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# **Heritage pasts and heritage presents: Temporality, meaning and the scope of heritage studies**

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# Heritage pasts and heritage presents: Temporality, meaning and the scope of heritage studies

## Abstract:

With the apparent focus of work carried out by the heritage ‘community’ very much directed towards heritage practices in the present, the potential historical scope for the discipline as a whole, becomes ever-more temporally closed. This paper makes space for a longer historical analysis of the development of heritage as a *process*. The paper ranges over the evolution of a medieval sense of heritage and how it is related to transitions in the experience of space and place, and also explores some early modern developments in the heritage concept, relating them to societal changes associated with colonial (and post-colonial) experience. This deeper understanding of the historically contingent and embedded nature of heritage allows us to go beyond treating heritage simply as a set of problems to be solved, and enables us to engage with debates about the production of identity, power and authority throughout society.

## Key words:

Heritage history; medieval heritage; ancient monuments; heritage *process*

## Introduction:

In decrying the lack of any full, or even remotely accepted, theorisation of the heritage concept, Larkham questions whether heritage is simply “all things to all people”.<sup>1</sup> Certainly there seems to be as many definitions of the heritage concept as there are heritage practitioners, while many commentators simply leave the definition as broad and malleable as possible. Johnson and Thomas for instance, simply note that heritage is “virtually anything by which some kind of link, however tenuous or false, may be forged with the past”, while Lowenthal seems to revel in his claim that “heritage today all but defies definition”.<sup>2</sup> This in itself raises the question of whether we really need a tight definition at all, let alone a comprehensive ‘manifesto’ of what heritage studies is all about. However, without wanting to delve into the inconclusivity (and ultimate aridity) that some of such debates have led us to in the past however, I think we do at least need to consider the ‘scope’ of heritage studies as a discipline. This is particularly important with regard to the theorisation of temporality that its very ‘presentness’ seems to imply. In short, I feel that many contemporary studies of heritage issues have failed to fully explore the historical scope that the concept really implies, and have rather been too pre-occupied with certain manifestations of heritage’s recent trajectory. I certainly do not intend to prescribe a narrowly-defined heritage manifesto, nor do I wish to denigrate any recent heritage work. Rather I wish to make space for a longer historical analysis of the development of heritage practices. Consequently, by providing a longer historical narrative of ‘heritageisation’ as a *process*, I am seeking to situate the myriad of multiply-connected inter-disciplinary research that makes up the terrain of heritage studies today.

The premise of this paper is that heritage has always been with us and has always been produced by people according to their contemporary concerns and experiences. Consequently, we should explore the history of heritage, not starting at an arbitrary date

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<sup>1</sup> P.J. Larkham, ‘Heritage as planned and conserved’, in D.T. Herbert (ed.) *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, London: Mansell, 1995, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> P. Johnson and B. Thomas, ‘Heritage as business’, in D.T. Herbert (ed.) *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, London: Mansell, 1995, p. 170. D. Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, Cambridge: CUP, 1998, p. 94.

like 1882, but by producing a context-rich account of heritage as a *process* or a human condition rather than as a single movement or personal project.<sup>3</sup> This account would place people such as William Morris (or Robert Hewison for that matter) as representative of a particular strand of heritage at a particular moment in time, reflecting the agendas, perceptions and arrangements of that time.<sup>4</sup> Every society has had a relationship with its past, even those that have chosen to ignore it, and it is through understanding the meaning and nature of what people tell each other about their past; about what they forget, remember, memorialise and/or fake, that heritage studies can engage with academic debates beyond the confines of present-centred cultural, leisure or tourism studies.

This short essay seeks to explore the development of the heritage process over the long term. In order to do this, the paper reviews the contribution of certain published work on such heritage issues that has been produced by people generally working outside of the field of heritage studies. A range of scholarly work on early modern and even medieval subject areas will be examined and placed within an understanding of the long-term development of heritage as a social process. In this sense, I will explore processes of heritageisation within a much longer temporal framework than is normally used. For instance, the evolution of a medieval sense of heritage is related to changes in technology and transitions in the experience of place and space, while some more recent developments in the heritage concept are related to the more recent societal changes connected to colonial (and post-colonial) experience. This essay merely scratches the surface of what is implied by this expanded temporal scale. Nevertheless, I feel that a deeper understanding of the historically contingent and embedded nature of heritage is vital, both in order to avoid falling into the trap of producing endless present-centred case studies for little (apparent) reason, and to enable us to engage with debates about the production of identity, power and authority throughout society.

Firstly however, we need to examine the nature of this ‘present-centredness’ which pervades the subject, before quickly exploring the full implications of the heritage definitions that are in current circulation. This will establish a firm contextual basis within which to place the historical analysis of the heritage concept.

### **The *presentness* of heritage; heritage definitions and the apparent demise of history:**

A glance at some recent heritage studies texts soon reveals the complexity and wide scope of the subject.<sup>5</sup> In particular, Arnold et al’s recent collection of essays shows just how broad the blanket term of heritage studies can be, with topics ranging from war memorials in Wales to the media treatment of Princess Diana.<sup>6</sup> This itself has caused some consternation, with Terry-Chandler for instance seeing the “unsystematized” and “heterogeneous” nature of heritage studies potentially leaving us with little more than a

<sup>3</sup> 1882 is the date of the Ancient Monuments Act in Great Britain. Other arbitrary dates for the ‘start’ of heritage include the French Revolution or the establishment of the National Trust in 1895.

<sup>4</sup> This idea is strongly resonant of ideas about the *invention of tradition*. See E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: CUP, 1983.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, see B.J. Graham, G.J. Ashworth and J.E. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage; Power, Culture, Economy*, London: Arnold, 2000; Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, M. Hunter (ed.), *Preserving the Past; The Rise of Heritage in Modern Britain*, Stroud: Sutton, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> J. Arnold, K. Davies and S. Ditchfield (eds.), *History and Heritage; Consuming the Past in Contemporary Culture*, Shaftesbury: Donhead, 1998; A. Gaffney, ‘Monuments and memory: The Great War’, in J. Arnold, K. Davies and S. Ditchfield (eds.), *History and Heritage; Consuming the Past in Contemporary Culture*, Shaftesbury: Donhead, 1998, pp. 79-89; J. Davies, ‘The media iconicity of Diana, Princess of Wales’, in J. Arnold, K. Davies and S. Ditchfield (eds.), *History and Heritage; Consuming the Past in Contemporary Culture*, Shaftesbury: Donhead, 1998, pp. 39-50.

