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Heritage

Ritual, Tradition, and Contestation

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To the spirit that drives
two hearts to beat as one

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helpful people at Carolina Academic Press for working with us on this book.

All of the materials in the book stem from decades of the Authors' research in these field areas where they spend some part of each year. Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern) and Andrew J. Strathern are a wife-and-husband research team who are based in the Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh and co-direct the Cromie Burn Research Unit. They are frequently invited international lecturers and have worked with numbers of museums to assist them with their collections. Stewart and Strathern have published over 50 books, over 80 Prefaces to influential books, over 200 articles, book chapters, and essays on their research in the Pacific (mainly Papua New Guinea (Mount Hagen, Duna, and Wiru areas primarily) and the South-West Pacific region, e.g., Samoa, Cook Islands, and Fiji); Asia (mainly Taiwan, and also including Mainland China + Inner Mongolia, and Japan); and Europe (primarily Scotland, Ireland, Germany and the European Union countries in general); and also New Zealand and Australia. One of their strengths is that unlike some others working in the Mount Hagen among the Hagen people the language of of the people, Melpa, was learnt and used to understand the lives of the people locally. Their most recent co-authored books include *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors, and Gossip* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); *Kinship in Action: Self and Group* (Prentice Hall, 2011); *Peace-Making and the Imagination: Papua New Guinea Perspectives* (University of Queensland Press with Penguin Australia, 2011); *Ritual: Key Concepts in Religion* (Bloomsbury Academic Publications, 2014); *Working in the Field: Anthropological Experiences Across the World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); *Breaking the Frames: Anthropological Conundrums* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); *Sacred Revenge in Oceania* (Cambridge University Press, 2019); *Language and Culture in Dialogue* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019); and Stewart. Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern (2019). *Sustainability, Conservation, and Creativity: Ethnographic Learning from Small-scale Practices* (Routledge Publishing, 2019).

Their recent co-edited books include *Research Companion to Anthropology* (Routledge Publishing, 2016, originally published in 2015); *Exchange and Sacrifice* (Carolina Academic Press, 2008) and *Religious and Ritual Change: Cosmologies and Histories* (Carolina Academic Press, 2009, and the Updated and Revised Chinese version: Taipei, Taiwan: Linking Publishing, 2010. Stewart and Strathern's current research includes the topics of Cosmological Landscapes; Ritual Studies; Political Peace-making; Comparative Anthropological Studies of Disasters and Climatic Change; Language, Culture and Cognitive Science; and Scottish and Irish Studies. For many years they served as Associate Editor and General Editor (respectively) for the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania book series and they are Co-Series Editors for the Anthropology and Cultural History in Asia and the Indo-Pacific book series that they created. They also currently Co-Edit four further book series that they created: Ritual Studies; Medical Anthropology; European Anthropology; and Disaster Anthropology and they are the long-standing Co-Editors of the *Journal of Ritual Studies* [Facebook: https:// www.facebook.com/ritualstudies].

A recently published biographical note for Stewart and Strathern can be found in their co-authored book: *Diaspora, Disasters, and the Cosmos Rituals and Images* (2019) at https://cap-press.com/pdf/9781611633986.pdf. We thank all the agencies and people who have supported our work over the years.

Front Cover of this book: Taiwan Indigenous Images on a Mural (PJ Stewart / AJ Strathern Photographic Archive).

Back Cover of this book: Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew J. Strathern in one of their favorite field areas (PJ Stewart / AJ Strathern Photographic Archive).

Introduction

Scholars study heritage from many different perspectives, as an aspect of history, as the production of memory, and as subject to political processes of rivalry over its content and value. In this book we extend those perspectives by looking at heritage as a form of ritualization in the sense pioneered by Catherine Bell (Bell 1997, see also Stewart and Strathern 2014a, 2016). 'Ritualization' refers to the processes by means of which action is turned into ritual through giving it incremental value over time. In these terms what starts out as a spontaneous form of action may over time crystallize into a more standardized and self-conscious performance, designed to display message about identity, legitimacy, and social power. This emergent pattern, developing through more or less staged performances, can be seen as the performance of heritage. What makes such performances compelling is that they can knit together peoples' senses of their identity, shaping these senses in an imagistic form encapsulating senses of value and allegiance. Aspects of culture that are often highlighted in this way are readily recognizable in forms of ritual. However, more everyday actions and patterns of action also feed into formalized performances. Heritage can be something quotidian, such as a particular way of planting or harvesting a

crop, as well as extraordinary in form, such as in a public parade or orchestrated dance pattern.

