Holtorf and Tim Schadla-Hall (2000) have made regarding "aura" and "authenticity", that what we think about objects depends upon the contemporary context: the "authentic replica" or "authentic reproduction" can really exist and can be valued as much—and sometimes more—than an "authentic original". An object does not have to be old—or even pretend to be—to be granted "heritage" status; and it does not have to be really what it purports to be: fictional objects can be granted it too.

Figure 10.3: Whiteworks

The novelist Arthur Conan Doyle used Whiteworks on Dartmoor in southwest England as the model for his great Grimpen Mire in the Sherlock Holmes novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Conan Doyle 1902) (Figure 10.3). It was the site of lead mining from the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries and, as a consequence, the area is a dangerously wet and marshy area with water-filled depressions and pits now overlain

by deceptively solid-looking plantlife. Despite its interest as a site of industrial heritage, it is as the Grimpen Mire that the place is frequently visited today: to the extent that one of the houses on the edge of the area carries a sign saying in very strong language that it is nothing to do with *The Hound of the Baskervilles* or, indeed, anything else Sherlockian, and please leave its inhabitants alone! Here, a fictional reference gives heritage status to a real location, but one which is not the real place visitors seek.

What this ultimately means is that not only can the category of heritage include any object, it can include anything at all—not only the physical but also the ideational: and, as Michael Thompson (1979, 56) neatly puts it, it is not that "things are … ideas, but that ideas are things".

Intangible Objects

The point about heritage objects—what makes them heritage, rather than anything else—is that they represent intangible qualities we value. But heritage does not only consist of objects: it consists of memories of objects and of memories of activities. Douglas and Isherwood (1979, 37) refer to collective (corporate) saving as having an "otherworldly morality" because it extends the life of the collective beyond that of its individual members. Collectives—such as military regiments, for instance—do indeed have existences beyond that of their individual members. In the British army, it became traditional to consider the regiment as immortal, and individual soldiers traded their own finite lives for the immortality of the unit: in this way, however short or long their life with that unit, they too partook of that immortality. This is one reason why old soldiers (and young ones) become so upset when reorganizations of the armed services lead to the disappearance of their regiment: their claim on the future has been removed from them. In fact, the usual procedure is for the regimental tradition to attach itself to a smaller unit in a new formation, at company or platoon level.

However, institutional descent need not be so direct to be recognized. At Cropredy Bridge in Oxfordshire (Figure 10.4), a stone tablet was placed in the 1930s at the site of a battle that took place in the 1640s. This object was created to stand for the memory of the event that was that battle: the intangible past event recalled only as intangible memory by the creation of a modern physical object. Each year at the spot, a re-enactment of the battle takes place by enthusiasts, some groups of whom claim an institutional descent from original participants by naming their "regiments" after those who fought on the day. Some of these regiments leave tokens—wreaths of flowers, perhaps—in memory of their fallen

"comrades" of three hundred years previously. This process—of placing the tablet, of re-enactment, of leaving tributes in remembrance—represents the reversal of the normal process of preserving objects from the past to represent intangible qualities. Here, instead, the intangible is represented by the creation of new objects.

Figure 10.4: Memorial at Cropredy Bridge

Battlefields themselves are also heritage objects. Oudenaarde in Belgium was the site of a great battle in the early eighteenth century. It is a typical battlefield landscape and, apart from a low mound which is all that remains of what was once a castle, it is a very empty and uninteresting piece of real estate. What battlefield preservation is aimed at—a point made strongly by a number of commentators, and especially Foard (2001)—is the memory of the now unrecoverable event rather than the material evidence of the event that may be present in that space: that these places matter as the place where a historic event took place, rather than as archaeological sites. Hence one reason, I think, for the general lack of discussion of the ontology of such places in the literature (although on this see Carman 2005b) is that what they represent are not the places themselves or the objects they contain, but instead serve to evoke in the mind a past event. This is partly about remembrance and memorialization, but also about imagination and a kind of "fictionalizing" of the past by requiring the use of imagination alone as the mode of interpreting the event: this is because so little remains except the shape of the space, and sometimes not even that.

Battlefield memorials are an interesting category of object in their own right (Carman 2003; Carman and Carman 2006, 184–206). Like the example

from Cropredy, they mostly post-date the event by some time. There was a medieval preference for building churches on battlefields soon after the event, but this practice was abandoned by the sixteenth century and the raising of other kinds of memorials is a practice of later centuries still (Borg 1991). What they mark is no longer present and was of course only fleeting in any case. They also mark different kinds of things that are not present. A great church built at the town now called Batalha celebrates the Portuguese victory of Aljubarotta fought several kilometres away and out of sight. A smaller monument at Tewkesbury marks that battle, but is now as likely to be used as a convenient location to park a bicycle. Both of these monuments commemorate the event particularly.

