

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE



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Introduction: The Intersections of Archaeology and Postcolonial Studies

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POSTCOLONIALISM IS A TERM THAT ENTERED THE VOCABULARY of the academic world in the late twentieth century to classify an amorphous body of art, literature, and scholarship dealing with the effects of colonialism on cultural formations and societies. In recent decades, postcolonial studies have significantly influenced academic disciplines throughout the humanities and social sciences (Gandhi 1998:viii, 42–63) including history, comparative literature, art history, women's studies, and cultural anthropology. The same cannot be said of archaeology, however, where postcolonial theory has previously exhibited comparatively little influence (Gosden 2001, 2004; van Dommelen 2002:127). The reasons for this lack of engagement are complex (e.g., Pagán Jiménez 2004), but the notorious “theory lag” that characterizes the history of archaeological thought is partly to blame. Furthermore, the tendency of many postcolonialists to employ less-than-lucid prose has not aided the incorporation of their thoughts into archaeological theory (Loomba 1998:xiii; Gosden 2001:241; Given 2004:23). However, the work of postcolonial scholars provides critical responses to the histories and literatures that reflexively shaped European colonialism from the fifteenth through the twentieth centuries. Because anthropological archaeology developed from and aided the expansion of Western colonialism and imperialism (Trigger 1984; Patterson 1995; Rowlands 1998; Gullapalli Chapter 3), postcolonial critiques address issues that are central to the discipline of archaeology today.

Archaeology and the Postcolonial Critique attempts to redress this dearth of engagement by explicitly and critically examining the significance of postcolonial studies for the theory and practice of contemporary archaeology.

The main objective of this volume is to engender a dialogue between archaeology and postcolonialism by examining the place of postcolonial studies in archaeology and vice versa. In so doing, this book brings together case studies from different worlds—the Old and the New, the “First” and the “Third”—to investigate both the positive and negative implications of postcolonialism for archaeology. Crucial to this endeavor is an examination of the impacts of postcolonial theory not only in the academic realm but also on the practice of archaeology in the modern world, with all the attendant colonialist, neocolonialist, and imperialist baggage that entails. The chapters that follow thus investigate the prospective theoretical, methodological, political, and legal implications of postcolonialism for the practice of archaeology in the twenty-first century.

Defining Postcolonialism

What defines postcolonialism? Like other theoretical paradigms appended with the prefix of “post” (postmodernism, poststructuralism, postprocessualism), postcolonialism resists any simple and unitary explanation. There is no single, monolithic “postcolonial condition” but, rather, a multiplicity of approaches that have been classified under the umbrella of postcolonialism. At the most basic level, however, postcolonial approaches challenge traditional colonialist epistemologies, questioning the knowledge about and the representation of colonized “Others” that has been produced in colonial and imperial contexts. Postcolonial theories address the complex effects of colonization, colonialism, and decolonization on cultural formations, acknowledging that long periods of forced dependency and hegemony have profound impacts not only on the societies of the colonized but on those of the colonizers as well. Postcolonial writers question the histories, literatures, and anthropologies produced by the Western academic canon, asserting that studies generated within colonial and imperial contexts often inscribe inferiority upon colonized peoples while distorting their experiences (Said 1978). Postcolonialists thus strive to develop new understandings of colonial experiences, often emphasizing the agency of indigenous peoples and investigating the hybrid and novel forms of culture that develop out of the processes of colonialism.

The seeds of postcolonialism were sown as many of the formal structures of European colonialism were dismantled in the wake of World War II, leading to a reexamination of the theories, assumptions, and disciplines that underpinned and grew out of Western colonialism. (For an expanded treatment of the intellectual origins and history of postcolonial studies, see

Patterson’s discussion in Chapter 2.) The political roots of postcolonialism can be traced back to an initial wave of radical anticolonial literature, including Mohandas Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* (1938), W. E. B. Du Bois’s *Color and Democracy* (1945) and *The World and Africa* (1947), Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972 [1955]), and Albert Memmi’s *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965). In spite of the deep history of these writings, it is Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) that is widely regarded as the foundational text of postcolonialism (Loomba 1998:43). In that work, Said examines the ways in which knowledge about “the Orient” (the Middle East, in modern parlance) was constructed by Europeans as an ideological component of colonialism. Building upon Foucault’s notion of discourse, Said focuses not on a description of the cultures and societies of the Orient, but upon the West’s representation of these peoples through the fields of philosophy, history, anthropology, philology, and literature. The critical analysis presented in *Orientalism* soon inspired the investigation of colonial discourses in other contexts, and throughout the 1980s a burgeoning movement flourished concentrating on the examination of colonialism from non-Western perspectives. This movement was originally known as colonial discourse theory, and its proponents include Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who, along with Said, are sometimes referred to as the “holy trinity” of postcolonial studies (Young 1995:165; see Gosden 2001 for a succinct synopsis of their major theoretical contributions). By the end of the 1980s, the moniker *postcolonialism* had been coined to refer to the critical scholarship and literature of non-Western (“Third World”) academics, authors, and artists whose work investigated the complex processes of colonialism and decolonization. In the 1990s postcolonialism gained widespread popularity in academic circles as its theories were embraced, appropriated, and expanded upon by academics working from the traditional centers of theory production (primarily Australia, Britain, and the United States).