When does culture in general become heritage is particular? Through processes of ritualization, actions may become more differentiated from each other and invested with consciousness, so that people are not only 'doing things' but are doing so in a marked rather than unmarked fashion, seeking an audience as witnesses of their actions. Action then becomes performance, and performance constructs 'heritage'.

As the word itself points out, heritage implies a further valency. It is looked on as a rightful inheritance, belonging to a specific set of people and deriving from the past, from the ancestors. Identities that are built up out of heritage must therefore be based on an appropriation of history, whereby something from the past is transported into the present through the magical embodiment of kinship. Heritage is always, then, *someone's* heritage, it is not a floating signifier but a located one, it can be 'pinned down'. For the same reason, it can become an object of contestation, when there is a dispute about the mode of succession to it. Heritage can be used to include people but also to exclude them, indeed the notion of inclusion implies a corresponding dialectic of exclusion.

Circumstances of conflict of this kind can produce overt hostilities. They also provide a context in which compromises and innovations can emerge. Ritual, then, begins with an identification with the past and tradition, but continues in the shape of innovation that unites past and present practices together. Heritage comes to look two ways, Janus-faced, rooting itself in the past, but achieving a relevance for the future. Herein lies the kernel of creativity in ritual, encompassing heritage in the past and pushing it forward in new directions.

How does all this apply to the case studies we have juxtaposed here?

In the case of the Ulster-Scots in Ireland, the heritage they have sought to claim, linking them also to an imagined Scotland from

which many Ulster-Scots people came to Ulster in Ireland is quite clear-cut. They see themselves as a kind of Scots, distinct from the Irish, even though they palpably also share in Irish culture. By grafting their identities onto a Lowlands Scottish identity, they have differentiated themselves from their Irish neighbors, and they have expressed this in dance, song, and poetry / dialect that signals this differentiation. The July Orange Parades, famous and contested at the same time, are prime contexts in which all this is expressed and merges with a wider politics of confrontation. Support for Sottish dance forms and tunes, Scottish ritual gear in the shape of kilts, and material culture such as the big Lambeg drums, all amount to an amplitude of identity-laden messages of this sort.

In the case of our Taiwan study, it is even more the case that identities are performed ritually. Many indigenous ritual practices were suppressed through influences of the Japanese and Chinese colonizers, such as tattooing or shamanic practices linked to seasonal festivals, and harvest festivals themselves, as well as ecological practices connecting people to the forest and their ancestral habitats. Much ritual and heritage were at first destroyed or forbidden. But heritage reasserts itself through the compelling medium of ritual, as our case history of the innovative reinstatement of heritage ties to a statue belonging to a leading chiefly family demonstrates. The creation of a ritual tie of affinity with the national Director of the museum in the capital, Taipei, shows also that an innovative cultural act may encompass political ends through the imposition of a ritual form based on an image of alliance through marriage.

Our case from Mount Hagen in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea shows anther arena of complexity. An archaeological site demonstrating the great and hitherto unsuspected time-depth in the area afforded the possibility of another ritualization; that is, the creation of a UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The local Kawelka people claim the land on which these discoveries were made, and through this they have sought to claim a special ritual identity for themselves. Heritage has been created out of these materials. What

is also interesting is that the owners of the land involved have sought further to claim as an integral part of their project of heritage making two ritual markers found close to the archaeological site and Centre they set up (with the aid of a supportive expatriate businessman) (see Strathern and Stewart 1998, 2018). One marker is an ancestral stone monument, linked to the Kawelka's claim to the land through one of their ancestral leaders, Koi. The other is the site where the sacred stones that are the markers of a huge ritual performance of a sacrifice of pigs to honor a Female Spirit are said to be buried nearby to the stone monument and to the Heritage or interpretive Centre that has been built as a part of the stewardship of the ritual area. The expansive ritual imagination has thus bridged a conceptual gap between the Kawelka and the archaeological site by amalgamating it with two further markers that undoubtably do link the Kawelka ritually to the land. Archaeology and oral history are blended together in this way to create a new ritual heritage, built from the past for present purposes and as a pathway into the future.

Questions relating to heritage are played out world-wide today in numbers of contexts. In this book, we approach this arena by means of three contrasting studies, from Ireland, Taiwan, and Papua New Guinea [all regions that we have worked in for decades and have continually visited, with the most recent trips to Ireland in 2019 and Papua New Guinea in 2019 and 2020 and Taiwan in 2017] (see, Stewart and Strathern 2014b). Groups that claim heritage over aspects of culture depend on their overall contemporary political relations in order to make good these claims. "Ownership" means different things according to the political distribution of power as this impacts particular minority groups. How ownership plays out also varies with the levels of identities that are brought into play, from the local to the global. We argue that while "heritage" ostensibly indexes culture and tradition in general, it is politics that inflects how heritage is defined and claims over it are realized. This explains why heritage is also often a contested category, becoming a focus for arguments about continuity and change.

