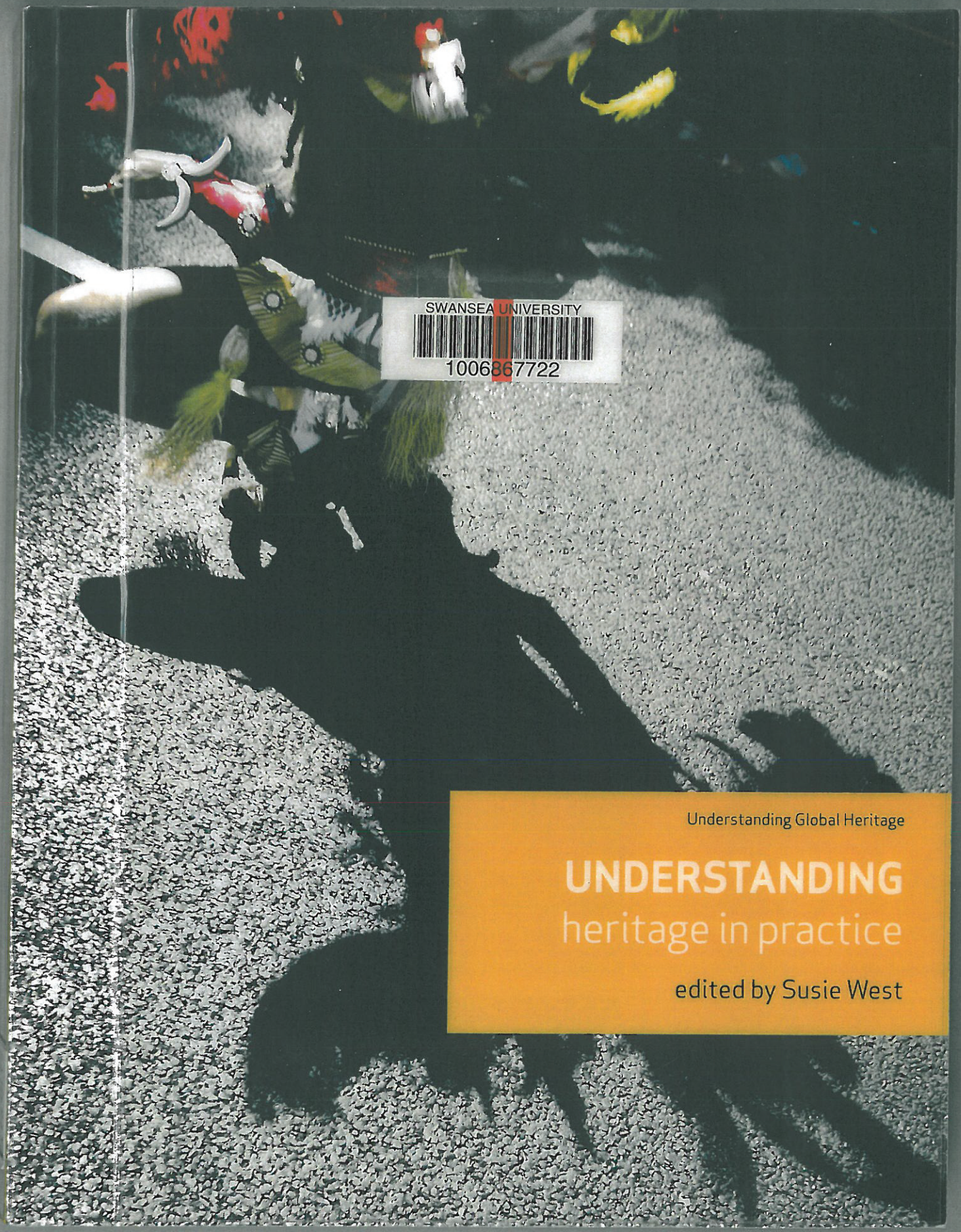


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Understanding Global Heritage

UNDERSTANDING
heritage in practice

edited by Susie West

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Chapter 7 Heritage as social action

Rodney Harrison

This chapter considers the ways in which 'unofficial' objects, places and practices of heritage might be used at the local level to build a sense of community and identity, and the ways in which these local practices might run counter to the ways in which heritage is employed by the state. The first case study looks at how a group of Indigenous Australians from western New South Wales use the physical remains of the former Dennawan Reserve in an active way to create connections between individuals in a community and their past. The second case study explores Jay Brown's Walking Tour of Brixton in south London as an intervention intended to subvert the traditional accounts of London's heritage given to tourists. The tour does this through emphasising the multicultural heritage of Brixton, a south London borough with a history of racial conflict and historically associated with the settlement of migrants from the Caribbean after the 1950s. This chapter complements the book's focus on official practices of heritage through a consideration of the unofficial processes of heritage which largely operate at the local level.

Introduction

This book has concerned itself almost entirely with institutional or official practices of heritage. Now this chapter considers some of the ways in which practices of heritage might be understood to function as a form of social action, both as interventions in official heritage practices and through local, community-building aspects of unofficial heritage practices. The term official heritage practices is used to mean the processes of heritage identification, management and conservation that are embedded in legislation and government. Unofficial objects, places and practices of heritage may not be recognised by governments or be listed on official heritage registers but they are considered to be significant or culturally meaningful by communities and collectives in the ways in which they constitute themselves and operate in the present, drawing on aspects of the past. The case studies that follow explore some of these unofficial objects, places and practices of heritage, as well as the ways in which they engage with and cut across official processes of heritage.

Heritage from below

The historian Raphael Samuel suggested that we must consider the *social* role of heritage. He argued that the popular appeal of heritage implied that heritage was not simply imposed on people from above but could be used for positive social change. He is famously associated with the term 'history from below', which refers to a form of social history that focuses on the lives of people such as women, children and the working classes who were previously thought of as less important and who were therefore neglected by historians. Samuel himself promoted the importance of non-institutional or community-based history. He thought that 'people's history' or 'history from below' had the potential not only to benefit local communities but also to influence the academic discipline of history. Writing about Britain and the increased interest in history and heritage that occurred during the 1980s, he argued that significant new ways of understanding the national past were emerging. He suggested these new approaches had the potential to challenge and revolutionise society's understanding of the past and the present, and to point to a more pluralistic future:

> history as a mass activity – or at any rate as a pastime – has possibly never had more followers than it does today, when the spectacle of the past excites the kind of attention which earlier epochs attached to the new. Conservation ... is one of the major aesthetic and social movements of our time. Family history societies fill the record offices with their searchers. We live ... in an expanding historical culture, in which the work of inquiry and retrieval is being progressively extended into all kinds of spheres that would have been thought unworthy in the past, that whole new orders of documentation are coming into play.
>
> (Samuel, 1994, p. 25)

The sociologist Stuart Hall extended some of these arguments to suggest that multiculturalism has the potential to revolutionise the ways in which countries perceive their heritage, and in doing so to effect social change in the present. Discussing the challenge of multiculturalism in relation to an understanding of the nature of heritage in the UK, he notes:

> the majority, mainstream versions of the Heritage should revise their own self-conceptions and rewrite the margins into the centre, the outside into the inside. This is not so much a matter of representing 'us' as of representing more adequately the degree to which 'their' history entails and has always implicated 'us', across the centuries, and vice versa. The African presence in Britain since the sixteenth century, the Asian since the seventeenth and the Chinese, Jewish and Irish in the nineteenth have long required to be made the subjects of their own dedicated heritage spaces as well as integrated into a much

> more 'global' version of 'our island story'. Across the great cities and ports, in the making of fortunes, in the construction of great houses and estates, across the lineages of families, across the plunder and display of the wealth of the world as an adjunct to the imperial enterprise, across the hidden histories of statued heroes, in the secrecy of private diaries, even at the centre of the great master-narratives of 'Englishness' like the Two World Wars, falls the unscripted shadow of the forgotten 'Other'.
>
> (Hall, [1999] 2008, p. 225)

We will return to consider the implications of **diasporas** for heritage in more detail later in the chapter. For the time being it is important to think about what Hall is suggesting here in terms of excavating new narratives about the past. There are hidden, neglected aspects of history which relate to the long tradition of interactions between cultural groups that lie buried in the memories and mementoes of ordinary communities. Heritage, through its focus on the relationship between humans and material things from the past in the present, can reveal and celebrate these hidden narratives. Hall continues:

> The first task, then, is re-defining the nation, re-imagining 'Britishness' or 'Englishness' itself in a more profoundly inclusive manner. The Brits owe this, not to only us, but to themselves: for to prepare their own people for success in a global and decentred world by continuing to misrepresent Britain as a closed, embattled, self-sufficient, defensive, 'tight little island' would be fatally to disable them.
>
> (Hall, [1999] 2008, p. 225)

These inclusive representations of the present that Hall calls for could be achieved, in part, by emphasising certain aspects of tangible and intangible heritage. But we should not see these comments as specific to the UK. In writing this, Hall points to the significant potential for heritage to change the way in which nations view themselves and their relationships with their minorities and the rest of the world. The idea of transforming heritage 'from below' is a powerful example of the social role that heritage can play in society.

