Chapter Four

An Introduction to the 'Value of Heritage' Debate

Introduction.

The opening chapters of this study have addressed the first two objectives set out in the introduction on page five. An investigation of the ways that people understand structures in the environment around them has suggested a close visual relationship with landscapes that carry multiple meanings. Having established the complexity of the meaning of landscape the study has overlain this with the idea that some of these meanings will have a bearing on the sense of identity of people who gaze upon them. Such social complexities will have a direct influence on the third objective set out for this study. This chapter considers the 'value of heritage debate', which the study aims to contribute to.

The first line of the original research question that set this study into motion located the work in the field of 'heritage study', 'to investigate the role of 'heritage' in society' (ESRC Case Studentship research proposal). To address this issue properly it is important to define what is meant by the term 'heritage', that is the purpose of the first part of this chapter. This definition describes 'heritage' as an ideological concept, as a shared culture or as a physical set of sites, monuments, buildings or artefacts. These three aspects of 'heritage' often interact with each other to make it a particularly well used term that has a multiplicity of meanings, or as Samuel puts it '"Heritage" is a nomadic term, which travels easily, and puts down roots -or bivouacs- in seemingly quite unpromising territory' (Samuel 1994, 205).

The second part of this chapter sets the study in the context of the 'value of heritage debate'. This debate has been carried on amongst 'heritage' managers and academics since the 1980s and has seen its context change from a 'Thatcherite' drive to justify the conservation of the 'heritage' in monetarist terms (Lipe 1984) to an intellectual debate in the 90s which suggested that 'heritage' is either an elitist 'right wing' interest (Hewison 1987, Wright 1987) or a potentially inclusive and energetic social activity (Lowenthal 1984, Samuel 1994, Bender 1998).

1. Defining 'Heritage'.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'heritage' as 'that which comes from the circumstances of birth; an inherited lot or portion; the condition or state transmitted from ancestors'. This definition suggests that 'heritage' can be an idea or shared culture transmitted from our ancestors or a physical property a plot or portion. To define 'heritage' this chapter considers three approaches to 'heritage': 'heritage' the idea;

‘heritage’ as shared culture and ‘heritage’ as property. Although they are considered separately the three kinds of ‘heritage’ are interrelated through the expression of ideas and culture in physical artefacts or buildings. By the ownership of these artefacts and buildings, either individually or in common, the ‘heritage’ of ideas and shared culture are given physical embodiment.

Whig and Tory definitions of ‘Heritage’.

Samuel (1994) commented on the origin of the dictionary definition above, he noted the emphasis on inheritance derived from two aspects of political rhetoric expressed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first of these expressions related to the old Tory philosophy that ‘heritage’ is a 'matter of God, King and the Law, alter and the throne' (Samuel 1994, 205). This definition of ‘heritage’ suggests a system of personal ownership and primogeniture supported and legitimised by religion and the law. An example of this kind of ‘heritage’ is found in the right of individuals in a particular social group to hold property and with it power, rooted deeply in the medieval feudal system. It is an idea of God given power handed down from generation to generation that carried with it its own expression in monumental buildings. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this social group, headed by the Royal family of the time, was the remnant of the Baronial classes. Those that had not fallen from grace had turned their castles into great manorial estates enclosing the land around them and ‘imparking’ great areas of former farmland to glorify their family ‘heritage’. The second of these political philosophies was ‘the "Whig" interpretation of history ‘referring to freedom broadening out from precedent to precedent, and the development of representative government' (Samuel 1994, 205). This version of ‘heritage’ is quite different from the Tory definition and lies at the root of American western liberal democracy. This Whig definition of ‘heritage’ was also an idea, illustrated by the constitution of the United States, a set of precedents that has been altered through time according to the working of the law and through democratically elected government. This too is a ‘heritage’ that is handed down and also has physical embodiment in monumental buildings such as courts, houses of Parliament, civic offices and buildings occupied by civic offices like police or fire services. These dual themes had a meaning in life during the eighteenth century; they stood at the root of the American war of independence, but would not be easily recognised in society today. The same themes however, have evolved and can be recognised reflected in contemporary notions of ‘heritage’. In contemporary Britain the Tory sense of ‘heritage’ is still associated with the continuing position of the Royal family, or the continued prominence of great land-owning families, all of whom are considered to hold a ‘heritage’ that is no longer simply personal but is now national. The ‘Whig’ notion of ‘heritage’ has been encapsulated in contemporary ideas of liberal democracy and ‘patriotic nationalism’ (Ignatieff 1993). In both cases ‘heritage’ has come to be enveloped in nationalism, yet both are very different definitions of the same word. Neither the Tory nor Whig concept of ‘heritage’ alludes to communal ownership although both approaches allow for ‘heritage’ to represent and perpetuate concepts of communal nationhood.

