Chapter one

Introduction

Trust me, this will take time but there is order here, very faint, very human.
Michael Ondaatje 1987, *In the Skin of a Lion*, p. 146.

This study is about ideology. In many ways it is possible to argue that almost any archaeological text, particularly within the well-defined academic structure of a thesis, is 'about ideology' (see for example Tilley 1989a and 1993a), but it is explicitly so in this instance. When I began my PhD in Australian historical archaeology, I intended to pursue the notion of adaptation, a largely undertheorised and uncritically examined category into which much research appears to be conveniently placed. Initially I approached this from a relatively secure economics standpoint, asking: What is adaptation?; What does it mean in terms of evolutionary theory?; and How has it been used by historical archaeologists? Unfortunately for the progress of that topic, in 1989 I read Russell Handsman's and Mark Leone's paper, 'Living history and critical archaeology in the reconstruction of the past'. As an examination of some of the alternative ways in which the same past may be constructed and how this reflects changing power relations, this paper altered my previous understanding of the ways in which Australian historical archaeology and the notion of adaptation are constructed and hinted at the alternatives which were possible. It also raised the issue of the analysis of capitalism, which was linked firmly to ideology and to the past and present uses of material artefacts.

Having decided to read more in this vein, the real impetus for my research sprang directly from Mark Leone's detailed and insightful study of William Paca's garden, published in 1984. William Paca was a wealthy American landowner, lawyer,

Governor of Maryland and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who in the 1760s built for himself an Annapolis residence augmented by a large, carefully designed garden, part Georgian symmetry, part wilderness, entirely formal. In Leone's analysis of the garden's construction, layout and appearance, his basic contention is that it embodies certain principles of order (grafting, transplanting, symmetry, formality, rules of geometry) and design (perspective through terracing and through gradation of avenues, appeals to antiquity in statues and architecture) which were an integral part of how William Paca defined himself and his place in society and which he could not help but represent externally (though not necessarily consciously). In other words the garden through its expression of order as control over nature and perspective as control over space *was* ideology, of which William Paca himself was also a part. Leone suggested that the garden was an articulation of the 'quest for a fixed, natural order' and as ideology, its principles hid certain elementary contradictions within William Paca's life and society: 'The major contradiction we see in Paca's life ... was between a slave-holding society and one proclaiming independence in order to promote personal freedom and individual liberty. ... The [hidden] contradiction ... is that between slavery for others and freedom for themselves' (Leone 1984, 33). It is the concealment of such contradictions which Leone sees as crucial to the definition of ideology. For him ideology is not simply a worldview or a belief but:

> ... ideas about nature, cause, time and person, or those things that are taken by a society as given. ... these ideas serve to naturalise and thus mask inequalities in the social order; [and] ... when accepted uncritically, serve to reproduce the social order. Ideology's function is to disguise the arbitrariness of the social order, including the uneven distribution of resources, and it reproduces rather than transforms society.
>
> (Leone 1984, 26)

As part of espousing this definition Leone could not simply study ideology as an unspecified social process. His explicitly critical definition and his interest in the archaeology of the recent historical past led him to link ideology firmly to capitalism. Although some have argued that it is possible to link ideology to other social forms

apart from capitalism (Gero 1987, 294; Miller and Tilley 1984), this has been the general tone which Leone has continued to follow:

> [t]he material references to classical antiquity compose an index to some notion of the past in the garden, while the use of garden books shows clear use of precedent. Given the link between the use of perspective in Paca's garden and his deep and successful immersion in law, the garden may naturalise perspective which is the principle that ties them together, and thus the garden may have substantiated the cultural segmentation of space and time. Perspective allows one to view space and time in measurable interchangeable segments: and this is how universal space and time link Mr. Paca's garden to his law, Annapolis' workers to their hours, capital to interest, ships at sea to weeks travelled and thus to profit and loss.
>
> (Leone 1984, 33)

Leone's 1984 study was one of the earliest attempts at reaching ideology through archaeological analysis. It and the volume of which it was a part prompted the beginning of much debate and many of the questions which I have attempted to deal with in this thesis are framed within the wider issues of this polemic. The most common criticism levelled at archaeological accounts of ideology is that 'ideology' is too often taken to mean 'the beliefs and values of the dominant', ignoring the existence and responses of those segments of the population who are 'ruled' in one fashion or another (see for example Johnson 1991; 1992; McGuire 1988; Paynter and McGuire 1991). Matthew Johnson (1989) had Leone's 1984 study particularly in mind when he argued that Leone 'fails to consider ... that ... ideology is not a monolithic entity, 'duping' the vast majority of the oppressed in any straightforward or unproblematic fashion. ... Nowhere does Leone discuss ... how those who viewed the garden interpreted it, and how their interpretations differed according to class, gender, ethnicity, or other interests—in short, their goals as active social agents'. Ian Hodder likewise insisted that '[i]t ... appears ... that the ideology is shared by all in society ... the extent to which people are duped by the ideas of the dominant class is remarkable in these accounts' (Hodder 1993, 67). He goes on to argue:

> [t]here is no indication anywhere that the same material culture may have different meanings and different ideological effects for different social groups. ... Different ideologies coexist in relation

> to each other and the dominant ideology is continually being subverted from other points of view. ... William Paca's garden may have worked well for William Paca, legitimating his own social interests, but whether anyone else was taken in by it is less clear. ... do subordinate groups ever visit or see the garden, do subordinate groups use such ordering in their own homes and gardens on a smaller scale or are their gardens very different?
>
> (Hodder 1993, 67, 70)

These are all positions expressly opposed to what has become known as the 'Dominant Ideology Thesis' (see Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1980; 1992), a shorthand for the assumption that the conscious values and ideals of the ruling group are automatically and naturally also those of the ruled. In other words, ideology arises solely from the position of the ruling class. In some quarters this valuable corrective has been expanded into a position which has crafted the notion of 'ideologies of resistance' as the response (see for example Hall 1992, Beaudry, Cook, Mrozowski 1991; Paynter and McGuire 1991, 10). If Leone's 1984 position was concerned with identifying the process of manufacturing consensus, or with how the dominant group incorporates itself, then the ideology of resistance approach sought to define and understand ideology in terms of how groups other than the dominant group react and 'reply' to such attempts at incorporation (see McLellan 1986, 74).

In many ways the 'Dominant Ideology Thesis' has been overly caricatured in archaeology as a foil for debating purposes. Quite paradoxically, in using this as a basis for criticism, many responses run the risk of simply inverting the perceived hierarchy rather than closely examining it. There is a danger here that the 'ruled' will be so intently fashioned as 'knowledgeable actors' that primacy will simply be accorded to their activities, rather than asking of each instance of resistance similar questions to those asked of instances of domination. The questions of how and why responses of resistance arise are routinely and often insightfully dealt with in archaeology, however further questions beckon in relating them to the complicated schema of ideology. Are they themselves attempts to dominate others? If so, are there sets of responses to them? From whom? How does the engagement with

instances of resistance affect the form and content of ideology? How might ideology be altered as a result? As Thompson (1986, 81-82) argues:

> The problem of ... dominant ideology is partly due to the tendency to look for a single dominant ideology, linked to a particular class, when what is needed is the careful mapping of the complex of discourses that articulate together to produce ideological effects.

Although it is laudable to attempt to isolate both ideology as the incorporation of a dominant group and ideology as a reply to such incorporation, this may not always be possible, particularly if the archaeological material under study relates directly to a single individual. It is impossible to articulate archaeologically the subordinate ideologies 'resisting' William Paca's garden, if William Paca's garden is the only area which is studied (but see Orser 1996, 177-178). Precisely because Paca was part of the elite and lived a life well within the bounds of the hegemonic view, a dominant reading of his material artefacts is most appropriate as an analysis of the process by which his class attempted to incorporate itself as a class.

There are two key points about the importance of William Paca's garden in relation to the ideology of class in that place (and at least in that time): as the under class (in this case slaves) built and worked in it they became involved in a process by which they could not avoid its symbolism; and the sheer scale and position of it meant that the symbolism was overt. While Paca certainly subscribed to his own ideology, which linked him to a particular dominant social group, the monumental scale, position and structure of Paca's garden was also designed to structure the world of the workers in such a way as to reinforce their perception of subordination.

It was against this background that I wrote this thesis. Primarily I was interested in how the use of material artefacts to incorporate a ruling group might also be used to reinforce a perception of subordination in others and how these boundaries, as exclusive coteries of status, might be broken down through the appropriation of these artefacts by the ruled. I was also concerned with how ideology was implicated in this

process. The basic focus for my thesis as I first conceived it, was to understand the ideologies of capitalism as they may have existed in the past in the relatively small town of Armidale in New South Wales, Australia (figure 1.1) and how this may be grasped archaeologically through the material objects which were made and used then. To this end I devised an historical account of the various forms of capitalism in Armidale during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and how this might relate to various forms of ideology. I regard capitalism as a process rather than a 'thing' and have attempted to approach it as 'it unfolds through the production of physical and social landscapes' (Harvey 1985, xviii). In doing so I am assuming the utter dominance of capitalism as a social system in Western society and the existence within it of underlying problems of political, economic and social inequality. One of the main assumptions is of capitalism as a specific type of unequal relation (cf. Johnson 1993a; Potter 1994, 37).