Making a sense of place

A more recent articulation of the social role of heritage and the part it plays in individual and collective identity owes its roots to the work of political scientist Benedict Anderson ([1983] 2006) and anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996, [2001] 2008). Their ideas, in so far as they relate to heritage, are perhaps best summarised by archaeologist Denis Byrne (2008). Byrne

suggests we should think of heritage as a form of social and cultural *action*. Most anthropologists now agree that cultures are not simply an accumulation of things and people but are better understood in terms of a series of processes by which new and old practices are adapted and adopted within a cultural system. These processes can be thought of as forms of 'work' which help to produce culture. In Chapter 1 you saw how UNESCO recognises the social practices that help to create distinctive communities as intangible heritage or living heritage. Intangible heritage consists of cultural practices such as language, performing arts, rituals, crafts and knowledge of the natural world which help individuals to build relationships with their communities and with the world in which they live.

Drawing on the work of Appadurai (1996, [2001] 2008), Byrne discusses the ways in which communities use both intangible heritage practices and the social practices relating to tangible forms of heritage as a part of the 'work' that maintains their connection to particular places and to each other. A community's campaign to conserve a building, for example, requires the community to form together as a collective, to acknowledge certain shared values, and to emphasise their connections both with each other and with a particular place. Appadurai calls this work the 'production of locality'. For Appadurai, **locality** is a relational rather than a spatial concept – 'the local' is not so much the place where you live but a space to which you feel connected and through which you feel connected to others. Appadurai's radical contention is that the local is not inherent, that societies must do cultural work to create it and make it real. We establish a sense of belonging to a community and to a place through cultural practices that create this sense of locality. Humans use heritage to produce the local by rooting particular practices – which they use to help link them to a particular community and/or to a particular place – in the past. The linking of these places to the past gives them greater legitimacy in the present. In the same way that we come to associate the landmark events of our individual lifetimes –the births, deaths and marriages – with particular places where they took place, at a group level, community-validated events gain their significance from an association with particular places and from a shared understanding that is rehearsed as part of the **collective memory** of a community.

An example of this form of cultural work undertaken by communities to produce the social relations inherent in a locality (or place) is festivals. During festivals people affirm their relationships with each other through a series of activities, or rituals, that celebrate particular historic events and their relationship to a particular place. An example is the Notting Hill Carnival which was established in 1959 in the west London suburb of Notting Hill in the wake of a series of race riots (Figure 7.1). It was initiated as a way for the British African Caribbean community to assert a sense of pride and kinship, as well as to promote unity with white Londoners. This annual festival, which is held over



Figure 7.1 Flamboyant costumes at the Notting Hill Carnival, 2006. Photographed by John Sturrock. Photo: © John Sturrock/Alamy.

a long weekend in the summer and involves two days of parades, music, dancing and food, is one of the largest outside Brazil. It does significant social 'work' in promoting racial harmony. It asserts a sense of community for British African Caribbeans through an emphasis on shared black Caribbean cultural experiences – in particular dance, music and cuisine. The Notting Hill Carnival is integrally linked both to the specific histories of British African Caribbeans in Notting Hill itself and to their heritage in the Caribbean.

The Notting Hill Carnival is an invention of heritage designed to deal with a particular cultural problem – racial tension between British African Caribbean people and white indigenes – and draws on older traditions of festivals and carnival from Britain and the Caribbean. Within the British tradition, carnival was historically rooted in seasonal celebrations that involved the temporary inversion of social order. In the Caribbean, carnival also had its roots in the upending of social order, and its symbolism evoked the escape of African slaves once a year to play music, dance and dress in flamboyant costumes. Bringing these two traditions together in a way that emphasised some of the positive aspects of cultural diversity in Britain in terms of music, dance and

cuisine was an ingenious way of attempting to bring together a community that was divided. The Notting Hill Carnival and further examples of the intangible practices of festivals are also discussed in Chapter 8.

These intangible heritage practices such as carnival, which bring people together and help to produce 'the local', can be considered as ways in which individuals and communities are engaged with producing culture. This active engagement in the production of culture is important as it allows the individual to build up cultural capital. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (1986; see Robbins, 1991) describes the skills and knowledge that people accumulate within the course of their lives and how these skills can be employed culturally in a way that resembles the use of economic capital. Cultural capital might be understood in a similar way to prestige or 'know-how': the ability to 'get along' and acquire more influence and status. Being able to connect oneself to the past, and to the collective past of others via the recollection or recreation of specific memories and histories, is a form of cultural capital that relates to heritage. Heritage is not always something imposed from above but can be something that people create and use actively to maintain the connections between themselves and other places and things. This model of heritage as a form of social action accommodates the intangible aspects of heritage such as song, language and tradition, those forms of heritage that we might think of as heritage *practices*.

The production of the local becomes even more marked when we consider the example of the many groups of people in the contemporary world, linked by common ethnic or historical relationships, who have experienced forced or voluntary movement from their place of origin. This experience, referred to as being in *diaspora*, creates a very real need for communities to develop practices of heritage with which to bind themselves both to their homeland and to the new places in which they settle. In diasporic communities the tangible and intangible aspects of the past have a particularly strong appeal in helping to establish a sense of connection between dispersed communities in the present. The connection between the local and the global emerges as important here, as the experience of the local is increasingly influenced by developments at the global level. For migrant, dislocated or diasporic communities, heritage provides a powerful language of place and community around which individuals and groups can mobilise a series of technologies for producing 'the local', even if that locality is not based in real space but exists only via an email list or a virtual discussion group.

If heritage can be a form of cultural capital and a way of connecting people with each other and with the environment that surrounds them, the promotion of heritage or involvement in heritage can be considered to be a form of social action. By drawing on the past and creating a new significance for its traces and memories, people can transform and refigure the ways in which their

societies operate. This is the sort of agenda that Stuart Hall has envisaged for heritage, as discussed earlier in the chapter.

What is a community?

In the first part of this chapter the word 'community' is used rather freely. It is worth pausing to think in a bit more detail about what a community is. Although we might feel we know inherently what the word means, it has a specific meaning within the fields of anthropology and sociology that informs our understanding of this aspect of heritage studies.

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines a community as 'a group of people living together in one place', 'a place considered together with its inhabitants' and 'the condition of having certain attitudes and interests in common'. Anthropologists tend to define communities as much by what they *are not* as by what they *are*. Many anthropologists would draw attention to the way in which community is defined in contrast with an 'other'. For example, Gupta and Ferguson (1997, p. 13) note that 'Community is never simply the recognition of cultural similarity or social contiguity but a categorical identity that is premised on various forms of exclusion and construction of otherness'. There are all sorts of different ways in which community may be developed, whether primarily with reference to those things that are held in common by its members or, in contrast, in terms of those things that define one group in opposition to its outsiders. Shared participation can be used to constitute a sense of community ('us') in the same way that notions of difference can be used to construct a collective sense of otherness ('them').

Benedict Anderson (1983) developed the concept of the 'imagined community' to attempt to account for the power and spread of nationalism in the West at the same time that the links between community and locality were becoming increasingly broken. For example, it is now common to hear the term 'online community' used to describe an interest group that holds in common various ideals and goals but communicates using the internet and is geographically dispersed. Anthony P. Cohen (1985) and Arjun Appadurai (1996) have argued that the dissolution of the spatial boundaries of a localised community in the modern world has led to the increased importance of symbolic and imagined forms of community. Recent work on community has sought to explore the alternative forms of community that have arisen in response to the separation of community and locality. Some of these forms of community are best thought of as imagined, such as online communities where there is no physical contact between members. Other forms which manifest themselves through a combination of long-distance and face-to-face social relationships that may or may not be centred on a particular place are increasingly developing in response to the new circumstances of modern life.

As discussed earlier, it is now possible to think about diasporic communities who have a relationship to a homeland and its culture without having ever visited it. Drawing on shared experience, interest, histories and common experiences, these new articulations of community 'arise ... out of an interaction between the imagination of solidarity and its realization through social relations' (Amit, 2002, p. 18).

While the term 'community' has a warm and fuzzy feel, we should think critically about what community means as a way of identifying with one group *in opposition to* another. Many issues of conflict arise within multicultural or plural societies around the issue of heritage. In the same way that heritage can be used as a way of including particular people within an imagined or created community, it can simultaneously be used to exclude others (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge, 2007). Such issues are complicated in heritage because of heritage's economic imperative and the fundamentally commercial nature of heritage in the modern world (discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6). We should be suspicious of forms of heritage that appear explicitly to exclude particular people or groups within society; at the same time we must remain mindful of the need for communities to express and emphasise those cultural and social aspects of a shared past which allow them to maintain connections in the present.

