

CHAPTER 12

IDEOLOGY

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1 INTRODUCTION

IDEOLOGIES thrive in the imagination and in the desires of different social groups. Ideologies move in the space between thought and knowledge that every society generates. Ideologies reflect in oblique ways the standpoint of social groups and spring from the interests of those social groups. They create opinions and dictate both mundane and ritual behaviours in order to validate these interests. They make these interests look real by turning assumptions into beliefs, transferring them into the taken for granted notions of everyday opinions, and reiterating them to reinforce them as an indispensable entity for social life and for its analysis. Ideologies, based on supposedly shared ethical or moral premises, tend to generate opposition and confrontation by nourishing and excluding identities in a social group which, due to their support of opposing interests, fractures into factions; on the other hand, they provide closure to open-ended questions and deepen conflicts. Ritual, religion, political discourse, and visual representations are loaded with ideologies.

Archaeologists have rarely taken up the complex concept of ideology. When discussing past ideologies, archaeologists mainly use the term as a substitute for ‘world view’, ‘religion’, or ‘political doctrine’. However, ‘ideology’ is not a coherent sphere of collective thought that can be investigated like a landscape or group of material objects. Instead, it refers to a complex set of relations between people and their surroundings that is centred on power differentials. Another aspect is the ideological nature of archaeological thought itself. When we speak of archaeological theories, we treat ideologies of interpretation in a fashion similar to that of past worldviews. The realm of theoretical discourse and the power relations established by it are—wrongly—treated as if this was a level playing field of equal interactions among (interested) archaeologists.

2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY

The term ideology originated in the aftermath of the French Revolution (Polowetzky 1993). The French scientist Destutt de Tracy applied the positivist paradigm from the natural sciences onto ideas. ‘Ideologists’ claimed to have a privileged access to reality, one that enabled them to represent the world as it really is.

Marx and Engels (1970) wrote *The German Ideology* as a challenge to the German Romanticism and Idealism of Hegel's students. They saw this work—not published until 1932—as a work of self-clarification. Marx and Engels argued that ideology is not simply 'consciousness', or 'ideas' but instead a false representation of the relationship between consciousness and being. Marx and Engels 'turned Hegel on his feet' by arguing that real social conditions and not the mind or ideas produce the contradictions that move history forward. In their formulation, ideologies primarily served to advance the interests of the ruling class by representing the particular interests of dominant groups as the general interests of society.

Marx did not use the term ideology in any of his further works. Most notably *Capital* makes no mention of ideology. Instead, Marx confronts misrepresentations of reality as 'commodity fetishism', where social relationships between people appear as if they were relations between things. Capitalist production breaks down into many steps the process of making objects, so that workers no longer recognize the input of their own labour. Instead, the finished thing turns into a mystical entity with monetary value that falsely appears to be unrelated to the workers' labour. By the same processes, the very human ability to perform work becomes a commodity that capitalists buy in a 'labour market'. Through this process capitalism alienates the worker from his labour.

The German Ideology tackles misrepresentation mainly as an effect of political relations, whereas Marx's later focus on commodity fetishism is the 'economic side' of ideology. Both of these concepts are important to understand how human beings live in an imagined relationship to reality. Commodity fetishism and ideology also set up two intertwined genealogical lines leading to modern concepts of ideology.