A central question in defining postcolonialism is “what exactly is meant by *post*?” or, put another way, “*when* is postcolonialism?” (Shohat 1992). The obvious response would be the period that follows colonialism. However, this too-simple solution presents multiple problems, including the prominent fact that colonialism continues in various guises to the present day (Said 2002:2; Pagán Jiménez 2004; Pagán Jiménez and Rodríguez Ramos Chapter 4), albeit in ever-changing forms. Postcolonialism, then, is not simply a synonym for “after colonialism.” Unlike postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postprocessualism, postcolonialism does not imply a direct refutation of

the preceding paradigm. Rather, postcolonialists acknowledge the impacts of colonization—"being worked over by colonialism," as Gyan Prakash (1992:8) puts it—and examine the incorporation of colonial elements in new ways (Appiah 1991:348). Thus, some postcolonial writers use the term to refer to "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft et al. 1989:2), instead of reserving it exclusively for decolonized contexts. Furthermore, postcolonialism subtly differs from straightforward anticolonialism due to its acknowledgement of the primary role of discourse in the social construction of reality. This separates postcolonialism from other forms of anticolonialism, such as Marxist approaches; in other words, while postcolonialists are generally anticolonial, not all anticolonialists are postcolonial. The term *postcolonialism* is thus fundamentally associated with the representations, discourses, and ideologies of colonialism and is not a strict historical marker (McLeod 2000:254). A related issue (which seems at first trivial but is nonetheless central to the definitions used herein) is the inclusion or exclusion of punctuation in conjunction with the term: should *postcolonial* be spelled with a hyphen (*post-colonial*) or written as one word? In this volume, we employ the hyphenated form to indicate temporal specificity; thus, *post-colonial* refers specifically to events occurring after the end of colonial rule (as in "post-colonial India"). Conversely, *postcolonial* is used to refer more broadly to the theoretical stance of investigating and challenging the discourses of colonialism.

The Intersections of Archaeology and Postcolonialism

As previously noted, postcolonial theory has not heretofore played a prominent role in archaeological research (van Dommelen 2002:176; Gosden 2004:176). Nevertheless, there are at least three distinct areas in which postcolonial studies articulate with archaeology: 1) interpretively, in the investigation of past episodes of colonization and colonialism through the archaeological record; 2) historically, in the study of archaeology's role in the construction and deconstruction of colonial discourses; and 3) methodologically, as an aid to the decolonization of the discipline and a guide for the ethical practice of contemporary archaeology. These three areas broadly overlap with three of the major theoretical contributions of postcolonialism: the investigation of hybridity in the constitution of postcolonial cultural formations (Bhabha 1994), the role of essentialism in the construction of colonial discourses (Said 1978; 1993), and the difficulties inherent in at-

tempting to give voice to previously silenced subaltern (i.e., marginalized) peoples (Spivak 1988a).

Interpreting the Material Culture of Colonialism

Some of the earliest applications of postcolonial theory to archaeology occurred in the interpretive realm, in the examination of episodes of colonialism in the past through material culture (van Dommelen 1997; Webster 1997). Over the course of the past decade, archaeologists have applied various concepts developed by postcolonial scholars to the investigation of European colonialism in the Americas (Wilcox 2002; Liebmann 2006), as well as examples of colonialism in the ancient Mediterranean (van Dommelen 1997, 2002, 2005). Central to these analyses has been the work of Bhabha (1994), particularly his concept of hybridity as a fundamental element of colonial encounters. Hybridity commonly refers to the new, transcultural forms produced through colonization that cannot be neatly classified into a single cultural or ethnic category. The concept of hybridity has aided archaeologists dissatisfied with traditional representations of colonialism that reify a binary opposition of colonizer versus colonized, opening up a theoretical third space in which the ambiguous "in-between" (Bhabha 1994:38) of hybrid cultural formations can be examined.

If merely used as another synonym to describe the recombination of signs and forms with different histories in colonial settings, hybridity hardly contributes to an improved understanding of colonialism (van Dommelen 1997:309). But Bhabha's hybridity differs from more commonly utilized anthropological concepts such as acculturation, syncretism, bricolage, and creolization, as it results from the profound *ambivalence* inherent in colonial situations and emphasizes a reworking of previously existing elements rather than any simple combination of two (or more) distinct cultural forms (Bhabha 1994:110). Hybridity breaks down the simple opposition of colonizer and colonized, opening a space to examine the ambiguous, confusing, and often seemingly contradictory patterns in the material culture of colonialism. As used by some postcolonial scholars, hybridity does not connote benign and innocuous combinations of formerly separate entities but can imply disruption and a forcing together of unlike things (Young 1995:26), calling attention to divisions as well as conjunctions (Kapchan and Strong 1999:249). Hybridity thus provides a foreground for the issues of power and inequality inherent in colonial societies, stressing the empowering nature of transcultural forms that often make space for anticolonial resistance through the challenging of binary categories. This emphasis on power can be traced

through Bhabha's writings back to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981:358–61), whose use of the term *hybridity* stressed the unsettling and transfiguring capacity of these new cultural formations.