Other monuments commemorate persons present at the battle they mark. Individual monuments may commemorate the death of individuals, such as that at Roliça in Portugal, in memory of Colonel Lake who fell in battle there in 1808. Groups may equally be remembered, such as the large numbers of mercenaries who died at in the battle of Stoke Field (1487) and marked by the stone in the nearby churchyard. Similarly, those who were present may be recalled, as for the Irish who fought for France at Fontenoy (1745) or those who fought for the allies at Corunna (1809). Alternatively, the presence of a prominent individual may be marked, such as by the obelisk raised to King Louis XV of France, not on the battlefield of Fontenoy (1745) but at Cysoing, some two kilometres away, where he spent the nights before and after the conflict. All of these persons have of course gone: all are now deceased, and no visible evidence remains of them at the place where they are commemorated.

Figure 10.5: Portuguese Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Remembrance of the dead is a specific category of commemoration. The Portuguese Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, commemorating World War One in particular, is located in the great church at Batalha, which itself commemorates war from six centuries earlier (Figure 10.5). More modest memorials to the dead of World War One can be found in the streets of St Albans, England, the site of a battle five centuries earlier. These memorials to the dead of modern conflicts sit away from the locations of that conflict, remembering not only people who are gone but also the distant events that took them.

Heritage sites, objects and places thus represent not things but the memory of things. The things they act to remember are always things that are gone: events, activities, people collectively or individually. They carry ideas and associations and values that are not concrete and cannot be measured or assessed in concrete terms: the physical description of a place, object or site is not a statement of its value or meaning. Beyond the memory of things, some represent the memory of the memory of things. All these fall into the category of the "intangible". When we talk about heritage, then, we are inevitably in a realm of the intangible: the idea of there being a "tangible" heritage, which is somehow distinct from an "intangible" one, is a shibboleth and a myth we need to move away from.

Paradoxically, the recognition of those intangible qualities as crucial to the category of "heritage" by official agencies also invites us to consider the role of those who engage with materiality in a new light. The next section will highlight how recent discussions of "heritage value" have sought to turn intangible qualities into tangible form.

New Heritage Values

We live in what has been termed the "Audit Society" (Power 1997), in which we are required to place a measurable value upon all things. The corollary, however, is that only those things that are measurable can be measured. It follows, then, that only those attributes the value of which is measurable are considered valuable. At the service of such ill-defined but contextually relative terms as "effectiveness", "efficiency" and "accountability" we find ourselves bound to offer tangible and measurable justifications for the preservation and custodianship of cultural heritage.

Recent initiatives in valuing cultural heritage reflect these aspects of the Audit Society. In 2005, English Heritage and other agencies commissioned a report from an environmental economics consultancy on *Valuation of the Historic Environment* (eftec 2005). Its opening statement

is "Heritage assets are economic goods" because—like other economic goods—they provide "flows of wellbeing" (eftec 2005, 7). Rather than being concerned with activities, projects and programmes as its full title suggests it should, the report actually concerns itself with how one might assess the value of such "heritage assets". In January 2006, the Accounting Standards Board (ASB) for England and Wales published a "consultation document" on accounting for such "heritage assets" (ASB 2006), which would require a full financial valuation of such objects to be included in an institution's balance sheet as assets. Despite arguments against such a move on a number of grounds—some ethical, some practical, some grounded in accounting technicalities, and some a mixture of two or more of these—the ASB has since published its statement of how to account for such objects in financial terms

In a parallel development, the Heritage Lottery Fund commissioned the think-tank DEMOS to help them reconsider the evaluation of heritage projects, especially in light of new ideas about "public value" (DEMOS 2005). This was followed up by a conference early in 2006 where ideas about the concept of "public value" were explored (Clark 2006) (Figure 10.6). The concept of "public value" was presented to us as a measure of "what the public value" and as the space of interaction between three types of value. The first is so-called *"intrinsic"* value, which represents the meanings and associations carried by the cultural heritage: in other words, its academic research potential, and its symbolic and associational values. The second is so-called *"instrumental"* value, which represents the kinds of benefits that accrue to a community or to society in general from maintaining or using a site or monument: these could be in terms of tourist potential, or economic regeneration; in other words, its amenity value. The third is so-called "*institutional*" value, which derives from the activities of the organization responsible for managing or using the site or monument or place: these were defined in terms of "*how* organizations relate to their publics [and includes] creating trust and mutual respect between citizens … and providing a context for sociability and the enjoyment of shared experiences" (Hewison and Holden 2006, 15, emphasis in original). While it was recognized that "instrumental" and "institutional" values would represent tangible returns that can be measured, albeit with some difficulty, it was generally agreed that the measurement of "intrinsic" cultural value was inherently more problematic. The general feeling was that this was the province of heritage professionals such as art and architectural historians, and archaeologists.