My concern with capitalism and its relationship to ideology led inexorably towards the secondary focus of this thesis. As an archaeologist, in considering what ideology might be and how it related to capitalism, I was forced to think through and then deal with several fundamental but related problems. Ideology is not a thing to be excavated like a pot or an axe, so what is an artefact of ideology? What is the chain of argument connecting definition, artefact and interpretation? How are my definitions to be translated into a series of distinctly archaeological problems? Tackling these questions led me to focus on architectural style as a particular field of material artefacts, which may have marked different patterns of social identity relevant to the construction of capitalism in the past. In my analysis I have set out to address the successive links between style, the construction of social identity, the semiotics of social position within capitalism and ideology.

There are problems with defining each of the key concepts of capitalism, ideology and style. All have been used to mean many different things, not all of which are compatible and for my purposes it was necessary to formulate a specific definition of

THE STUDY AREA

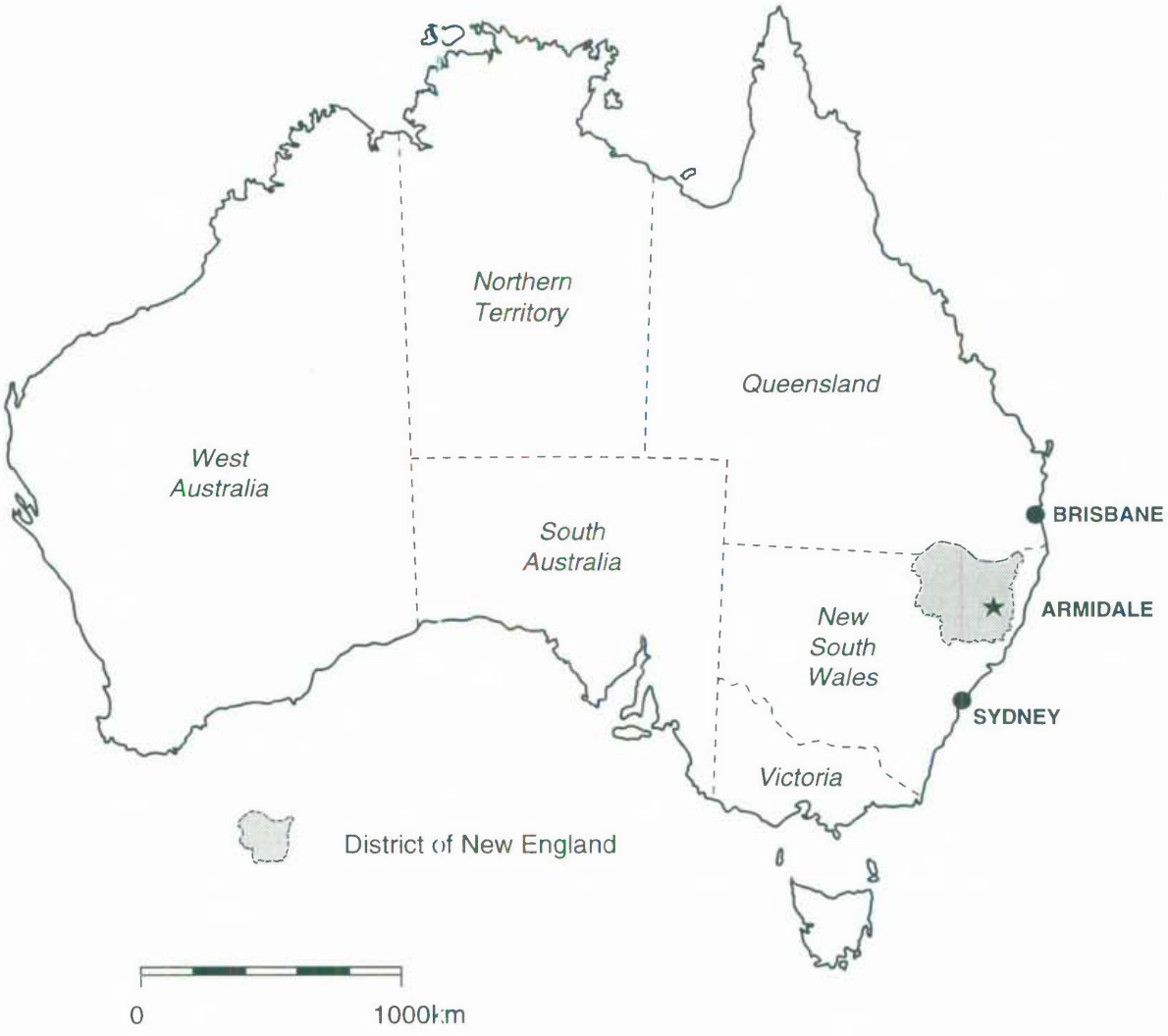

FIGURE 1.1: The location of Armidale, New South Wales, Australia

each. I will define capitalism as *a mode of production in which the means of production are individually appropriated as 'property'*. Capitalism thus both needs and produces the commodification of labour, the means of production and the products of nature. The term itself is derived from capital, or all those accumulations of past labour that have not yet been expended, such as consumable goods, machinery, or authorised claims to material things (money). To be considered 'capital' however, such accumulated wealth must be directed towards the primary capitalist goal of self-expansion or of accumulating more of the same (Wallerstein 1993, 13-14). Capital is therefore not really a thing at all, but a social relation which appears in the form of a thing: in capitalist society the production of capital predominates and dominates every other sort of production.

The principal form of capitalist accumulation is based on legal rights conferred on property owners, who appropriate surplus value in a variety of ways such as profit, rent or interest. I regard capitalism as simultaneously a social process, a way of producing commodities, and a relationship between owners and producers by which both objects and the capacities of people are simultaneously brought into definite social relations under the control of capitalists (Wells 1989, xiv). There are three central aspects to this control: control over things ('nature' as land, minerals, timber); control over the labour of direct producers (through the formation of wage labour with rights vested in the capitalist to alienate labour power) and control over production (over the productive process itself, and a right to control and dispose of the results). (Wells 1989, xiv, xii-xiii). It is important to realise that a definition of capitalism as a social process and a definition of it as a set of relationships are related systemically. In one sense capitalism *is* (and only is) the 'narrow set of economic relations', which is reified to become the whole social process of classes and relations commonly associated with the economic formation.

Capitalism becomes related to ideology through the basic contention that societies with such an unequal distribution of resources are subject to potential contradiction within

these relations. Within capitalism the principal contradiction lies between capital and labour, and reproduction of it entails both the reproduction of material means and wealth and also the reproduction of the principal contradiction and its social conditions. Although I argue that other antagonisms apart from that between labour and capital may also be part of ideological forms of domination (such as gender or ethnicity), the fundamental tension between capital and labour is the only contradiction which is necessary to the survival of the capitalist system *per se*.

> It can be argued that in so far as the reproduction of the capitalist system is concerned [the contradiction between capital and labour] cannot be put on the same level as other conflicts emerging from gender, race and colonial divisions. The contradiction between the two main classes of the mode of production is the only one which is constitutive of and essential to the capitalist system, in the sense that it is the only contradiction without which the capitalist system cannot survive.
>
> (Larrain 1994, 15)

It is this contradictory process which ideology conceals: thus ideology is both the result and the condition of the reproduction of the contradiction between capital and wage labour (Larrain 1983, 157; 1994, 12-13). Through concealment ideology prevents transformation and reproduces the social order. It mystifies, and acquires its meaning as a very powerful social force disguising the perpetuation of asymmetrical relationships and grounding exploitative relations and definitions in a sphere which seems beyond question (Leone 1982, 748-9). Ideology thus becomes the field through which the essential contradictions contained within a capitalist society are mystified and either hidden from recognition as social products or removed from the realm of mutability. This is part of the process Marx identified as alienation, whereby human powers, products or processes escape from the control of human subjects and come to assume an apparently autonomous existence. Such estranged phenomena exert power, and people submit to what are in fact products of their own activity as though they are an alien force (Eagleton 1991, 70). In turn this is closely linked to reification: if phenomena cease to be recognised as social products they are perceived instead to be independent things and accepted as being inevitable.

My understanding of style is firmly grounded in Polly Wiessner's contention that it is a medium for identification via comparison and a means by which people 'negotiate and communicate personal and social identity *vis-à-vis* others' (Wiessner 1989, 59).

> ... [I]ndividuals in all cultures have been shown to possess a strong desire to create a self-image through social comparison and to project this to others, in a positive way. Self-images have two components, a personal one and a social one. Social identity is important in that individuals are unable to form self-images in the absence of an identity derived from membership in one or more groups. Conversely, an element of personal identity seems equally important and when put in situations of extreme conformity, individuals experience discomfort and strive to differentiate themselves from similar others. ... Since style is one medium of projecting identity, one would expect both personal and social identity to be expressed in style.
>
> (Wiessner 1990, 109)

Taking this as her premise, Wiessner is able to argue firstly that style may in part be an indicator of the balance between the interests of the individual and the interests of society (Wiessner 1989, 59; 1990, 109), and secondly, that in marking social distance style may be linked to specific questions of status and power. Style may thus be studied in terms of how it is used in different social strategies.

Power is implicit in much of the discussion in this thesis. In understanding the variety of relationships between groups of people in Armidale, I have drawn on Wolf's (1990, 586) four modes of power:

1) power as the ability of a person as potency or capability,
2) power as the ability of a person to impose their will on another, in interpersonal social relations,
3) power as the control of social settings in which people may deploy their capabilities or interact with others ('tactical power') and,
4) power as the organisation or orchestration of the settings themselves, as the deployment and allocation of social labour ('structural power').

