Introduction

This book began for me on the streets of Manila. I had gone to the city in May 1989 to begin doctoral research on the condition of archaeological sites in the developing countries of Southeast Asia. The Philippines had just emerged from twenty years under the kleptocratic Marcos regime, and I encountered a kind of poverty in Manila I had simply not seen in Jakarta or Bangkok. Over a period of weeks, this affected my sense of priorities. Stepping over sleeping bodies on the streets at night, climbing the stairwells of the decrepit National Museum building where torrential rain streamed in through broken windows and ran down the steps, the question of whether a representative sample of archaeological sites was being preserved by the country's heritage management system seemed day by day more remote from the reality around me. Added to this was my growing impression that most people in the archipelago conceived of old and ancient things in ways that were unrelated to the ontologies of archaeology and heritage conservation.

Large numbers of people, particularly those of low socio-economic standing, appeared to regard stone artefacts and ancient pottery as numinous phenomena, which is to say as things imbued with magical power. This extended beyond archaeological remains to the statues and sacred sites of folk Catholicism. In this book, I use the scholarly term 'popular religion' for such beliefs and practices, thus distinguishing them from those that characterise institutional, text-based, orthodox religion. Popular religion entails not just a different view of the material past but a whole different relationship to the material world, one that seemed as out of place in the late twentieth century as I felt myself to be on the pavements of some of those Manila streets.

As I was coming to terms with all this, I was simultaneously coming to realise that significant numbers of the moneyed and landed elite of the Philippines were enthusiastic collectors of the very antiquities that my hosts at the National Museum were trying so hard to preserve *in situ*. From what I could see at the time, the collectors valued these objects as 'things in themselves' rather than as evidence of past human history and behaviour. Over the previous few decades, their appetite for antiquities had led to thousands of archaeological sites in Philippines being potholed. The collecting

phenomenon was as pervasive in the archipelago as was popular religion. Having come to Manila believing that antiquities were by definition archaeological, I was soon having to acknowledge that archaeology was just one among a number of different and to some extent competing valuations, or 'discourses', to use the Foucauldian concept I had only recently discovered. Today this may seem trite, but to me in 1989 it was momentous.

Subsequently I came to see that this situation was not confined to the Philippines. When I went to Thailand late in 1989 to continue my fieldwork, I found a very similar situation. Eventually I came to the view that popular religion and antiquarian collecting, rather than being marginal or exceptional, actually framed the relationship that the great majority of people in Asia had with 'old things'. At the level of popular practice, it was archaeology and the heritage concept that came to seem marginal in Asia. And yet they had captured the high ground: at an official level, then and now, it is their representation of the material past that is salient. It informs government policies and programs, and the education system seeks to instil it in the young. State sanctioning and deployment of archaeology and heritage discourse has been integral to the process of modern state formation in Asia (Anderson 2006, Byrne 2009a, Peleggi 2007) and internationally (Smith 2004).

Popular religion and antiquities collecting constitute the principal themes of *Counterheritage*. While the fields of archaeology and heritage practice seem curiously uninterested in popular religion, the opposite is true of their attitude to antiquities collecting, which is seen as a direct threat not just to the goal of preservation but to the very idea of collective inheritance. The vehemence of their closure against collecting, I maintain, entails a denial of certain commonalities between them, including their shared history (Byrne 1999). Antiquities collectors and the followers of popular religion, on the other hand, seem not to regard archaeology and heritage as inimical to their own practice. Followers of the cult of the Chinese goddess Mazu in Taiwan, for instance, are proud that some Mazu temples are now recognised by the state as items of national heritage, taking this to be an acknowledgement of the goddess's divine status and power. Antiquities collectors, for their part, often show a keen interest in archaeology and do not appear to see the notion of heritage as alien or incompatible with their activities. A striking example of this, related in Chapter 8, is seen in the way collectors in the Philippines ingenuously identify themselves as champions of national heritage.