2.1 Western Marxism

Western Marxism developed the first line in the early twentieth century by integrating notions of ideology and commodity fetishism to understanding social life. Georg Lukács (1971) argued that commodity fetishism seeps into the social life beyond the economic sphere. Relations between human beings themselves become reified. Lukács maintains that in the process, objects take on an abstract appearance of existing in and by themselves, uncontrollable in an opaque world. Scholars of the Frankfurt School emphasized Marx's concept of ideology to elaborate on Lukács's ideas (Arato and Gebhardt 1982; Rush 2004). They separated 'traditional' and 'critical' theory. Traditional theories take a 'realist' perspective of a presumed neutral and independent mind. The naivety of traditional theory leads to the acceptance of a capitalist logic of instrumental reasoning that seeks to optimize gains and by that reifies social relations, alienating people from themselves and nature. In contrast, critical theory recognizes that historically and socially created ideologies mediate our perceptions of the world. Thus, to gain knowledge, scholars must first investigate how their own ideological position mediates their understanding of the world. Critical theory reveals the ideological content and reification of instrumental reasoning. In the second half of the twentieth century, Jürgen Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action adds to this critique of a dominant reason by dividing the social universe into one sphere ruled by instrumental reason, science and reification, which he calls the system. The other is the 'lifeworld', a realm of communicative reason. Built of unquestioned and unquestionable

elements, Habermas conceptualizes actions in the lifeworld as largely discursive events where the optimizing relation between means and ends so typical of instrumentality, becomes inseparably merged, as in chatting or communication during a collective meal.

The second genealogical line continued to use the term ideology and led to the equation of ideology with false consciousness, first mentioned by F. Engels. Many Marxists compounded the facile understanding of 'false consciousness' with a simplified reading of Engels' comment that the economic base determines superstructures 'in the last instance'. Proponents of Social Democracy and the Second International promoted the notion that economic relations determine ideas. The communist bloc propagated this vulgar materialism in their doctrine of 'historical materialism'.

Western Marxist theorists, including Lukács, opposed the idea of ideology as false consciousness by emphasizing that thought and knowledge about the world could change practices and thus the world itself. Lukács also defined ideology as the collective consciousness of specific classes, rather than a 'false consciousness'. The Italian communist Antonio Gramsci (1992) refuted the concept of ideology as a product of economic relations and instead argued that ideology caused economic relations. He concluded that ideology and culture are of central importance for all political relations, foreshadowing the cultural studies paradigm. He contended that people have two 'consciousnesses', one non-discursive, and the other 'explicit or verbal'. The non-discursive results in a naive reproduction of the hegemonic ideas of social elites and institutions such as church, state, and schools.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony refers to ideas that are both cultural and political. Institutions of the state, including law, police, or military, use hegemony to enforce submission. Scott (1990: 70–85) discusses two readings of Gramsci's notion of hegemony. The 'thick version' claims that people actively subscribe to ideas that enhance their own subordination. The 'thin version' posits that a dominant class defines 'for subordinate groups what is realistic and what is not realistic and to drive certain aspirations and grievances into the realm of the impossible' (Scott 1990: 74). Gramsci claimed that a social group could only become politically dominant after having gained a hegemonic, culturally compelling position in civil society by integrating to some extent subordinate groups' interests.

We can summarize the relation between hegemony and ideology as follows:

- ideology is deeply embedded in civil society and serves to subdue subaltern classes to political power
- ideology as a 'cement' of society is both practical and grounded in thought
- ideological hegemony means co-optation of the ruled by their rulers in a cultural network that is not specifically political but serves political ends anyway
- subordinate groups employ counter-hegemonies to try and transform dominant hegemonic leadership.

2.2 French Structural Marxism and Althusser

Louis Althusser's main work on ideology (1972) departs radically from much earlier thought. Building on Gramsci, Althusser differentiates historically specific, practised ideologies located in what he calls 'ideological state apparatuses' (ISA) from 'ideology in general'.

He differentiates ISA such as schools, church, or family from ‘repressive state apparatus’ (RSA) that include the police and the army. The two kinds of apparatuses make up a state but do not seamlessly merge into a whole: while the RSA is coherent, ISAs do not form a totality. Instead, they are themselves de-centred and contradictory.