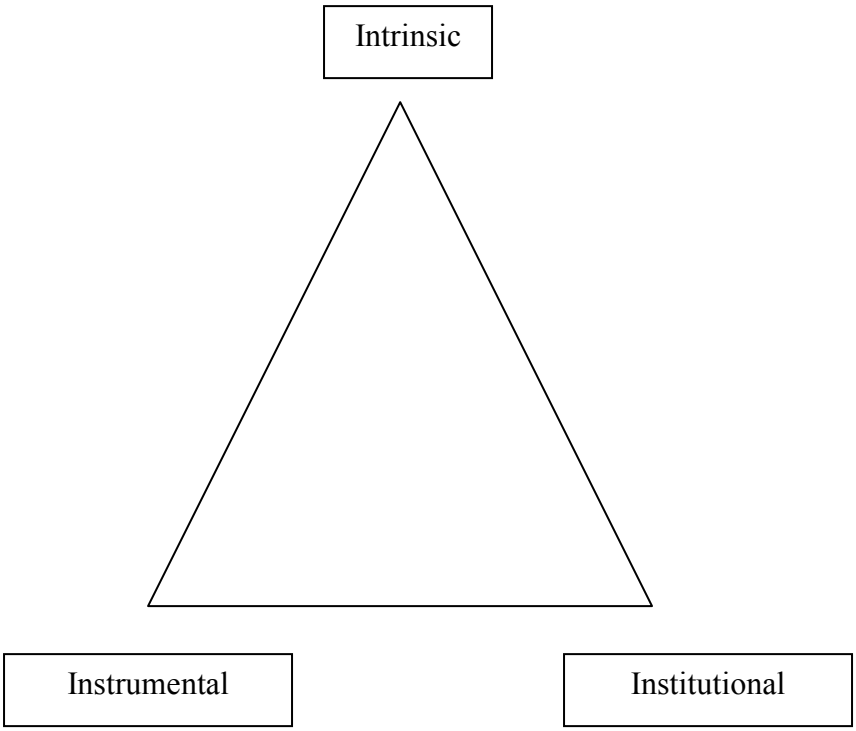

Figure 10.6: The "public value" triangle (Source: Hewison and Holden 2006, 15)

Both these attempts at valuation—in financial terms (ASB 2006) and in terms of "Public Value" (Clark 2006)—represent efforts at turning the value of the cultural heritage into tangible, measurable terms. For the ASB this takes the form of a straightforward accounting exercise. The "Public Value" schema incorporates other forms of valuation, but essentially reduces heritage to a purely utilitarian object, relegating its "cultural" values to the (largely immeasurable) "intrinsic" category.

The Role of Archaeology

By contrast with the ASB and "Public Value", the usual approaches to valuation of the archaeological resource serve the interests of archaeology as a discipline and as a field of activity. As Tim Darvill (2005, 39) has put it, measures of archaeological importance are an "interest group

methodology applicable to specific elements of the resource, in order to allow some kind of ranking or discrimination". These can be contrasted with the more generally-held "value schemes" of wider society, which, he argues, are constructed of almost perfectly opposite elements, but with which they are linked to professional schemes of value in a hermeneutic circle (Darvill 2005, 37–9). Any accounting or financial scheme similarly serves the interests of institutional accountability in order to allow comparison between the relative effectiveness of different bodies responsible for stewardship of the heritage. It, too, is an "interest group methodology" in Darvill's terms—serving the interests of the accounting and audit community. And, despite its name and rhetoric, the scheme of Public Value proposed by DEMOS and others is equally unrelated to the relationship of actual people to their pasts. The one group not considered here are indeed real people: intrinsic, instrumental and institutional values are all kinds of abstracted, bureaucratic measures, detached from any sense of personal or group affinity to object or place. Yet the great lesson of surveys of public attitudes to the heritage (for example, English Heritage 2000) is precisely that sense of "belonging" which is central to the whole idea of having a heritage. Paradoxically this was an aspect strongly emphasized at the *Capturing the Public Value of Heritage* conference (Clark 2006), but remains excluded from the practice of policy—either public or disciplinary—as opposed to statements of intent (see for instance English Heritage 2000; DCMS 2001)

The experience of archaeologists, however, indicates an alternative way forward. Bill Boyd and his colleagues in Australia identified the processes by which professional interest in sites engendered the development of local interests and values built around a site's various attributes and different constituencies (Boyd et al. 2005, 98–107). They show how local Aboriginal interests mostly focussed upon sites representing Indigenous and traditional attitudes to land and environment, or to the history of their engagement with incoming colonizers. European Australians also recognized such claims and sometimes the spiritual dimension these indicate. Others, however, were more concerned with current social and economic uses—as tourist sites, recreational space, or thoroughfares—although not all of these necessarily conflicted with Aboriginal conceptions: the attitude of skateboarders to a rock-art site, for instance, could be seen as another example of the site's significance to a particular subculture (Boyd et al. 2005, 107), and indeed a close alliance was thereby forged between these otherwise quite different groups. It was by raising questions about such places from an archaeological and

ethnographic perspective that values were ascribed that marked their importance to inhabitants of the locality and beyond.