Along with Laurajane Smith (2004, 2006), I view heritage discourse as essentially hegemonic (Byrne 1991, 1996). There is, as it were, a compact among heritage practitioners not to notice that heritage discourse constructs its own subject, that it constructs heritage items out of old things. This 'not noticing' may on the face of it seem innocent, but its effects are corrosive. The coinage 'counterheritage' denotes not an attack on heritage practice but an insistence on transparency. The book argues for a more democratic heritage practice, one that respects the existence of other ways of relating

to old things and one prepared to take a clear-eyed view of its own history. In writing the book, I endeavour to better understand the politics of my own practice. The book speaks to the need for an ethnography of heritage in Asia, in the same sense that Lynn Meskell (2005, 2010) has called for a practice of archaeological ethnography, which she calls an 'ethnography of us' (2010: 448). In earlier work (Byrne 2008a), I have advocated a 'countermapping' approach which, identifying the map as a technology of power in colonial and post-colonial settings, works to inscribe on maps those elements of the culture and history of marginalised groups that official heritage mapping practices have neglected to 'notice' (see also Harrison 2011a).

DIVINE HERITAGE AND MODERNITY

At temples to the goddess Mazu in downtown Taipei, they are waving lottery tickets through the smoke rising from incense urns; in Bangkok, they are selling amulets made from the dust of crumbling Buddhist stupas; in China, they are making offerings in the vacant lots where local deity temples, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, formerly stood. Who are these people? They are believers in material agency. Along with Buddhists in Burma, Hong Kong gangsters bonded as sworn brothers, northern Thai farmers propitiating nature spirits, or devotees of folk Catholicism in the Philippines, they have in common a conviction that the places, buildings, and objects associated with the spirits and deities they worship are animated by miraculously efficacious supernatural power. 'Associated' is perhaps too weak a word: they apprehend the materiality of these places and things to be continuous with the divinities they worship or placate. For these people, who in Asia number in the hundreds of millions, old things may trigger memories and emotions; they may be instructive about history and emblematic of national identity. But over and above all that, many of these same old things are redolent with possibilities of good or bad fortune. People approach them seeking aid with such mundane priorities of ordinary life as good health, success in love, or prosperity in business. Many of the things we understand to consist of inert matter, they apprehend as animated in a manner not incompatible with Bennett's (2010) understanding of material vibrancy.

Much of the materiality of popular religion is magical, a term encompassing the idea that things such as statues, amulets, shrines, and sacred springs are numinous and efficacious, but also the idea that this efficacy can be transferred via contagion between human bodies and magical objects and that it can be mobilised for human ends by the practice of magic. 'Numinous' is a word that references an inner (immanent) divinity or supernatural force. Belief in the numinous is held by modernity to be prior to and superseded by modernity, and yet the magical aspect of popular religion can be seen to be flourishing in modern contemporary Asia, Africa, Latin America, and parts of Europe. It exists not merely alongside modernity but in concert

with it. Rather than withering in the face of the various Asian economic 'miracles', popular religion and economic advancement appear to be mutually reinforcing (e.g., Goossaert and Palmer 2011; Jackson 1999a, 1999b; Keyes, Hardacre, and Kendall 1994). In the early twenty-first century, there is every indication that belief in the numinous quality of certain objects and places—many of them included on the heritage inventories of Asia—will continue to be perfectly compatible with late modernity.

Belief in the numinous does, however, involve people in practices that often run counter to the conservation ethic. Whereas heritage conservation works to prevent the fragmentation and dispersion of heritage fabric, these same processes are likely to be seen by believers in popular religion as evidence of the 'natural' propensity of numinous material to radiate. The belief that a fragment of a holy object contains a distillation of its power explains why followers of popular Buddhism in Thailand have often sought fragments of ancient stupas as talismans (Byrne 1993, 1995; Pruess 1976: 70; Terwiel 1979: 81). The decay of a religious structure can occasion the radiation of its physical fabric and thus a spatial expansion of the field of its radiant magical force.

The stand that heritage practice takes against dispersion is matched by its opposition to the accretion of new on old fabric. We see this in the conservator's removal of sedimentations of dirt and recent over-painting from old paintings of gods on the walls of Chinese temples. Popular religion, by contrast, favours the piling up of fabric upon fabric, renovation upon renovation, according to the logic that spirits and deities are honoured by the labour and funding expended in the renewal and elboration of the fabric of their temples and shrines. Whereas heritage conservation seeks to stabilise built fabric, popular religion cannot seem to abide stasis.