“morass of case studies”.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, the one aspect that appears to unite almost all of these case studies, as well as the wider subject as it is practised today, is the dating of their heritage subjects; almost all commentators placing the appearance of the heritage phenomenon in the latter half of the twentieth century, with even the earliest origins often manifested only in nineteenth century with the Ancient Monuments Act of 1882 and personified by such figures as William Morris.<sup>8</sup> For instance, in the opening pages of their book, McCrone et al proclaim that “heritage is a thoroughly modern concept, ... (it) belongs to the final quarter of the twentieth century”.<sup>9</sup> Although McCrone et al acknowledge a much older origin for heritage in a legal sense, their linking the concept with modernity is complete, claiming heritage to be “a condition of the later twentieth century”.<sup>10</sup> Continuing this trend of dating the heritage concept within the opening paragraphs of a text, Lowenthal argues that it is only in our time that heritage has “become a self-conscious creed”, while Graham et al claim that it is only in the last few decades that the word has come to mean more than a legal bequest.<sup>11</sup> Considering the acknowledged complexity of the heritage phenomenon, it is certainly understandable why so many commentators use a purposely vague and malleable definition of the concept. However, in the aforementioned cases at least, it seems that the unexamined assumptions regarding the dating of heritage are let loose before any such definitions are even reached.

It is easy to see why heritage commentators have dated their subject in such a way, what with the increasingly high profile of heritage in the public mind,<sup>12</sup> matching the increasing proliferation of heritage sites; a recent trend that has been much discussed in the literature.<sup>13</sup> The critical response of Robert Hewison<sup>14</sup> to the recent developments of the so-called ‘heritage industry’ are well known, and the dating of this rise of ‘heritageisation’ to the later twentieth century is a central part of his thesis. A simple overview of this debate however, shows that whether critical or supportive of such recent heritage practices, most authors seem to accept implicitly the recent nature of

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<sup>7</sup> F. Terry-Chandler, ‘Heritage and history: A special relationship?’, review article in *Midland History*, Vol. 24, 1999, pp. 188-193. Terry-Chandler seems to have faith in the apparent self-evident existence of a ‘substantive base’ for heritage studies upon which she provides no further comment. This has drawn questions on the Mailbase heritage discussion list, most specifically from Peacock (23/11/1999).

<sup>8</sup> Such views were very much to the fore during *The Idea of Heritage* Conference, London Guildhall University, (7-9/9/1999). Many delegates using phrases such as ‘heritage in Britain started with the 1882 Act’. The sentiments of the present paper were fermented during the attendance of this excellent conference.

<sup>9</sup> D. McCrone, A. Morris and R. Kiely, *Scotland –the Brand. The Making of Scottish Heritage*, Edinburgh: Polygon, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. 1; Graham et al, *Geography of Heritage*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Reflecting the thoughts of Tunbridge and Ashworth, ‘heritage’ is one of those things which everyone possesses, and which everyone will defend, seemingly without thought. J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage; The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Chichester: Wiley, 1996. More recently, National Lottery funding has added a further cash injection into the public profile of heritage in Britain, raising many questions about the increasingly overt politicisation of heritage management and funding.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Hewison is perhaps best known for this. In 1987 his book *The Heritage Industry; Britain in a Climate of Decline* formed a cornerstone of a long-running debate about the nature and worth of the recent trajectory of heritage in Britain. This book provides numerous facts that outline the proliferation of ‘heritage’, such as how the 68 monuments scheduled by the 1882 Act have now risen to more than 12,000, with over 330,000 listed buildings besides.

<sup>14</sup> R. Hewison, *The Heritage Industry; Britain in a climate of Decline*, London: Methuen, 1987; R. Hewison, ‘Great expectations – hyping heritage’, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 9, 1988, pp. 239-40; R. Hewison, ‘Heritage: An interpretation’, in D.L. Uzzell (ed.), *Heritage Interpretation, Volume 1*, London: Belhaven, 1989, pp. 15-23.

this general dating framework without question.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps this is not surprising considering the very strong and fertile links that have been established between heritage studies, museum studies and a wide range of professional and amateur heritage practitioners who are working at the ‘sharp end’ to conserve, present and interpret material in the present. However, this itself raises the question of where the origins for this wider field of professional and amateur heritage practice lies, and, more importantly, what its version, or ‘vision’, of heritage constitutes.

The origins of this very present-centred professional terrain have been dated to later nineteenth century heritage initiatives in general and to the 1882 Act in particular.<sup>16</sup> Certainly the founding of such bodies as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), the National Trust, or even *Country Life* magazine appear as seminal moments in the development of the British heritage conservation movement.<sup>17</sup> The continuing legacy of organisations such as SPAB and such individuals as William Morris has been especially noted by Mielle,<sup>18</sup> who criticises the continuing implicit sanctification surrounding the memory of these ‘founding fathers’ and of their practice of preserving ‘authentic’ physical artefacts in aspic. However viable and laudable the heritage ideals associated with this movement are, they constitute a partial spectrum of the wider potential of the heritage field. The recent dating of such activity, therefore, simply tends to hide a much deeper temporal scope for heritage studies.

This situation is not helped by the strong, yet often simplistic, relation of the heritage concept to conditions of postmodernity and to the postmodern economy.<sup>19</sup> For instance, McCrone et al relate the rise of heritage to the post-fordist economic climate that characterises this postmodern era, claiming that “heritage has its roots in the restructuring of the world economy – a process which began in the 1970’s”.<sup>20</sup> This statement sells heritage short on three accounts. First, it seems to imply a definition of heritage completely along commercial lines. A strong and perhaps increasing link between heritage and the market place is certainly apparent. However, despite some scholars defining heritage almost completely along the lines of economic commodification,<sup>21</sup> it certainly cannot be claimed that heritage is *only* about the economic practices of exploitation. The second and connected point, is that heritage is portrayed almost one dimensionally, as just another aspect of a burgeoning leisure

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<sup>15</sup> R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory; Volume 1. Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, London: Verso, 1994; P. Wright, *On Living in an Old Country; The National Past in Contemporary Britain*, London: Verso, 1985; D.L. Uzzell, ‘Introduction’, in D.L. Uzzell (ed.), *Heritage Interpretation, Volume 1*, London: Belhaven, 1989, pp. 1-14.

<sup>16</sup> J. Carmen, ‘From good citizens to sound economics; the historical trajectory of the archaeological heritage’, unpublished conference paper presented at *The Idea of Heritage* conference, London Guildhall University, (7-9/9/1999), p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. 104.