Judging by recent presentations at professional conferences, hybridity appears to be quickly supplanting many of the anthropological concepts traditionally utilized by archaeologists to describe cultural intermixture. As the interpretation of the material culture of colonialism gains increasing attention (Given 2004; Gosden 2004; Stein 2005), the concept of hybridity promises to aid in the writing of new and innovative archaeologies of colonialism (Liebmann Chapter 5), but only if attention is paid to the subtleties of power and ambivalence that are central to Bhabha's use of the term.

The Colonialist History of Archaeology: Essentialism and Colonial Discourses

The second major area in which postcolonial theory is relevant to archaeology is in the investigation of archaeology's role in the historical production and deconstruction of colonial discourses. From the earliest days of the discipline, archaeology has played a part in creating and controlling the representation of the past in colonized societies. As noted by Said (1978), colonial discourses typically represent colonized peoples through a series of essentialist binary oppositions that favor colonial (Western) cultures, presenting colonized Others as variously inferior, passive, feminine, savage, lazy, marginal, simple, static, and primitive in contrast to the superior, active, masculine, civilized, industrious, central, complex, dynamic, and modern colonial Self. These "truths" about colonized peoples were formulated and shaped through Western literatures and histories, and are not, of course, based in ethnographic realities but, rather, created the "facts" that justified Western colonialism. Colonial discourses based on these binary oppositions constructed an unequal dichotomy that was used to validate and rationalize military and economic violence against the colonized. In so doing, Western cultures defined *themselves* through the representation of colonized Others in negative terms. These colonial discourses rely upon essentialist representations, wherein social groups are presumed to possess universal features exclusive to all members. Essentialist discourses reduce complex heterogeneous structures to a supposed inner truth or essence and function within colonial regimes to reinforce hegemonic control over colonized peoples, inscribing inferiority upon them by controlling the dominant modes of representation (Liebmann Chapter 5; Borgstede and Yaeger Chapter 6).

Archaeology has played a significant role in the construction of essentialist colonial discourses over the course of the past century. Gosden (2004:21) identifies V. Gordon Childe as an early and explicit purveyor of colonialist representations of the West. Childe constructed exactly the type of binary essentialisms identified by Said when he wrote that in the archaeology of Early Bronze Age Europe, "we can recognize already those very qualities of energy, independence, and inventiveness which distinguish the Western world from Egypt, India, and China" (Childe 1925:xiii–xiv). Nowhere has archaeology aided colonial domination more clearly than in Zimbabwe, where Portuguese and British colonists controlled the representation of the past for much of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Archaeologists attributed the construction of the massive *zimbabwe* (Shona for "stone house") sites to Phoenicians or, more generally, white civilizations (Pikirayi 2001). In so doing, they not only denied agency to indigenous Africans but also justified colonization of the region by controlling the representation of the past. Examples of archaeology aiding colonial expansion—sometimes overtly, other times latently—abound (Trigger 1980, 1984; Arnold 1990; Patterson 1995), yet archaeologists often appear remarkably ignorant of the ongoing role the discipline has played in the denigration of colonized or formerly colonized peoples (McGuire 1992).

Archaeology is not inevitably or inherently colonialist, however. Ours is a discipline that can aid in the deconstruction of colonial discourses as well. This was famously the case in the resolution of the Moundbuilder debates of the late nineteenth century, when archaeological evidence was used to determine conclusively that the mounds of the eastern United States were constructed by Native Americans and not Europeans (Thomas 1894; Silverberg 1968; Willey and Sabloff 1993). Unfortunately for the indigenous peoples of the eastern United States, this vindication came too late; colonialist representations of the past had already been used to justify the removal of Native Americans from the east and the taking of Indian lands (McGuire 1992:822). Similarly, archaeological evidence was eventually used to refute the colonialist discourses surrounding the supposed "white" construction of Great Zimbabwe (Given 2004:164–65), but only after decades of colonial rule had exploited local resources and peoples. Postcolonial theory highlights the role played by the creation of historical essentialisms and offers tools archaeologists can use to identify and deconstruct the propagation of colonial discourses. For this reason, archaeology stands to benefit from postcolonial theory. And postcolonial theory stands to benefit from archaeology as well, as the study of material culture can aid

in the deconstruction of the colonial discourses which are used to subjugate subaltern peoples.

Postcolonialism and the Practice of Contemporary Archaeology

The third arena in which archaeology engages with postcolonialism relates to the practice of archaeology in the twenty-first century. Postcolonialism challenges archaeologists not only to examine the colonialist history of the discipline but also to learn from the errors of the past and put into practice an ethical and noncolonialist archaeology today (Rizvi Chapter 7). This means considering the political climates in which archaeologists generate research questions and interpretations and recognizing that archaeological work is not conducted in a social or cultural vacuum. As postcolonialists have demonstrated, representations of the past—particularly the histories of colonized peoples—have real implications for contemporary power relations, often negatively impacting those whose past is the subject of archaeological research. Thus, in formulating any discourse regarding the past, archaeologists need to consider the ways in which their research shapes and is shaped by colonialist representations. This entails consultation and, when possible, collaboration on the local level with descendant communities and indigenous peoples (see Preucel and Cipolla Chapter 8; Scham Chapter 10), but also macrolevel considerations of archaeology's role in globalization and neocolonialist institutions (Lilley Chapter 9; Seneviratne Chapter 11).