Heritage discourse and popular religion thus frequently compete over physical fabric. To see this tension as confined to conflicts over archaeological sites and heritage properties is, however, to miss the much larger drama implicit in the linkage between heritage discourse, the project of modernity, and the interests of the nation state. Henri Lefebvre (1991) set out a theory of how the modern state seeks to project its power across the spatial field of the nation by subordinating local and human bodily space to centralised space (see Yang [2004] for an application of Lefebvre to the situation in modern China). As I relate in Chapter 3, the modern nation state in Asia has been waging a campaign against popular religion through the course of the twentieth century and into the present century. It has been termed an 'anti-superstition' campaign (Goossaert 2006), one entailing an effort to secularise and rationalise local space. Put simply, popular religion populates space with nodes of divine, numinous power which are often networked regionally and even internationally (as we see, for instance, in the case of the diasporic networks of temples to the Chinese deities Erlang, Guanyin, Kuan Ti, and Mazu). Situated as they are within what the Thai scholar Winichakul Thongchai (1994) felicitously terms the 'geobody' of the nation,

the modern state quite correctly perceives these local nodes of power to be obstacles to the projection of its own power uniformly across the space within its national borders. The tension between popular religion and the modern nation state stems partly from a perceived incompatibility between the radiation of divine power and the radiation of state power.

Heritage discourse shares with archaeology the modern, Cartesian view that matter is inert and passive (Olsen 2010). This licenses conservators to treat temples as purely human artefacts rather than as phenomena that arise from the bundled effects of divine and human agency. Heritage discourse is wedded to modernity. Ontologically, it proceeds from modern secular rationalism. Asian popular religion, on the other hand, frames the world in a way similar to that pertaining during the European Renaissance when all phenomena were linked in a web of connectivity and 'similitude' (Foucault 1970) reflecting a unifying certainty that all phenomena are created by God. One could also go back to the European medieval belief that the divine power of God and the saints made itself manifest in the miraculous efficacy of certain springs, trees, bodily relics, and altar stones (Chapter 2). In many parts of contemporary Europe, popular Christianity continues to call forth a sacred landscape populated with sites of miraculous agency that include relic shrines and Marian apparition sites (e.g., Carroll 1992, Stewart 1989, Zimdars-Swartz 1991). Popular or 'folk' Catholicism, grounded in the magical supernatural, is very much part of the contemporary European scene and in many ways can be seen as a counterpart to popular religion in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

Julian Thomas (2004: 248) argues for a 'counter-modern' archaeology informed by the critiques of modernity that have been mounted by phenomenology, feminism, and post-structuralism, all of which insist the world is inherently meaningful and not composed of inert matter whose only meaning is that given to it by humanity. He maintains that this does not return archaeology to a 'pre-modern teleology, which presents meaning as a consequence of cosmic order' (2004: 248). I wholeheartedly agree on the desirability of this counter-modern archaeology, but I wish to extend the gesture to embrace heritage practice in contemporary Asia, where the cosmic order is very much alive and well in popular culture. Whereas archaeologists including Bradley (2000), Meskell (2004), and Tilley (1994, 2004), along with Thomas, urge us to acknowledge that prehistoric people lived in a sensory world and a world experienced as numinous, in heritage practice we are confronted with the reality that millions of contemporary people—possibly the majority of the population of the non–West—live in such a world right now. None of these authors would condone the view that contemporary popular religion in Asia is a relic of pre-modern times or that those who practice it are not 'coeval' (Fabian 1983) with us. That social-evolutionary perspective was put to rest by anthropologists and archaeologists decades ago. I maintain, though, that such thinking endures at an implicit level in the field of heritage practice. One of the reasons the field

declines to acknowledge popular religion, I suggest, is that it really does regard it as a superseded form of knowledge, one belonging to the past rather than to the contemporary reality of Asia.