The first mode is analogous to Miller and Tilley's (1984) 'power to', the last three to their 'power over' (Little 1994, 23). Power as the orchestration of the settings themselves is relevant to descriptions of capitalism as a process, and power as the expression of an individual's potency equally distinctive of descriptions of resistance to that process. In this thesis I am most often concerned with power in the third sense, as control over the variety of social settings, such as those which exist within Armidale. Power in the third and fourth modes is squarely based on the distribution of limited resources (whether labour, land, raw materials, products or money), although to some extent, power as the ability of a person to impose their will on another, may also be based on this. When assessing the place of people within networks of power I am not necessarily assessing their individual 'potency or capability', although this becomes relevant if tackling the issue of resistance (see for example Orser 1996, 177-178), but their relative position within a landscape of limited resources. Stewart Clegg (1989, 219) argues for four circuits of power in such a landscape, which I have relied upon heavily in my analysis: mobilising relations of meaning and of membership, and mobilising techniques of production and discipline.

In terms of ideology, what is really at stake when the issue of power is raised is not simply the identification of a range of material signs or symbols and their possible signified meanings, but what these meanings accomplish within a given set of historical circumstances. Power is a set of relations between individuals and groups and a powerful group in one context may well be powerless in another. Whether or not signs are always held to be ideological, ideology is not just a matter of the signified meaning, but also of the *operation* of the signifier (Easthope and McGowan 1992, 6).

Given that this is a thesis 'about ideology' it would be remiss to ignore one last (though not final) issue which is highly germane to the archaeological debate over ideology: the commentary on contemporary contexts which such studies provide. The range of responses to a paper published by Mark Leone, Parker Potter and Paul Shackel in *Current Anthropology* illustrates this engagement. Whether it be in terms of

recognising how the present socio-political context of the researcher influences the agenda which is followed (Blakey 1987, 292); disentangling the ideological nature and implications of research into ideology (Bradley 1987, 292; Hodder 1987, 295; Levy and Silberman 1987, 296); examining the usefulness of the past in restructuring understandings of the present; or in undermining prevailing ideology or indicating the interest groups best served by particular reconstructions (Durrans 1987, 293; Gero 1987, 294), many archaeologists share a concern with how the present continually structures the creation, understanding and uses of the past. It would be hypocritical to attempt to study ideology without also attempting to question the ideological bases of that research itself, although this is by far the most difficult implication of any project. As Blakey (1987, 292) argues persuasively, critical archaeological research, rather than 'showing "real relationships" or producing "less contingent knowledge", can only be expected to yield *differently* contingent knowledge and relationships'. Because it is the nature and implications of both this difference and this contingence which are at issue, there is also a question of what criteria of acceptability such an exercise is answerable to (Wylie 1987, 297). How should we value such studies as a means of characterising the world today? This is neither a simple nor spurious exercise if archaeologists have any control over the accountability of the discipline or the intellectual investment in particular answers:

> ... for ideology is *justification*. It presupposes the experience of a societal condition which has already become problematic and therefore [which] requires a defense just as much as does the idea of justice itself, which would not exist without such necessity for apologetics.
>
> (Adorno, quoted in Kreckel 1985, 163, emphasis in original)

In the following chapters I will attempt to deal with the problematic social conditions of capitalism in Armidale in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; how this may have given rise to ideology in the past; and the ideological basis for particular presentations of that past in the present.

Chapter two

An anatomy of ideology

WHAT IS IDEOLOGY?

The study of ideology is an area of research which has long been acknowledged as part of archaeology in various capacities; however there have been many different approaches to its study, corresponding to varying appreciations and definitions of the concept. The changing extent to which and ways in which archaeology has acknowledged ideology as an area for productive research is part of the ways in which archaeology itself has changed as a discipline. This is no simple or unidirectional process, of course, but is part of wider changes in the social sciences, in politics and in society.

Terry Eagleton's (1991) recent comprehensive appraisal charts a complicated series of historical moments in the conception and definition of ideology. Within this framework Eagleton (1991, 3) recognises two primary mainstream traditions: an epistemological tradition descending from Hegel, Marx and Lukacs and a sociological tradition espoused by Althusser and Gramsci. The epistemological tradition derives from the early Marx's use of the celebrated *camera obscura* analogy, which opposed 'reality as it actually is' to ideology, which was an inversion of this reality. Ideology was an illusion (false consciousness) which could be combatted by substituting true ideas for the false ones. This lent an eminently subjective character to ideology, which became one of the fundamental bases upon which the sociological tradition diverged from the epistemological (Larrain 1994, 61). Althusser in particular was critical of portraying ideology as a form of consciousness produced by, and therefore existing only in the minds of, individual subjects. The potential here was for ideology to be

reduced to phantasm and thus for it to be understood as a production of faulty cognitive processes in the human mind or as self-deception induced by a manipulative ruling class. Ideology is thus created as ' ... pure illusion, a pure dream, ... nothingness. All its reality is external to it' (Althusser, quoted in Larrain 1994, 61). Instead, sociological interpretations are based on an intent to demonstrate that ideology indeed has some 'external reality', that it is not spiritual but based on actual material practices, experiences and institutions and as a result is not produced internally by any one subject but instead shapes and constitutes all subjects.

As a result Eagleton (1991, 28-30) distinguishes at least six different possible ways to define ideology and considers each as successively helping to refine the focus of the term:

1. *Ideology as ' ... the general process of production of ideas, beliefs and values in social life.'* This is possibly the broadest kind of definition and alludes to the way in which individuals live their day to day social practices, but is silent on the specifics of those practices themselves. Because of such breadth, ideology in this sense is analogous to the concept of 'culture' and simply stresses the social determination of thought.

2. *Ideology as ' ... ideas and beliefs (whether true or false) which symbolise the conditions and life-experiences of a specific, socially significant group or class.'* This definition introduces a political element and begins to consider ideology in the sense of sectoral interests rather than of 'culture'; however it still presents the concept of ideology in isolation and does not view it in either relational or conflictive terms within society. Such a definition is analogous to the concept of 'worldview' or collective self-expression.

3. *Ideology as '... the promotion or legitimation of the interests of social groups in the face of opposing interests.'* Here a distinct element of conflict or contradiction is

introduced, which enables ideology to be conceived of as a 'discursive field in which self-promoting social powers conflict and collide over questions central to the reproduction of social power as a whole'. This not only views ideology in relational terms, but links it more closely to questions involving reproduction of the social order.

4. *Ideology as '... the promotion or legitimation of sectional interests, [in terms of] ... the activities of a dominant social power.'*. This definition continues the focus on sectional interests, but limits these firmly to those which are considered to be central to the social order. Because such a definition conceives ideology exclusively *in terms of* a dominant social power, it cannot help but consider ideology as homogenous and unifying, furthermore assuming that it helps to unify a social formation in ways convenient for its rulers.

5. *Ideology as '... signif[ying] ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interests of a ruling group or class specifically by distortion and dissimulation.'* This is very close in conception to definition number four, however it gives greater consideration to the precise ways in which ideology might operate. Under both conceptions four and five, not all ideas of the ruling group need be considered to be ideological. Some may not promote its interests and some may not do so via the specific tactic of deception.

6. *Ideology '... as false or deceptive beliefs [which arise] not from the interests of a dominant class but from the material structure of society as a whole.'* This shift in emphasis, from dominant interests to the material structure of society in general, in part is a response to criticisms of accepting the ideology of the dominant group as the defining ideology for all of society (see for example Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1980). In this view subaltern groups or classes retain a degree of autonomy, are often outside of the total control of the ruling group and perhaps embody beliefs and values at odds with those of the dominant group.

In descending Eagleton's ladder a conception of ideology emerges which has several significant implications. Most importantly, ideology is not a mere set of esoteric beliefs which are disconnected from daily life, but is instead fundamental to the social order, arising from the material structure of society as a whole. It therefore affects all members of a society, though perhaps not all in the same manner and is connected to some minimum perception of social reality (cf. Feuer 1975, 96).

This means that, although ideology may include beliefs which are false or deceptive, 'false' should not be understood here to mean 'unreal' (as in a false reality, an imposed illusion), but as 'false' in the sense of 'untrue as to what is the case'. It is perfectly possible for ideological discourse to be false at one level but not at another: true in its empirical content for example, but deceptive in its force; or true in its surface meaning but false in its underlying assumptions (Eagleton 1991, 16-17; Plamenatz 1970, 31). As Eagleton (1991, 15-26, emphasis in original) argues it:

> 'Prince Andrew is more intelligent than a hamster' is ... probably true, ... but the effect of such a pronouncement ... is ... likely to be ideological in the sense of helping to legitimate a dominant power. ... while such utterances are *empirically* true, they are false in some deeper, more fundamental way. ... [I]deology is no baseless illusion, but a solid reality, an active material force which must have at least enough cognitive content to help organise the practical lives of human beings ... and many of the propositions it does advance are actually true. None of this however, need be denied by those who hold that ideology often or typically involves falsity, distortion and mystification. Even if ideology is largely a matter of 'lived relations', those relations, at least in certain social conditions, would often seem to involve claims and beliefs which are untrue.

Eagleton's definition of ideology as false or deceptive beliefs arising from the structure of society as a whole (as well as his clarification of 'truth' and 'falsity'), firmly reconciles the potential of ideology to conceal with the question of how it can also relate to forms of lived experience. Ideology may well be misrepresentation, but it is not pure illusion. It is inextricably linked to the fabric of society and to the general reproduction of that society through the process of concealing antagonistic contradictions. This allows ideology to be understood as both something which

masks, which presents false representations of life, and something which still makes some minimal sense of people's actual day to day life experiences. This suppleness is what gives ideology its power.