This is, of course, not entirely uncharted territory for archaeologists. Various processes of decolonization have impacted the practice of archaeology significantly in the past twenty years (Atalay 2006 a,b; Smith and Wobst 2005). The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), for example, reconfigured the relationships of archaeologists and indigenous peoples in the United States (Swindler et al. 1997; Mihesuah 2000; fforde et al. 2002) by empowering Native Americans with a modicum of legal control over cultural resources and their ancestral human remains. Legislation has likewise stimulated the decolonization of archaeological practices in parts of Oceania and Australia (Lilley 2000). But even with the threat of legal action pulling archaeologists—sometimes kicking and screaming—into this new era, colonialist attitudes remain remarkably prevalent in archaeology (Pagán Jiménez 2004; Seneviratne Chapter 11), although changing legal realities sometimes cause them to be deployed in new ways.

One of the main challenges to archaeology posed by postcolonial theory is a reconsideration of how archaeologists represent the past—to whom we can or cannot give a voice through material culture and for whom we can or cannot speak. Archaeologists have long stressed the ability of our discipline to allow those silenced by time to be heard again in the present. Historical archaeologists in particular have stressed the ability of material culture to “speak” for the marginalized and subordinated peoples often underrepresented in historical texts: enslaved persons, ethnic minorities, disenfranchised peoples, and illiterate members of society, known as *subalterns* in postcolonial jargon (a term coined by Gramsci to refer to “those of inferior position”). Giving voice to the subalterns of history was the primary aim of a cadre of postcolonial historians known as the *Subaltern Studies Group*, who attempted to rectify the tendency of official versions of South Asian historiography to focus on elites (Guha 1982). But the ability of these historians to give voice to the voiceless is questioned in a famous essay by Spivak (1988a) entitled “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in which she investigates the risks and rewards of any academic pursuit that seeks to speak for a disenfranchised group. How, she asks, can authors writing about the past avoid presenting themselves as an authoritative representative of the groups they write about? Should intellectuals abstain from representation of these groups entirely? On the other hand, Spivak points out that ignoring the role of subalterns continues the imperialist project, silencing the oppressed and marginalized of history. Her queries obviously apply to archaeology as well: in what voices do the peoples we study speak? Their own? Their subconscious as manifested through material culture? Accents borrowed from the excavators? Or is archaeology merely an exercise in ventriloquism, throwing our own voices into the mouths of people in the past?

For her part, Spivak is pessimistic about the ability to recover subaltern voices from historical texts written by colonial elites, insisting that “the subaltern cannot speak.” However, her point is not to stifle the investigation of subalternity entirely, observing that in some cases it is precisely what *cannot* be said about the past that becomes important. In archaeology the situation is more complex—unlike historical documents, which tend to be written by single authors or members of specific social classes, material culture is left behind by persons at all levels of society. Thus, in most cases, a record does exist attesting to the life of subalterns. However, this record does not speak for itself; it must be given a voice by the archaeologist. While the attempt to uncover previously silenced versions of the past is an admirable goal, archaeologists must remain aware that it is their own voice that is speaking. Claiming to speak for—rather than about—

subaltern groups in the past (or present) runs the risk of perpetuating colonial representations.

Critiques of Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is not a panacea, however. Serious and compelling critiques of postcolonial studies have been raised in recent years, giving archaeologists reasons to be wary of the uncritical application of these theories. Critics of postcolonialism have accused its proponents of, among other things, homogenizing colonial experiences (Shohat 1992:102; Ahmad 1995); perpetuating academic imperialism (Dirlik 1994; Mukherjee 1996); divorcing theory from political realities (Ahmad 1995; Dirlik 1994); neglecting to account for the material aspects of colonialism (Parry 2004; Gosden 2001:248, 2004:7; Patterson Chapter 2); and, most problematically for archaeologists, failing to adequately acknowledge the role of history in cultural change (Ahmad 1992; Dirlik 1999; Gosden 2001:243). While the validity of these and other critiques has been the subject of intense debates, they do raise substantive questions regarding the assumptions underlying much of postcolonial theorizing. However, these criticisms do not necessitate the outright rejection of all things postcolonial, either; to do so would be tantamount to throwing the theoretical baby out with the bathwater. One of the unintended benefits of the "theory lag" in archaeology is the ability to see (and, it is hoped, avoid) the pitfalls and blind alleys that have plagued other disciplines that have previously worked through postcolonial issues. Moreover, these critiques present an opportunity for archaeology to contribute to current debates in postcolonialism. Rather than occupying the traditional role of mere consumers of theory, archaeologists could actually play an active role in the production of postcolonial theory.

Monolithic Postcolonialism?