We should also see the emphasis on cultural diversity within multicultural societies as a fundamentally important function of heritage in plural societies (Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge, 2007; see further discussion in Harrison, 2010). As Appadurai (2006) points out, it is the fear of minorities that has led to most contemporary widespread outbreaks of violence and terror by majorities; and such outbreaks have tended to occur where minorities are smallest, not in instances where they might appear to be powerful or a threat. Where heritage can be employed to normalise cultural diversity and establish the place of minority cultural groups within society, it has the potential to have a powerful influence on civil harmony. Clearly there is a potential discord here between an emphasis at the level of the state on the heritage of cultural majorities and the need to include cultural minorities within the state's official heritage practices. In both of the case studies that follow, the forms of heritage as social action are established at a grassroots level and operate in direct opposition to state-led heritage management practices.

The two case studies explore some of the ways in which unofficial practices of heritage might be considered to be forms of social action. The first case study looks at the ways in which a group of indigenous people from Australia are engaged actively in producing a connection between themselves and their past, developing their connections to a place from which they have been historically excluded but which they claim as an intimate aspect of their past. In doing so, they emphasise the links between themselves and their ancestors,

as well as with this particular place. Their activities at the site draw creatively on both aspects of contemporary heritage and national park management, as well as on traditional notions of the land and its cultural power.

Case study: 'lost places', heritage and community building

Dennawan is a former Aboriginal reserve near Weilmoringle, in western New South Wales, south-eastern Australia, that acted as a labour pool for surrounding pastoral (sheep-ranching) stations over the period *c.*1860–1941. These pastoral stations are now managed by the New South Wales (NSW) National Parks and Wildlife Service as part of Culgoa National Park. My interest in Dennawan was piqued by two of my colleagues, Tony English and Sharon Veale, who undertook a project in Culgoa National Park shortly after its gazettal on a pilot cultural heritage assessment for new park acquisitions. Their work identified Dennawan as one of the most important places to the local Muruwari community. They explained how they had been taken to the site and shown around by some of the people who remembered living there as children, and the dynamic relationship that former residents, their relatives and other members of the local community had formed with the material remains on the site. This presented an opportunity to spend a period of time studying in detail the relationship between the archaeology of this former reserve site and people's attachments to it as one of a series of places from which a particular group of Indigenous Australians had been removed in the recent past. (This account is an edited version of Harrison (2003). A more detailed account of the former Dennawan mission can be found in Harrison (2004).)

Dennawan is a place to which many older Muruwari people have a close spiritual and emotional attachment, remembering their experience there as a time when 'traditional knowledge and cultural life was sustained and integrated with participation in the local pastoral economy and the development of distinct skills, experiences, and interactions' (Veale, 1997, p. 102). Betty Waites, a Muruwari woman who lived at Dennawan during the 1930s and who was interviewed in the mid-1990s by historian Sharon Veale, recalled that

> There were a lot of children at Dennawan. There was the West family, and they had children, they had a girl. The Cubby's, I played with them and Mrs Grimes and there was a woman called Granny Suzie, Donald Byno's sister, we used to call her, this is the nickname now, Granny Doonie. But she had girls and we used to play together. We had this big rounders ground and we all had to play there, at the rounders ground. It was all families living together, but you know they used to share what they got. If one went out and got the wild meat, the others they'd share.



Figure 7.2 The remains of 'Granny Bailey's house' on the former Dennawan Reserve, with (from left to right) Muruwari project collaborators Josey Byno, Arthur Hooper, Dorothy Kelly and Vera Nixon, 2002. Photographed by Rodney Harrison. Photo: © Rodney Harrison.

Essie Coffie, another Muruwari woman who lived at Dennawan, described the experience of returning to Dennawan in the 1990s, when visiting the site with relatives, as 'coming home'. These intensely emotional responses to returning to the site of the former Aboriginal reserve help describe the significant role that Dennawan plays as a heritage site for this local community. This case study explores some of the ways in which a younger generation of Muruwari people with no direct living experience of the site are using its remains to develop connections with each other, and to reconnect themselves with a place from which they were historically excluded (Figure 7.2).

Aboriginal reserves and the heritage of diaspora

Most Australian schoolchildren would be able to tell you that Australia was 'discovered' by the Englishman Captain Cook and settled by white invaders in 1788 at the small settlement of Port Jackson, later to become the metropolis of Sydney. Australian government policies have subsequently had a profound

impact on both indigenous people and colonial relations in Australia. From the middle of the nineteenth century, Christian missions, state and later federal governments played a major role in the relocation and segregation of Indigenous Australians both from members of their own language groups and from the white population. Indigenous Australians were subject to controls and legislation that isolated them and controlled their lives in a variety of ways including their ability to be involved in the traditional social and religious lives of their ancestors, which had centred on the relationship between people and the land. Under later policies, individuals were intended to be assimilated into white society through processes of removal. The widespread nature of these removals, which occurred over the period 1930–70, stimulated a government report (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997) and the coining of the term 'stolen generations' to describe the children who were removed from their families to be placed in the care of non-indigenous Australians.

Although it has much deeper roots, the modern **Land Rights** movement emerged as a force during the 1970s. Drawing on the rhetoric of 'Black Power', it drew attention to the failure of assimilation in Australia while asserting the rights of indigenous people to exist as a distinct cultural group within settler society. The Native Title Act, which was passed by the Australian federal government in 1993, provides for the determination of cases in which Indigenous Australians might be found to hold **native title**, defined as a series of common law rights (such as the right to occupy, hunt, fish and forage, as well as to fulfil ceremonial obligations) over particular parts of the landscape. Although widely heralded at the time as an important gesture of land justice for Indigenous Australians, in practice many long and drawn-out legal battles have ensued, and for the majority the Act has had little obvious benefit in terms of rights over land due to the fact that many other land uses are considered to extinguish native title. In cases where conflicts exist between indigenous customary law and non-indigenous law, native title is often found to be extinguished. In 2008, in recognition of the mistreatment of the stolen generations of Australia, the Australian federal government issued a formal apology for the forced removals of Indigenous Australians from their families and their country in the past.

Many of the Indigenous Australians who live in the more densely settled south-eastern states of Australia experienced profound dislocation and forced removal from their traditional country. In a society where all connections between people were mediated by way of strict laws based on a relationship with a particular landscape, even small restrictions on movement to important sacred sites would have had a major effect on indigenous communities and their relationships with one another. Because many Indigenous Australians experienced a forced removal from their traditional lands and families, they

feel they are in a certain sense in diaspora in their own country. The term 'diaspora' is most often associated with the Jewish and Chinese diasporas. My object here is to emphasise the comparative potential of a study of the ways in which the experience of dislocation from a homeland encourages a particular way of relating to associated heritage sites. However, it is important to point out that where the Jewish and Chinese diasporas describe the movement of very large numbers of people across the globe, the usage I employ in this study describes a much more local, although certainly no less significant, spatial shift. The term 'diaspora' is used here to cover a range of different processes that dislocated Indigenous Australians from their country, from official 'concentration' policies and forced removals to less obvious but equally important processes of alienation of land which restricted people's access to parts of the landscape. The important point of similarity resides in the way in which Indigenous Australians understand their 'country' and collective identity in quite specific geographic terms: removal from one's traditional country, even if it is simply to a reserve in an adjacent area, encourages a relationship with the homeland that renders the removal similar to the large-scale geographic movement of ethnic groups more often associated with the term.

Dennawan

Dennawan's history goes back to the early 1880s, when a small white settlement began to take shape at Bourbah (as Dennawan was then known), centred on a local pub and post office located at the convergence of two travelling stock routes. Of course, local Muruwari people had occupied this area for thousands of years prior to this first white settlement, but it is only from this period that we see the first historical records associated with the settlement at Bourbah. Aboriginal people had been camping on local pastoral stations before this time, including on nearby Tatala, where in 1901 a census collector recorded twenty (adult) Muruwari people camped.

With the growth of other pastoral stations in the area and the declaration of a mail route along the Culgoa River, the hotel at Bourbah became the Diemunga (postal) receiving office in 1889. A fire at the turn of the century destroyed the hotel, and a new hotel was built approximately 2 km to the south, near an area where Muruwari people were camped alongside a small lagoon. At this time Diemunga receiving office came to be known as Dennawan post office. This name was probably based on the Murawari word for emu, *dinawan*.