I can readily understand how difficult it is for many of my colleagues in the heritage field to accept that a widespread faith in miracle-working gods and in the magical efficacy of statues, stones, and incense smoke is as much a part of Asia's future as electric cars, stock exchanges, sea level rise, and Prada handbags. Even those willing to concede this may fall back on the thought that if older people in Asia 'still' have faith in the magical supernatural, surely this cannot be true ot youngsters with bleached hair. Similar to this is our tendency to think of belief in the magical supernatural as being compartmentalised within otherwise modern-rational lives. Avron Boretz's (2003, 2010) work is a good antidote to this. Boretz insists that those aspects of the lives of his ethnographic interlocutors in Taiwan which involve gangsterism, motor scooter riding, and recreational drug use are continuous with their channelling of the spirit of the martial god, Guan Gong, during religious processions. If Boretz's subjects were to decide to rebuild one of Guan Gong's temples, we would be as rash to think they were acting in isolation from the god's own wishes (conveyed in dreams or trances) or from their individual aspirations for advancement in a gang hierarchy.

I suggest that our urge to contain or compartmentalise the magical-supernatural is linked to a post–Reformation change in the European worldview which saw a differentiation of spheres, a number of which—the state, the economy, science—were defined as secular (Casanova 1994). Concomitantly, religion was placed in a sphere of its own. While modern Asian societies are similarly internally differentiated, one of the striking things about popular religion in Asia is the way it integrates with the economic, educational, and political spheres. Its concern is much less with the condition of the soul than with the mundane imperatives of earthly life.[1] Followers of popular religion turn to the gods, the Buddha, the saints and bodhisattvas for specific assistance in such mundane matters as success in university examinations, the happy conclusion of business deals, and protection of their bodies from physical and spiritual assault.

The difficulty most heritage practitioners seem to have in conceding coevality to popular religion is understandable in the light of a longstanding investment by the West in the idea of it being a manifestation of the primitive state. As such, belief in the supernatural is deemed separate and distant from us in time and space (Fabian 1983). As Marlene Van Niekerk (1998: 56) has argued, 'superstition' may present itself to us as a category of belief but in really it is an instrument we have employed for rendering the other different and distant and for authorising our subjugation and exploitation of others. In her view, vulnerability to superstition was taken to be a token of the infantile state of the native mind, and this in turn legitimated colonial paternalism.

In Chapter 3, I describe the way the modern post-colonial state in China and Southeast Asia, rather than rejecting colonialism's denigration of popular religion, absorbed it into its own statecraft. Emergent indigenous nationalist elites held popular religion (glossed as superstition) to be an impediment to science's promise of advancement. State campaigns against belief in the supernatural persisted through most of the twentieth century in China and Thailand and through the second half of the twentieth century in other parts of Southeast Asia, often involving the destruction of temples, old and new, or their conversion into schools or offices. I argue that heritage practice was complicit in these campaigns.

In an implicit acknowledgement of their failure, the last four decades or so have seen a softening of anti-superstition measures. In the second half of Chapter 3, I provide details of how, in China and the formerly hardline socialist countries of Southeast Asia, religious practice of all kinds has undergone a tremendous revival in the last three or four decades. Elsewhere in the region, meanwhile, popular religion continually metamorphoses into new forms which keep pace with economic, social, and media changes. It shows a striking capacity to mesh with these spheres and match their dynamism. The 'hard' version of the secularization thesis, which belonged to the Enlightenment critique of religion and held that modernization causes a decline in religion, has thus been 'disproven' (Szonyi 2009: 313). The situation today in Asia speaks to the obvious: that however much its reverberations reached into Asia, the Enlightenment, like the Reformation, remained a European provincial experience (Chakrabarty 2000). It seems that heritage practice in Asia has yet to adjust to this reality.

Christian missionary efforts in Asia in the nineteenth century, especially those of the Protestant denominations, were deeply imbued with the expectation that universal scientific education and mass literacy would see a withering of belief in the supernatural. Instead, we see science supplementing 'superstition' rather than killing it; we see modern medicine flourishing alongside the cults of popular religion. Both antibiotics and invulnerability charms are deployed—bundled together, one might say—to protect the same bodies. As to literacy, if access to the world of textual learning has weaned some people off the supernatural, it can equally be argued (Jordan 1994: 151–152) that it rendered sacred tracts and texts more easily transmissible, leading to a standardisation of popular religious traditions and to formerly localised cults and sacred sites becoming more widely known.