One of the most common critiques leveled at postcolonialism is its tendency to homogenize colonial encounters (McLeod 2000:244–45; Gullapalli Chapter 3). By collecting the experiences of colonized and formerly colonized peoples around the world under the single umbrella term of *postcolonial*, critics argue that the label becomes vague, obfuscatory, and ahistorical. What, for example, do Aboriginal Australians, communities of the African diaspora, citizens of the modern state of India, and inhabitants of ancient Roman provinces share beyond myriad experiences with very different forms of colonialism? Postcolonial critic Aijaz Ahmad complains that when postcolonialists extend their analyses back to encompass the Inca

empire and forward to the present day, then colonialism becomes "a trans-historical thing, always present and always in the process of dissolution in one part of the world or another" (Ahmad 1995:9).

Aside from the fact that Inca imperialism overlapped temporally with the European colonization of the Americas and thus doesn't involve pushing colonialism into the past much (if at all), the debate over the applicability of postcolonial theory to differing cultural and temporal contexts is an arena in which archaeology stands uniquely poised to contribute. Indeed, recent archaeological studies of colonialism have begun to identify shared attributes in colonial situations around the world and throughout time (Rowlands 1998; Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002; Given 2004; Gossen 2004; Stein 2005). As of yet, however, postcolonial theory has not figured prominently into these analyses (excepting van Dommelen 1997, 2002, 2005). Within postcolonial studies, scholarship has previously focused almost exclusively upon European colonialism and neocolonialism from the fifteenth century until today, inviting criticisms of Eurocentrism. The unique diachronic and cross-cultural nature of the archaeological record affords archaeologists the opportunity to explore the applicability of postcolonial theory to a wide variety of cultural and temporal contexts, examining both the European expansion of the post-fifteenth century (Orser 1996) and similar processes in the more distant past (Gosden 2004; Stein 2005). Even with the addition of archaeological studies of a variety of differing contexts, there is no inherent reason that postcolonialism must homogenize the diversity of colonial experiences. Rather, the variety of colonial encounters affords great potential for postcolonial studies. Critics who accuse postcolonialism of generalizing colonial experiences sound a valuable warning, and postcolonial scholars have acknowledged that "the homogenization of colonialism does need to be set against its historical and geographical particularities" (Young 1995:165). Archaeological research provides just such valuable comparative studies. For this reason, we have chosen a variety of case studies from different contexts around the world to be represented in this volume, investigating not a monolithic "postcolonial condition" but, rather, a diversity of situations in which postcolonial theory may prove enlightening.

Is Postcolonialism Neocolonialist?

The most scathing critiques of postcolonialism have been leveled by critics who argue that although postcolonialists *appear* to challenge imperialist power structures, this opposition masks their continuing complicity with

neocolonialist modes of oppression (Ahmad 1992, 1995; Dirlik 1994, 1999). According to this view, postcolonialism is principally a Western product, complicit in the continuing neocolonialist subjugation of the Third World. Historian Arif Dirlik accuses the First World academy of appropriating postcolonial/"Third World" intellectuals. His answer to the question "When exactly does the postcolonial begin?" is only half-joking: "When Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World academe" (Dirlik 1994:328–29). Dirlik accuses the luminaries of postcolonialism of having "sold out" by accepting employment in American universities. He and others further point to the European philosophers who underlie much of postcolonial thinking: Foucault's influence on Said, Derrida's on Spivak, and Lacan's and Freud's on Bhabha (Mukherjee 1996:8; Patterson Chapter 2). This intellectual genealogy purportedly demonstrates that postcolonialism does not represent the perspectives of colonized peoples but, rather, that of European colonizers, with objectives and concepts fashioned in American universities. Finally, these critics note the alarming alacrity with which postcolonialism was appropriated by Western scholars (archaeologists being a notable exception), all of which leads them to the conclusion that postcolonialism is nothing more than a neocolonialist tool of the Western academy which functions to maintain Euro-American hegemony.

While the European origins of many of the theories that inspired postcolonial thought are undeniable, this fact only serves to illustrate one of the main points of postcolonialism: that colonized peoples cannot help but be influenced by the legacy of colonialism (McLeod 2000:249). Criticisms such as Dirlik's belie a latent nativist desire for pure, unadulterated "Third World" theory, uncontaminated by the processes of Western colonialism. But as postcolonialists have demonstrated, the existence of such pristine scholarship is a myth, as the capillary actions of colonial power are far too pervasive (Foucault 1980). Furthermore, the fact that postcolonialism has had extensive impacts on Western academics illustrates the corollary that colonization impacts the colonizer as well as the colonized. While it is true that postcolonialism has been quickly embraced by scholars at the traditional centers of theory production (as evidenced by the contributors to this volume), the alternatives of ignorance or apathy by Western academics are hardly preferable. Those who advocate a de-Westernized postcolonialism seem to support a policy of academic apartheid, promoting a binary division between "First" and "Third World" scholars that is not only unsustainable but also undesirable.