In 1912 about twenty Muruwari people were recorded as remaining camped at Tatala on part of the travelling stock route, not far from the Bourbah Hotel. It was argued that if an area was reserved exclusively for Aboriginal people and fenced, the constable could 'compel them to camp on it and prevent

objectionable people trespassing on the reserve'. The reserve at Dennawan was gazetted shortly after this, and soon grew to the size of a village, with as many as 100 people at a time camping there. The settlement was serviced by the hotel and Dennawan post office and store, but was abandoned with the closure of these services in the early 1940s. Today Dennawan is a ghost town. It consists of little more than the occasional scatter of tin cans, broken glass and house frames distributed over several longitudinal sand dunes around a water tank and soak. In its heyday it was a bustling village, home to a community of hundreds of Indigenous Australians who worked on surrounding pastoral properties, but today only scattered fragments pay testament to the settlement that once existed there.

Why did people leave?

One of the important aspects of the history of Dennawan concerns the reasons for its abandonment. In the context of a longing to return to Dennawan, people cite many different reasons for an (unofficially) forced abandonment. In 1936 increased powers given to the state government's Aborigines Protection Board through amendments to the Aboriginal Protection Act 1909 had considerable impact on Indigenous Australian communities in the north-west of New South Wales. In 1938, as part of a 'concentration' strategy the board proposed to relocate Muruwari people from Dennawan to Brewarrina Mission, approximately 150 km to the south. Ration support, which the reserve had traditionally received from the Aborigines Protection Board, became uncertain and sporadic. A national economic depression and a decline in the availability of local pastoral work due to widespread withdrawals of land from larger leaseholders (to be made available as additional areas for smaller leaseholders) also contributed to this move. The closure of the post office and store at Dennawan meant an effective closure of all services to the remote settlement. This, coupled with what anthropologist Howard Creamer recorded as an extremely bad drought occurring *c.*1940–1, probably forced Muruwari people into larger nearby centres such as Goodooga, Brewarrina and Weilmoringle. Despite their earlier resistance to the forced removal that had been attempted just two years before, Muruwari people were finally faced with the necessity of abandoning the settlement on the reserve.

Returning to nothing: Dennawan becomes a heritage site

The formal, almost ritual ways in which Muruwari people move about and interact with the remains of the former settlement when they visit it is an integral part of the cultural and social significance of Dennawan. Indeed, almost as soon as the settlement was abandoned people began returning to the ruins, taking other people with them to tell them about the history and their memories of the place. The post office was dismantled soon after its closure and re-used as

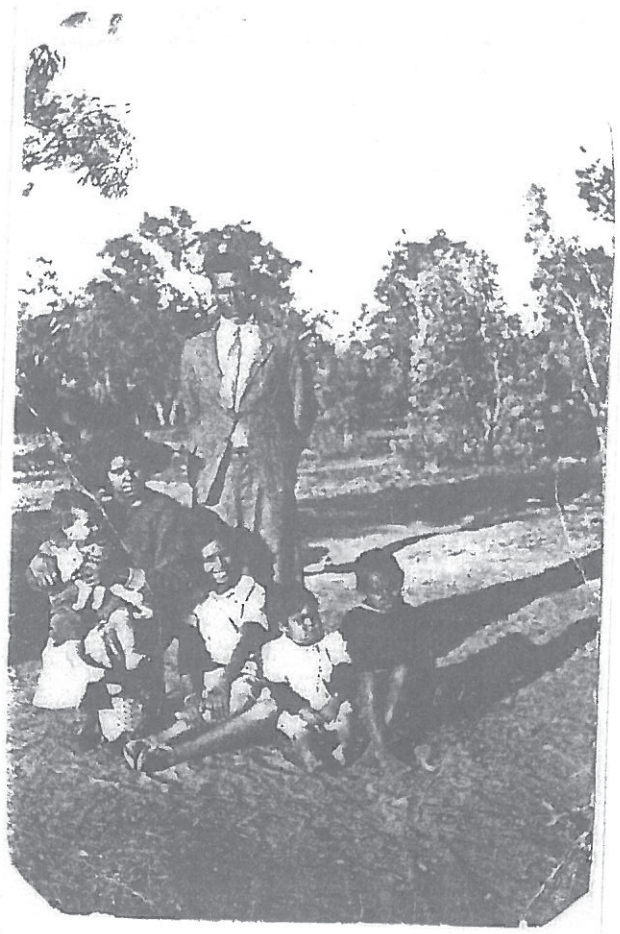


Figure 7.3 The Ferguson family at Dennawan in 1936. Standing at rear, Duncan, seated is his wife Blanche holding baby Cheeko, with children Gloria, June and Fred, 1936. Unknown photographer. Photo: reproduced with kind permission of June Barker.

building material on a nearby pastoral station. In 1943 the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM) 'native worker' Duncan Ferguson drove past Dennawan and noted his sadness to see all the abandoned homes falling into decay (Figure 7.3). In 1953 the mission house was removed. In the late 1950s Duncan Ferguson and his wife Blanche had their photos taken near the remains of their first house, built in 1936, its flattened kerosene tin walls and rough timber

bush pole frames already fallen into ruin. I recorded interviews with a number of people who were taken to Dennawan by people who had lived there, or by descendants of those who had lived there, and mapped and recorded the way in which they were shown the site during these returns (Figure 7.4).

Today Dennawan is an important and frequent site of pilgrimage. The frequency of visits back to Dennawan increased dramatically from the time that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service began working in Culgoa National Park in 1996. In the light of a widespread feeling of loss, often articulated by Muruwari people as a loss of culture associated with the loss of language skills and the death of knowledgeable elders, Dennawan has become a heritage site that is subject to increased visitation and scrutiny. The ruin of the site and the decay of the buildings are together seen as a metaphor for perceived cultural decline, but interrogation of what is left behind is considered to be of great importance as a way of salvaging information and connections with the past. People often express the sentiment that if they could only arrest the decay of the site, they might be able to regain control of their cultural lives. Nostalgia for the way of life at Dennawan is articulated as a desire to regain control of cultural and spiritual life in the context of the increased development of and reliance on manufactured goods and modern material cultures. The decay of the settlement is considered to be symbolic of the erosion of traditional indigenous economic skills and technologies.



Figure 7.4 Archaeological remains at Dennawan, including a flattened kerosene tin, enamelled milk jug and tin can, 2002. Photographed by Rodney Harrison. Photo: © Rodney Harrison.

Understanding the significance of Dennawan to Muruwari people

For descendants of the Muruwari people who used to live on the Dennawan Reserve, the dead often visit the living in dreams. Contemporary Muruwari people have a number of beliefs about relics and their relationship with ancestors that have contributed to the development of Dennawan as a place of pilgrimage. Physical contact of the body or skin with artefacts is considered a way of making a connection with the ancestral past. During visits to archaeological sites Muruwari people like to rub artefacts such as flaked stone against their skin. Vera Nixon explained in an interview in 2001,

> When you're rubbing the stones over your skin you can get the feel of – you sort of get the feeling of the spirits coming into your skin somehow or another. I dunno, it's a strange feeling, but it's a good feeling.

The belief that ancestors' spirits are associated with objects they used during their lifetimes structures people's interactions with the remains of the former settlement. A trip to Dennawan, then, is much more than just an opportunity to learn about the past; it is an opportunity to make direct and intimate contact with it. Josie Byno said

> When we go and visit the place and see the artefacts that they used to use and the fire there, the oven, we get very emotional. Not only that, there is a special feeling in the air that surrounds us. We can feel that spiritual feeling wherever we go, and we know that they are with us.

While it is important for people to be able to touch and interact with the artefacts on site, it is considered dangerous to remove them. People who do this are tormented with bad dreams or sickness. In contrast, just being at the site is considered to make Muruwari people feel physically healthy. Arthur Hooper, at the time in his seventies, noted

> Ever since I've been coming out here, doing a little bit of work for people, I've been feeling really great. I'm really happy to see the old place again. And my feelings – inside me it's a very glad feeling, I have no worries about anything else. No aches and pains, I just walk around the place for hours and hours without getting tired.

The ability of the place to effect change on the body of Muruwari people is an important facet of the spirituality and significance of the former Dennawan Reserve. These bodily influences are intimately tied to various spiritual associations with the former settlement, in particular the slippage between post-1930 associations with Aborigines Inland Mission Christian missionaries who lived on the site and older, deeper associations with *wiyrigan* (medicine

men) and *miraaku* and *miraga* (spirits) who were traditionally held to inhabit the area. This slippage creates a certain denseness of shared experience that is felt by Muruwari people in the present when visiting the archaeological site, which they have increasingly done on a regular basis, especially over the past ten to twenty years.

During field trips with National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, certain unexplained incidents that have occurred at Dennawan have been considered to be consistent with the presence of spirits or ghosts at the site. A man who accidentally knocked over one of the standing frame posts of one of the buildings at Dennawan feared that he would be tormented with lack of sleep. The relics and ruins at Dennawan act as the focal points for interactions between the present and the past as well as between the living and spirit worlds.

Objects and ruins on the site are personified. They act as focal points for creatively imagining the actions of ancestors. The following observation made by Dorothy Kelly while we were at Dennawan illustrates this important part of Muruwari people's experience of this place.