<sup>18</sup> C. Miele, ‘Conservation and the enemies of progress? William Morris and the myth of authenticity’, unpublished conference paper presented at *The Idea of Heritage* conference, London Guildhall University, (7-9/9/1999).

<sup>19</sup> For instance, see K.T. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past; Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*, London: Routledge, 1992; F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London: Verso, 1991; U. Eco, *Travels in Hyper-Reality*, London: Picador, 1987; Hewison, ‘Heritage: An interpretation’; D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

<sup>20</sup> McCrone et al, *Scotland – the Brand*, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Schouten for example, defines heritage as “the past processed through mythology, ideology, nationalism, local pride, romantic ideas, or just plain marketing into a commodity”. F.F.J. Schouten, ‘Heritage as historical reality’, in D.E. Herbert (ed.), *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, London: Mansell, 1995, pp. 21-31. Although some more ‘cultural’ aspects of heritage are recognised in this passage, the central place of commercialism and instrumentalist edge that is implied by Schouten appears to overly limit the scope of the concept.

industry. This has even led some to some worry over whether heritage may somehow lose out in a popularity contest with “other leisure forms”.<sup>22</sup> As with the economic side of heritage, the relationship with (post)modern forms of leisure seems to be increasingly pervasive in the heritage arena. As with its commercialisation however, heritage must be allowed a wider scope than simply being portrayed as something else that people do to fill their free time, or as a hostage to the whims of leisure fashion. The third, and perhaps most important point to be made about the relation of the ‘rise of heritage’ to the changes of the 1970’s in the world’s economy concerns the conceptual closure that is implied by such dating. Most people would accept that to understand transitions in the world economy requires a much longer and more deeply embedded historical analysis than just identifying changes in the 1970’s. The field of heritage studies seems too often to lack such a comparatively rich historical contextualisation beyond the simple tracings of lineage to certain nineteenth century cult figures as noted above. Just as the present-day economic practices of capitalism were not started on a blank sheet in 1970, then present-day heritage concerns should not be seen as originating completely anew from a similar set of cultural, political and societal transitions, whether they are called ‘postmodern’ or not.

In order to account for the very recent dating of heritage, we need to explore the implications of the very ‘presentness’ of heritage processes and practice. Hardy referred to heritage as a ‘value-loaded concept’, meaning that in whatever form it appears, its very nature relates entirely to present circumstances.<sup>23</sup> Tunbridge and Ashworth for instance note that “the present selects an inheritance from an imagined past for current use and decides what should be passed on to an imagined future”.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the only referent that matters is the present, which some have seen as representing a defeat of history and a closing off of any meaningful relationship with the past.<sup>25</sup> This is comparable to the argument that Hewison used in his attack on the so-called ‘heritage industry’; that heritage was somehow threatening history, destroying an authentic version of the past and replacing it by a simulacra of that past.<sup>26</sup> Since all heritage is produced completely in the present, our relationship with the past is understood in relation to our present temporal and spatial experience.<sup>27</sup>

Some heritage scholars have sought to place this dislocation and rootlessness within wider developments of our postmodern society.<sup>28</sup> What this has meant for the field of heritage studies is that a sort of ‘line of temporal closure’ has been drawn, which ties the appearance of heritage to the development of postmodernity. Heritage, as practised today, is portrayed as a product of the wider social, cultural, political and economic transitions that have occurred during the later twentieth century. What this itself implies, however, is that firstly, there is something called ‘correct’ historical narrative

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<sup>22</sup> For instance, see the concerns of Terry-Chandler, ‘Heritage and history’, p. 192.

<sup>23</sup> D. Hardy, ‘Historical geography and heritage studies’, *Area*, Vol. 20 (4), 1988, pp. 333-338.

<sup>24</sup> Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> F. Jameson, *Postmodernism*; Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994. Lowenthal (*The Heritage Crusade*, p. 3) relates this concept to Fukayama’s notion of the ‘end of history’.

<sup>26</sup> This extreme position was criticised by Samuel (*Theatres of Memory*) among others, who see the practices associated with the so-called ‘heritage industry’ as valid techniques for exploring one’s relationship with the past.

<sup>27</sup> This school of thought which ultimately endeavours to relate notions of time-space compression to ideas that the experience of time itself has now ended, as we are now condemned to live through an endless series of presents, is well discussed in a critical paper by Dodgshon; R.A. Dodgshon, ‘Human geography at the end of time? Some thoughts on the notion of time-space compression’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 17 (5), 1999, pp. 607-620.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, see Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*.

that heritage is busily destroying, and, extending from this, that up until very recently, all history, historical narrative and other relationships with the past, were somehow more genuine and authentic than they have now become. This point requires some discussion of the relationship between history and heritage, and also some thought as to how we define the latter concept.

The extent to which ‘traditional’ historians ever saw their work as a completely straightforward accounting of ‘what happened’ is open to question. Certainly during the twentieth century, it became more fully recognised that “the evidence of history cannot be so easily separated from the interpretation built upon it”.<sup>29</sup> A differentiation between historical and heritage narratives based upon issues of objectivity has continued however, with Plumb for instance, likening history to a scientific endeavour which, again, is under threat from more frivolous heritage activity.<sup>30</sup> Even Lowenthal contrasts heritage practices with a situation where “testable truth is history’s chief hallmark”.<sup>31</sup> As Johnson further notes however, this “distinction between true history and false heritage ... may be more illusory than actual”.<sup>32</sup>

Raphael Samuel was very critical of what he saw as “heritage baiters”, accusing them of reifying professional historical narration as an objective practice that recounted a ‘real’ past, and being hypocritical in their description of the heritage industry.<sup>33</sup> As well as appearing to hang on to a modernist, scientific version of historical narrative, the heritage baiters’ accounts also tend to imply that previous relationships with the past, whether factually correct or not, were somehow more authentic. In this sense, the heritage industry is portrayed as a sort of parasite, exploiting the more genuine and ‘ageless’ memorial (and largely oral) relationships with the past that people had before the nineteenth century. This idea is related to notions that distinguish between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ memory, that was best articulated by Nora and discussed by Johnson.<sup>34</sup> Nora draws a distinction between an elite, institutionalised memory preserved in the archives, and the memory of ordinary people; unrecorded, and ingrained in the unspoken traditions and habits of everyday life.<sup>35</sup> Most importantly however, rather than seeing this ‘traditional memory’ as something that has ended, and defeated by ‘false heritage’, Nora sees it as having been transformed (partly through technological and archival development) and democratised. “In this light, rather than viewing heritage as a false, distorted history imposed on the masses, we can view heritage sites as forming one link in a chain of popular memory”.<sup>36</sup> What this implies for heritage studies is that we should not draw any lines of temporal closure, or see the entire heritage concept as a product of later nineteenth and twentieth century cultural change without origin. Rather, we should supply heritage with a history of its own; not in terms of recounting the story

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<sup>29</sup> N. Johnson, ‘Historical geographies of the present’, in B.J. Graham and C. Nash (eds.), *Modern Historical Geographies*, Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2000, pp. 251-272, (p. 252). Johnson cites Collingwood’s (1946) work on this point, showing that concerns were being raised about the supposed objectivity of ‘proper’ history more than 50 years ago.