A related criticism, leveled by Marxist critics, is that postcolonialism's focus on colonial discourses, language, and representation ignores the ma-

terial realities of subaltern subjugation (Dirlik 1994, 1999; Ahmad 1995; Parry 2004; Patterson Chapter 2). In other words, despite all the jargon-laden academic discussion, postcolonialists neglect to account for the concrete economic and social conditions faced by people living outside the Ivory Tower who deal with the realities of colonial legacies on a daily basis. These critics view the focus on colonialism as a red herring, distracting postcolonialists from the true basis of subaltern subjugation: capitalist modernity (Ahmad 1995:7).

While it would be far too optimistic to suggest that archaeology alone might resolve these debates, the study of material culture can contribute to postcolonial theory by investigating the linkages between colonialist representations on the one hand and the material world on the other. In so doing, archaeological research can not only help to ground some of the more esoteric aspects of postcolonialism but also provide the historical backing that postcolonial studies are accused of lacking (Ahmad 1992; Dirlik 1999). Although postcolonialists have stressed the importance of "putting together . . . the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present" (Bhabha 1994:63), these same studies have been criticized as predominantly synchronic analyses, lacking any real theory of culture change (Gosden 2001:243). Archaeological research can, in some cases, provide a material and historical basis for postcolonial analyses. But in the same way that postcolonial theory is not a panacea for archaeology, archaeology is not a panacea for postcolonialism. Both archaeology and postcolonial studies stand to benefit from increased dialogue. Gosden (2001:243) notes that "postcolonial theory may suggest new directions for archaeological analysis"; we would suggest that archaeology might do the same for postcolonialism.

Contributions of This Volume

The case studies presented in this volume explicitly examine the intersections between archaeology and postcolonialism, concentrating primarily upon the prospective contributions of postcolonial theory to contemporary archaeology, and in some cases, how archaeology might also contribute to postcolonial theory. In an attempt to avoid the problematic homogenization of which postcolonialism has been accused, we have assembled a wide variety of studies from around the world. Although the majority of authors hail from the traditional "centers" of archaeological theory, some do not, and together they address the practice of archaeology in a variety of contexts worldwide: the Caribbean, Mesoamerica, the

United States, the Middle East, India, Turkey, and Sri Lanka. Contributions also range from studies that address the impact of postcolonial theory on the local level (examining histories of archaeological research in specific regions) to the global level, investigating the practice of archaeology in and by modern neoliberal institutions. The assembled chapters are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of postcolonialism in archaeology; indeed, we consider the relationship between archaeology and postcolonialism in its infancy. Rather, the contributions in this volume represent the first tentative steps of a much longer journey. The studies presented here merely provide points of departure upon which we hope future examinations can be built.

History is a primary theme investigated in the chapters by Thomas Patterson (Chapter 2), Praveena Gullapalli (Chapter 3), and Jaime Pagán Jiménez and Reniel Rodríguez Ramos (Chapter 4)—the history of postcolonialism as well as the history of archaeology in specific regions. Patterson contextualizes the emergence of postcolonial theory within a wider global history of the later twentieth century in his chapter, “A Brief History of Postcolonial Theory and Implications for Archaeology.” Through a consideration of the emergence of postcolonialism out of the contradictions of political-economic, social, and intellectual currents that shaped world history after the Second World War, he notes that the roots of postcolonialism can be traced back not only to early decolonization movements, but also to the creation of a world in which “imperialism, socialism, and third-worldism” struggled for control over newly independent nations. By examining the intellectual genealogy of postcolonialism, he further notes the Enlightenment foundations that underlie much of contemporary postcolonial theory. Unconvinced that postcolonial scholars have sufficiently considered Marxist perspectives, Patterson expands upon classic critiques and questions the applicability of models generated by postcolonial scholars (which tend to focus on the specific historical circumstances of the past sixty years) for the interpretation of precapitalist societies—the focus of the majority of archaeological research. Ultimately, Patterson reminds us that any engagement between archaeology and postcolonialism demands critical assessment of the theories being applied, though he welcomes the broadening of intellectual horizons and strengthening of ties between archaeology, cultural anthropology, and history that will result from the judicious application of postcolonial theory.

In Chapter 3, Gullapalli directly addresses the critique of postcolonialism as homogenizing by emphasizing the necessity of local discussions within specific historical and archaeological contexts. She notes that ar-

chaeological research highlights areas in which postcolonialism needs to be developed further—specifically, increased attention to the heterogeneity of experiences within colonialism and among colonized peoples. Through an investigation of the history of archaeological research in South Asia, Gullapalli draws attention to the complex relationship between archaeology and colonialism in India. There, colonial discourses forged by early British archaeologists continue to shape Indian archaeology down to the present day. Even more recently, archaeology has played a role in the development of discourses of decolonization by specifically countering colonial narratives as well. And while the practice of archaeology in contemporary India shares similarities with other postcolonial nations, it does not necessarily proceed in the ways typically envisioned by postcolonial theorists, either. While post-independence archaeology in India has been used to refute colonial discourses, Gullapalli points out that it has not led to the articulation of localized, heterogeneous histories. Thus, she demonstrates the ways in which anticolonial discourses can lead to homogenizing and nationalist narratives regarding the past. Gullapalli concludes by calling for increased attention to the myriad local identities that archaeology has the ability to elucidate, which may in turn demonstrate that archaeology can indeed enable postcolonial peoples in India to create their own histories.