> Mum brought us out here to this special spot; there are a few remains still standing. Lots on the ground and lots of tins, kerosene tins that they made their houses with, and this is so special, very special. This is our Granny's house. In your mind, you can see Mumma walking around, playing around, and Grandmother here in the family. Everyone was one big family, and I think she played a lot with Musso, our cousin Arthur Hooper, and even the swing ... he made her a swing over here, and it means so much ... but in our mind, you can see it all, right in front of you, everything. The house standing, Mum as she is, you can see our grandparents. Although we didn't see them, in our mind it's so clear.

The archaeology of the former Dennawan Reserve has much information to contribute regarding the relatively hidden histories of Indigenous Australian pastoral labour camps in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the ruins of the former reserve are much more than a source of information to local Muruwari people; they represent the focus for a programme of shared, collective memorialisation of the past. The artefacts that remain on the former reserve are invested with intense emotional and spiritual power. They form the conduit for controlled interactions between the spirit and human worlds, and between past and present. Instead of ceasing to exist after its abandonment, Dennawan continues to hold power and fascination for Muruwari people as a place where local traces and memories persist, challenging and actively assisting in the creation of the past and the present. It does this as much through the mutual involvement of people and objects, which both evoke and create collective memories, as

through their absence or decay. For Muruwari people, Dennawan is past and future. Each trip to Dennawan represents an opportunity to excavate a place of buried memory.

Heritage and community building at Dennawan

Contemporary historical geographers have shown us the ways in which aspects of performance help to create a space. By moving in and around particular spaces in particular ways, human action creates a 'place' from a 'space'. The formal route by which people move around the former settlement is one of the important ways in which Muruwari people 'create' Dennawan as a heritage site. The routes on this journey – composed of the places and sites shown by former residents to other Muruwari people – have been invested with special significance and creative power, and are considered to be authentic links to a distant ancestral past. These places have the power to speak to contemporary Muruwari people in very intimate and personal ways. They are the places that document the past in the way those ancestors wished to have it represented, rather than in the way a third party might represent it. Because of this it forms a very genuine link to the past, an authentic memorial with which creatively to construct new collective memory.

This is evident in discussions with the Byno sisters about where their mother used to take them when she came out to the settlement. These places, in combination with the places shown to them by their cousin Arthur Hooper, are now shown to their children. This process documents the active creation of a collective memorialisation of the past at Dennawan:

ARTHUR HOOPER: She [Tottie Byno, the sisters' mother] used to bring you out when you were small eh?

VERA NIXON: Yeah, well, she used to bring us out here when she was alive, and she used to tell us where people used to live but we can't remember much ... where they used to live now.

DOROTHY KELLY: A special place she used to take us was the corroboree ground, and where she used ... where her mum was living, where she used to live, you know, the main places.

Josie Byno continues:

> I think Dennawan is very special to us and it's got significant value ... a spiritual value, and we love coming back up here because our mum brought us up here when she was alive and she showed us around here. A lot of people don't do that because they don't like memories ... but my mum, she liked memories and she would get us up here as often as she could and we would spend a whole day here. And she

> was very emotional about the place, and now coming back it's just repeated – we get very emotional about it too. So it's really of value to us.
>
> (Interviews, 18 November 2001)

With time, the physical traces of the site become more important as a source for the creation of collective memory, as people's lived memories of the place become less clear. Access to the site and an ability to people it with anecdote and incident become a form of cultural capital, and the primary way of re-creating memory in the abandoned space. Each new return to the site provides opportunities for discovery as well as for re-populating the place with newly created memories. On many trips out to the place with local Aboriginal people frequent reference was made to occurrences during previous trips, both in terms of the significance of individual events, and in order to orient and map the absent spaces of the site as a peopled place.

The humble archaeological remains at Dennawan belie the intensity of local people's emotional attachments to the site and its relics. Dorothy Kelly reflected on this when she said

> Well Rodney, sometimes it's very hard to describe the feelings within, deep within the heart, and sometimes there's no words to describe it. Even for an old tin, or any object that's just lying on Dennawan itself, it means so much, and words can't describe the feelings inside me.

The act of returning to Dennawan could be thought of as a sort of pilgrimage and a form of performance. By frequently returning to the heritage site with members of the community, and taking part in an unofficial heritage process of collective imagination and memorialisation, Dennawan has become a part of the social glue that holds the local Muruwari community together. The connection between heritage and performance is explored in more detail in Chapter 8.

Dennawan as an 'official' heritage site

Dennawan was first drawn to the attention of the NSW state government in 1977, at which time local Muruwari people commented on the need to stabilise and conserve the fragile remains of the houses on the reserve, and to protect it as an archaeological site from the impact of sheep grazing. Although it was registered on the NSW Aboriginal Sites Register at this time, none of the recommendations for works on site to stabilise or conserve it were followed through. When Culgoa National Park was gazetted in 1996, these issues were once again raised by local indigenous people who were concerned about the deterioration of the site. When I was working there over the period 2000–3 discussions between local Muruwari people and park managers about how best to conserve Dennawan were ongoing. At the same time, the local

Muruwari native title representative body was also attempting to have Dennawan excised from the national park and purchased under the Aboriginal Lands Strategy. These continuing negotiations over the management of the site reflect the ways in which the unofficial heritage significance to the local Muruwari community is not reflected in the style of its management as an official heritage site.

Some people might see the ways in which Muruwari people have engaged creatively with their heritage at Dennawan as 'untraditional'. In the context of the Native Title Act in Australia, it behoves Indigenous Australians to demonstrate their continued and ongoing traditional association with the land under question, and as such an acknowledgement of dislocation or removal from a place can be problematic. However, it is wrong to suggest that this creative engagement with heritage is not related to more traditional relationships between Indigenous Australians and their landscapes. As anthropologist Anthony Redmond explains,

> Space and place have meaning and existence only in relation to the positioned, mobile, and intentional human body ... Far from being 'frozen over' or 'outside time', human experience continues to draw lifeblood from, add clarifying detail to, and animate the mythic structures of country. Human emotional investment makes the country ... grow.
>
> (Redmond, 2001, pp. 136–7)

Muruwari people's interactions with the physical traces of the past at Dennawan both reproduce and create anew relationships with country and the ancestral past. It is the dynamic between memory, landscapes, objects and the performative qualities of interactions with them that allows people actively to create a sense of community and locality in this 'abandoned' place. I hope that you have been able to comprehend the way that Muruwari people relate to the site as a sort of cultural 'work' and as an unofficial heritage practice that is centred on creating a sense of community and relationship with a landscape from which people have been historically excluded.

Reflecting on the case study

In the case study we can see that a process has developed whereby what was originally simply a village or pastoral labour camp has been memorialised by the process of the passage of time and the historical significance of the abandonment of the settlement to contemporary Muruwari people. The case study provides an example of the way in which a particular community who feel they have been physically and culturally excluded use heritage to build a sense of shared identity in the present. Perhaps more importantly, Dennawan

emerges as a symbol of restitution, a place where people can undertake cultural 'work' to connect themselves with each other and with a place they thought they had lost.

One of the interesting aspects of the case study is the way in which the material remains on the site become prompts for memory. Appadurai's ideas about the production of locality were discussed earlier in the chapter. Here we can see physical artefacts used quite literally as technologies to produce the local, and connections between the local and the community.

The case study also provides a poignant example of the sort of approach to 'heritage from below' in which Raphael Samuel was most interested. The perceptions of local people and their recollections based on oral accounts by their ancestors have been used not only to produce innovative new accounts of this particular place but also to interpret broader indigenous work histories and the heritage of the sheep-ranching industry in Australia (Harrison, 2004). The case study similarly highlights diaspora as a distinct problem of the contemporary world which uses of heritage may seek to address. The desire that migrant communities have for reconnecting themselves with their fellow diasporic and source communities across time and space is much broader than Australia, and links the heritage needs of people across the globe. Whatever the location and circumstances, these unofficial practices of heritage that we see developing at a local level require detailed investigation to uncover their connection with broader cultural and social issues such as the ones discussed in the case study.

It is not only the unofficial practices of heritage that could be thought of as doing social 'work' or having social agency. The next case study considers the ways in which individuals and communities can use official heritage practices to challenge, or intervene, in mainstream heritage systems, and in doing so change the ways people think about themselves and their heritage. Here the focus shifts from the Australian outback to the urban setting of Brixton in south London in the UK. The case study in Chapter 1 demonstrated how dominant discourses shape heritage in their own image. Heritage can become a form of social action when individuals and groups attempt to subvert this process and create counter-cultural heritages. As we saw in Chapter 2, these unofficial challenges to official heritage practices and the values and discourses that underpin them can be powerful, and have the potential to make official definitions of heritage more inclusive.