<sup>30</sup> J.H. Plumb, *The Death of the Past*, Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1969.

<sup>31</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. 120.

<sup>32</sup> Johnson, ‘Historical geographies’, p. 259.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, pp. 259-273.

<sup>34</sup> P. Nora, ‘Between memory and history; les lieux de memoire’, *Representations*, Vol. 26, 1989, pp. 10-18; N. Johnson, ‘Memory and heritage’, in P. Cloke, P. Crang and M. Goodwin (eds.), *Introducing Human Geographies*, London: Arnold, 1999, pp. 170-178.

<sup>35</sup> Nora, ‘Between memory and history’, p. 13. This conception of ‘traditional memory’ seems closely related to Bourdieu’s notion of ‘habitus’; P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: CUP, 1977. Also see D.C. Harvey ‘Continuity, authority and the place of heritage in the medieval world’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 26 (1), 2000, pp. 47-59.

<sup>36</sup> Johnson, ‘Memory and heritage’, p. 171.

of the development of a particular modernist strand of heritage from a nineteenth century icon, but in terms of examining the evolution of the heritage process over the longer term. Of course, the narration and practice of both history and heritage involve the subjective interpretation of selective material and issues. This situation is certainly not new, but rather has a long history that needs to be examined.

In addition, although most authors have restricted themselves to talking about the very recent past, there is rarely anything in their definitions of heritage that necessarily supports their dating heritage to this recent past; the temporal restrictions seem to be completely self-imposed. For instance, Lowenthal sees heritage as a practice that “clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes”, while Hewison has defined heritage as “that which a past generation has preserved and handed on to the present and which a significant group of population wishes to hand on to the future”.<sup>37</sup> Notwithstanding the very physical and artefactual assumptions in Hewison’s definition about what constitutes heritage, neither of these definitions necessarily exclude the practice, or *process* of heritage from a pre-twentieth century context. Rather, through examining a series of case studies, we can explore issues of heritage production and consumption within a pre-modern arena. In this respect, we are making space for heritage studies to explore earlier links in the ‘chain of popular memory’ of which the present day heritage industry forms just part of the most recent section.<sup>38</sup> The practice of engaging with these case studies through recourse to heritage concepts will help us to understand heritage as a *process*, or a verb, related to human action and agency, and as an instrument of cultural power in whatever period of time one chooses to examine.<sup>39</sup> In order to investigate these historical case studies, the simple definition of heritage as “a contemporary product shaped from history” has been used.<sup>40</sup> This concise definition gets across the way that heritage is subjective and filtered with reference to the present, whenever that ‘present’ actually is. It is a value-laden concept, related to processes of commodification, but intrinsically reflective of a relationship with the past, however that ‘past’ is perceived and defined.

### **Heritage practice in the pre-modern period:**

A useful place to start this review would seem to be through examining the longevity of the oft-cited relationship between ideas of heritage and those of national identity.<sup>41</sup> A very large body of literature exists that relate these factors, though nearly all of it seems to imply relatively recent origins for this link.<sup>42</sup> Johnson for instance, focuses on the

<sup>37</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. xv; Hewison, ‘Heritage: An interpretation’, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> Albeit an important part, during which time the development of new technologies have transformed the very nature of collective memory and the experience of heritage.

<sup>39</sup> In many ways, this newer conception of heritage as a ‘way of seeing and being’ reflects similar considerations that have transformed the field of landscape studies in recent years. See D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape*, Cambridge: CUP, 1988; S. Daniels, *Fields of Vision; Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993; D. Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, London: Reaction Books, 1999; S. Seymour ‘Historical geographies of landscape’, in B.J. Graham and C. Nash (eds.), *Modern Historical Geographies*, Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2000, pp. 193-217.

<sup>40</sup> Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage*, p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> B.J. Graham, ‘The past in place; historical geographies of identity’, in B.J. Graham and C. Nash (eds.), *Modern Historical Geographies*, Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2000, pp. 70-99; C. Brace ‘Looking back: the Cotswolds and English national identity, c. 1890-1950’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 25 (4), 1999, 502-516; J. Taylor, *Shakespeare Land: A Dream of England*, Manchester: MUP, 1994.

<sup>42</sup> For literature on this subject, see Graham et al, *Geography of Heritage*; McCrone et al, *Scotland – the Brand*; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 1983; R. Fevre and A. Thompson, ‘Social theory and Welsh identities’, in Fevre and Thompson (eds.), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory. Perspectives From Wales*, Cardiff: UWP, 1999, pp. 3-24;



First World War as a time in which public memory was transformed and institutionalised, while Hobsbawm and Nora concentrate on a longer-term transition originating in the political and economic revolutions of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, despite no stipulation of a necessary time framework, all of the case studies in Hobsbawm and Ranger's influential collection, for instance, focussed on relatively recent events.<sup>44</sup> However, much earlier examples exist of where a particular notion of heritage is used in order to legitimate a 'national consciousness' or a communal memory akin to an early 'nation state'.

A particularly good example of this is found in the support and spread of Bonfire Night in England, celebrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November each year from the seventeenth century. Cressy argues that during this period, "England's past became an issue in England's present to a degree unknown elsewhere, ...A deliberately cultivated vision of the past was incorporated into the English calendar, reiterated in sermons, reviewed in almanacs, and given physical form by memorials and monuments".<sup>45</sup> The act of remembering the Gunpowder Plot was pushed very heavily in the seventeenth century as a device to support notions of communal solidarity, and to legitimise the Protestant state, its hierarchy and bureaucracy.<sup>46</sup> This seems to be a case of invented tradition in all but name, and one that continues today, with Bonfire 'celebrations' ritualised and ingrained through such devices as the child's rhyme; "Remember, remember the fifth of November, gunpowder, treason and plot".