'Heritage' as shared culture.

With the rise of socialism, most notably in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the concept of a common 'heritage' came into common use. The idea of a common 'heritage' introduces the possibility that society itself can have a 'heritage' in the form of culture that is handed down and changed from one generation to the next. This culture is represented in many physical ways and can be expressed in the landscape itself, a concept introduced in the preceding chapters. This is of course a definition of 'heritage' quite opposed to the sense of personal ownership of national 'heritage' suggested by the Tory sense of 'heritage' and also would be considered to restrict the liberal freedoms of the Whig definition of 'heritage'. In his definition of 'heritage' Merriman (1991) highlighted communal and individual 'ownership' of 'heritage' that he defined as an opposition. On one hand is 'culture (represented by artefacts and buildings) and landscape that are cared for by the community and passed on to the future to serve people's need for a sense of identity and belonging'. On the other hand is 'the manipulation (or even invention) and exploitation of the past for commercial ends' (Merriman 1991, 8).

'Heritage' as physical sites, monuments, buildings or artefacts.

The possibility that 'heritage' might also be understood in purely physical terms has been suggested throughout the previous definitions of the word. The dictionary uses the words *plot* or *portion* which both evoke a physical inheritance or 'heritage'. In narrow terms this can relate to an object such as a ring or a bedpan handed down in a will, but in broader terms it can also refer to a building, a collection of buildings or even a landscape. In some cases this may be handed on as an individual's property or it might be used in a more ideological way to suggest that a landscape is a representation of the activity of a particular culture and is handed on with an interest to society in common.

Collections of artefacts, buildings, monuments, archaeological remains and even whole landscapes may be described as 'heritage' because they are the plots and portions that have been handed down through the generations to the present. In addition to this functional definition it is also possible that a landscape, and the historical 'heritage' features that stand in it, can represent the ideas of 'heritage' described above. Thus they legitimate the continued presence of the person, group or institution that put the building there or reside in it. This is an important feature of the present study because such buildings can also represent other issues closely related to 'heritage' such as nationalism as outlined in the preceding chapters.

Artefacts, buildings, monuments, archaeological remains or sites became increasingly important to a variety of groups in society following the enlightenment as society began to catalogue, collect and interpret the meanings of all manner of things from the landscape. This interest in human remains from the past began a 'fitful rise' in the preservation of this 'heritage' (Hunter 1996, 1-16). The rise of 'heritage' preservation was dotted with government legislation like the Ancient Monuments Act 1882 and groups of enthusiastic 'conservation militants' led by William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

(SPAB) (Hunter 1996). English Heritage oversees this conservation role in England today. This rise in interest in conserving and studying the past has in turn given rise to a number of terms for physical remains of the past that are often used in association with the term ‘heritage’.

The Term Site.

The term 'site' in the present study refers to archaeological sites. An archaeological site can be considered any remains or trace of human activity buried beneath the ground or found on the earth's surface. In focusing the research it did not concentrate on archaeological sites because they are not readily accessible to people in their everyday lives. An archaeological site must be deliberately accessed usually through the interpretation of an expert. The influence of archaeological sites on local communities is an interesting area for further research but would require a separate project.

The Term Monument.

The word 'monument' has been used since the nineteenth century to refer to standing remains of former human activity. The term is closely bound to the concept of ‘heritage’, as a monument stands as reminder of people or events from the past. Remains such as burial mounds, hill forts, Roman walls or Medieval castles and abbeys were all included as monuments in the 1882 Ancient Monuments Act. The perception of these structures as monuments from the past, or to the past, may reflect Victorian society. Such monumentality legitimises social institutions like empire, local government and *nouveau riche* industrialism. Palladian and Gothic architecture of that period reflects Classical and Medieval monumentality taking legitimisation from the past (Nuttgens 1983, 238-246, Jones 1985).

English Heritage does not focus its attention solely on ‘monuments’ like those listed above. Together with local government they also conserve structures that represent more recent architectural styles. These features of the built environment include everyday dwellings, industrial remains, Victorian architecture, modernist architecture and even sports stadiums (Arsenal’s Highbury Stadium façade and the twin towers at Wembley Stadium for example).

The broad range of structures that English Heritage include in their interests is matched by this study rather than concentrating on the now traditional definition of ‘monuments’ used in the 1882 Ancient Monuments Act.

Heritage as part of the landscape.

An alternative approach to heritage is to consider heritage as part of a much broader whole. Ashworth (1998) suggested that heritage (a collection of artefacts, sites and monuments etc. in the landscape) forms part of the environment. Put simply individuals and social groups endow their local environments with meanings that are not intrinsic to the physical forms themselves but are ascribed to them by people. This

concept of place-identity is discussed further in chapter four but here it brings an important spatial dimension to heritage. Ashworth (1998) emphasises that these meanings invested in the environment are 'both expressed through the medium of heritage and become the perceived collective heritage of individuals and groups' (Ashworth 1998, 112). This is a particularly important role for heritage and has been discussed in depth in the opening chapters of this thesis.