There is a distinct element of contradiction contained within the notion of ideology, either between classes in a society or between groups defined through other divisions. Ideology is thus seen to be a very powerful social force, which in part is used to contain contradiction in order to prevent it from becoming conflict (cf. Leone 1982, 748-9). This returns once again to the notion of ideology as being central to the general reproduction of the social order and to an appreciation of ideology as dynamic rather than static. Ideology does not function as an isolated body of thought, but as an ongoing social process: it is not a 'possession' or a 'state of mind', but is continually changing in response to its engagement in the world and the patterning of the relationships between given groups (Therborn 1980, 77-78). This raises the interesting questions of under what forces and at what rate does ideology change?

Ideology is best understood, not as simple and patronising, in the sense of one (dominant) group always duping another (subordinate) group, but as sets of beliefs which enable *all* groups to live out their lives within a given social order, albeit a social order in which there may still be a considerable degree of inequality and conflict. Ideology is not a conspiracy of the ruling class, but an 'organising social force which actively constitutes human subjects at the roots of their lived experience and seeks to equip them with forms of value and belief relevant to their specific social tasks and to the general reproduction of the social order' (Eagleton 1991, 221). Ideology is not necessarily a systematic or coherently articulated body of ideas, but is related directly to practice, influenced directly by experience and often uttered unreflectively as 'common sense' (Rootes 1981, 43). For Eagleton, because ideology is not always directly equatable with outright systematic doctrine, and because it provides some minimal connection with material reality, it is implicated in much of the minutiae of day-to-day life experience.

Eagleton's six concentric definitions are clearly designed to narrow the definition of ideology towards an increasingly tighter account of the social processes involved. There are three movements here. Firstly each successive meaning is virtually a subset of the previous meaning and as each is unpacked, greater attention is directed towards the issue of the imposition of ideology upon others and the power which attaches to this. But by the time the sixth definition is reached there is also a second shift, from questions of the imposition of ideology to questions of its acceptance. The issue is no longer solely who imposes ideology upon whom, but also how this is received and what this process of reception might imply. Between the first and the second definition there is also a third shift, which in a sense ties both of the previous issues together: once a notion of ideology as culture is rejected, the definition of groups itself becomes fundamental to the defining of ideology. Whatever particular attributes ideology may have then, it must be shared by a group of people, it must concern matters important to the group and it must serve to hold the group together or to justify the activities and attitudes characteristic of its members (Plamenatz 1970, 31).

For the purposes of this thesis, my definition of ideology is:

... false or deceptive beliefs and presuppositions implicit in ordinary ways of thinking, speaking or behaving in the world, which arise from the structure of society as a whole and the relations of the group to that structure and which serve to reproduce that world by concealing contradiction and by perpetuating an unequal pattern of existing material relationships between and among groups.

Because it is concerned with concealment, ideology necessarily serves particular interests and thus refers to the specific ways in which signs, meanings and values help to incorporate and reproduce dominance as a social power and to manufacture consensus, while at the same time concealing the antagonisms resident at this point. Ideology may exist at more than one scale within the same society, or within the same individual: as unsophisticated ideology or implicit 'common sense,' which is shared

most widely and as sophisticated ideology; or as a more or less coherent system of explicit beliefs about the world which favours the interests or expresses the feelings of a more specific group in society, without the members necessarily being conscious of their belonging to that group.

One of the most difficult aspects to defining ideology is undoubtedly the permutations which are possible. Although this is one attempt at definition, it is not an attempt to provide resolution. Ideology may be all of the things in this chapter, but it is not reducible to any one of them. Eagleton (1991, 222) makes the point that ideology is impossible to define for all times and for all situations, 'indeed it is doubtful that one can ascribe to [it] any *invariable* characteristics at all' (emphasis in original). My particular attempt at definition therefore has a number of specific historical roots. It is materialist rather than idealist in that it considers ideology to be anchored in real societal contradictions and to have some root in material 'reality' (this may be also defined as a realist ontology, see Patterson 1994, 533). My definition is not so strictly materialist however that it reduces the position of ideology to one of subservience to the material base of society: neither one is strictly determined by the other (it is therefore 'dialectical' in the Marxist jargon). As a result my definition is also 'post' Marxist in the sense that it recognises interests other than those which are strictly tied to production (ie. between classes) as participating in ideological discourse. If ideology is the general process of masking contradiction and reproducing an unequal or conflicting societal form, then it would seem to be undoubtedly ideology in the service of particular interests. Because I conceive of power in a wider sense than Marx, these interests are not necessarily restricted to those of class. It is equally possible for ideology to refer to the specific ways in which signs, meanings and values help to reproduce a dominant social power, or to *any* significant conjunction between discourse and power (Eagleton 1991, 221). In this sense discourse is not reducible merely to language, but is instead the use of language for the production of specific effects and is often a function of the relationship between an utterance and its particular social context (Eagleton 1991, 9).

> Ideology ... disguises not just forms of class domination but other forms too such as racial, gender and colonial repressions. This does not mean that such ideological processes are disconnected from or have no bearing upon particular forms of class domination—the colonial ideological construction of colonized peoples as inferior clearly plays an ideological ... role ...—but ... ideology conceals not merely class antagonisms but also forms of gender, racial and colonial domination which affect women, ethnic minorities and Third World peoples.
>
> (Larrain 1994, 15)

Undoubtedly some of the most important recent criticisms of treatments of ideology are those opposed to the existence of a single dominant ideology within society, targetting both the simplistic vision of society which this implies and the ideological nature of these arguments themselves. Like Larrain (1994, 13-15) I wish to widen the scope of the concept of ideology beyond the class and national context in which Marx primarily wielded it and to consider a more general link between asymmetrical relations of power and situations of domination.

Despite disavowing strict idealism, my definition does allow for the participation of both an unconscious and symbolic element to the ways in which ideology functions. The choice to place the emphasis squarely on symbolic aspects should not be taken to imply that I consider ideology to be confined to the symbolic dimension of social life only, an implication which in turn encourages a link between ideology and idealism. As a result I do not consider symbols merely in terms of esoterica, but in terms of the semiotic potential of *all* artefacts, from the mundane to the magnificent, to be symbolic or indexical of asymmetrical relations of power and situations of domination. I am not necessarily saying that every artefact must always be symbolic, but that, depending on how an artefact is used, by whom and why, it *may* be. Certainly in terms of ideology, the potential is there.

WHAT DOES IDEOLOGY DO?

There is a complementary aspect to the definition of ideology which partially defines it according to what it *does*, rather than simply what it *is*. This expanded definition considers how ideologies operate: ideology does not just *express* sets of ideas, beliefs or values, but presents them in particular ways, so as to remove them from contention. There is a distinction to be made here between the functions of the attitudes, beliefs or ideas which compose ideology: they may well serve to describe and explain, but they may also justify and encourage behaviour, or condemn and discourage it. They are thus both descriptive and persuasive and the same beliefs or attitudes may serve both functions (Plamenatz 1970, 70-71). Eagleton (1991, 45-59) has distilled six main strategies by which ideologies operate: unification, action-orientation, rationalisation, legitimation, universalisation and naturalisation (but see also Urry 1981 for a similar scale).

1. *Unification.* The process of unification strives to create a sense of community which may lend coherence to an otherwise internally differentiated society. Creating a sense of national identity through patriotism or heritage, or the Australian Aborigines' creation of a national flag are two examples. But however much ideologies are used to homogenise, Eagleton points out that they are themselves rarely homogenous. Instead they are usually internally complex, with conflicts between their various elements which need to be continually renegotiated or resolved. The perception of dominant ideologies as unifying in particular contains an implicit paradox. A dominant ideology only exists in relation to other ideologies; therefore it has continually to negotiate with these ideologies and cannot as a result achieve any kind of pure self-identity. As Eagleton notes, a conception of ideology as pure and devoid of contradictions is itself highly ideological.

2. *Action-orientation.* This relates to the ways in which an ideology may be used to express concrete social interests, rather than merely abstruse theoretical or

metaphysical systems. This strategy attempts to translate ideology into practical states, capable of furnishing goals, motivations, prescriptions and imperatives. Religions often function in this way, as did *Mein Kampf.*

3. *Rationalisation.* A strategy by which ideology is used systematically to provide plausible explanations and justifications for social behaviour. This might be linked to other strategies, such as naturalisation or legitimation.

4. *Legitimation.* The process of securing at least tacit consent to authority. Both rationalisation and legitimation may refer to the conferral of respectability onto otherwise illicit interests, but may merely mean establishing one's interests as being broadly acceptable. Eagleton points out that legitimation is not necessarily normative (in the sense that a legitimated power is always internalised by its subjects), but sometimes pragmatic (the rights of the rulers are endorsed because the subjects can see no other realistic alternative).

5. *Universalisation.* A strategy by which values and interests specific to a certain time and place are presented as common to all humanity and rendered seemingly inevitable, as self-evident, anonymous universal 'truths'. When, in August 1770, Captain James Cook (cited in Clark 1971) noted of the Australian Aborigines that, 'They seem to have no fix'd habitation, but move about from place to place like wild beasts in search of food, and I believe depend wholly upon the success of the present day for their subsistance (sic)', his English shock at these behaviours presented European values through just such an ideological strategy.

6. *Naturalisation.* As with universalisation, naturalisation is part of the tacit denial that ideas and beliefs may be specific to a particular place, time or social group and presents them as natural or self-evident. 'Science' is presented through such a strategy and rests upon a particular ideological conception of nature as being 'massive, immutable and enduring' (which Eagleton argues, in this age of technological

dominance, it most certainly is not). Both universalisation and naturalisation present processes as things, 'deleting agency and constituting time as an external extension of the present' (Thompson 1984, 131, 137). Essentially both deny inequality by denying that it is a social product and by presenting it as though it was the result of distinctly nonsocial factors.