Importantly, although the Bonfire Night example on first sight appears almost as an overt instrument of the state and of a Protestant elite to instil order within the emerging English state, it can perhaps better be viewed as a re-interpretation of a much older tradition. The fire festival of Samain had been held in many parts of Britain in early November since pre-Christian times, and by the seventeenth century, the "unspoken rituals and inherent self-knowledge" that Nora associates with 'true memory' had surely taken root within this custom.<sup>47</sup> Bonfire Night, therefore, can be seen as a product of heritage; represented according to agendas of the present (whether that 'present' is in the seventeenth century or the twentieth), and carried on very largely through oral custom and non-elite practice. Although there were no heritage theme parks related to the seventeenth century Protestant ascendancy, a cult of Queen Elizabeth I was successfully established within folk memory,<sup>48</sup> while the product of heritage processes surrounding the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 can still be seen in the form of countless *Royal Oak* pubs throughout Britain.<sup>49</sup> In other words, 'heritage', even at this time, was non-elite and undoubtedly popular. According to Cressy, even the Fire of London in 1666 was blamed on the Pope, and the 200 foot high *Monument* built to

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<sup>43</sup> Johnson, 'Memory and heritage'; Nora, 'Between memory'; E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, Cambridge: CUP, 1990.

<sup>44</sup> Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*.

<sup>45</sup> D. Cressy, 'National memory in early modern England', in J.R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princetown: PUP, 1994, pp. 61-73 (p. 61).

<sup>46</sup> The Gunpowder Plot in 1605 sought to blow up the Houses of Parliament in Westminster.

<sup>47</sup> A. Ross and D. Robins, *The Life and Death of a Druid Prince*, London: Rider, 1989, p. 35. Nora, 'Between memory', p. 13. I do not like Nora's use of the phrase 'true memory', and this Bonfire Night example demonstrates that such 'unspoken rituals' are just as open to re-invention as elite or popular memory is.

<sup>48</sup> Some people have argued that this cult of the 'Virgin Queen' should be seen as the Protestant version of the cult of the Virgin Mary.

<sup>49</sup> Cressy, 'National memory'. The 'Royal Oak' phenomena commemorates celebrated the oak tree that the young Prince Charles (later Charles II) apparently hid in to escape Parliamentary forces during the latter stages of the second Civil War in 1651. The 29<sup>th</sup> May (Charles II's birthday and the date of Restoration in 1660) became 'Royal Oak Day'.

commemorate London's survival became a venue for anti-Catholic demonstrations, contributing to a new symbolic geography of the city.<sup>50</sup> Although public memory at this time still largely resided within oral tradition, *The Monument* can be seen as a very material product of a later seventeenth century 'heritage industry' that sought to inscribe a particular past through re-interpreting relatively recent events according to a contemporary agenda.<sup>51</sup>

Some authors have sought the origins of English national identity within an even earlier time period.<sup>52</sup> For instance, one piece of 'English heritage' that still has a very high public profile is that associated with St. George and the dragon. Although some modern critics would surely be upset at the way this supposedly 'genuine' piece of legendary folk-heritage has been abused and commodified as part of later twentieth century football rituals, Bengtson has demonstrated how this re-presentation and conscious skewing of the legend in relation to a contemporary agenda is not a new practice.<sup>53</sup> Far from contextualising this process of heritageisation within the field of international football during the later twentieth century, Bengtson places the heritage within the field of international conflict in the fourteenth century. Conscious of his family's 'French' origins, Edward III made a particular effort to fuel the cult of St. George and to align himself very much with it.<sup>54</sup> What is interesting about this example from the point of view of heritage studies, is the way that the emergent interpretation of the St. George traditions can be seen as a dialogue between the lay traditions, oral heritage and popular memory of ordinary people on the one hand, and the 'higher' agendas of the Monarchy on the other. People were taught to refer to their heritage in a particular way that related to contemporary political aspirations, thereby commodifying the stories so as to create a type of cultural capital that could be used as an instrument of power.<sup>55</sup> Although Shakespeare obviously embroiders actual events in his play *Henry V*, it is interesting to note that the Agincourt campaign of 1415 really *did* witness an outpouring of references to St. George.<sup>56</sup> The deployment of this particular version of heritage therefore, helped the Monarchy "establish an intimacy with the people which they would otherwise have not easily achieved".<sup>57</sup> The St. George stories came to be ingrained and ritualised within ordinary peoples' psyche, inseparable from the legitimacy of monarchical rule. In this respect, this medieval version of heritageisation and 'nationalisation' of the monarchy is not too dissimilar from Mandler's views on the 'nationalisation' of the stately home in the twentieth century.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71. Just 15 years after the Great Fire of London, a new inscription was added to *The Monument* stating that: "This pillar was set up in perpetual remembrance of the most dreadful burning of this Protestant city begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of the Popish faction".

<sup>52</sup> For instance, see Hastings slightly disappointing account. A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, Cambridge: CUP, 1997. In a parallel case, Duby has argued that the origins of French nationhood may be found in (among other things) the heritage associated with the battle of Bouvines in 1214. The mythologizing and memorialising of this battle was actively supported by the Capetian Monarchy during the later Middle Ages; G. Duby, *The Legend of Bouvines*, Cambridge: CUP, 1990, pp. 155-157.

<sup>53</sup> J. Bengtson, 'Saint George and the foundation of English nationalism', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 27 (2), 1997, pp. 317-340.

<sup>54</sup> The English king was at war with the French king at this time, and so we see here the attempts by Edward III to transform this clash from an *aristocratic* squabble between overlords, into a *national* struggle between two peoples.

<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, pp. 171-183.

<sup>56</sup> Bengtson, 'St. George', p. 325.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>58</sup> P. Mandler, 'Nationalising the country house', in M. Hunter (ed.), *Preserving the Past*, Stroud: Sutton, 1996, pp. 99-114; P. Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*, Yale: YUP, 1997.

Although the examples used so far refer to the heritage of national identity (itself a very modernist pre-occupation), medieval versions of heritage were not solely related to emergent national memories. Boholm for instance, examines how aspects of Roman heritage in the medieval period helped to transform the city of Rome from a decaying backwater into the foremost Christian metropolis.<sup>59</sup> Over several centuries, non-Christian remains came to be placed within an overtly Christian story. Specific heritage stories were mapped onto the cityscape that acted to re-present significant sites and landmarks through the subtle re-interpretation of existing popular memories. Rome's Pagan heritage was used as a device to enhance the authority of the Pope. In this respect, "traditions are not static; they modify and change through time as a result both of their internal dynamic and in response to external demands. The present is informed by the past and the past is reconstructed by the present".<sup>60</sup> It seems from this, that some of the heritage practices commonly associated with the later twentieth century were alive and well in medieval Rome. This statement seems to directly contradict Lowenthal when he noted that the rebuilding of St. Peter's showed that in later medieval Rome, "old stones meant nothing in themselves".<sup>61</sup> However, as Lowenthal admits,<sup>62</sup> the most important aspect of Roman heritage was found in the significance of the site itself, which had become symbolically charged through re-interpretation over several centuries.