The heritage field has now adopted a 'values' approach that conceptualises heritage items as having multiple kinds of significance or value (Harrison 2013a: 145)—see for example Australia ICOMOS's Burra Charter (1999) and the Getty Conservation Institute's values assessment model (Avrami et al. 2000). Heritage 'best practice' urges that these categories of significance be documented and assessed prior to the making of heritage management decisions. Yet rather than leading to an accommodation of popular religion, this approach continues its displacement in another guise. While ostensibly

offering a value-neutral, level-playing-field approach to heritage management, one cannot help noticing that it is heritage discourse that is in the driver's seat. What the values approach tends to obscure is that heritage discourse is itself a 'value' (Poulios 2010) or a system of valuation in terms of which value is produced (Samuels 2008: 82). The sleight of hand involved here is that a process presenting itself as disinterested and objective, in other words as value-neutral, has already off-camera carried out a massive act of valuation in constructing the thing in question as heritage. It might thus be said that heritage is a 'value' disguised as a process.

LOOTING REAPPRAISED

The illicit removal of antiquities from archaeological sites and monuments has for a number of decades been referred to as 'looting' by the fields of archaeology and heritage, a term expressing unambiguous condemnation. Whereas in Asia the heritage field's effacement of popular religion takes the form of ignoring popular belief in the numinous nature of old things and sites, the campaign against looting in a sense does the opposite: it shines a spotlight on the prevalence of a popular practice and on the damage it causes to archaeological sites and heritage properties.

There is much that is problematic about the campaign against looting, beginning with its manifest failure to curtail the practice in Asia (see Chapter 9). Of more interest to me, however, is the insight the campaign offers on the nature of heritage practice itself. It is revealing that virtually all commentators make quite clear that those engaged in 'looting'—illegal excavators, grave robbers, dealers, and their local agents—are simply at the supply end of a market created and sustained by antiquities collectors. Without the collectors, 'looting' would not occur. It is therefore remarkable how little serious attention commentators give to the contemporary practice of antiquities collecting. The *Journal of the History of Collections*, for example, focuses on European collecting in the period up to the nineteenth century, with occasional pieces on European collecting in the early and mid-twentieth century. Probably the best insight into contemporary patterns of collecting Asian antiquities (in the West and Asia) is to be had from glossy collector magazines such as *Orientations*. The nature of the anti-looting discourse is such as to demonise and exoticise collecting and to exaggerate the distinction between it and the fields of archaeology and heritage. And yet even a cursory examination of the history and current practice of antiquities collecting in Asia and the West reveals that, far from being foreign to and incommensurate with archaeology and heritage, this practice is very much entangled with them. It shares much of their history and embodies an economy of value that intersects with their own at key points.

Previously, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and following Hamilakis and Yalouri (1996), I have pointed to the way heritage discourse construes

antiquities as being part of the cultural capital of the nation, a construction that encourages—one might even say requires—the *display* of this capital in museums and at archaeological and monumental sites and via various media (Byrne 1999). Given this situation, I argued, in Asia it became impossible to confine the desire for that capital to the institutions of the nation. Instead, members of the national elite and the emerging middle class have sought to display their patriotism and build their own status by accruing this cultural capital to themselves. In the countries of Asia, the state has not had the means to police the boundary between the interests of the nation and those of its citizen collectors. More than that, I have suggested it might not greatly *matter* to the state (despite official rhetoric to the contrary) whether the nation's heritage is displayed in the glass cabinets of museums or on the glass coffee tables of private homes.