Jaime Pagán Jiménez and Reniel Rodríguez Ramos remind us of the ongoing colonial legacy still experienced today in the “postcolonial colony” of Puerto Rico (Chapter 4). They emphasize the importance of local experiences in the development of archaeological theory and are leery of the neocolonialist aspects of postcolonialism being thrust upon them from the centers of theory production. Through a detailed analysis of the history of archaeological research on the island, they show how the construction of the Puerto Rican past through colonial discourses serves to naturalize the continued colonial and neocolonial occupation of the island. They also take to task archaeologists from the traditional centers of theory production for their ignorance of the theory produced in Latin American and other non-English-speaking parts of the world, warning that “if a concerted effort is not made by central archaeologists to hear what others are saying, they will continue to float in their own colonially-infested swimming pool.” Pagán Jiménez and Rodríguez Ramos provide concrete examples of colonialist discourses that persist to the present day, reminding us that colonialism indeed endures, and that although some former colonies have attained a modicum of independence, we most certainly do not live (or practice archaeology) in a world free from colonialism.

The problems of essentialism and identity construction in modern indigenous communities are examined in the contributions of Matthew Liebmann (Chapter 5) and Greg Borgstede and Jason Yaeger (Chapter 6). Chapter Five, "Postcolonial Cultural Affiliation: Essentialism, Hybridity, and NAGPRA," investigates the conflicts that can arise when postcolonial tenets such as anti-essentialism and the hybrid construction of identities are brought to bear upon the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Contrary to the assertions of critics who contend that NAGPRA necessitates the propagation of essentialist discourses by contemporary Native Americans, this study uses the history of the legislation to provide an alternative interpretation of the law. It contends that a more nuanced reading of NAGPRA can be used in concert with the works of postcolonial theorists such as Bhabha (1994) to strengthen the claims of cultural affiliation required of Native Americans under the law. The cornerstone of postcolonial cultural affiliation depends on the ability of archaeologists to document the histories behind the hybrid cultural formations of modern tribes. Rather than undermining Native American claims of cultural affiliation, the postcolonial concept of hybridity can be used to establish the ways in which modern tribes retain a cultural affiliation with their ancestors. In this way, postcolonial theory can help to free contemporary Native Americans from the colonialist discourses that locate Native American authenticity only in a static, unchanging precolonial essence.

Borgstede and Yaeger investigate archaeology's role in the construction of essentialist discourses in Mesoamerica in their chapter, "Notions of Cultural Continuity and Disjunction in Maya Social Movements and Maya Archaeology." Archaeology, they contend, is implicated in a complex recursive relationship with the concept of cultural continuity in Maya contexts. While archaeologists are guilty of employing generalized, indiscriminate ethnographic analogies based on modern Maya communities to interpret the archaeological record, these analogies neglect to acknowledge the variation that exists among modern Maya ethnic groups and regions. At the same time, the homogenized characteristics employed by archaeologists are utilized by modern Maya intellectuals in the deployment of "strategic essentialisms" (Spivak 1988b) that emphasize pan-Maya cultural continuities. Thus, they note that the hybridity so often identified by postcolonial scholars as a hallmark of colonial and postcolonial societies is actively deemphasized in Maya contexts in order to bolster the case for cultural continuity. For archaeologists, this minimization is thought to strengthen their interpretations of the precolonial Maya past. For modern

Maya peoples, this discourse of cultural continuity is co-opted and reconfigured for political expediency. Borgstede and Yaeger note that while these essentialisms are used by indigenous groups to contest colonial hegemony, they also contribute to a potential undermining of archaeological science in the future.

The decolonization of archaeology is at the core of the studies by Uzma Rizvi (Chapter 7) and Robert Preucel and Craig Cipolla (Chapter 8). According to Rizvi, although the colonial legacy of archaeology is amply documented, this fact has not yet effected a methodological shift in the discipline. She provides a case study based on archaeological research in Rajasthan, India, that advocates critical reflexivity during fieldwork (paying particular attention to the politics of language); community-based archaeology involving interaction and collaboration with people on the local, provincial, and national levels; and possibly most importantly, a willingness among archaeologists to fundamentally relinquish power in the field. By conceiving of postcolonial critiques not just in the realm of theory but also as methodological tools, Rizvi pulls postcolonialism from its Ivory Tower refuge. In the process, she provides a response to the common Marxist critique that postcolonialism divorces theory from political realities, demonstrating the potential impact of postcolonialism beyond hypothetical debates to affect practical aspects of the practice of archaeology.