This Roman example suggests that the development of the heritage process from the medieval world to the (post)modern, can be characterised in part by an increasing symbolic value that was attached to actual physical remains as opposed to the heritage significance of the site on its own. Certainly the early church always appeared very concerned with maintaining a symbolic link through the re-interpretation of pre-Christian sites.<sup>63</sup> Menuge for instance, argues that the heritage of the first Christians was always of crucial importance to the medieval church.<sup>64</sup> Certainly parallels can be drawn between the branching lineages of well-known monastic centres, saints, abbots, or even teachers, and the more narrow and strictly legal definition of heritage as an inheritance within a family line.<sup>65</sup> This idea of continuity, and control over a specifically presented heritage is echoed in St Gregory the Great's instruction which called for Christian missionaries to "cleanse heathen shrines and use them as churches".<sup>66</sup> This active process of re-use and re-interpretation of sites is a crucial and enduring concept. Even where sites fell out of use (as in Rome), they were often re-used, sometimes centuries later, supported by a desire to utilise the religious gravity that was associated with such sites.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> A. Boholm, 'Reinvented histories: medieval Rome as memorial landscape', *Ecumene*, Vol. 4 (3), 1997, pp. 247-272.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>61</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. 13. This statement seems to ignore the hundreds of instances in Rome alone where 'old stones' *did* appear to mean something. Just in Britain, there are many examples of churches built specifically so as to take into account of some former structure, such as a standing stone, or burial mound. In Sweden, the foremost Christian centre in the entire country (at Uppsala) is built within the precinct of a series of pre-Christian mounds.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Harvey, 'Continuity'.

<sup>64</sup> N.J. Menuge, 'The foundation myth: Yorkshire monasteries and the landscape agenda', *Landscapes*, Vol. 1, 2000, pp. 22-37, (p. 25).

<sup>65</sup> Many religious 'lineages' may well have been false, but ultimately a Christian establishment would desire to show an unbroken inheritance from the original apostles; with all Popes claiming 'direct descent' (as it were) from St. Peter himself for instance.

<sup>66</sup> J. Blair, 'Minster churches in the landscape', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988, pp. 35-58, (p. 50).

<sup>67</sup> Harvey, 'Continuity', p. 52.

In trying to understand the nature of heritage processes in the medieval period, hagiographical accounts would seem to comprise a useful source. These saintly legends represented key elements in the legitimisation of Christian belief and its supposedly unquestionable authority.<sup>68</sup> They also represent a strand of heritage, reflecting how cultural power was wielded through the agency of heritageisation. Hagiographies acted to instil a particular popular relationship with the past that would imbue certain sites with particular significance, renew, enlarge and ritualise religious cults, and (hopefully) generate pilgrimage. Some scholars have successfully portrayed the medieval pilgrim industry as analogous to that of modern tourism, and Abou-el-Haj in particular, has animated the popularity and commercialism involved in the medieval pilgrim business.<sup>69</sup> Although a medieval cathedral was obviously a completely different structure to a modern-day heritage theme park, the crowds, enthusiasm and money-spinning generated could be similarly huge, and the popular mediation of memory and identity, similarly genuine.<sup>70</sup> In other words, they both represent “contemporary products shaped from history” through which people relate to the past. As with the Bonfire Night example, an important element in these cases is the degree to which the identities, memories and temporal experiences of ordinary people are uncovered. Importantly however, this is not some sort of innate or ‘authentic’ folk memory that was somehow primordially instilled, but rather, represents a dialogue between folk experience, elite interests and actions of commodification and commercialism. This reflection of the heritage process is demonstrated particularly well with a close reading of hagiographic legends of local and often obscure saints.

In previous work, I have explored how hagiographies of certain saints in medieval Cornwall reflected a particular pedigree of heritage interpretation that stressed continuity with a particular past and a particular landscape.<sup>71</sup> Although very much arranged and presented within a medieval present, these stories forged a genuine link with past events and physical features. In many ways, people learnt how to identify themselves within both a spatial and temporal landscape, through the memory and popular heritage of saintly legends. In the mostly illiterate society of medieval Cornwall, stories of St. Samson or St. Gwinear for instance, would have been orally narrated, or, particularly on festival days, performed as miracle plays.<sup>72</sup> Henderson even notes that on the occasion of an Episcopal visit to the church of St. Buryan, a Cornish interpreter was brought in order that the local audience could hear the Bishop’s solemn recounting of the story of the “blessed Saint Beriana”.<sup>73</sup> Although presented with contemporary political agendas in mind, such hagiographic accounts expressed the existence of a real popular heritage.

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<sup>68</sup> D.C. Harvey ‘Landscape organisation, identity and change: territoriality and hagiography in medieval west Cornwall’, *Landscape Research*, Vol. 25 (2), 2000, pp. 201-212; B. Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints. Formations and Transformations*, Cambridge: CUP, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> For relation to the tourism industry, see J.M. Fladmark (ed.), *In Search of Heritage: As Pilgrim or Tourist?*, Shaftesbury: Donhead, 1998. Abou-El-Haj, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 7-32.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-5 provides an absorbing narrative of the battle between the Abbot of Vézelay, the monastery of Cluny and the Count of Nevers over the tomb of St. Mary Magdalene. Following heavy ‘lobbying’, the Pope proclaimed the tomb genuine, which led to a century of disputes, including military campaigns, assassinations, propaganda and the “defrocking” and “dishonouring” of the odd monk!

<sup>71</sup> D.C. Harvey and R.A. Jones, ‘Custom and habit(us): The meaning of traditions and legends in early medieval western Britain’, *Geografiska Annaler*, Vol. 81B, 1999, pp. 223-233; Harvey, ‘Continuity’; Harvey, ‘Landscape organisation’.

<sup>72</sup> N. Orme, *Nicholas Roscorock’s Lives of Saints; Cornwall and Devon*, Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1992, p. 136; P. Beresford-Ellis, *Celtic Inheritance*, London: Muller, 1985.