Earlier in this chapter Stuart Hall's comments about the ways in which multiculturalism is challenging what we perceive to be heritage were discussed. London is a city with a large proportion of African Caribbean migrants, but until recently there has been little recognition of associated objects, places and practices in mainstream heritage practice.

However, a series of individuals and communities are changing our view of the heritage of London through an emphasis on black heritage and tourism there. The next case study features an interview with one of these people, Jay Brown, about her walking tour of Brixton in south London, and the ways in which it is changing how people view London's past and, by extension, its present.

Case study: an African Caribbean heritage walking tour in Brixton, UK

The term African Caribbean is used to describe communities whose members share a West Indian background and whose ancestors were originally Indigenous Africans. Today, over 350,000 people of African Caribbean descent live in Greater London (this section draws on information from the website of the Museum of London, n.d.). This is approximately 7 per cent of the total population, making African Caribbean people and their descendants one of London's most numerous ethnic minority groups. While the bulk of the ancestors of these people emigrated to London after the Second World War, London has much earlier connections with the black Caribbean, when Africans from the region were brought to London as part of the slave trade from the late sixteenth until the early nineteenth centuries. African Caribbeans continued to come to London, but the introduction of the British Nationality Act 1948 brought about changes in response to the postwar skilled labour shortage by giving British citizenship to all people living in Commonwealth countries, along with rights of settlement and entry in Britain. Among the first to enter under this legislation was a group of 500 Jamaicans who arrived in London on the ship the *Empire Windrush* and who settled predominately in Brixton as well as in other areas of London (Figure 7.5). Their voyage is celebrated in the name of the square in central Brixton known as Windrush Square, which was renamed in 1998 as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the journey.

Active recruitment by the UK National Health Service and British Rail in the West Indian islands in the 1950s led to a wave of migration from the Caribbean, and another African Caribbean settlement, particularly popular with people from Barbados and Trinidad, was established in Notting Hill Gate in west London. This was to be the site of early racial unrest, and in 1958 riots occurred there as a result of serious attacks on West Indian residents by white youths. The annual Notting Hill Carnival (discussed earlier in this chapter) was hosted for the first time in the following year in response to these riots as a way for the African Caribbean community to assert a sense of pride and kinship, as well as to promote unity between British African Caribbeans and other Londoners.



Figure 7.5 Jamaican men aboard SS *Empire Windrush* at Tilbury Docks, 22 June 1948. Photographed by Eddie Worth. Photo: © Eddie Worth/AP/PA.

The 1981 Brixton riots

During the 1960s and 1970s Reggae music and Rastafarian culture became symbols around which London's West Indian community's newly emergent sense of identity and pride, which derived in part from the American civil rights movement, was centred. Yet at the same time that British African Caribbeans were developing a newfound political and cultural visibility, they were increasingly the target of both structural and casual racism in Britain. High levels of unemployment in black British communities and the much greater levels of imprisonment of African Caribbeans when compared to white Britons left some black Britons feeling that they were the victims of a racist campaign of government and police oppression. Comments made by the British leader of the Conservative Party Margaret Thatcher in a television interview in January 1978 reflected the uneasy race relations that had developed in Britain in the late 1970s and set the scene for a series of riots that broke out across Britain over the spring and summer of 1981. She noted:

> People are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture ... The British character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so much throughout the world, that if there is any fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in.
>
> (Thatcher Foundation, [1978] 2009)

These riots, later centred on Toxteth in Liverpool, are now considered to have been important in heralding a new self-confidence among black British communities and the development of inclusive multicultural policies by the British government. Brixton is famous in the context of this story for having been the first place where rioting occurred. During the riots in Brixton petrol bombs were used against police for the first time in Britain. These were turbulent and violent times that have an important place in the history of contemporary British race relations. The tensions that were developing in Brixton in the late 1970s were highlighted in the Clash song 'Guns of Brixton', released on the album *London Calling* in 1979. Written and sung by bassist Paul Simonon, who grew up in Brixton, the song reflects on the growing sense of unease in Brixton and the difficult relationships that had developed between the local community and the police.

In early April 1981 police had begun a plain clothes operation called Operation Swamp 81 (which took its name from Prime Minister Thatcher's speech), during which nearly 1000 people were stopped and searched in the south London borough of Lambeth over the course of six days (this account of the riots draws on Waddington, 1992). These searches – made under the controversial stop and search or 'sus' laws, which allowed police to stop and search anyone if an officer thought they were committing a crime – were a

source of resentment among the local black community who felt that police discriminated against them by focusing their operation on young, black men (Figure 7.6).

A series of events beginning on Friday 10 April moved tensions on to a new level. A group of people observed the police investigating the stabbing of a young black man and questioning a mini-cab driver accused of hiding drugs (he had in fact simply put away a wad of money for safekeeping). A crowd of 150 people gathered to accuse the police of having planted evidence on the driver and an altercation between a black youth and the police broke out. When the youth was put into the back of a police van, it was set upon by the crowd. The situation escalated and as more police gathered to disperse the crowd they stood their ground, arguing that there was a long history of police harassment in the area. The van was hit by missiles thrown from within the crowd, and was subsequently turned on its side and set alight. Violence escalated as the crowd set about damaging and looting property, and Molotov cocktails were thrown at police.

By Saturday, many buildings and cars had been damaged by the fires which had broken out in the Brixton town centre. The rioters retreated to the 'Frontline' on Railton Road, so named because it was the area away from the surveillance of police where it was possible to buy and sell drugs and escape the detection of authorities. A makeshift barricade was erected across Railton Road, while further looting occurred in shops and buildings. A stand-off ensued, after which rioters were eventually dispersed by police using fire hoses. Further isolated attacks were made on the police and businesses on Sunday and Monday, after which the rioting was assuaged. By the time the rioting had finished, 279 policemen and some 450 people overall had been injured, while 28 buildings had been damaged or destroyed by fire, 207 cars had been damaged or destroyed, 354 arrests had been made, and some 7300 officers had been called in to quell the riots.

One of the factors that made Brixton a flashpoint for rioting was the very stark cultural and economic mix of people resident in the area. Following the riots, an inquiry was conducted. The report, prepared by Lord Scarman (1981), highlighted the social and political deprivation of black Britons. It noted the extremely high levels of unemployment in Brixton, where 25 per cent of black people were unemployed at the time, with over 55 per cent of young black men under 19 unemployed. The report pointed to the sense of poor political representation as a factor that fed the riots, and the misplaced moral panic at muggings and street crime in Lambeth which had led to the development of Operation Swamp 81 in the first place. Most importantly, it challenged the practice of 'stop and search', which was dropped as a result of the inquiry.

Although Brixton was the scene of the first riot of 1981, further racially motivated riots broke out in a number of places across Britain in the following months. Today the riots are seen as having had positive outcomes: they

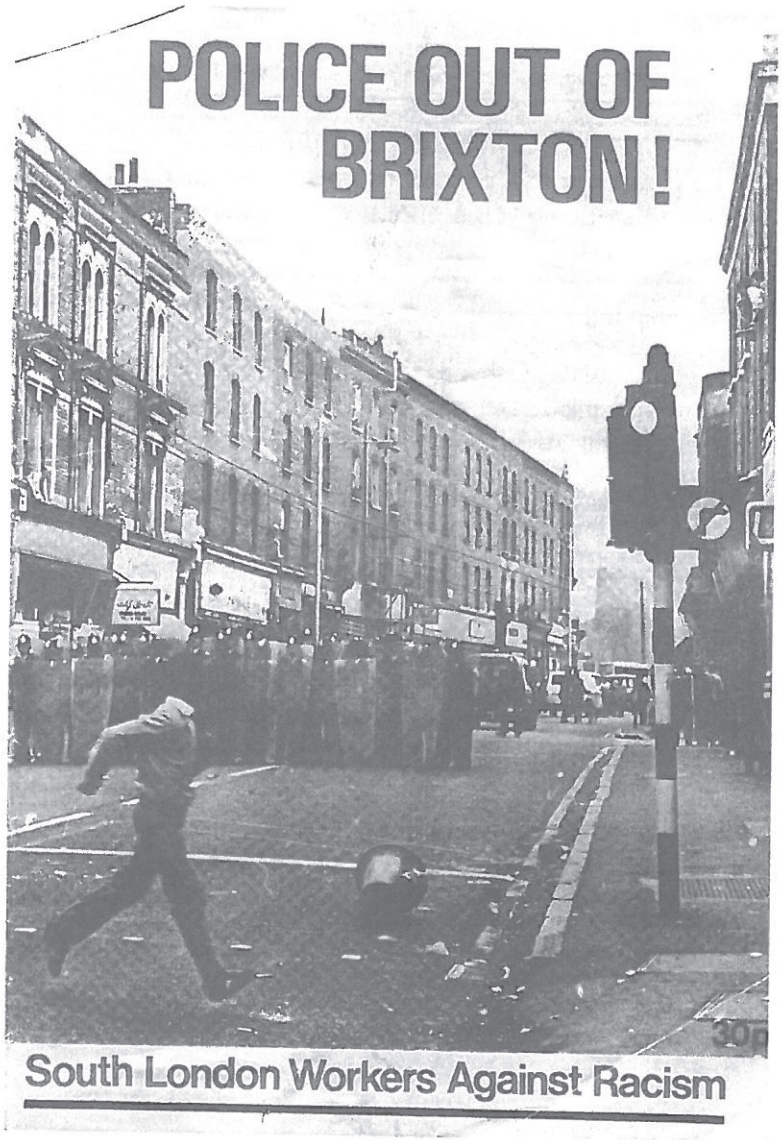


Figure 7.6 'Police out of Brixton' leaflet produced by South London Workers Against Racism, 1981, mixed media. Photo: © Museum of London. The front cover image shows a photograph of police holding riot shields during the 1981 Brixton Riots. The leaflet refers to the 'criminalisation' of the people of Brixton.