To these six might be added a seventh, as advocated by Thompson (1984, 137):

7. *Dissimulation.* A strategy which acts to conceal, deny or block relations of domination and to simultaneously conceal the process of concealment. This is ideology as a mask, for example by arguing that certain features of an order exist while others simply do not (eg. affluence, freedom, equality, not poverty, oppression or exploitation). The 'end of ideology' thesis current in the 1970s (see for example ???), which argued that people under late capitalism are too worldly and wise to be taken in by ideology, illustrates how ideology can be concealed by denying that it exists.

As is the case with essential definitions of ideology, although it is possible for ideology to operate via all of these strategies it is not reducible to any one of them and many permutations are possible. Different strategies may be used successively over time by the same group of people, or the same strategy may be employed by completely different and separate groups.

IDEOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

Implicit in discussions such as Eagleton's is a nexus between ideology and the construction of social identity, exemplified by descriptions of the patterning of groups as subordinate and dominant, male and female, Protestant and Catholic or European and Aborigine for example. Goran Therborn (1980, 28) argues that ideology at any scale consists broadly of two components: what constitutes 'us' and what constitutes 'them' and emphasises the reflexivity inherent in making sense of your own place in

the world through making sense of the relational place of others. For Therborn (1980, 18) there are three fundamental modes of ideological interpellation. The first qualifies subjects by telling them, relating them to, and making them recognise what exists, and its corollary, what does not exist: that is, who 'we' are, what the world is or what nature, society, men and women are like. In this way 'we' acquire a sense of identity and the world acquires structure. The second and the third are both consequent upon this, relating identity to what is good and what is not (ie. what is right, just, beautiful, attractive, enjoyable), and its opposites. In this way, desires too become structured, as well as what is possible and impossible, 'patterning a sense of the mutability of being-in-the-world and the consequences of change' (Therborn 1980, 18).

Whether or not you believe, as Marx did, that the proletariat is compelled to abolish itself and is therefore conscious of both itself as a group and of its relative place in the rest of society, one strength of Marx's argument rests on his recognition that each group is only created as a group by reference to what it is not. Membership in a group (or groups) is created within the tensions of an unequal (in this case capitalist) society: in other words, who is and is not 'proletariat' (or marginalised under some other distinction) can only be defined in relation to who is and is not 'bourgeois' (or 'elite' in some other sense). Ideology is thus a process which brings individuals and groups into certain power relations and provides both social identity and knowledge about the world. Through ideology, which works to both include and exclude by suggesting standard sets of values against which everything can be measured, groups and individuals signify and respond to common arrays of values and beliefs.

John Plamenatz (1970, 17-18) took the premise of a connection between ideology and the construction of social identity and sought to reconcile an understanding of ideology as a general process of societal incorporation, with the obvious need to recognise the autonomy and heterogeneity inherent in human society. He distinguished between ideology in a sophisticated sense and ideology in an unsophisticated sense in order to approach the subtleties of individual identity. A sophisticated ideology is a 'more or

less coherent system of explicit beliefs about the world', an all-embracing philosophy or doctrine which may be shared by only a few members of society, while an unsophisticated ideology consists of the 'presuppositions implicit in ordinary ways of thinking and speaking about the things and persons, events and actions that constitute the world' and may be shared by all. A sophisticated ideology is not necessarily the vehicle for making explicit the presuppositions of an unsophisticated one (although it may be), but if all the members of a community or group are mutually to understand one another's 'ordinary discourse' they must share an unsophisticated ideology (Plamenatz 1970, 18). Thus while there may be only one unsophisticated ideology within a society, it is entirely possible for the same society to accommodate more than one sophisticated ideology.

Although Plamenatz chooses the words 'implicit' and 'explicit' to describe the way unsophisticated and sophisticated ideologies work, this should not be taken to imply any necessary equation with consciousness. Plamenatz (1970, 113-114) argues that it is entirely possible for a class or social group to have an ideology (beliefs which are widely held because they favour interests or express feelings shared by the group's members generally) without themselves being class or group-conscious. In other words they may have wants and feelings typical of that group, but not be organised to promote their interests or to act together as a group, or even be aware that they belong to a particular class or group. To a certain extent, what is definable as 'consciousness' is dependent upon what the 'objective interests' of the group are taken to mean:

> If we take a class (or other social group) and define it broadly in terms of some of the social relations in which its members stand, we can then perhaps discover aims typical of the class and define the conditions most favourable to their achievement, consistent with the class retaining its identity. These conditions we can call the 'objective interests' of the class and we can say that the class is 'class-conscious' when its members are effectively organised to further their interests and have beliefs (an ideology) which contribute to their furtherance. But if we define its objective interests and its class-consciousness as the aims and beliefs which its members would have if they understood the true significance of the course of history, we may be forced to conclude either

> that the objective interests and consciousness of all classes are the same or that no class ever achieves a full consciousness.
>
> (Plamenatz 1970, 121)

What Plamenatz distinguishes is the existence of ideology at different *scales*, either within the one social system, or even within the one individual. Under this kind of approach society at any given time will contain a variety of ideologies, unsophisticated and sophisticated, and analysis needs to focus upon the ways in which these ideologies articulate with one another to either promote or hinder different forms of social solidarity. Although the baseline Marxist emphasis rests upon how a social solidarity which allows capitalism to be reproduced is maintained, this maintenance may not be a result of a single dominant ideology incorporating all members. Rather, the reproduction of capitalism may be fostered as much by ideologies which effectively hinder, confuse or divert the development of resistance as by ideologies which incorporate a ruling group.

Plamenatz' dichotomy is similar to the distinction between vulgar and non-vulgar ideology proposed by Meltzer (1981) and is echoed in a similar distinction formulated by Anthony Giddens (1979, 190-192). Giddens formulated a scheme for analysing ideology as discourse which suggests that it can be undertaken at two levels: ideology as strategic action and ideology as institutional analysis. Giddens' conception of strategic action encompasses ideology in its most 'conscious' form, involving 'the use of artifice or direct manipulation of communication by those in dominant classes or groups in furthering sectional interests' (Giddens 1979, 190). Political tracts or Machiavellian strategies are typical examples of this. Ideology as institutional analysis however is concerned with how forms of domination are sustained in the everyday context of 'lived experience' (Giddens 1979, 191) and may be largely unconscious and deeply embedded both psychologically and historically. For Giddens (1979, 193) the distinction balances upon a search for 'the modes in which domination is concealed as domination, on the level of institutional analysis: and for the ways in which power is harnessed to conceal sectional interests on the level of strategic conduct' (figure 2.1).

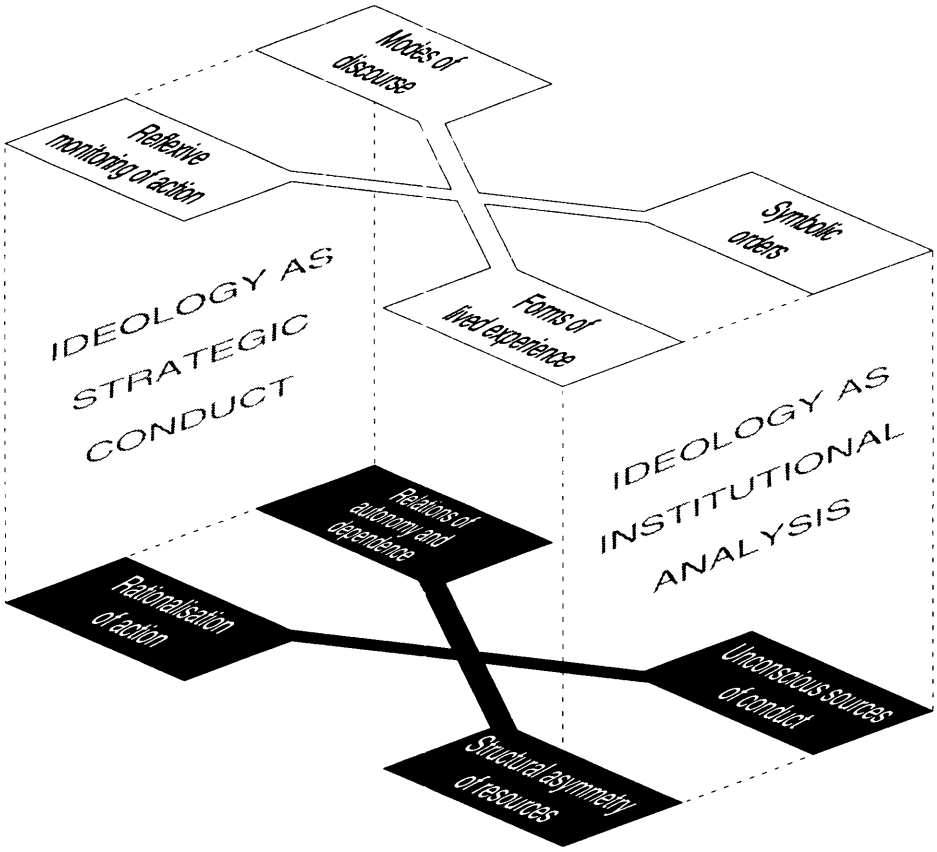

FIGURE 2.1: Giddens' scheme for analysing ideology

Because, for Giddens, an analysis of ideology is contained within the broader theory of structuration, he is careful to point out that this distinction should not be taken to imply two different types of ideological elements, but rather two different levels of ideological analysis which are 'connected via the duality of structure' (Giddens 1979, 193). An important strand which Giddens draws from his distinction is the relative degrees to which each ideological level may be penetrated and by whom: ideology as strategic action is often ideology of the most easily penetrated sort and 'by those who are the object of political manipulation—however subtle and clever the prince may be'; while ideology as institutional analysis contains the most 'buried' form of ideology and is not easily penetrated by those who live it (Giddens 1979, 191-192).