<sup>73</sup> C. Henderson, *Essays in Cornish History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935, pp. 93-107.

We have no evidence that medieval ‘peasants’ got up and demonstrated against the demolishing of a physical relic in the way that people are encouraged to do today, and it certainly seem unlikely that a medieval lay movement existed that was actively concerned with what we might term ‘heritage issues’. However, this situation does not mean that people had no concern for certain issues that we would associate with heritage today. People still had a relationship with the past, and they still actively preserved and managed aspects or interpretations of that past; they were just nurtured into a different experience of this heritage.

### **The development of heritage processes at ancient monuments:**

With the establishment of a longer temporal framework within which to contextualise concepts of heritage, it is now possible to explore the long-term evolution of the heritage process. A useful example with which to illustrate this is that of so-called ‘ancient monuments’. Much has been written about the present-day commercialism and hidden (or not so hidden) agendas that go hand in hand with the presentation of such sites today.<sup>74</sup> The recent re-presentation and issues of exclusion surrounding Stonehenge, in particular, has brought very widespread attention from both academic and non-academic circles,<sup>75</sup> and provides an excellent example which would seem to support the postmodern ‘heritage is destroying history’ argument of people such as Hewison. However, if we take a longer-term temporal perspective of the presentation of such sites, we see that they have always been presented (or intentionally *not* presented) within the context of political agendas and wider conceptions of popular memory contemporary to the time.

As discussed more generally in the examples above, such sites were often utilised and literally ‘taken within’ by the medieval Christian church, while in the early modern period, such sites were interpreted and presented within the context of newer societal structures and arrangements. When William Stukeley described the site of Avebury, he ascribed its origins to ‘British Druids’, adding that “we may make this general reflexion ...that the true religion has chiefly since the repeopling (of) mankind after the Flood subsisted in our island: and here we made the best reformation from the universal pollution of Christianity; Popery”.<sup>76</sup> For Stukeley, the heritage of Avebury represented a strand of anti-Catholicism and helped to legitimise both his national identity, and the validity of his entrenched religious identity. Again we see the heritageisation of a popular memorial artefact being presented within the context of contemporary agendas.

As agendas changed, so too did the referents for heritage interpretations. In 1699 for instance, Edward Llwyd described the Neolithic remains at Newgrange in Ireland as “plainly barbarous”; as a “place of sacrifice used by the old Irish”, and far “too rude for

<sup>74</sup> Just to name but a few; P.L. Kohl and C. Fawcett (eds.), *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, Cambridge: CUP, 1995; P.G. Stone and P.G. Planel (eds.), *The Constructed Past; Experimental Archaeology, Education and the Public*, London: Routledge, 1999; M. Dietler, ‘A tale of three sites: the monumentalisation of Celtic oppida and the politics of collective memory and identity’, *World Archaeology*, Vol. 30 (1), 1998, pp. 72-89; J. Owen, ‘Making histories from archaeology’, in G. Kavanagh (ed.), *making Histories in Museums*, Leicester: LUP, 1996, pp. 200-215. G. Cooney, ‘Theory and practice in Irish archaeology’, in P. Ucko (ed.), *Theory in Archaeology*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 263-277.

<sup>75</sup> B. Bender, *Stonehenge. Making Space*, Oxford: Berg, 1998; T. Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place; Geography, Ideology and Transgression*, Minneapolis: UMP, 1996; C. Chippindale, P. Devereux, P. Fowler, R. Jones and T. Sebastian, *Who Owns Stonehenge?*, London: Batsford, 1990; S. de Bruxelles, ‘How restorers “improved” Stonehenge’, *The Times*, 9/01/2001, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> W. Stukeley, *Abury; A Temple of the British Druids With Some Others Described*, London: Innys, Manby, Dod and Brindley, 1743, p. iv.

so polite a people” as the Romans.<sup>77</sup> Here we see the heritage process working in respect to both conceptions of Irishness (barbarous), and of Classical Rome (polite), and always reflecting a contemporary terrain of cultural power relationships. Over the following two centuries, various antiquarians and amateur archaeologists visited Newgrange, mostly ascribing it to non-Irish origins; the Irish, after all, were supposedly far too backward to build anything as complex.<sup>78</sup> Thomas Pownall for instance, even associated Newgrange with ancient Egyptian builders, or at least a lost Phoenician tribe.<sup>79</sup> As can be seen in so many other heritage presentations, Pownall’s story says more about him and his time than it does about the object of study. Through such descriptions, the monument is presented as evidence of a previous attempt to bring civilisation to Ireland, and a justification of the system of *improvement* and the wider British colonial project in Ireland.

The example of Newgrange demonstrates how the British domination of Ireland was mirrored by their parallel domination over the representation and interpretation of ancient heritage. The native inhabitants were portrayed as either too stupid, or only capable of building such monuments with the help of a civilising influence. This heritage process therefore, reflects the predilections of a powerful elite, and was used to justify wholesale landscape alteration, plantation and *improvement*. Following Irish independence in 1921, the heritage agenda shifted once more, so as to reflect a new post-colonial perspective. Newgrange became a central part of a new national story; one which is homogeneously Gaelic, powerfully evocative of great antiquity, and engendering ideas of rurality, of continuity, the vernacular, and the local; to become a site which is used unproblematically to express an ancestral connection.<sup>80</sup> In this respect, we should perhaps be a little critical of the revisionist versions of Irish national history.<sup>81</sup> Our longer temporal perspective of heritage interpretation reveals that the overtly politicised presentational packages that have been developed in Ireland during the later twentieth century are not new, but are merely (re-)establishing themselves within a heritage landscape that has been interpreted according to a contemporary political agenda for centuries.

### **Concluding thoughts:**

The above examples have illustrated how concepts of heritage have always developed and changed according to the contemporary societal context of transforming power relationships and emerging nascent national (and other) identities. I would see this relationship very much as a *hand in hand* transformation, rather than one of straight *cause and effect*. I have also demonstrated how heritage processes can be explored within a very long temporal framework, and should not be described simply as a recent product of post-modern economic and social tendencies. Most important here, is the notion that heritage is, first and foremost, a *process*. I do not wish to engage in a semantic and ultimately arid debate about tight grammatical definitions, but I do feel that, just as historians have been criticised for a perceived “fetishisation” of the written archive,<sup>82</sup> heritage studies can sometimes come across as fetishising (authentic and

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<sup>77</sup> E. Lhwyd, unpublished letter to Thomas Molyneux, dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 1700 (Molyneux MSS), Trinity College, Dublin.