With reference to Southeast Asia and China, *Counterheritage* extends my earlier analysis of collecting and 'looting', hoping to lay some of the groundwork for a deeper understanding of the relationship between the two. I am by no means an advocate of private antiquities collecting, but nor do I believe there should be an embargo on giving serious, scholarly attention to it as a social practice. Without such attention and depth of understanding, we are seriously compromised in trying to stem its supply-side impacts, witnessed for example in the scars left on Angkorean temples when stone carvings are sawn off or in prehistoric sites pitted and holed by pothunters. This is not a book against heritage, it is against the heritage field's blind spots and its disinclination to examine the basis of its own practice.

The two themes of the book, popular religion and antiquities collecting, converge at certain points. One such convergence arises from the habit which many followers of popular religion have of collecting sacred objects with numinous qualities. Often these objects also fall under the category of antiquities. The quest for sacra is a quest for access to the efficacy embodied in statues of gods, Buddhist amulets, prehistoric ground-edge axes, and numinous glass beads, to name just a few such objects of desire. A thriving market exists for them. They are cash convertible. As I argue in Chapter 9, though most of those digging for these objects or seeking them by other means would understand them to be sacra, this is not incompatible with an understanding of them as tradable commodities.

Another convergence is found at the level of mobility. While the fields of archaeology and heritage practice are not opposed to the mobility of antiquities per se, they insist this movement should take place exclusively within their own spheres and circuits. Objects are permitted, for instance, to move from archaeological deposits into archaeological laboratories and museums. But we should not be blind to the other contexts of mobility that continue to be common outside these fields. Stone and bricks from ancient monuments in Southeast Asia are often dispersed as farmers in the surrounding countryside recycle them to build field boundary walls, houses, and other structures (see, for example, Raffles 1965: 8, 32). I recall staying in a Thai government

guest house in Chiang Saen in far north Thailand in 1990 and finding the stepping stones I was walking on in the back garden to be recycled laterite disks, components of fallen columns from the ruins of Buddhist temples in the town. The technique of anastylosis, used by restorers of monuments to fit back together dispersed stone and other building components, is characterised as a corrective to this kind of dispersion, but it can equally be seen as simply another leg in the travels of the material, another step in their life history. The use of dispersed stone to make field walls could be described as economically productive. There are other situations in Asia in which dispersion is *socially* productive. Writing about the partial dismantlement and dispersion of an old wooden house in north-east Peninsula Malaysia, Syed Ariffin (2013) describes how elements of the structure were incorporated by relatives into new houses up to several kilometres away, so honouring the 'glory' of the original home and 'multiplying' the lineage's inheritance. In another case, the same practice is 'likened to taking a cutting from a plant' both in the sense that a new house springs up from the old and that the lineage is preserved and continues (Ariffin 2013: 77–80).

In the case of a wide range of objects, mobility is intrinsic to their sacredness. When statues of deities and saints in China, Taiwan, and the Philippines are carried in procession around their local cult territories, it is understood that their power-efficacy is being sustained in the act of surveying their domain while, at the same time, their devotees and their residences in the domain benefit from the physical proximity of the statue as it makes its rounds. As Bautista (2010) observes, such objects move because they are efficacious, and they are efficacious partly because they move. The numinous nature of religious objects animates them in ways that imply mobility. This is clearly the case with statues, amulets, and ex-votos that are designed to be portable, but it can also apply to monuments such as Thai Buddhist stupas in which all of the structure's fabric—bricks, mortar, stucco, decorative tiles—partake in the object's supernatural vibrancy. This vibrancy can seem to invite devotees to remove fragments of the structure in a process by which the dispersion of fabric parallels the radiation of the structure's numinous power (see Chapter 4).

In the area of antiquities collecting, the absence of clear boundaries between the sacred and the profane is of particular interest. A significant proportion of objects targeted by 'looters' and collectors in Buddhist Southeast Asia are religious either in their original context, their contemporary context, or both. It seems highly unlikely that either the 'looters' or the collectors, the great majority of whom are themselves Buddhist, are indifferent to the objects' religious status or efficacy. In the case of the former, especially when statues and structural stone carvings are 'stolen' from temples and monuments, this would seem to imply acts of sacrilege with all its attendant dangers. But even this may not be clear-cut since the pragmatic aspect of popular religion provides opportunities, via placatory offerings to site guardian spirits, for instance, to forestall the negative spiritual fallout from

the act of 'stealing' them. In Chapter 9, I describe a tension which exists between the sacred integrity of Thai Buddhist stupas and the desire of many people to rob them of their treasure (including caches of amulets), a tension that is virtually institutionalised in Buddhist practice. Also, it would be wrong to think that statues of the Buddha or of bodhisattvas cease to be regarded as divine once they enter private collections in Asia. At a more theoretical level, the act of collection can itself be regarded as a kind of ritual, one in which objects are enshrined and treated by the collector with reverence (Belk 2006, Meskell 2004).