Heritage is a category that overlaps the arenas of culture and politics. It is often a category that is the locus of contests over resources and identities. In this book we seek to show how this interplay between Culture, History, and Politics is manifested in our case studies. The Heritage that we discuss is both tangible and intangible and the issues are pervasive in many different parts of the world.

Summarizing these general points, we may conclude that heritage as a concept refers to the appropriation of claims to cultural practices. Claims to a heritage act as attempts to legitimize the identities of the claimants, so that culture becomes a resource for establishing those identities, often vis a vis claims made by others in opposition to these claimants. Heritage purports to be a neutral term, but in practice claims to it are often contested and can lead to conflicts.

In each case our focus is on heritage issues as these involve minority or local groups within a wider nation-state context. "Heritage" manifests itself as a force in such a context through the creation of memories that link identities to entitlements and esteem within a wider field of opportunity and political consciousness. Heritage can be made to 'stick' to certain localities both as a means of self-realization and as a pathway to obtaining resources. Quite often it takes the form of opposition to, or contrast with, other groups.

Our three case-histories will show how these factors operate in recognizable, but also different, ways owing to circumstances of encapsulation in wider polities. Our Taiwanese case entails looking at the extraordinary history of indigenous Austronesian groups in a land dominated by the Han peoples who colonized, married-in, and transformed the island. Our Ireland case is about the Ulster-Scots category of peoples, descendants of settlers who came to the northern part of Ireland as a part of the colonization process known as the Plantation of Ulster in the seventeenth century. This identity has become compressed into the major axis of conflict be-

tween political parties in Northern Ireland, embracing the putative Catholic vs Protestant versions of Christianity. Ulster-Scots identities, however, depend on a broad sense of Scottish heritage, shown clearly in language traditions. The case shows how a heritage movement can both be confined within a political context and strive to transcend the sectarian implications of that context.

The case from Taiwan shows parallels with and differences from Ireland. Here we focus on the small minority (c. 2% of the total population) of indigenous peoples who have been in Taiwan long before the colonization by outsiders starting with Han Chinese colonists from the sixteenth century onward and accelerated by the accession in 1949 to Taiwan of Chiang Kai-Shek and his soldiers and followers, with an interlude of Japanese control from 1895–1945. Indigenous Aboriginal cultures have in the past been extensively overlain by Japanese and Chinese influences, but they have recently been brought to the fore essentially as a part of a struggle over identities between Taiwan as a whole and Mainland China. Taiwanese Aborigines have been viewed as emblematic of what makes Taiwan different from China. A minority category has therefore entered into macro-politics, as has happened also with Ulster-Scots.

For the Taiwanese Aborigines, then, heritage has become a resource for reasserting their minority indigenous identities in contrast with settler communities of people who came and colonized the land at later times.

The indigenous Taiwanese groups have also shown much ingenuity and resourcefulness in pursuing their cultural revival, often reaching outward to the Pan-Pacific Austronesian cultures, e.g., the New Zealand Maori groups. The Ulster-Scots have also reached out to the wider diasporic movement from their communities, notably to North America. In both cases the aim has been to strengthen local political leverage and identity formations.

The Papua New Guinea case shows another globalized context. in the territory of a small tribe, the Kawelka, minor players in a regional political scene. In this field area of ours we have worked

with archeologists for several decades, in our capacity as local social-anthropologists. An amazing history has been uncovered demonstrating a time-depth of garden cultivation going back 10,000 years. This discovery has given to the Kawelka and their region a sense of identity that did not exist before. After a long struggle, the area involved was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. Who can claim this heritage and what struggles surround it? The case-study traces the history of the site and its current encapsulation in regional and national politics. The Kawelka hold the key to a national resource which can enhance Papua New Guinea's international standing. The archeological work carried out by scientists from Australia and elsewhere has become the foundation for the creation of a cultural consciousness that did not exist before. The case- study shows the process of creating that consciousness. Here the reaching outward of the local identities is to a World community of human heritage.