2. The 'Value of Heritage' Debate.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s publicly funded organisations in 'Western nations' found themselves under pressure to justify their existence as governments sought to control public spending. Organisations responsible for public museums, conserving cultural resources or carrying out the practice of archaeology found themselves having to put a value on their activities. Public spending control in the United Kingdom was typified by Margaret Thatcher's government policy to 'roll back the boundaries of the welfare state' and provision of 'value for money'. Pressure on public services to justify their existence led to a debate amongst cultural resource managers and archaeologists that began (in published form) with a paper by Lipe (1984) entitled 'Value and meaning in cultural resources', published in a volume edited by Clere entitled *Approaches to the Archaeological 'Heritage'*.

Lipe accepted that 'value' is not inherent in cultural items or properties received from the past, but is ascribed by humans. He insightfully highlighted the role of human perception and contemporary context in addressing value (Lipe 1984, 2). Lipe modelled the place of cultural resources in society as a means to describe a number of 'types of value' that he related to particular contexts. Figure 4.1 shows Lipe's model that reads from the bottom upwards. At the base of the model is the 'Cultural Resource', a set of basic phenomena consisting of objects, structures and human landscape surviving from the past. Lipe identified four 'Value Contexts'; Economic Potential, Aesthetic Standards, Traditional Knowledge and Formal Research that impact upon and are influenced by the 'Cultural Resource Base'. The two-way relationship between the 'Value Contexts' and the 'Cultural Resource Base' is important because it recognises that the 'Value Contexts' also define the basic phenomena as a 'Cultural Resource Base' rather than a pile of rubbish from the past.

A desire to justify the practice of archaeology and the existence of museums is reflected in Lipe's model. He separated out 'Economic' and 'Formal Research' contexts that reflected his position as an archaeologist operating in a time of privatisation and public spending cutbacks. John Carmen has commented on the location of cultural resource management as a branch of archaeology, noting that this leads the field to concentrate on practice rather than theoretical issues (Carmen 1995). This emphasis on practice (both the process of archaeology and conservation) is compounded because both practices are located in local

authorities, making them particularly sensitive to economic contexts. The practice of archaeology is located in the planning process, carried out by commercial units and monitored by the local authority.

Carver (1993, 1996) has argued powerfully that the value of archaeological 'heritage' as a research practice must be advocated in a debate increasingly influenced by social values. As more players enter the debate, previously the domain of the inspectors of ancient monuments and academics, Carver has argued that it is important that the academic community 'champion the archaeological resource as a research 'asset'' (Carver 1996, 45), he goes on to suggest that it would be more appropriate to protect whole landscapes rather than monuments. This change, Carver argues, will allow for the academic to negotiate for the exploitation of archaeological resources for their research value along side the other social values. Carver's suggestions of a new approach to 'heritage' that advocates research value focuses on buried deposits that require an expert to reveal their secrets, namely an archaeologist. As a result of this expert interface between landscape and public they do not relate directly to the objectives of this study. It should be said however, that an investigation of people's understanding of local landscape before, during and after an archaeological intervention would be a study of some interest.

Conservation is practised by organisations funded by central government, namely English Heritage, local government (e.g. Museums) or charitable organisations like the National Trust.

Lipe's model also included contexts that he calls 'Aesthetic Standards' and 'Traditional Knowledge'. These contexts are cultural contexts that are open to most people; the aesthetic standard reflects what cultural constructions of what is pleasing to the eye whilst traditional knowledge is separated from formal research because it again is available to all.

Above the 'Value Contexts' in Lipe's model are four 'Types of Value'; the 'Value Context' influences each of these types. For example the 'Aesthetic Standards' and 'Traditional Knowledge' contexts influence 'Aesthetic' and 'Associative/Symbolic' 'Types of Value' respectively. Lipe considers that 'Associative/Symbolic' values are 'at the heart of the value of cultural resources' this is because, he writes: they have an 'ability to serve as tangible links to the past from which they have survived' (Lipe 1984, 4). Lipe does not argue that this makes cultural resources superior to or independent of written sources of information about the past, but that they do provide direct access:

> "Any incident, episode, or period of the past can never be truly recaptured; the words that were spoken, the actions taken, the exact cultural and environmental context, the people themselves –these can be described or discussed, but as real entities they no longer exist and can never be brought back. But cultural resources are composed of the very *things* that were made, used and discarded by, or that provided shelter or settings for, those human

> lives and actions of long ago. Physically, cultural resources participate in both the past and the present."
>
> (Lipe 1984, 4)

Lipe was describing his assumptions about the experience of people in the present as they interact with objects in their environment that have a resonance with the past. He went on to point out that this subjective sense of the past is conditioned by the knowledge that the person brings to the encounter.