THE STYLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book's first six chapters examine the implications for heritage in Asia of popular religion and its belief in the supernatural essence and efficacy of temples, shrines, religious images, archaeological sites, ruins, and a plethora of other objects, many of them old and many of them belonging to what archaeology and heritage practice considers to be its own preserve. In Chapter 1 I narrate the circumstances in which, in the late 1980s, I first became interested in this subject. There and at several other points in the book, I adopt a personal-narrative style, acknowledging that my personal history with the subject matter cannot be disentangled from the intellectual understanding of it that I have arrived at.

There is a vein of writing in the humanities and social sciences in which scholars attempt to draw closer to the truth of things by combining intellectual discourse with personal experience (see, for example, Ang 2001, Muecke 1997, Stewart 1996). Michael Taussig, for example, has this to say about ethnography:

> They say science has two phases: the imaginative logic of discovery, followed by the harsh discipline of proof. Yet proof is elusive when it comes to human affairs; a social nexus is not a laboratory, laws of cause and effect are trivial when it comes to the soul, and the meaning of events and actions is to be found elsewhere, as in the mix of emotion and reasoning that took the anthropologist on her or his travels in the first place. (Taussig 2011: xi)

As in ethnography, in archaeology and heritage studies, the 'imaginative logic of discovery' is very often enacted in the landscape as well as in the context of travel (Byrne 2007, 2013a). In the present book, the trajectory of the reasoned arguments is shadowed by a trajectory through Asia's geography.

The chapters are anchored in case studies located in the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, and China. Why this set of places? They represent a good range of historical and contemporary contexts in which to examine

the book's two principal themes, but they also track the trajectory over time of my own experience with the region. This began with the Philippines and Thailand, but as I became increasingly aware of the enormous richness of the English language literature of anthropology and modern history that was available on China and Taiwan, and of its relevance to my interests, I extended northward. This literature represents a wonderful resource for heritage studies. It speaks to the relationships ordinary people have with their material past and is eloquent on the ways the modern state in Asia has sought to intervene in and shape these relationships. I mine this literature particularly in Chapters 5 and 6.

Within a book of this size, it would have been impossible to cover other Asian countries—the standout omissions being Japan and India—at anything like the level of detail that would be satisfying. However, even allowing for the book's restricted geographic coverage, it would surprise me if the situations depicted here do not resonate in various ways for those who are familiar with the world of heritage elsewhere in Asia as well as in the Latin world, Africa, and parts of Europe where popular religion is a major force in contemporary society or where the collecting and illegal excavation of antiquities is a major issue.

In the course of Chapters 2 and 8, I look to Europe for what I see as essential historical background. There are two reasons for this westward gaze. The first is a desire to understand the baggage of cultural-historical influence that people like myself bring with us to Asia and that shape so many of our assumptions and expectations about human relations with old objects and places there. It would, for example, be naïve to think the attitude of Western heritage practitioners to popular religion in Asia owes nothing to the influence of the Protestant Reformation and the disenchantment of the European mind. The second reason is that the West has, over the last century or so, had a profound influence on the way heritage has been constituted as a field of ideology and practice in Asia (Winter and Daly 2012: 11). Previous to that, the West in its colonial-imperial capacity was equally influential in Asia's embrace of modernity. Nationalist movements in Asia in the first half of the twentieth century were acutely sensitive to Western denigration of Asian popular religion as backward, risible, and illustrative of a native mentality unfit for self-governance in the modern age (Chakrabarty 2000). As Edward Said (1978) observed, the epistemological violence of colonial powers had consequences long after the end of colonialism. For the modernising nationalist elites of Asia, their own people's belief in the supernatural embarrassed them in the face of the West.