The same set of processes was evident at the Hilton of Cadboll site in Scotland (Jones 2004). Here, excavation of the lower portion of an inscribed Pictish stone and its reconstruction ignited controversy over the ownership and placement of the reunited object, which was claimed both by the national museum in Edinburgh and the locality. Investigation of the contexts within which contemporary meanings for the stone are created identified a complex set of interlocking values. Academic and intellectual values included those of archaeology, art history, folklore and oral history (Jones 2004, 27–33). In parallel to these, there was a more symbolic sense of its identity, as a living part of the community, and as an object "born" into the locality (Jones 2004, 33–7). As such, it at once belongs to the community, is part of it and also constitutive of it: "as well as being conceived of as a living member of the community, the monument is also simultaneously an icon for the [community] as a whole" (Jones 2004, 37). This extends into the monument's role in the construction of a sense of place, and indeed of re-forging a "lost" sense of community cohesion (Jones 2004, 39) that can be "healed" (at least symbolically) by reuniting the two original pieces of the monument.

These are ideas about "cognitive ownership", defined by Boyd and his colleagues (2005, 93) as "a deliberately provocative term designed to focus attention on the diversity of socially-constructed values which may be identified for any cultural place [and] refers to the interest in or association with a site claimed … by any person or group", specifically emphasizing the diversity of such associations that may co-exist simultaneously or change over time. Such notions inevitably relate closely to what has been called elsewhere "social value". This is a measure of "collective attachment to place", and places where this is evident have been conveniently defined—again by work in Australia (Johnston 1992, 7)—as those which "provide a sense of connection with the past, tie the past affectionately to the present, provide an essential reference point in a community's identity or sense of itself, help give a disempowered group back its history, and provide a sense of collective attachment to place". Such places "loom large in the daily comings and goings of life" and are "places where people gather" (Johnston 1992: 7).

Sites such as Hilton of Cadboll (Jones 2004) and those cited by Boyd and his colleagues (2005) clearly fall within this category. It is clear that the kinds of values that are ascribed to such places are multiple and can be conflicting, but at the same time, none necessarily prevent the ascription of other values to the same object at the same time. Accordingly, intellectual

and academic values can sit alongside popular, economic, recreational and tourist values. This means that "cognitive ownership" may allow each claimant to a resource full access to it without interference from or interfering with access by others. By giving full reign to such cognitive claims, each can take from the resource without placing any restraint upon similar taking by others. It is not so much of a stretch from here to the exercise of a voluntary physical restraint on actual use of the resource so as not to deny it to others; in other words, a value-based conservation programme that is not entirely reliant upon bureaucratic structures, systems of reporting to public agencies and the measurement of tangible returns (Carman 2005a).

Conclusion

The significance of these examples is not that this sense of "cognitive ownership" automatically exists and only needs to be recognized (*contra* Clark 2006). Instead, the message of Hilton of Cadboll and of Boyd's work in Australia is that the active interest shown by students of culture serves to *create* new values that are then ascribed *by others* to the material under study. These examples of "community" projects serve to emphasize the link between valuing the archaeological past and a feeling of "ownership" of that past. It is this aspect of the relations between people and objects from the past that is lacking in current initiatives, be they professional archaeological or accounting schemes, or schemes of "public value". The paradox is that it is not those who have been talking and writing about schemes of archaeological value who have been able to provide a model that will counter the impact of "the audit society" on our work. Instead, it is among those who conduct community archaeology projects that we find what we seek. What we have failed to do is to translate the language of that work into the language of our own.

What is clear is that archaeology creates real value—not just archaeological value, but other values too—by virtue of engendering interest in the focus of our work. Such newly created values—whether they relate to the uses to which a place may be put, or the sense of community it creates, or the unexpected links and alliances that emerge between diverse groups within and between communities (such as Aboriginal elders and teenage skateboarders)—are all equally valid and relevant to heritage conservation. The point of this for the argument of this chapter is that it is *archaeologists* who are creating these values—and that the values so created inevitably attach to material objects. While the value of heritage is always intangible, it is to tangible objects that they attach,

and the people best suited to deal with this tangible material are archaeologists.

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