It is important to stress in advance here the particularity of the case study. In the literature on the Pacific there is an extensive set of discussions by anthropologist regarding the recovery, preservation, and revitalization of indigenous cultural forms faced by extraneous forces of change. A predominant feature of the literature is that culture is presented as an adaptive tool in which people both accommodate to and resist such processes of change. In the course of so doing, they also reinvent and modify aspects of their customary life, incorporating and domesticating the outside so it becomes inside. In colonial and postcolonial contexts these processes are often based on opposition to outside control and on attempts to re-achieve a local autonomy perceived as having been lost. We will give further background on this topic in our section on the Kawelka people of Mount Hagen in Papua New Guinea. However, our present study's main aim is to investigate the special case of the election of a World Heritage UNESCO site among the Kawelka, which is not a case of the revival of indigenous custom or its contemporary reification. It is rather an appropriation of scientific findings that

have involved a substantial rewriting of the history of agriculture at a global level, reflexively transformed into local 'heritage'.

In the Kawelka people, then, a special claim on the results of detailed archeological work on their territory has arisen as a means of realizing that claim as a resource for cultural preservation and stewardship of the site.

In each of these cases something unique is claimed by a distinct group: language by the Ulster-Scots, Austronesian identity and language by the indigenous Taiwan groups, and the UNESCO World Heritage site by the Kawelka in Papua New Guinea, making each unique thing into an effective cultural and political tool of identity in what has involved each area in struggles over the identities themselves and what these identities might mean in economic and political terms.

In all cases issues over land, identity, and ownership of rights to what is seen as cultural property, emerge as crucial to contests over 'heritage'. Who can claim heritage, what is included in it, and how do contests over it get decided over time?

Issues that arise over heritage are Whose Heritage? How does this heritage relate to that claimed by other social actors? What specific or broad part does the claim to heritage play in the wider political context? What kinds of materials count for the establishment of a claim to Heritage? In this book we consider the above cases, from Ireland, Papua New Guinea, and Taiwan, and we initiate a comparison between them centering on the above themes. We focus on the issue of how heritage emerges as a concept and from where.

We begin with short condensed accounts of each major case study followed later by more detailed discussion.

Ireland: The Ulster-Scots

Ulster-Scots communities are the descendants of Scottish migrants who came to Ireland in the seventeenth century as a part

of a wave of colonial settlement. Scottish and English migrants came as landowners or as categories of people working for landowners, following complex grants from the British Crown. The Scottish settlers were counterposed both to English settlers and to the indigenous Irish and their chiefs who were expelled from the land now occupied by colonists. Subsequently, in an era of modern politics, a renewed claim to identity was made as a part of the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement in Northern Ireland, in which 'parity of esteem' was accorded to Irish Gaelic and Ulster-Scots as a way of making peace between sectarian groups identified as Catholic Gaelic speakers and Protestants who claimed Ulster-Scots heritage. One of the pivots of the Ulster-Scots claim lay in their use of a version of Scots language dialect as setting it apart from varieties of English as well as from Irish Gaelic. A more contentious part of their identity resides in the practices of marching bands at celebrations commemorating the accession of William of Orange and his wife Mary to the British throne after the defeat of King James VII and his Catholic Forces at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The Ulster-Scots identity is thus inextricably bound up with political history and indeed emerges out of that history, along with recent attempts to depoliticize it and link it to identity purely in terms of cultural practices of dancing, music, and literature. The Ulster-Scots claims to identity function as a counterclaim to the Celtic Irish claims to identity in Northern Ireland and as a means to achieving recognition with 'parity of esteem' in a contested and political historical situation. Language is one identifiable focus of this claim, and it links the Ulster-Scots to Scotland itself.

Indigenous Groups in Taiwan

In Taiwan, numbers of indigenous groups, speakers of different Austronesian languages, exist within the shadow of a dominant Han majority deriving from migration and settlements from the seventeenth century onwards, accelerated by the accession to

power of Chiang Kai-shek in 1949 following the defeat of Japan in World War II. Chiang Kai-shek instituted Martial Rule, which lasted until 1987, and he introduced the indigenous Austronesian minorities to the Mandarin language as well as fostering Christianity as a new religion in place of Chinese religions such as Daoism. Since 1987 movements of cultural revival have been set in hand in Taiwan, focusing on the re-assertion of language and cultural practices of dancing, art, ritual, and language, which separate the indigenous tribes from the Han while integrating them into the national state by formalizing their identities as minority groups. We see here a different constellation of identity claims from those the Ulster-Scots articulate in Ireland. In Taiwan the indigenous people have regained a sense of their identity largely because of a shift in majority politics, entailing their recognition in the politics of differentiation between Taiwan and Mainland China. In this context the revival of indigenous heritage and language has emerged both as a modality of differences from Han culture in general and as a mechanism of separating Taiwanese identity from Mainlander identities. Heritage thus emerges again as a phenomenon of juxtaposition of identities, centered on relations of power. Each indigenous group lays claim to a specific heritage distinguishing it from others, and as means of gaining separate official recognition. Our own work has mostly been with Paiwan speakers around Taitung and Pingtung.

Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea

In the two previous cases, minority identities with claims to indigeneity have emerged in contexts of shifting national-level politics. The Mount Hagen case shows the emergence of a local identity into national prominence as an icon of cultural history flowing from recognition at an international level via the acquisition of its successful nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage site. We find here the same broad context of sliding scales of identity as in the Ulster-Scots and the Taiwanese indigenous cases. That is, heritage

is pegged to a certain level in society and emerges in juxtaposition between identities. In the Mount Hagen case, we are dealing with two very different contexts that have become fused as a result of contingent archaeological findings which have meant an expansion of heritage and senses of identity. The locus of analysis is the Kawelka group, settled at the place Kuk in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea. This group of a few thousand people are well known in the ethnographic literature because many research workers have studied their life and history. The Kawelka's identity has thus come to be emblematic of the Hagen area in general, encapsulated in a given time and place framework. They have a heritage of their own in this regard. It happened that a major archeological field project in their territorial area established that this area, the Kuk site, contained evidence demonstrating an extraordinary and unexpectedly early date for the beginnings of gardening. The discovery led to a sudden escalation in senses of identity among the Kawelka. This chapter will explore this process of discovery in more detail. The argument of the chapter is that a Kawelka identity has emerged as both very particular and very general. As a group, they remain identified locally as they were before. As the accepted custodians of a world-recognized cultural site, that Kawelka identity has been raised to further levels: provincial, national, and international. "Kawelka" thus means different things at different levels, from the local upwards. Although this case does not display the conflicting contexts of interpretation shown in the first two cases, it does show that identities emerge via politics and the politics determine the recognition of heritage, as we find in the other two cases.

Comparison and Interpretations

Comparing our three cases we will make use of three axes of discussion. One is the levels of identities involved. Another is how these identities become involved in politics at different levels. The third is what, then, do we mean by heritage, with the conclusion

that heritage is a claim for continuity or renewal of identity as a kind of possession that derives from the past and enhances the status of its possessors for now and the future. Heritage is also a mark of disruption and reassertion of identities, although it can reside in and depend upon the establishment of political conditions that favor or disfavor certain expressions of cultural patterns. Although heritage rests on perceptions of cultural continuity, it becomes a characteristic that is valued only in circumstances of political change that determine its altered value.

Who Owns Heritage?

Heritage is often subject to claims and counterclaims of ownership, from local to international levels (cf. Brown 2004). Such claims depend on assertions of identity and belonging and on the control over limits of identities that must be defended. Heritage is not something that is simply there, to be grasped. It is actually created and maintained as an active process of discovery and re-discovery and is as easily lost as gained in that process. It is always a product of relations of power. It also shifts over time in terms of perceptions of its ownership. Overlapping or competing claims lead to ambiguities in claims of ownership, sometimes resolved by official rulings, sometimes left open with regard to the authenticity of otherwise of traditions. Using these perspectives, we draw the following conclusions from our case studies. In Ireland, ownership of Ulster-Scots becomes contested in two different ways. One is by a denial that such a thing as the Ulster-Scot language exists. The other is that it exists, but not as a separate identity from the Scots language. As a social grouping, it both derives legitimacy from its Scottish character and claims a separate identity through being a part of the history of colonization of Ireland. In Taiwan, the indigenous groups can claim ownership of their cultures as decisively different from and prior to colonization by the Han culture, particularly with regard to their Austronesian languages and their cus-

toms of initiation of boys into manhood, as well as their traditions of shamanic practices. In other words, their culture links them to Pacific Islanders but is currently deployed at national level to distinguish the nation of Taiwan from Mainland China. 'Ownership' in this sense is multiply shared and recognized, but its fundamental locus lies with the indigenous people themselves. In Papua New Guinea a comparable shared ownership emerges between UNESCO, the PNG state, and the branches of the Kawelka tribe living at or near the site. The Kawelka remain the "root" people in this scheme because of their land, but it is interesting to note that they were in no way tied to the long history of agriculture in the area by any previous traditions of their own. The link has been provided by archeology, and the idea of heritage has taken a leap into cultural history through the association with archeological findings: a process that is likely to be paralleled in other parts of the world and would provide a point of further comparisons.

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We turn now to the more detailed account of the three main cases in this book.