Geographically focused case studies are presented at several points in the book. Chapter 1 is concerned with popular religion in the Philippines and its implications for heritage practice. Chapter 3's focus is on China and Thailand—the campaigns waged by reform-minded elites and the modern state against 'superstition' and the late-twentieth-century resurgence of popular religion. The whole of Chapter 4 is devoted to examining Thai

Buddhist practices of restoring and rebuilding stupas. Chapters 5 and 6 range geographically from China and Taiwan to Thailand and some other parts of Southeast Asia. In Chapter 7, I return to the Philippines to recount the circumstances in which, in 1989, I became aware of and interested in the upsurge in antiquities collecting and the attendant wave of illegal digging that occurred from the 1960s across the archipelago. In examining antiquities collecting and looting as social practices, in Chapters 8 and 9, my reference is mainly to the situation—historical and contemporary—in Thailand. Overall my concern will be not so much with the specifics of heritage practice in Asia as with the way different classes of people there live with and become entwined with the objects and places we refer to as heritage.

The West's license to act hegemonically in Asia, so striking an aspect of heritage practice in the twentieth century (Byrne 1991), is expiring along with its global economic dominance. Much of our effort in heritage practice has been devoted to educating local people in Asia away from those customary and modern ways of treating old things that we consider prejudicial to their integrity as heritage items. It is time to ask by what means these objects are heritage and who benefits from that designation. In the future I see for the heritage field in Asia, we as heritage aficionados will need to come to terms with loss—the loss of our ability to classify everything old as heritage and to then pass judgement on human interactions with 'heritage' according to whether in our terms they degrade it, obliviate it, or preserve it. But this loss will be more than compensated for by what we gain in terms of our awareness of and pleasure in the richness and diversity of the ways people in Asia 'dialogue' (Harrison 2013a) with old things and places, tangle with them, configure and reconfigure them. It is towards this future that *Counterheritage* looks.

This book is a product of my thinking over a long period of time, making it difficult to put names to all those I would want to thank. Without the open-hearted generosity of a number of scholars at the Australian National University in the late 1980s and early 1990s, my first research in Southeast Asia would have been far less rewarding. They were Isabel McBryde, Peter Bellwood, Craig Reyolds, Gehan Wijeyewardene, Doug Miles, Johan Kamminga, Rick Fordham-Edwards, David Bulbeck, I Wayan Ardika, and Ipoi Datan.

For their hospitality and advice in the Philippines in 1989, I thank Mel Aguilera, Margarita Cembrano, Bong Dison, Bernandinito Galpo, Jesus Peralta, and Wilfredo Ronquillo, all of the National Museum of the Philippines. I thank Aniceto Mendes for his guidance and companionship. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance given to me in Thailand in 1989 and 1990 by Patchanee Chandrasakha, Pisit Charoenwongsa, Somchart Chungsiriarak, Nikom Musigakama, Surapon Natapintu, Suphot Prommamoch, Vira Rojpojchanarat, Somsuda Rutnin, and Pathomchai Saengduangdee, all of the Thai government's Fine Arts Department. Thanks also to Gerard Dudeffent, Padung Kaewpradit, and Graeme Storer for hospitality and advice in Thailand.

For their care and great generosity in commenting on a draft manuscript of the book, I sincerely thank Rodney Harrison, Lynn Meskell, and Alfredo González Ruibal. Without them, the book would have been immeasurably poorer. For their encouragement, willingness to listen, and acts of support over the last few years, I offer my warmest thanks to Steve Brown, Emma Dortins, Caroline Ford, Lynn Meskell, Tim Winter, and last but by no means least, Daniel Ng. None of those mentioned here is responsible for the views expressed in the book or for whatever errors or oversights it contains.

NOTE

1. Ironically, popular religion's failure to differentiate in this way is one of the reasons that in China, the state refuses to recognize it under the category of religion (Szonyi 2009: 321), and this itself reflects the fact that Chinese modernity has not reproduced the Western pattern of modern differentiation.