However, Althusser’s main contributions to theories of ideology are his reflections on ‘ideology in general’. He contends that ideology is universal in how humans relate to the world and not just a product of the consciousness of some dominant class intent on ruling others, nor a warped reflection of reality. Ideology produces subjects, people who perceive themselves as ‘free subjects’ but who are, as the notion implies, ‘subjected’ (Althusser 1972: 182). Subjection means that individuals are ‘always already subjects’ (Althusser 1972: 176): they have a name, religion, nationality, language, and culture at birth. Existence as a human being implies being placed inside pre-existing ideology. Second, ideology constitutes subjects through relentless symbolical ‘hailing’. Althusser refers to Blaise Pascal’s example of the person who kneels in a church and by that practical act believes. One does not kneel because one believes; it is enough to kneel in order to believe. Practice induces dispositions of the mind. Althusser turns ideology into something material and performative. This reversal of conventional concepts of ideology fits Althusser’s general stance on history as the effect of structures from which spring human practices that create subjects.

Abercrombie et al. (1980) have critiqued Althusser’s and Gramsci’s position as a ‘dominant ideology thesis’ where ideologies dupe lower classes into willing submission despite stark economic inequalities—an abbreviation of ‘thick versions’ of hegemony. In contrast Abercrombie et. al (1980) argue that dominant ideologies merely integrate ruling classes, whereas subordinate groups form their own, opposing ideas. This critique fails to address the complexity of Althusser’s and Gramsci’s thought. Their dismissal of categorical divides makes it clear that neither of them envisioned a ruling class cunningly creating an ideological scheme of domination. Rather ideology produces collective, de-centred subjects who paradoxically imagine themselves as centred ‘egos’. Contrary to Marx, ideologies do not exist in the collective imaginary of some ruling class but rather are made up by the collective imaginary of the lower social strata. According to Balibar (1993: 13), upper classes appropriate this imaginary, rework it and return it in altered form to subordinate groups. The degree to which subordinates accept the returned imaginary measures the success of a ruling ideology. Ideologies conceal this relationship between the subaltern imaginary and dominant ideology.

2.3 Ideology, Discourse, and Hegemony

According to Althusser, ideology produces collective and individual subjects. Michel Foucault instead claims that subjects are shaped by discourses. Foucault objects to the notion of ideology because peoples’ attempts to unveil what ideology silences and hides presume some truth beyond what is criticized. Foucault opposes this claim to truth arguing that truth is not to be had, not even relationally—as in ‘closer’ or ‘further from it’. Instead Foucault explores the establishment of ‘truth regimes’ (1984: 60), the conditions that turn specific discourses into apparent truths and others into falsehoods.

Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory diverges from Foucault in several ways. They claim that there is literally nothing outside of discourse and merge the concept of a

discourse with the notion of hegemony. Laclau and Mouffe see hegemony as a particular emergence of meaning in discourse that is driven not by interests of a collective or individual subject but by discourse itself. Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 136–7) call the practice of chaining discursive notions to a major concept ‘hegemonic articulation’, an activity that is political because different hegemonic formations may end up in relationships of antagonism and struggle. They agree with Foucault on the impossibility of a subject that is at the origin of a discourse; there is no other possibility than constantly shifting ‘subject positions’ that are provided by discourse itself.

Slavoj Žižek (1994, 2008) analyses how ideology appears in the contemporary world in culture, politics, religion, and daily life. He begins with the Lacanian triad of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. The Imaginary is closely related to the emergence of an ‘image’ of self in early childhood. The desire to render all and everything meaningful is, according to Žižek, an anthropological universal that requires a symbolic sphere which is mainly the realm of language. Žižek claims that language constitutes a universe in itself that does not denote reality. It is an entire world apart. Finally, the ‘Real’ is not reality as we experience it, but reality as we would experience if we were not wrapped in the symbolic realm. Žižek reads contentions that we are at an ‘end of ideology’ or that we need to create a ‘post-ideological’ (2008: 295–6) world as ‘ideology par excellence’ (1994: 17), since such contentions are typically ideological positions unrecognized by those who hold them. This means that the unexamined, taken-for-granted aspects of theory, methods, or practices, in archaeology or elsewhere, are more likely to be ideological in character than those that individuals contest. Žižek’s observations on cultural production, and his insistence on identifying the many instances and types of misrepresentation in the symbolic realm, provide a good example for a critical archaeology that recognizes both past beliefs and its own products as misrecognitions.