highlighted lack of political representation, police racial profiling and unemployment as contributory factors. As a result, a whole series of political and structural mechanisms were put in place to deal with these issues. Despite these, subsequent riots broke out in Brixton in 1985 in response to the shooting of an unarmed woman during a police house search. Nonetheless, Brixton has experienced a period of stability in the intervening years, and there has been greater political emphasis on developing multicultural policies which are more inclusive of both black Britons and people of many other cultural backgrounds.

Brixton Walking Tours

Jay Brown, a former Brixton resident with long-term connections to the area and a member of the British African Caribbean community, has been running Brixton Walking Tours since 2002 (Figure 7.7). She was inspired by community-based tourist ventures in Harlem, USA and South America that are run by locals and allow tourists a safe way of accessing an alternative view of a different culture. She is one of a number of people currently involved in promoting black British heritage in London. I was lucky enough to interview her and to accompany her on one of her tours in March 2008 (Figure 7.8).



Figure 7.7 Jay Brown in the Granville Arcade markets in Brixton, 2008. Photographed by Rodney Harrison. Photo: © Rodney Harrison.

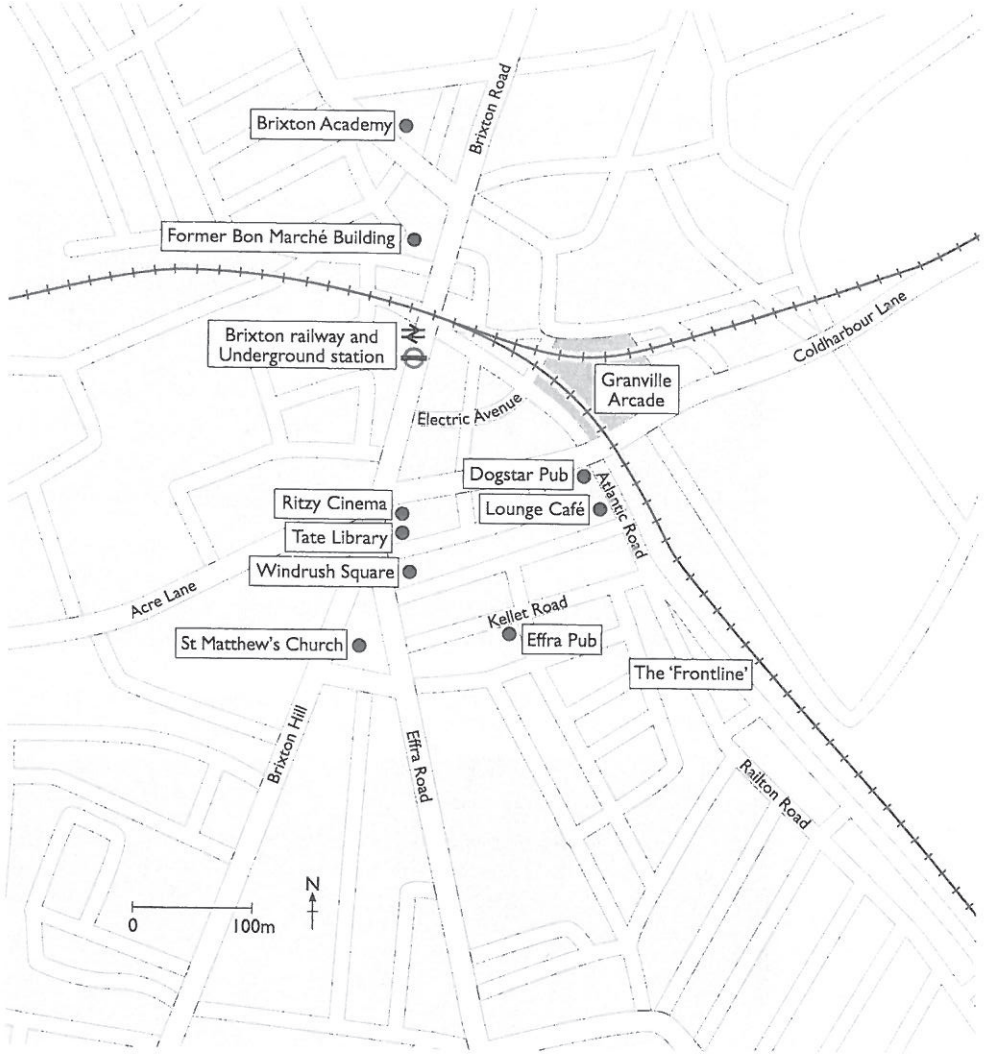


Figure 7.8 Street map of the Brixton area showing sites on the tour and places discussed in the text.

Jay advertises her business on the internet, via postcards which she leaves for distribution with local businesses, and through word of mouth. Although Brixton is not a traditional destination for tourists or visitors to London, the

area and the 'vibe' of its local African Caribbean community are central to her business. Jay notes:

> A lot of people are afraid to come to Brixton. They have heard about the riots, they think it could happen again and they have a misconception. By starting the tours, it's a key for people to see what Brixton has to offer ... If you think about the places they [tourists] have to go to [in London] it's pretty limited. It's fine if you want to see a palace, fine if you want to go on the Wheel [the London Eye], but I figured people needed something which was off the beaten track, like a hidden gem, and that's what Brixton is.

She sees her tour as targeted at those who wish to learn more about black British culture and at independent travellers who want to be exposed to a different side of London life:

> There are a lot of independent travellers who want to come and do their own thing ... Lots of black Americans come here and they want to see how [black] people live in London, and not just travel around the West End ... This is a place I think people need to come to, to see what is going on in London. I'm opening the door for them to see different cultures. There are over 40 languages spoken in [the borough of] Lambeth alone. You can walk along the street and eat Japanese food, Portuguese food, Indian food ... if you come here you feel like you have escaped London and arrived somewhere else.

Jay's tour begins at Atlantic Road near the Dogstar pub, almost immediately moving on to Railton Road and the frontline of the 1981 riots (Figure 7.9). She takes this opportunity to discuss the riots and to try to help people to understand what prompted them:

> The tour starts here at Atlantic Road and straight ahead is the scene of the riots on Railton Road. So it's a nice start to the tour because we can walk up the street and look at the area and see the ways in which the area has regenerated since the riots. And as we walk along I can explain to them about why the riots happened in '81 and '85, and the reason why is that a lot of the Jamaicans had free run of the area. They could have *shebeens*, which were late-night parties well into the night, and they could sell drugs. And they did this from the frontline, and the frontline was on Railton Road. And there came a time when the police were stopping and searching the young men, and anger built up in the community from that. But I think the main thing that set it off was that they felt that there was racism against them because 'stop and search' was mainly being levelled at young black men. And it's not a nice thing, being stopped in the street and having your pockets



Figure 7.9 Looking along Railton Road towards the site of the 'Frontline' of the 1981 Brixton Riots, 2008. Photographed by Rodney Harrison. Photo: © Rodney Harrison.



Figure 7.10 Windrush Square, Brixton, 2008. Photographed by Rodney Harrison. Photo: © Rodney Harrison.

> turned out. And that was their way of saying they weren't going to take it anymore. And although that's not the way that things should be done, it was like a kettle boiling and at some point it had to go off.

Turning into Kellet Road, Jay highlights the Victorian terraced houses and tells of the community of artists and musicians who squatted in them in the 1960s, and the association of the area with Reggae musician Bob Marley. Walking past the Effra pub, Jay directs her tour towards St Matthew's Square and St Matthew's Church which date from the 1820s. Travelling along Brixton Hill and past the Tate Library, she recounts the association of the Tate family with sugar plantation slavery and the invention of the sugar cube. On Brixton Road she points out Windrush Square (Figure 7.10) to discuss the connection with the first Jamaican community to arrive in London in 1948, and the Ritzy Cinema, the oldest functioning cinema in south London which opened in 1911 as the Electric Pavilion. From there she walks to the Brixton Academy, a major concert venue that opened in 1929, and past Bon Marché, the first department store in the UK when it was opened in 1877.