<sup>78</sup> M. O’Kelly, *Newgrange: Archaeology, Art and Legend*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1982.

<sup>79</sup> T. Pownall, ‘A description of the sepulchral monuments at Newgrange’, *Archaeologia*, Vol. 2, 1773, pp. 236-275.

<sup>80</sup> Cooney, ‘Theory and practice’.

<sup>81</sup> Such as that demonstrated in R. Foster, ‘History and the Irish question’, in C. Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism*, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994, pp. 122-145.

<sup>82</sup> Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*.

preserved) physical relics and remains.<sup>83</sup> To counter this, we should heed Brett's comments about history being a verb; likewise, heritage is not given, it is made and so is, unavoidably, an ethical enterprise.<sup>84</sup>

This essay, therefore, challenges the popular convention of understanding heritage simply as a physical artefact or record, by advocating an approach which treats heritage as a cultural process. Following from Bender's comments on landscape, heritage is "never inert, people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate it and contest it. It is part of the way identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group or nation state".<sup>85</sup> Perhaps even more so than the representation of landscape, heritage is a present-centred cultural practice and an instrument of cultural power. The heritage movement that traces its origins to William Morris and the SPAB of the later nineteenth century represents but one strand of heritage practice, reflecting the perceptions, politics and assumed natural identities of its practitioners. Taking a longer temporal perspective has revealed a complex evolution of heritage, mirroring processes of dialogue and resistance between interested parties. Developments that have occurred should be seen as gradual, tentative and discontinuous, intrinsically linked to changing notions of what heritage *should* be like, and inseparable from the ingrained ritual associated with practices of everyday life.

An appreciation of heritage as a process that has undergone considerable change over the very long term, leads us to consider the factors that account for such temporal transition. For instance, Lowenthal relates what he sees as a secularising tendency within heritage to a process of democratisation.<sup>86</sup> On the face of it, the involvement of heritage with a mass audience as compared to the nineteenth century seems clear-cut. However, our longer-term perspective reveals a large degree of popular involvement in Bonfire celebrations in the seventeenth century and in miracle plays and the like at a much earlier time.<sup>87</sup> Overall though, it does seem certain that a bigger range and number of people are becoming more involved in a much broader and deeper array of heritage phenomena than ever before. Drawing on the ideas of Dodgshon, this transformation in scale, scope and access to heritage can perhaps be related to a transformation in technology.<sup>88</sup> Dodgshon argues that the technologies associated with modernity have led to a huge discovery of time; "both deep past time, through physics, geology, archaeology and history – and future time through physics and planetary science".<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, modern technology has allowed a huge increase in the capacity to store, categorise, interpret and present this broader deposit of time; a carryover, which Dodgshon sees as an essential part of the very being of society.<sup>90</sup> Such technological change, therefore, has led to an increasing bulk and capacity to store, articulate and produce heritage, just as changing leisure practices have allowed greater scope to interpret and 'do' heritage. In this respect, heritage is not seen as a *new* phenomenon,

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<sup>83</sup> This point is well made by Baker; D. Baker, 'Contexts for collaboration and conflict', in G. Chitty and D. Baker (eds.), *Managing Historic Sites and Buildings: Reconciling Presentation and Preservation*, London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 1-21.

<sup>84</sup> D. Brett, 'The construction of heritage', in B. O'Connor and M. Cronin (eds.), *Tourism in Ireland: A Critical Analysis*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1993, pp. 183-202, (p. 186).

<sup>85</sup> B. Bender, 'Introduction; landscape – meaning and action', in B. Bender (ed.), *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, Oxford: Berg, 1993, pp. 1-18, (p. 3). See also Seymour, 'Historical geographies of landscape', p. 214.

<sup>86</sup> D. Lowenthal, 'Stewardship, sanctimony and selfishness – A heritage paradox', in J. Arnold, K. Davies and S. Ditchfield (eds.), *History and Heritage*, 1998, pp. 169-179, (p. 173).

<sup>87</sup> Cressy, 'National memory'. Harvey, 'Landscape organisation'.

<sup>88</sup> Dodgshon, 'Human geography'.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 613.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 616.

nor even one particularly or exclusively associated with modernity. Rather, the transformations that are implied by modernity are simply mirrored by an increasing intensification, recycling, depth and scope of heritage activity. In many respects therefore, the present tendency for nostalgia and finding solace in heritage is just the latest phase of a much longer trajectory.<sup>91</sup>

In parallel with the underdevelopment of a longer temporal perspective on heritage is an underdeveloped sense of heritage history, or what might be termed the ‘heritage of heritage’. Lowenthal drew attention to this when he noted that history itself is a heritage.<sup>92</sup> In this respect, conceptions of modernity and even the longing for the future that Lowenthal speaks of are “contemporary products shaped by the past”.<sup>93</sup> Taking this view, one might therefore see the often-reported and eulogised nineteenth century development of preservationism and architectural protectionism (along with the entire ‘scrape/anti-scrape’ debate) as simply an important ‘moment’ within a much longer trajectory of heritage in Britain. Like all heritage, it is a selective portrayal contingent on present-day requirements, thereby reflecting a sense of nostalgia towards the heritage heroes of yesteryear.

As Lowenthal argues, “heritage, far from being fatally predetermined or God-given, is in large measure our own marvellously malleable creation”.<sup>94</sup> Heritage is not an innate or primordial phenomenon; people have to be taught it. It is the view of this paper that this teaching of heritage has sold the heritage process short by concentrating so heavily on the very recent past, and producing a received wisdom of a heritage that ‘began’ at a particular date in the nineteenth century. In my opinion, we need to acknowledge, understand and embrace the very long-term temporal trajectory of the heritage phenomenon, otherwise we would not understand it at all. As Lowenthal stresses, understanding heritage is crucial; “we learn to control it lest it controls us”.<sup>95</sup>

### **Acknowledgements:**

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<sup>91</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. 5; McCrone et al, *Scotland – the Brand*, p. 11.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi. Also, see the implications of J. Arnold, ‘Nasty histories, medievalism and horror’, in J. Arnold, K. Davies and S. Ditchfield (eds.), *History and Heritage*, 1998, pp. 39-50.

<sup>93</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. 1. These ideas are related to those of Matless (*Landscape and Englishness*) in which a rural nostalgia is fused with a progressive modernism in inter-war England. See M. Andrews review of Matless’s book, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 6 (2), 2000, pp. 185-186.

<sup>94</sup> Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusade*, p. 226.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.