Eagleton (1991, 50) has suggested that to study ideology is among other things, to 'examine the complex sets of linkages or mediations between its most articulate and least articulate levels'. Perhaps what Eagleton would seem to suggest is that ideology at its least articulate is concerned with ideology as social practice, as opposed to ideology as carefully formulated political doctrine. In this sense then, archaeology will always be concerned with ideology at its least articulate levels: not because it is a recognition of the axiom that material artefacts are by their nature 'dumb' and it is the archaeologist who gives them 'voice', but because archaeology, by definition, is routinely directed towards understanding daily material practices.

There would appear to be obvious similarities between Giddens' analysis levels, Eagleton's articulation levels and Plamenatz's scales of sophisticated and unsophisticated ideology. In a sense these are all pointing in the same direction to intentionally highlight the complexity which faces any research attempt to analyse and contain ideology. Archaeology must also come to terms with this. Any contextual approach demands the same attention to the intricacies of ideology as to history or social context, while at the same time resisting a tendency to metaphorise and reify ideology as an organism in itself. Unsophisticated and sophisticated ideology are *only* articulated and made sense of through their continual reading and reception by people and only expressed materially within the varieties of ways of life of the people who live them.

It is crucial to remember here that there is a close connection between unsophisticated and sophisticated ideology. Both are the process and the products of daily life. As Raymond Williams (1977, 70) suggests, to attempt to dichotomise ideology as either a label for formed, separable 'ideas' or 'theories', or as the general production of 'real life' and to ignore the links between the two is 'the persistent thread of error'. This leads to a final rider on my definition of ideology. I also consider ideology to be dyadic: existing simultaneously at two levels within the one society, or even within the one individual, and thus continually interacting and being

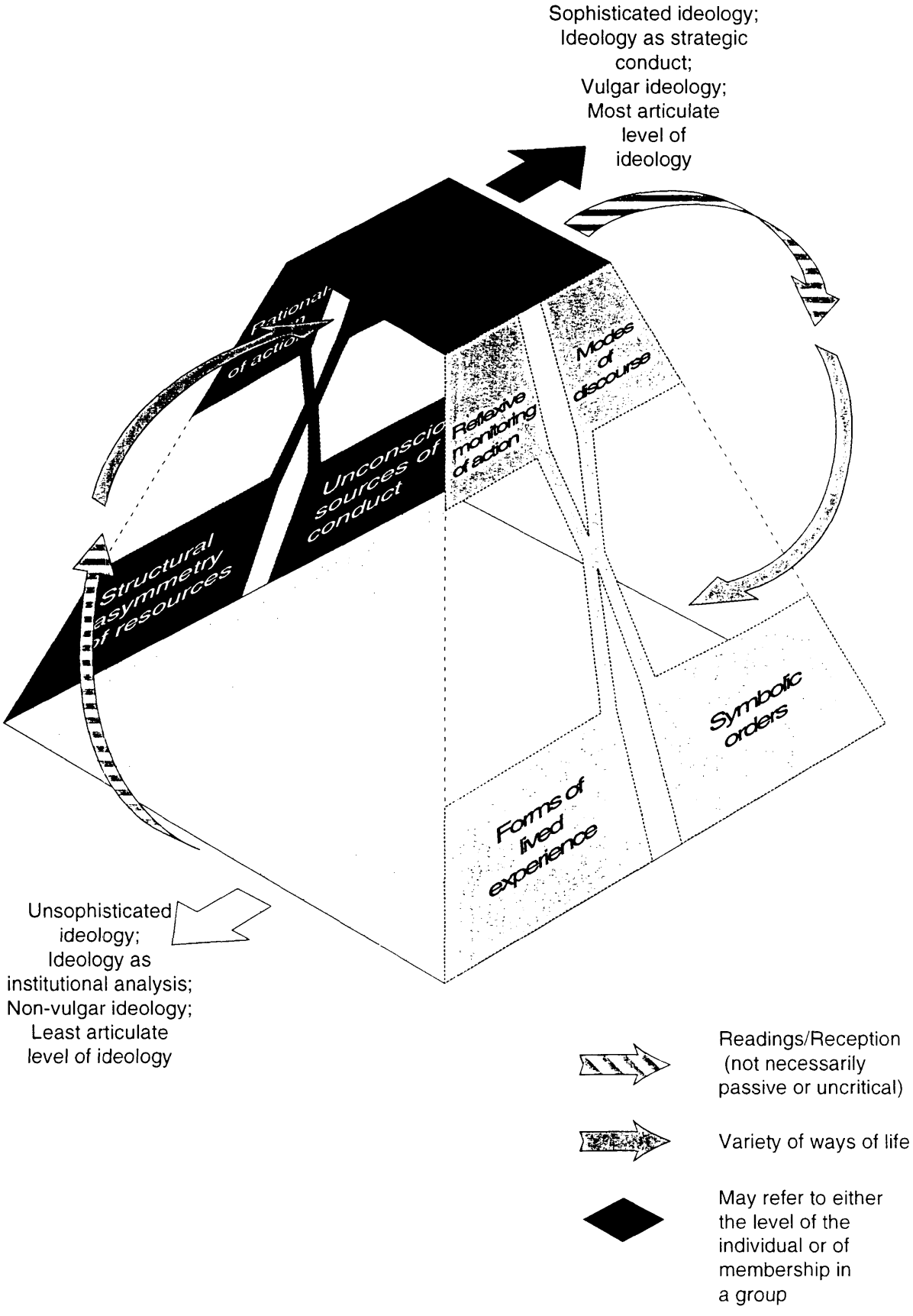

FIGURE 2.2: An alternative scheme for analysing ideology

negotiated as a result. Most importantly, my definition of ideology is firmly linked to questions of social power and to the negotiation of social identity.

Instead of a dichotomy, Williams proposes that it is the 'fundamental signifying practices' of ideology as belief or theory which are an integral part of ideology as 'real life' and it may well be the links *per se* which assume importance. It is this association between the 'material social process' (the production of society through the interactions of and interrelations between groups) and signification (the production of 'meaning' through signs) which is the key to understanding how ideology may be studied in archaeological terms.

IDEOLOGY, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND STYLE

Identity is a central facet of ideology and a crucial aspect in allowing it to make at least minimal sense of people's position in the world and thus their day to day life experience. It is also expressed, sometimes deliberately, mostly unknowingly and often materially. Within archaeology, an argument linking identity, power and ideology is applied not only to particular signs individually (See for example Handsman and Leone 1989; Thomas and Tilley 1993), but also to their manifestation as a collectivity: in other words as 'style' (see for example Earle 1990; Hodder 1990; Shanks and Tilley 1987).

My contention for a nexus between identity, style and ideology is clearly expressed in Polly Wiessner's (1989, 58) argument that there is a single underlying behavioural basis to style, in the 'fundamental human cognitive process of identification via comparison'. Through this she views style as a component of non-verbal communication (although it is not reducible to such), which communicates information about aspects of relative identity, at both an individual and a group level. Style thus becomes a medium for identification via comparison and a means by which people

'negotiate and communicate personal and social identity *vis-à-vis* others' (Wiessner 1989, 59).

> ... [I]ndividuals in all cultures have been shown to possess a strong desire to create a self-image through social comparison and to project this to others, in a positive way. Self-images have two components, a personal one and a social one. Social identity is important in that individuals are unable to form self-images in the absence of ar identity derived from membership in one or more groups. Conversely, an element of personal identity seems equally important and when put in situations of extreme conformity, individuals experience discomfort and strive to differentiate themselves from similar others. ... Since style is one medium of projecting identity, one would expect both personal and social identity to be expressed in style.
>
> (Wiessner 1990, 109)

Although style is non-verbal, it is a part of the construction of relative identity which is mediated by language and the symbolism which language entails (Noble and Davidson 1989; 1993; see also Davidson 1996, 4). Just as language creates the potential for restricting access to information and thereby for separating groups who possess that conventional knowledge from those who do not, so too, style, as a physical and enduring manifestation of group, contributes to the construction and negotiation of this relationship between 'in-group' and 'out-group' (Davidson and Noble 1992; Noble and Davidson 1993). As Conkey (1990, 7, emphasis in original) has argued: 'the word 'style', like the rest of language works by difference, and we certainly have used the study of style as our *access to difference*.' The advertisement of difference, of course, must still imply some convention of understanding of meaning across a boundary (Davidson 1995, 13). It is clear that I am subscribing here to a view of style as an inherently symbolic and purposeful behaviour, which, whether consciously chosen or not, *entails the choice of particular distinctive options of form from the range of alternatives available* (see Sackett 1990, 35-36).

At the same time however, while the range of choices which create self-image may be in theory limitless, in practice this creation is constrained by the range of choices which are seen to be possible as a result of culturally-encoded experience. In other

words, facetting a self-image through membership in one or more groups is directed by the range of groups which already exist, or which are able to be conceived as possible to exist. In this sense then, style is both the result of a fundamentally human cognitive process and at the same time a *learned* behaviour.