The tour ends at the Granville Arcade markets which opened in 1938 and form one of Europe's largest Caribbean food markets, and nearby Electric Avenue, the first shopping street in England to be lit by electricity, made famous by the song 'Electric Avenue' released in 1982 by Guyana-born British Reggae singer Eddy Grant.

Commemorating London's African Caribbean and multicultural history

Jay Brown's Brixton Walking Tour is an example of what we would recognise as a mainstream heritage practice – the walking tour. However, both the nature and the location of this tour are far from being mainstream. When most people think of the heritage of London they might think of the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, Madame Tussaud's and the Tower of London. Jay's walking tour is unique in exposing tourists to a part of south London they might otherwise not experience due to fear or its invisibility from the tourist landscape. But more importantly, Jay's tour puts an emphasis on Brixton's multicultural community and celebrates its distinct British African Caribbean heritage. In doing so, it not only changes the way outsiders view Brixton but it also celebrates Brixton as a place, and helps to build Brixton as a community.

Jay's tour is only one of a number of recent initiatives in black British tourism and heritage in London. In 2003 Nana Ocran published *Experience Black London: A Visitor's Guide*, which included a series of black heritage walking trails and a guide to black heritage sites in London. Steve Martin, author of

Britain's Slave Trade (1999), runs an open-top black history bus tour of London's West End. In an interview with the BBC, he noted

> We have a very narrow attitude of history ... Shakespeare alluded to a multicultural London. But then we got an empire. And with that came a model of history that supported the idea of racial purity. What is most shocking is how little is taught in schools. Children know more about black American history than the heritage of people walking in their own streets.
>
> (Casciani, 2003)

These initiatives can be thought of as interventions in official heritage practice in the sense that they use official heritage practices to draw attention to an overlooked aspect of heritage. Black and African Caribbean heritage has been largely ignored by official heritage listing and interpretation in London, although more has been done in the wake of the 2007 bicentennial celebration of the abolition of the British slave trade. These small-scale interventions all work towards changing the ways in which tourists and locals view the heritage of London and, by extension, the culture and community of London in the present. Jay's tour puts an emphasis on experiencing Brixton as a community.

> In the tours I say to people 'Open your senses ... Look at what's happening around Brixton.' The tour is about all the senses, so I get people to taste food, if it's patties, or Guinness punch [traditional West Indian food and drink], or fruit in the market.

Understanding and celebrating the multicultural past of Brixton has positive benefits for the contemporary experience of multiculturalism. This helps people to understand multiculturalism as an integral part of the London experience today.

The other important aspect of Jay's walking tour is the way it commemorates and contextualises the 1981 riots. It attempts to remove from Brixton a historical stain that has influenced tourists' and Londoners' perspectives on it as a place. Looking at the riots within the context of British African Caribbean music, food and culture might be seen as an attempt to balance the frequent negative press which presents Brixton and south London in general as a place associated with a complex cultural and ethnic mix that produces high rates of criminal activity. But perhaps more importantly, it reclaims and celebrates the riots as an important historical event that can be argued to have brought about positive social changes.

> When I explain to people they can empathise with the situation and understand why it happened, and then to take them to the scene it's a positive part of the tour. I emphasise the ways in which the riots set

> off a chain of events for change, and the ways the community has rehabilitated since then. Looking around you today you will see that Brixton is as trendy as Notting Hill. It's nice for people to come and see and ... understand that out of such a bad thing came all of these good things.

While there remain ephemeral traces of the riots (Purbrich and Schofield, forthcoming), the riot site can largely be thought of as an intangible heritage site, so this form of commemoration as part of a walking tour is perhaps the best way of memorialising the riots. I noted earlier the ways in which heritage as a form of social action is one way in which unofficial heritage practices interface with official forms of heritage, and this case study provides a good example.

Reflecting on the case study

By working with a well-known heritage tourism practice – the walking tour – Jay Brown has developed a heritage activity that has the potential to change perceptions of this infamous part of south London as well as the potential to create a sense of community and locality. As in the previous case study, we are presented with an example not only of the social work that heritage does in producing a sense of the local, but also with an example of grassroots heritage work that might be understood to produce a sense of 'history from below'. The tour is clearly aimed at changing the ways in which people think about the history of Brixton, and the place of African Caribbeans in British history and contemporary culture. However, the tour is about not only making black British heritage more visible but also bringing tourists into Brixton. When people come to Brixton they are investing money back into the community – they shop in the local stores and buy fruit and vegetables in the markets. This heritage tour does part of its social work by attracting tourists to an area they might otherwise avoid because it has had a bad reputation. It also does social work in celebrating and commemorating cultural differences – in particular, African Caribbean culture in Brixton and its important role in making Brixton a unique and distinctive place. This provides a clear example of Appadurai's ideas about the social work involved in the production of locality and its social relations. Jay Brown's walking tour literally creates Brixton as a place by walking people along its streets and unveiling the connections between its community and the neighbourhood. In doing so, it reinforces Brixton as a multicultural community and the social relations that connect the community with the place.

Heritage, social action and place

This chapter has concerned itself with the ways in which heritage might be thought of as a form of social action. The case studies have highlighted two forms of social action. The first case study has described Indigenous

Australians in western New South Wales undertaking a range of unofficial heritage activities at the former mission site of Dennawan as a way of reconnecting themselves with a place from which historically they have been removed. These practices help to form a sense of shared history and community for the Muruwari people in the present. The second case study has looked at a particular walking tour as an intervention in conventional heritage practice. Jay Brown's Brixton Walking Tour and its focus on African Caribbean heritage in south London can be considered a form of activism as it highlights an aspect of the history and heritage of London that has previously been neglected by mainstream heritage tours. The ways in which the tour influences and changes people's preconceptions about the Brixton riots form another way in which it could be seen to be a form of social action. Black British heritage sites have not previously been well promoted, and Jay's tour serves the dual purpose of promoting multicultural and black British heritage while also attracting people to an area that is off the tourist map. This helps to build effective links between people within the community and Brixton as a place by bringing tourism and its positive economic benefits to the community, as well as establishing a set of stories with which the community can reflect on its shared experiences.

Conclusion

While most of the chapters in the book have concerned themselves with official practices of heritage and the ways in which they are employed by the state, this chapter has considered the unofficial practices of heritage that individuals and communities use to build their effective links with each other and with the places that are important to them. It has argued that by challenging the histories produced as part of official heritage practices, these unofficial forms of heritage have the potential to transform a society's understanding of its past and, by extension, its present and future. Such interventions in heritage, alongside the ways in which heritage is used in the everyday construction of the local and the community, demonstrate the significant social role of heritage in society. The following chapter continues this focus on the intangible and unofficial practices of heritage to consider the relationship between heritage and performance.

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Chapter 8 Heritage as performance

Susie West and Marion Bowman

The rise of performance studies has drawn attention to the cultural work that is achieved through activities performed as part of daily life, as well as in 'set piece' performances. This has useful parallels with heritage studies' interest in the cultural work that objects, places and practices of heritage are used for. In this chapter the relationship between heritage and performance is explored in three contexts: through performative traditions that are intangible heritage (the first case study by Susie West on carnival in Trinidad); through the invitation that 'official' heritage extends to the visitor to become a performer by the act of making a visit (to Glastonbury Abbey); and through the creation of new performances that assert their status as unofficial heritage (processions). The case study by Marion Bowman focuses on Glastonbury, a town noted for its spiritual heritage of Christianity and alternative/New Age practices. As part of her research into the religious pluralism and spiritual economy of the town, writing from a religious studies perspective, she investigates performative traditions and the creation of new traditions, through contrasting processions.

Introduction

This chapter explores the idea that all societies use performances as the means to cultural ends. We might first think of performances as formal events, where the audience is clearly distinguished from the performer. A performance such as a play or a concert is highly structured: the performers have invested a great deal more time and energy in developing their expertise than most of the audience. The audience, however, has expectations: to be entertained, perhaps, or to be moved emotionally, or maybe just to be able to dress up and be noticed themselves, in which case the audience members are self-conscious about their roles as informal performers. Actually, most official performers would say that an audience is necessary to their work, giving feedback through their collective responses, and providing a sense of occasion that heightens the performers' achievements. Some researchers have taken this two-way relationship further to suggest that many of our daily social activities contain performance elements: we adopt social roles as the context requires, enact our own rituals, or sometimes feel that we have lost the script and have to extemporise. Performance is not just a metaphor here; we will see that 'acting something out' is sometimes the only way society agrees that a real act has taken place. Marriage vows are one example.

The emergence of the idea of performance as a major area of human social activity has come from a number of academic disciplines. Philosophers asking