It is a specific part of this complex interaction at the heart of the 'value of heritage' that this study deals with. The specific context in this study relates to incidents when the person is dealing with issues of local landscape, national symbolism and evocation of Europe.

Associative and symbolic values.

Lipe spent some time in his paper considering the symbolic nature of cultural resources in which he commented on the rarity of studies into such a commonplace phenomenon. He commented on the action of symbols in learning and cultural transmission of information among contemporaries and generations. He saw the symbol as a means by which people can know what to expect in a particular circumstance rather than have to perpetually learn from trial and error (Lipe 1984, 5). Material objects can be called into action as symbols giving them importance in cultural activity. This idea is expanded later in this study, proposing The idea that landscapes and the sites and monuments within them have culturally learned symbolic meanings is explored later in this study.

Lipe saw material objects as particularly durable and stable kinds of symbol, which are functional with respect to 'society's need for continuity in the transmission of cultural information through time' (Lipe 1984, 5). He drew on the work of Arendt writing in 1958 and Eliade in 1973. Arendt emphasised the role of material objects in stabilising society, they have 'durability' because (he says) people 'can retrieve their (the objects) sameness, that is, their identity, by being related to the same chair and the same table' (Arendt, 1958). Eliade wrote about the role of the Australian landscape in aboriginal culture. He identifies the landscape as a material symbol evoking the mythical beliefs underpinning aboriginal culture, passed on from generation to generation (Eliade 1973). The emphasis on stability is an important facet of cultural resources in people's lives, one that this study will need to address. As the work of Bender (1998) (discussed later in this chapter) suggests in her work on contested landscapes, we might also hope to find a good deal of flexibility in the use of cultural resources as symbols in the landscape.

Lipe accepted that it is possible to 'change' the symbolism of a material object by giving it new utilitarian functions or allowing it acquires new meanings. Indeed he said 'if historic structures are to be preserved in the midst of contemporary towns and cities, it is almost essential that they have more than a symbolic role,

and that their utilitarian roles be, to some extent, different than they were in the past' (Lipe 1984, 6). Lipe recognised that the symbolic role of a landscape, building or object can change but he saw the role of 'heritage' managers as preventing the breaking of the historical context of the symbol, stabilising particular aspects of its symbolic role. It seems, from his summing up of the symbolic role of cultural resources, that Lipe saw this 'social value' of 'heritage' as a dangerous area that needed to be policed by historians and archaeologists acting as 'heritage' managers:

> "Here, the association with a cultural past has been entirely severed. And, if we know that the history is false for which, e.g., a monument, building, or battleground is made to stand, we have the obligation to speak out about it. To do less is to declare that the associations of historic things and their meanings are, after all, only conventional, and that any information whatsoever can be attached to these things, for whatever purpose, if only enough of us agree to do so. This violates Arendt's (1958, 137) vision of the way in which 'the objectivity of the man-made-world' can stand against and hence stabilise the subjectivity and ever-changing nature of human life. If even historic things can mean anything whatsoever, then not only continuity but also predictability in human affairs can ultimately be lost."
>
> (Lipe 1984, 6)

Lipe's approach to the symbolic role of cultural resources is a little paternalistic, seeing the stabilising role of 'heritage' as positive, fostering objectivity policed by a academic experts in interpreting the historical truth of the resource concerned. Whilst 'heritage' as an idea and as a physical representation in the landscape has a stabilising effect this may be due to its social construction as a 'given' in a culture rather than any inherent truth in its symbolic meaning which may be interpreted in other ways depending on the context in which they are viewed.

Lipe's discussion, which is underpinned by the socially constructed and stabilising nature of 'heritage' or cultural resources, naturally leads onto the informational and economic 'values' of these resources. If we examine the context in which Lipe was writing (that of justification of the activity of 'heritage'/cultural resource managers in a climate of 'value for money'), it is perhaps not surprising that he emphasised these 'values'. Lipe actively highlighted education and economics that brings to the fore issues that can be easily understood and outcomes that can be easily measured. This activity is much more palatable to local and central government policy makers and funding bodies than discussion of symbolic and associative values. Establishing the 'value' of 'heritage'/cultural resources in this context was and still is an important part of the professionalisation activity of historians and archaeologists employed in this field.

Informational and economic value.