Like language, style is symbolic reference. It represents both individual and group identity in such a way that one thing, such as a particular pattern, shape or range of colours, is made to stand for another, some grouping of people. In early approaches to style, representation was often held to refer to group on an extremely large scale; as a supposed ethnic or geographic group. In the absence of absolute dates style was thus used as a chronological marker (see Conkey 1990, 7-8). This type of approach viewed the limits to variation as extremely broad, and particular styles became labels for otherwise undefined groups of people, such as the Beaker folk and the Lapita culture. In turn, these groups came to be viewed as restricted in time, and labels for 'cultures' also became labels for chronological periods, such as the Aurignacian or the Solutrean (Conkey 1990, 8). Because group was constructed at such a large scale, extreme variation within it was inexplicable and was therefore often relegated to equally inexplicable realms such as ritual. The recent criticism of such approaches has spawned work aiming to narrow down the focus of style to concentrate on the nuances of stylistic differentiation which are possible *within* a single group. The limits to variability have come to be understood in part as intra-group context, as the product of the social differences created between raw materials, between men and women, between the sacred and the secular, or between shadings of social status for example.

With this has come a recognition that style as an expression of social identity is necessarily complex. There are multiple facets to personal identity which are linked to membership in different social groups on a variety of scales and group membership may be predicated on a wide range of aspects of social inclusion. A person may have many identities, corresponding to the many contexts of their social behaviour. Identity consists of a variety of components with which individuals can construct aspects of

differentiation in different social situations (Shennan 1989, 20). Thus a woman may be simultaneously feminist, archaeologist, daughter or mother. She may even be, in other times and at other places, a tax payer, a Labour Party voter and a collector of art. Ponzio (1993) refers to identity genres, in which rights and duties are determined separately. Profession, social status, political party, sex, age, nationality or ethnic group are all genres which may inform a single person's identity. The expression of identity through style, then, may be as multifacetted as the expression of identity through group membership.

Understanding style as contextual also entails a more challenging proposition: that style is not necessarily always a deliberately communicative message, but often only has the *potential* to be received as a message, thus consideration must be directed towards the ways in which style operates and the productive contexts within which artefacts are given form and meaning (Conkey 1990, 11, 14). Although a contextual approach to style still begins with the analytical necessity of mapping the incidence of stylistic 'messages' and thus plotting group boundaries, it attempts to then move beyond this to question the situatedness behind these boundaries. How do boundaries relate to each another? Are they fixed or are they fluid? What are the contexts in which these boundaries exist and change?

It is this successive movement 'behind and beyond' which is advocated in Wiessner's (1990, 110) argument for a two-tiered approach to stylistic studies: initially at a surficial level, analysing style according to the expression of similarity versus difference or simplicity and uniformity versus complexity and diversity, and then at a deeper level, with attention being paid to the symbolism beneath these perceived patterns in order to grasp the underlying nature of social relations. The first level is what Conkey (1990, 15) refers to as pattern recognition, the process of describing observable patterns of artefact variability and relating them to group social relations. The second level however aims at questioning how that observable patterning might be generated, asking why those groups in those patterns at those times or what those

particular expressions of social identity might convey about the participant's construction of the world and the relative positioning of people within it. This is what Conkey (1990, 15) terms pattern generation and it is at this level that Wiessner argues style is capable of revealing the 'central metaphors' accompanying social relations: in other words, and in my terms, ideology.

Considering any study of style as social comparison in terms of these two levels begins to indicate the sheer complexity with which style may represent identity and the fluidity with which 'group' might be understood as dependent upon the context in which identity is created. It is in this nexus between the systematic study of the relationships between style and context that style comes closest to answering questions concerning ideology. Ideology may refer to *any* significant conjunction between discourse and power (whether predicated on age, gender, ethnicity or class) and thus is often closely related to context. I understand context to be *the situation in which identity is activated*, as indicative of the many facets which imbue identity. Style becomes one archaeological manifestation of ideology, through its role as the material expression of aspects of contextual identity and the negotiation through this of competitive strategies of status and power. To analyse ideological 'meaning' as transferred in context however, is to do more than merely describe the content of individual signs or symbols embodied in style. An appreciation of context aims to capture at least one aspect of 'meaning' by situating the analysis of style within complementary settings contributing to the overall construal of meaning (Dant 1991, 7-8):

1. the structural context (the way style is used to convey meaning),
2. the wider discursive context (what comes before or after in this and in other contexts) and
3. the power context (the power relations embodied in and realised by style).

Conkey (1990, 10) has argued that archaeological analyses of style should take an understanding of context as their premise. Style, like meaning, is not a fixed property, but is anchored in the discursive activity of the members of a community. It is grounded in the shifting terrain of different constructions of group membership, but it is expressed in material artefacts. By stressing the role of context as a creator of style, Conkey and others have fastened attention onto a specific range of questions. Conkey considers these to be questions of pattern generation: why *that* style in *that* place? why *that* style at *that* time? (cf. Conkey 1993, 106). Or as Smith (1994, 147) has phrased it: '[groups] ... are mobilised at particular times for particular purposes. The question that then arises is why are particular forms of group activated in particular contexts of interpretation?'

It is through such an approach material artefacts are often described as a 'text' or a 'discourse' (or at least part of one), which implicates meaning in the process of creating and maintaining social context(s). Discourse is the set of positioning arrangements within which identity and group (and the inequities which surround this) are negotiated. To reiterate Eagleton (1991, 9, emphasis added): discourse is not reducible merely to communication, but is the use of communication for *the production of specific effects* and is a function of an utterance and its particular social context. If an 'utterance' can be communicated as much through the form or use of material items as through speech, then artefacts become implicated in the discursive process by which ideology is reproduced. For example, if spatial constructs and architectural styles are components of a discourse (if they are texts), they may be examined both in terms of how discourse enters into their construction (how the practice of construction, and the inclusion and exclusion of objects relates to the rules and patterns of discursive formations) and how in consequence buildings or planned environments become statements (Hirst 1985). Power is implicated in the process of creating social identity by constituting the conditions by which certain constructions of identity can come to exist and perhaps persist in the face of others. Ideology

masks the asymmetry behind these different forms of identity, as well as also masking the spheres of power which legitimate and are in turn reinforced by this pattern.

Forging a link between ideology and style and then approaching it through the medium of architecture is not a new direction. Style in terms of the analysis of architecture—whether the façade or the plan—has become a focus for much historical archaeological recent research (see for example Anderson and Moore 1988; Johnson 1992; Leone 1994; Markell 1994; McGuire 1991; Miller 1984; Mrozowski 1991; Palkovitch 1988). Bringing architecture into an archaeological study creates a peculiar problem in the understanding of style: while both disciplines may study it, they do not necessarily use it to mean the same thing.

Both architectural and archaeological style begin in the same place, with the morphological description of features and the relationships between them. Questions of style in architectural terms are generally directed towards seriating changes in architectural features, a practice which uses style as a basis for creating artefact types and chronologies. 'Style' thus becomes the shorthand for a series of physical and morphological characteristics which go together in a known scheme (ie. the broad design principles which underlie historical types). These schemes are predicated on an accumulation of architectural wisdom and are also referred to as 'manner' (for example, a house may be said to be constructed in the Gothic or the Georgian manner) (figure 2.3). If an architectural style or manner is the coherence of particular sets of formal elements, it is also *prescriptive*, in that the 'known scheme' is bound by rules which guide composition. Thus the limits to variation are tightly established. Style prescriptions were a major export to the colonies of European Empire (Markus 1993, 8) and have become entrenched over the last three centuries in the descriptive and legislative ways in which people interact with buildings. Architects, when dealing with style, commonly work within such prescriptions and thus orient their studies towards the known schemes. Not all buildings are designed by architects however, and in a town the size of Armidale focussing on style only as the province of professional

or even of popular interpretations of their designs, would exclude the majority of buildings from discussion. Many buildings in Armidale are excessively plain and unadorned and, although typical of any range of buildings, are problematic because they are not identifiable to any coherent style. It is the *absence* of a distinct manner which renders these buildings distinctive.

'Style', like 'art' or 'architecture', can be an eminently subjective term and as Noble and Davidson (1996, 83) have argued for the terms 'culture' and 'symbol', may be given oppositional connotations associated with either mundane or 'highbrow' meanings. While highbrow meanings imply particular value-laden judgments ('style' as restricted to the province of professional designers or to the art gallery), mundane meanings imply the less romantic opposite ('style' as the choices all people make between different options of form). 'Style' as used by architects in effect means 'stylish', and as a result has far more highbrow connotations than 'style' as used by archaeologists. As a value-laden category, style-as-stylish can become the means by which something is judged to be (or not to be) 'Art' or 'Architecture'. This is one of the major differences between architectural and archaeological style. Architectural style is fundamentally concerned with assessing how a particular building fits within a known scheme, without being able to answer the more interesting question of why it may or may not conform. Archaeological style is less concerned with how a building should look as with why it may look a particular way; in this case variation from the known scheme is not merely aberrant, but relevant. Although I retain use of the term 'architectural style' in this thesis to refer to structures or parts of structures, I wish to make it clear that I do so in an archaeological sense. In this sense I am using 'architecture' (with a small 'a') as a convenient label to describe structural features, rather than as a judgement of a building's value (Architecture, with a capital 'A'). By the term 'architectural style', I mean style which is analysable in external structural features, as opposed to style in other areas of cultural production which archaeologists may investigate, such as rock art or pottery. I do not use it to refer to 'style as a

known scheme' (manner), but to particular features or groups of features which may be communicative.