Preucel and Cipolla continue the investigation into the decolonization of the discipline through their discussion of indigenous archaeologies. They examine the various meanings of the term *indigenous archaeology* in the twenty-first century through an exploration of the diverse practices associated with this term. Indigenous archaeologies overlap with postcolonial approaches through a shared commitment to decolonize archaeological practices. Preucel and Cipolla investigate the role of language in the production of archaeological discourse and the incorporation of indigenous epistemologies into contemporary archaeology. But they also document areas in which indigenous archaeologies provide a critique of postcolonialism, noting that the attention afforded to local issues by indigenous archaeologies addresses particular concerns of specific communities, a factor often overlooked by the generalizing (Western) academic interests that tend to characterize postcolonial studies. Ultimately, they are optimistic regarding the potential of indigenous archaeologies to transform postcolonial concepts, reshaping them to correspond with the specific disciplinary requirements of archaeology. In the process, the intersection of postcolonial and indigenous approaches hold the potential to transform archaeology into a more democratic—and decolonized—discipline.

Globalization, nationalism, and the impacts of neoliberal organizations upon the practice of contemporary archaeology are themes investigated by the final chapters in this volume. In Chapter 9, Ian Lilley examines the relationships between archaeology and neoliberal global entities through a consideration of how archaeologists might pose a postcolonial response to recent shifts in the cultural heritage activities of the World Bank. Promoting the value of a broad postcolonial sensibility (rather than applying the work of a specific postcolonial scholar), Lilley exposes the constant tension in international affairs between state sovereignty and external intervention. Through a case study of World Bank heritage policy focusing on the Ilisu Dam project in Turkey, Lilley calls on archaeologists to become more vocal concerning the activities of global entities with impacts on archaeological resources. If we do not, he warns, archaeologists "will have no impact on the way the decolonizing world turns and no say in the way in which the turn of postcolonial events impinge upon us." However, archaeologists need to decolonize the practice of our craft, he notes, if we intend to demand the same from global organizations. Attention to multivocality and willingness to relinquish the authority to speak and act for the past, he believes, are the keys to this decolonization.

Sandra Scham (Chapter 10) examines the conflicts among local, national, and global interests in her analysis of the problematic notions of "heritage" in the Middle East. In an attempt to rid the histories of the Middle East of nationalist baggage, global organizations such as UNESCO have recast them in terms of "World Heritage," a notion that serves to veil neocolonialist interventions in the region. By transforming "their heritage" into "our heritage," archaeological sites in the Middle East have become locales of colonization yet again. In this context, Scham reminds archaeologists of the need to clearly identify "the persons for whom they are retrieving the past." Because archaeology has long been a tool of nationalist discourses in the Middle East, Scham investigates the notions of "good" and "bad" nationalisms, concluding that there is no such thing as "good" nationalism, and advocating the abandonment of that term. Although she also realizes that heritage and archaeology will likely never be value neutral, she calls for continued critical reflection regarding the presentation of the archaeology of the Middle East.

Sudharshan Seneviratne (Chapter 11) continues the examination of UNESCO policies through his investigation of archaeological practice, preservation, and presentation in Sri Lanka. Seneviratne documents the various ways in which the World Heritage site of Anuradhapura has been

appropriated for ideological gains. He notes the ways that these appropriations, beginning with British colonialists and Orientalist historians, were passed on to future postcolonial archaeologists, historians, and interested publics, fomenting Buddhist-Hindu tensions in Sri Lanka. The case of Anuradhapura provides a strong critique of the neocolonialism exhibited by global organizations such as UNESCO, which has raised the ire of local populations who believe that their history has been appropriated by colonialist actions. But Seneviratne also notes the dangers in the denial of history that can result from the outright rejection of all knowledge developed under colonialism, as demonstrated by terrorist attacks at Anuradhapura in recent decades. Rather than advocating either nationalist appropriations of the site or the antiestablishment denial of heritage, he calls for a third approach which emphasizes inclusivity and the shared historical legacy of the island's multiple ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups, as all are legitimate stakeholders in the historical legacy of Sri Lanka.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 12) by coeditor Uzma Rizvi investigates the futures of postcolonialism and archaeology, suggesting possible avenues for further examination. She identifies potential contributions arising from the interaction of archaeology and postcolonialism, including an emphasis on the necessity of interdisciplinary research and the extension of the postcolonial critique to postnational and post-Soviet contexts. Rizvi finishes with a call for archaeology to effect and stimulate social change, building upon recent acknowledgments of the importance of involving interested publics and affiliated communities in the practice of contemporary archaeology.

The chapters in this volume thus establish several emergent themes in the articulation of postcolonialism and archaeology: the investigation of the history of colonial discourses, the problems of essentialism, the importance of decolonizing practices, and the neocolonialism often inherent in the heritage strategies of global and neoliberal institutions. They also present an opportunity for archaeology to address some of the critiques of postcolonialism outlined above. In response to the accusation that postcolonial studies refuse to engage with real-world issues, the chapters in this volume provide a multitude of studies of modern, real-world situations. They document the variation of contemporary postcolonial conditions, providing materiality and locality to the study of postcolonialism—and in the process, answer the critique that postcolonialism homogenizes colonial and postcolonial experiences. More than anything else, these studies

demonstrate the relevance and significance of postcolonial theory for the practice of archaeology in the twenty-first century. They not only document the utility of postcolonialism for archaeological method and theory but also suggest new directions and challenges posed by archaeology for postcolonial studies.