Lipe defined informational value most clearly as that which stems from formal research; 'the fields of archaeology, art history, architectural history and historical geography' (Lipe 1984, 6). These fields he observed have important interrelationships with ethnology, history, folklore, cultural geography, architectural design and the psychology of art. This broad set of academic groups combine to present

‘increasingly credible and detailed accounts of the life ways of past cultures’. It is this set of accounts that give cultural resources their ‘informational value’ (Lipe 1984, 6). The informational ‘value’ of cultural resources is still underpinned by their symbolic nature in educational terms. Lipe discussed this issue from the basic standpoint that information about the past ‘has value for its own sake’. It is for this reason that he had to borrow from the symbolic strand of his model of cultural resource value (see Fig 4.1) so underpin his argument.

In his discussion of the informational ‘value’ of cultural resources Lipe raised the need to both research them, which may cause their destruction, and conserve them for the public to see and for other researchers to use. This placing of cultural resources into the conservation debate means that they must compete with other uses of land and space in the landscape. This competition meant that cultural resources had to establish an economic value. Lipe identified three areas of economic ‘value’ that could be ascribed to a cultural resource; utilitarian, market and informational.

Utilitarian value.

The first of Lipe’s economic values was utilitarian value. This approach is particularly relevant to standing buildings, the concept of adaptive reuse (defined by Weinberg in 1979) allows for a building with historic interest to be redeveloped to provide housing for families or businesses. Adaptive reuse is now an important plank in urban renewal programmes. In May 1998 the Urban Task Force declared that ‘older buildings can be tremendous asset’, this ‘recycling’ of buildings is now termed ‘conservation led regeneration’ by planners, architects and buildings archaeologists.

Lipe warned in 1984 that this approach risked losing any evocation of the past context of the building in its contemporary economic use (Lipe 1984, 8). Any contemporary use of a building will detract from its earlier use so Lipe’s warning is directed at those with responsibility for the planning of such developments; ‘what planners and preservationists must deal with are the difficult questions about the degree to which alternative uses will enhance or detract from associative and aesthetic values, and the degree to which these alternatives are economically feasible. Since 1984 ‘conservation led regeneration’ has been a key aspect of the redevelopment of many townscapes, conserving historic buildings that are available to people in their day-to-day lives to evoke a sense of place. It is questionable whether regenerated buildings always evoke Lipe’s concern for ‘historical truth’ held in the informational value of the buildings. This would be a problem if physical remains from the past only act as a socially constructed ‘stabilising given’; as Lipe believed it does. If physical remains are available as symbols with multiple meanings and open for contestation, as Bender (1998) would suggest, then informational value is not always precluded from peoples’ understanding of the townscape, it is used in many ways depending on context.

Market value.

The second of Lipe's economic values is the 'market value' of a cultural resource. By this he meant the value given to a resource because people are prepared to pay for it or to see it. This value is lent to 'heritage' or cultural resources by their associative/symbolic values or their aesthetic value. There are two main manifestations of this; cultural tourism and the trade in antiquities. The first of these had been recognised well before 1984 and was encouraged as a significant source of economic growth in many 'developing' regions of the world. The presentation of 'heritage' as a tourist or visitor activity was only skimmed over by Lipe, but as this chapter will show, this particular social role for sites and monuments has been considered by a number of authors since (Lowenthal 1985, Hewison 1987, Wright 1987, Samuel 1994 and Bender 1998). The trade in antiquities is seen as a particular threat to the informational value of 'heritage' as it removes items from the gaze of those with a research interest in them as well as from the general gaze of people who cannot afford to purchase in the market.

Lipe pointed out that on the one hand 'money is an instrument being used by the public to obtain access to the symbolic, aesthetic and informational values of cultural resources' (Lipe 1984, 8). On the other hand he continues 'cultural resources can also be used as instruments for obtaining strictly economic goals, and that their use in this sense may have results damaging to the resources themselves or to their non economic values' (Lipe 1984, 8). Lipe concluded that economic value demonstrates the value of cultural resources through market demand, but given this as the only measure of value much 'heritage' with considerable informational value will be considered 'unworthy' of conservation or investigation.

Informational value.

Lastly Lipe tried to show that the informational value of 'heritage', 'although not often translated directly into market value, can also affect and be affected by decisions made on economic grounds' (Lipe 1984, 8). In the context that Lipe was writing in this is an important connection to make as the information supplied by academic researchers needed to be justified in as many ways as possible, rather than simply relying on the idea that information about the past has value 'for its own sake'.

Aesthetic value.

Lipe was rather reluctant to accept that value is given to some cultural resources because people simply 'know what they like'; 'I am willing to grant that some forms, textures and qualities of cultural materials are more intrinsically appealing to the observers aesthetic sense than others are' (Lipe 1984, 7). He insightfully noted that the aesthetic value of a cultural resource is specific to the observers' culture and that their sense of 'I know what I like' is more likely to be culturally influenced. This point in relation to our visual perceptions of landscape was discussed in chapter one.