Sequences of material artefacts thus become understood as combinations of material signs and archaeological expressions of ideology as the ways in which, and means by which, these combinations of signs are embedded in relations of power between social groups who are continually negotiating their social identity in the world. Thus, analysing ideology as it is constituted in material artefacts is essentially to question the constructedness of the social contexts in which producers of meanings, recipients of meanings and the material items which may be implicated in those meanings interact. Ideology is meaning in the service of power (Thompson 1986, 7). Power is implicated in the process of creating social identity by constituting the conditions by which certain constructions of identity can come to exist and perhaps persist in the face of others. Ideology masks the asymmetry behind these different forms of identity, as well as also masking the spheres of power which legitimate and are in turn reinforced by this pattern.

STYLE AND THE SEMIOTICS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

Ideology and style are closely linked, in that both are implicated in the continual process by which people construct their relative social identity in relation to other groups. This is the route by which ideology has come to be understood in part as a semiotic process, involving the relations between signified meanings and the various groups involved in producing and receiving those meanings.

At the base of semiotics lies the concept of the sign as a relational element. Peirce's (1985[1931]) vision of semiotics creates a three-tiered notion of what may constitute a sign, depending on the particular relationship between the sign and the thing which it represents. Both iconic signs and indexical signs exist in a direct relationship with the thing they represent: an icon is constructed as an analogous image; while an index is

linked to its object through certain secondary characteristics generally acknowledged to be causal. Thus flame is an icon of fire, while smoke, as caused by fire even if the fire itself is not visible, is an index. In contrast, a symbol is a sign which has no direct connection or resemblance to its object. The relationship between a symbol and its referent is wholly arbitrary and depends upon convention for its understanding. While the Roman numeral II is iconic for example, in that the sign bears some resemblance to its object, the Arabic numeral 2 is a symbol. A symbol can thus be seen as communicative, in that through common convention it is shared with other members of society (Chase and Dibble 1992, 43-44). Although strictly speaking under this scheme a 'symbol' is only one of three possible forms of sign, it is possible to speak more generally of an icon and an index functioning symbolically in that both may be substituted to stand for an absent object.

As a material marker of identity then, style becomes symbolic of group, in that it functions as an indexical marker of membership in particular groups, as well as of those groups themselves. Through this symbolism style promotes a group's self-identity and cohesiveness, maintains its boundaries, and arbitrates its interaction with other such groups (Sackett 1990, 36; see also Davidson 1995). Style by virtue of its arbitrary and conventional association with particular groups in society comes to be indexical of them and subsequently symbolic of the set of relations between that group and other groups. This is not a linear relationship, of course, but a circular one. As well as signifying positions of wealth, style may also index positions of poverty, but in the process, it may also signify the ways in which and means by which this difference is subverted and thus new indexes of difference are created. At any particular period, those features which symbolise the status difference are deemed by those who have them as stylish, but only so long as they constitute a recognisable system of difference. When conceptions of 'stylishness' become appropriated into alternative contexts, how are group boundaries maintained?

If style as an indexical marker persists into later contexts, when the particular grouping of identity it characterised no longer exists, it becomes a symbol in Peirce's understanding of the term, as a sign which no longer has any direct resemblance or connection to the object it once marked. These previous coteries of status become symbolic to later observers (up to and including the archaeologist), and may well become incorporated into later contexts of meaning. It is crucial to remember that, for style to function as a symbol, there must be observers to whom it is meaningful and among whom there is a convention that it stands for another thing (Noble and Davidson 1996, 68-69).

It is by this route that it is possible to understand the 'archaeological record' as a composition of signs, which function in communicative behaviour between and among groups of people (see Noble and Davidson 1996, 160-194). Archaeologists routinely analyse artefactual variability in terms of the expression of individual and group difference, which is itself one step removed from conjectures about ideology. The 'signs, meanings and values' part of my definition of ideology is what the archaeologist is analysing: studying the material artefacts as signs, in a semiotic process as the vehicle through which ideology may be realised.

The meaning of persistence

Through its role as a communicative component of human interaction, style in part mediates the process of constructing social identity, which all humans undertake. As an accessory to ideology, style is the material expression of aspects of contextual identity; and ideology is a facet of the assignment of meaning behind that construction. Ideology is fundamentally about providing a meaning for particular characterisations of social identity, as including some and excluding others. Ideology masks asymmetry by placing this characterisation beyond human control, thus one of its 'meanings' denies that difference is a socially constructed category. The archaeological study of style however is directed explicitly towards the opposite: towards identifying the ways and

means by which difference may be created socially through competing constructions of identity. Ideology may be one means of accessing Wiessner's second level of analysis, but ideology as a 'central metaphor', may give a particular meaning to the construction of particular contexts, and thus to the structuring of style within that context. Considering how context structures style is the study of generative processes: meaning as it is invested in each act of creation. Its aim is to articulate the constellation of social relations that gave rise to the construction of identity which produced that style. This set of social relations is what Handsman and Leone (1989) and Conkey (1990, 14) refer to as productive relations or productive context; the patterning of groups which gave rise to the creation of particular styles and the use of styles in particular ways.

Subsequent to the creation of a style or an object in its particular contexts of production, are the various contexts in which interaction with that object takes place. There is meaning in every successive act of interpretation and the longer an object endures, the more opportunities arise in which to interpret it. This is the context of visibility to which Wobst (1977, 328-330, 334-335) refers: the place which an artefact occupies within the visible landscape and the possibilities for interaction with it which arise from this location. 'Meaning' as a relationship arising from the continual use of material items is thus complicated by the many successive contexts in which those objects persist. This has repercussions for an archaeological investigation of ideology through the multiple meanings of style. Houses, gardens or street plans for example are both highly visible and fixed features in the landscape, which often survive substantially intact through many successive historical contexts. This may extend to a time when they become classed as 'heritage' and thus not only are preserved, but their very preservation celebrated. Where this occurs—in other words, where sets of material remains persist into subsequent contexts—the material expression of ideology in itself becomes a 'frieze'; the physical motif of a previous configuration of social relations which extends into and becomes part of the 'present'. Such a frieze makes an ideologically determined structure persist beyond the social relations which produced

it and persist in such a visible way that it continues to be interacted with, and thus acquire meaning within, later contexts of interpretation.

Following on from this is the question of how the persistence of each previous pattern, or frieze, may come to structure subsequent patterns. This succession is a continuum and by no means the static sequence which my use of the term 'frieze' might suggest. In any sequence there are likely to be common linking threads, which both bind and direct change. While context certainly structures the range of possible meanings which may be assigned to stylistic choices, it is also possible that the range of previous choices which endure into, and inform aspects of, later contexts, might also structure choice. This is particularly relevant when considering style in architecture and the negotiation of social identity, when the semiotic markers of relative social position persist into later contexts and thus become symbolic of particular groupings of people in the past. It is possible that, as the frieze of a previous social landscape, those architectural features both provide a benchmark for subsequent constructions of stylishness and a reminder of previous social boundaries which have since been subverted and renegotiated. While context certainly structures style then, it is also necessary to question the reverse: How might style structure context?

A note on meaning

In connecting style to symbolic behaviour through the vehicle of semiotics, my position holds that there is at least some emic meaning to be gained from the analysis of style. Style is not just 'something which informs', although the term is sometimes reduced to this etic position, but also 'something which mediates', a behaviour that was intentionally created and manipulated by the participants, as much as by the observer. Chase (1991, 195) recognises this duality when he separates the meaning of style as the intent to communicate from the meaning of style as the recognition of the material patterning produced by that intent. By 'meaning', I do not wish to imply that it is possible to 'get inside' another person's head, nor do I hold that there is *a* meaning

to be associated with a given material artefact. Just as there can be more than one meaning attached to an anecdote or to a person's actions, so, too, are there many possible meanings associated with an artefact implicated in the myriad strategies of human behaviour. It is not the case that artefacts or sequences of artefacts constitute a single text of the meanings associated with them, since meaning clearly changes with context. Various people in different groups (remembering that group may change over time as well as across space) may well interpret the same object or arrangement of objects in completely different lights.

As Howard Morphy's (1991) analysis of Yolngu paintings clearly illustrates, meaning is an often hierarchical and always slippery category. A single painting or a part of one may have many meanings which are not held in common by all members of society. Which meaning is held applicable by which person is fundamentally a function of that person's relative position: in other words their social context in terms of such factors as their age, their gender or their moiety. As Davidson (1995) has argued, this very slipperiness implies that a painting may be in turn iconic, indexical or symbolic, depending on the relative identity and knowledge of the interpreter. Paintings with more iconic representations (for example figurative motifs) belong to a wider, less restricted context, accessible in at least some degree to outsiders and the uninitiated. While there may be elements of iconicity in the more geometric paintings which belong to a restricted 'inside' context, they are 'primarily indexical and ultimately symbolic' in that their meanings are not so immediately associative (Davidson 1995, 890). The issue of meaning between inside and outside becomes not 'how many?', as in either context there may be multiple meanings, but of 'to whom does it mean?' and what criteria of group membership this knowledge marks.

This is a crucial aspect of archaeological style: how does it help to constitute groups? and how is the construction of a group mediated by access to the knowledge and position associated with that style? This links style firmly to power and to the differential power relations involved in creating and maintaining in-groups and out-

groups. It is along this route that style is most closely linked to ideology, particularly when ideology is envisioned as the mask behind which exclusion is negotiated. In other words, if ideology masks social asymmetry created through different patterns of inclusion and exclusion, then the material expression of this patterning—style—may be a reliable archaeological indicator of past ideology.

It is time to situate the theory within the particular historical and social contexts which informed the construction of Armidale. What groups of people lived here? How did they interact? And how might they have constructed their own identity and that of others through the medium of style in architecture?