Lipe worried that aesthetic value can exist for a person without them having an understanding of the past of a cultural resource. This would certainly be a problem if sites and monuments were merely understood as a stabilising influence in society, if however, their meaning can be used flexibly according to context this difficulty is not so serious, indeed it may be seen as a benefit. The idea that a cultural resource might have a number of meanings would allow people to engage with the cultural resources in a way that allows them to consider the alternative meanings rather than simply be informed by the experts. It is however; perfectly reasonable that Lipe should defend the information value of the same resources. As we shall see later in this chapter, authenticity is an important element in presenting cultural resources, mediating the effects of market forces, consumption and political manipulation of the symbolism of the past.

In the late 1970s and 1980s a 'heritage industry' developed building representations of the past to attract tourists and locals alike (Hewison 1987). At this time discussion about the 'value' of cultural resources focused on tourism and 'heritage' visiting activity. This focus on 'heritage' as a social phenomenon was encapsulated in David Lowenthal's book *The Past is a Foreign Country* published in 1985. Lowenthal did not take the specific 'heritage managers' approach underpinning Lipe's paper. He presented a generalised overview of three main themes; the way that the past can both enrich and impoverish people's lives and why they embrace or shun it, how recollection and surroundings remind people of the past and how they respond to it and how different meanings of the past are emphasised and how these varied meanings affect both people and perception of the cultural resource (Lowenthal 1985, xix).

Lowenthal expanded on the symbolic nature of cultural resources, noting that they are an essential part of identity and that without an understanding of the past nothing would be familiar and the present would make no sense. Yet he also saw 'heritage' as a burden that cripples innovation when the past is understood as a social 'given'. The benefits of the past are a sense of identity and legitimisation of our selves, even a place to look for answers to contemporary problems. Yet the burdens are decay and a lack of innovation. In the final part of his book Lowenthal discussed the problems raised by multiple meanings of sites and monuments in the landscape and the way that this changes understandings of the 'heritage'. This is the flexible approach that of course allows for continual reinvention of the past to suit the present. This flexibility worries 'heritage' managers like Lipe who seek to provide information that has a singular truth, and certainly there are problems with the political use of certain reinventions of the past to repress groups within a society. Rather than rail against the flexible past that subverts pasts invented and then presented as givens, Lowenthal argues for a more inclusive way forward in understanding the value of the past in the present:

> "What reassurance can be gained from vestiges of a past so prone to vicissitude? What virtue has a 'heritage' whose permanence is chimerical? The answer is that a fixed past is not what we really need, or at any rate not all we need. We require a 'heritage' with which

> we continually interact, one which fuses past with present. This 'heritage' is not only necessary but inescapable; we cannot now avoid feeling that the past is to some extent our own creation. If today's insights can be seen as integral to the meaning of the past, rather than subversive of its truth, we may breath new life into it."
>
> (Lowenthal 1985, 410)

Lowenthal's overview of the role of 'heritage' in society was deeply insightful. The present study explores Lowenthal's notion of an interactive past. It investigates existing interaction with 'heritage' in their own locale, whilst talking in the context of local meanings and the evocation of nation and Europe. It also discusses people's visual expectations and representations of sites and monuments in the landscape in different contexts In particular it explores the effects of context upon these visual representations. In the light of Lowenthal's work this study makes two important contributions:

a) It looks at the way in which different aspects of the same built environment become salient (are noticed or thought to be important). Specifically, the way in which changes to the frame of locality-reference (town, nation, Europe) make certain features of the seen environment 'loom large' (or conversely vanish from consideration).
b) The specific symbolic values associated with any particular site or monument may vary according to the nature of the locality (or place) with which it is identified.

These observations have obvious relevance to the social 'value of heritage' argument in that local democratic opinion and popular attitudes towards aspects of the built environment may be multi-faceted and hence cannot, for example, be fully understood if we only ask people for their attitudes towards parts of their town as their home.

Lowenthal raised the spectre of a stifling ''heritage' industry' that held back change but he also sought a new road for those influenced by the social value of 'heritage'; managers and policy makers, to take. This new approach could be enabling and enriching for people. Other commentators (Hewison 1987, Wright 1987) preferred to emphasise the problems of 'heritage' presented and perceived as a social 'given' which the public receive in an unquestioning and obedient manner. Hewison (1987) and Wright (1987) have reflected on the rise of a 'heritage' industry, since about 1975, as a cultural response to the collapse of British power, a response that led eventually to Thatcherism and a penchant for wrapping itself in the flag of nationalism. In his book *The Heritage Industry* (1987) Hewison declared that this appropriation of the past to give a particular representation for political ends and represented the end of history itself. Patrick Wright commented in *On Living in the Old Country* (1987) that 'heritage' as a national obsession with the Tory or Whig definition of the idea was 'part of the self-fulfilling culture of national decline'.

This turn against 'heritage' was termed 'heritage baiting' by Samuel in his book *Theatres of Memory*, (1994). He commented on the negative image given by 'heritage baiters' to conservation officers at local authorities or within English Heritage and he noted the accusation that 'heritage' managers and developers sought to turn the country into 'a gigantic museum, mummifying the present as well as the past' (Samuel 1994, 260). Samuel identified Hewison, Wright and Cannadine as the main 'heritage baiters'. He called Hewison's book (1987) the 'squib that ignited 'heritage baiting' and Wright's book (1987) a more substantial exercise in 'heritage baiting' (Samuel 1994). Lastly Samuel identified historian Cannadine as a 'heritage baiter' quoting his words on BBC Radio 3 on 5th January 1993 when he talked about 'this heritage junk' that 'represents a bunker mentality imprisoning the county in a time warp'. Cannadine (1989) identified national interest in 'heritage' with periods of depression, the 1890s the 1930s and the 1970s.

'Heritage baiting' was by no means a wholly academic practice. Samuel identified the activity carrying on in the 'quality media'. Neal Ascherson writing in the Observer in November 1987 laid the expansion of the 'heritage industry' squarely at the door of the 'right wing' in politics resulting in a 'vulgar English nationalism'. Ascherson drew on the Wigan Pier Heritage Centre to illustrate his point showing how montages and actors replaced the reality of mills and mines. The final outcome said Ascherson was that Britain became a museum itself (Ascherson 1987a, 1987b). This complaint against the 'theme-parking' of England was summed up by Julian Barnes' satirical novel *England, England* (1998) in which a wealthy entrepreneur buys up the most easily recognisable and popular 'heritage' in England and moves it all to the Isle of Wight.

Samuel noted Ascherson's emphasis on English Nationalism, whilst similar developments were happening in Scotland (Samuel 1994 262). It is an interesting point that current political attitudes carry on the radical theme to reject 'heritage' in England as part of the forces of conservatism whilst welcoming it in Scotland as a new and enabling force

Samuel was scathing of the attitude taken by the 'heritage baiters' described above. Ascherson, he says, was showing literary snobbery when he described 'living history' projects as 'vulgar arrogance'. Ascherson saw flashy 'heritage' presentations as a 'fraud' and 'deception' that build a wall between real history (objective and found in books) and our awareness of the past. Samuel also looked at 'heritage baiting' in the visual media. By the early 1990s he says 'exposures of 'heritage' were competing with one another for prime time on the airwaves' (Samuel 1994, 263). The programmes that he referred to where *Chronicle: Past for Sale?* on BBC2 and *Signals: Theme Park Britain* on Channel 4. Samuel also commented on a photographic exhibition at the Photographers Gallery that in 1993 became a book called *Flogging a Dead Horse.* This collection of images says Samuel was the 'coming-of-age' of anti-heritage. It was a potpourri of anti-heritage clichés 'a kind of anti-heritage trail first marked out by Robert Hewison'. Samuel paid particular attention to the way that the photographs were used to represent people visiting or appearing in 'heritage'

displays as grotesques as some sort of antidote to the packaging of history taking place around them (Samuel 1994, 263).

In his summing up of the 'heritage baiting' movement Samuel returned to two main problems. One was the way that an argument from those who considered themselves radical, sounded so very conservative. It sounded, says Samuel, like the right-wing critics of new history taught in schools in the late 60s and early 70s. 'Heritage', say the 'heritage baiters' 'takes the mind out of history, offering a Cook's tour or package-holiday view of the past as a substitute for the real thing' (Samuel 1994, 265). These concerns were reflected in the assessment of the value of 'heritage' made by 'heritage' managers like Lipe in 1984, he was concerned that the 'information value' or academic research was lost in the presentation of 'heritage' as an economic resource. The second problem that Samuel had with the 'heritage baiters' is basic snobbery. The charge that 'heritage' presentation is 'vulgar' speaks for itself. 'Heritage' presentation is often bracketed with theme parks or Disneyland; its association with entertainment is a cause of offence (Samuel 1994, 265-271).

Samuel countered the 'heritage baiters' by looking for the energy and strength in 'heritage'. He looked at the Mary Rose 'heritage' presentation in Portsmouth. This was a warship from Henry VIII's fleet that sank in the Solent, the ship was recovered in the 1970s and 80s by a combination of academics, divers, engineers and fundraisers. Here was Samuel's energy and dynamism including a wide variety of people professionals, volunteers and those watching events on the television.

Samuel also highlighted activity like family history that involves people in using historic documents for their own research agenda. Recent archaeological projects like the excavation of the Spittalfields church crypt bring forward individual histories at a community level rather than grand historical narratives. Samuel is particularly interested in the potential that archaeology brings to the energy and strength of 'heritage', his views seem to have been borne out by the recent increase in interest in archaeology on television. This style of 'heritage' is presented as a problem solving activity that has conflicting possibilities that invite people into the debate. The role of the expert has changed from a fount of all truths to a source of advice that may help in solving the problem. English Heritage and local authorities fund a number of regional services for metal detectorists identifying metal objects and recording their finds. Most metal detectorists work today as enthusiastic amateur archaeologists; the treasure hunters have long since lost patience and put their equipment in the attic. A few have taken to raiding archaeological excavations looking for an easy buck, but they are in the minority despite the continued advertising of metal detecting equipment for 'treasure hunting'.

Historical re-enactment societies (a regular sight at museum and 'heritage' presentations) also feature in Samuel's argument. Some are professional actors paid by the 'heritage' presentation where they appear, but

most are independent groups. These societies consist of people who interact with particular interpretations the past and interpret it for themselves, based in part on their own experimentation. They use academic research for their own ends, interacting with 'heritage'. Such groups are no longer a small set of enthusiasts, but a wide variety of groups specialising in historical periods ranging from the Iron Age to the recent past. Indeed one might include dressing in 1970s clothes at theme parties in this inclusive and energetic model of 'heritage'!

The social values of 'heritage' so persuasively argued by Lowenthal and Samuel reflect the influence of the social sciences on history, archaeology and 'heritage' studies. Shanks and Tilley's work Social Theory and Archaeology published in 1987 highlights this 'reflexive turn' and has challenged the nature of what is understood about the past from physical remains or 'heritage'. The change in approach suggests that material culture does not offer objective evidence nor are those who interpret the past objective observers, but that 'heritage' is also politicised and dependent on the outcome of a debate between several actors on Samuels Theatre Stage; developers, planners, local communities, enthusiasts and academics.

Prominent in the debate about the social value of 'heritage' has been the work of Barbara Bender who is particularly interested in the ways in which 'heritage' sites, such as Stonehenge, become contested landscapes (Bender 1992, 1998). Bender's work draws together the idea of landscape introduced in chapter one and the 'value' of heritage debate, the subject of this chapter. Bender acknowledges the 'banal' nature of symbols in the landscape like those described by Billig (1995) but she is far more interested in the moments when a landscape becomes contested between interest groups. She is interested in the social value of 'heritage' that allows the static (Eliade 1973) to be contested. Bender considers the ways in which traditional 'heritage' conservation has restricted access to Stonehenge, a particular monument in a particular landscape. This conservation she argues seeks to stabilise the 'value' of Stonehenge as a symbol of nationhood, and an enduring unchanging monument to the past (Bender 1998, 151). Bender describes a more complex set of social actors and values; 'a multitude of voices and landscapes' that through time 'mobilise different histories, differently empowered, fragmented, but explicable within the historical particularity of British social and economic relations, and a larger global economy' (Bender 1998, 131). The Stonehenge case study focused on the 'Free Festivals of the 1980s which challenged the banal flagging of authority and nationalism with which Stonehenge was vested. The conflict hit a peak at the 'Battle of the Bean field' (1985) when 'New Age' travellers were violently evicted from the vicinity. She highlights the potential vitality of the social 'value' of heritage and the complex multiplicity of meaning that imbues that value.

Bender adds to our understanding of the social value of 'heritage' for the purposes of this study. 'Heritage' sites or landscapes can be actively politicised or preserve the status quo through what Billig would describe as 'banal flagging' (1995). They can also however, be brought to the fore, dragged out from the 'banal' and

contested. Stonehenge has been the subject of study by Bender both as an archaeological landscape and as a contested landscape in contemporary society. She uses ethnographic and qualitative research methods to interview the contestants involved. This approach is particularly valuable in both illustrating and unpicking some of the complex issues that feature in the debate about the social 'value of heritage'.

Conclusion.

Samuel's arguments are compelling with regard to self-conscious 'heritage' activities that are often performances, visiting 'living' 'heritage' presentations or even taking part in research about the past. This study however, seeks to investigate people's understanding of 'heritage' sites or buildings in the landscape around them, rather than studying them whilst consciously taking part in 'heritage' activity like visiting a museum or re-enacting the English Civil War. To address the first two objectives requires that more every day interactions with the landscape and its features be considered. Here one might expect to find examples of the static nature of 'heritage' suggested by Eliade (1973) and Billig (1995) or examples of contested 'heritage' as suggested by Bender (1998). Bender's work is significant for the purposes of this study as she suggests a set of social values for 'heritage' that are dynamic and can challenge the static and 'banal' nationalist flagging that support the status quo.

It is the purpose of this thesis to investigate ways in which people understand the 'heritage' around them and to consider the implications of this for negotiation of identity. Both of these aims have a key role in the 'value of heritage' debate. The next chapter considers how a qualitative approach to social research was employed to investigate these questions.