3 IDEOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeological discourse on ideology begins with the work of Karl Marx. Archaeologists initiated this discourse in the middle of the twentieth century but with the exception of V. Gordon Childe, mid-century archaeologists denied, ignored, or were simply ignorant of the Marxist origin of the concept. Partly as a result of their failure to engage Marxist scholarship they misread the idea of ideology as a reified ‘world view’. Towards the end of the twentieth century many archaeologists initiated a serious, explicit engagement with Marxism and the concept of ideology (Patterson 2003). At the same time, other archaeologists picked up strands of feminist and post-modernist thought that also use a Marxist-derived notion of ideology.

3.1 V. Gordon Childe

In the 1930s, V. Gordon Childe (1936) explicitly adopted a Marxist concept of ideology as a false consciousness that served elite interests. He stressed ‘the obvious truth that men cannot live without eating’, such that ‘the way people get their living should be expected in the long run to “determine” their beliefs and institutions’ (Childe 1979: 94). Childe sought to

show that in any given environment, with a given set of tools and knowledge, one form of organization secures the smoothest and most efficient exploitation of that environment—people included—while any other is likely to impede production or may even paralyse it. And in general just one *kind* of ideology—institutions, beliefs, and ideals—will keep that organization functioning most smoothly. He placed ideology firmly in the realm of myth, ritual, and religion, and seems to have regarded magic, religion, and ideology as aberrations, forms of social pathology that blocked progress in social evolution. Because class struggle pervades *all* aspects of the life of class societies, magic, religion, and ideology as systems of mystification and control are essential features of elite power.

In his later years, Childe (1956) considered the relationship of knowledge and history and retained a notion of ideology as false consciousness. Childe argued that a society's knowledge is not always progressive, and critique is necessary to reveal this. For Childe, the convergence between knowledge as a model of the 'real world' and that society's means of production provides the measure of a society's fitness to survive. Ideology as individual delusion or social illusion could hamper a society's knowledge, and the ability to act and progress. Childe saw the development of knowledge as a dialectic in which people achieved understanding through the negation of error and argued that ideology interferes with the progress of knowledge. Thus, ideology as an integral part of human history is for Childe distinct from knowledge. He had no problem in claiming the latter for the discipline of archaeology.

3.2 Neo-Evolutionists and Cultural Ecologists

In the 1960s, the term 'ideology' came into common use among Anglophone archaeologists. Most of them did not refer to Marx or Childe but rather drew their ideas from the Neo-evolutionary theory of Leslie White and/or the cultural ecology of Julian Steward. Neo-evolutionists tended to equate ideology with the 'ideational' or realm of ideas as opposed to material relations and processes of life. Cultural ecologists on the other hand, usually spoke of ideology as information that regulated adaptive systems.

White (1949: 366) defined culture as people's extra-somatic means of adaptation and divided it into three subsystems: technology, society, and ideology. The process of cultural change begins in the technological subsystem and changes in this subsystem lead to changes in the social subsystem that then result in changes in ideology. White's students equated ideology with the totality of mental culture including world view, beliefs, and value systems (Demarest 1992: 1). As solely the outcome of a process of culture change, ideology becomes trivial and epiphenomenal.

The new archaeologists of the 1960s picked up this broad view. Many also accepted that ideology was a consequence rather than a dynamic, active element of cultural change. White's three subsystems guided Binford (1962: 24–5) in his division of material culture into technomic, sociotechnic, and ideotechnic artefacts. He embraced White's definition of ideology as an operational subsystem of culture that rationalized social structures and enabled individuals to function in society. In historical archaeology, James Deetz (1977) drew on structuralism rather than White but he too equated ideology simply with the realm of ideas, namely as a colonial world view he called the Georgian Order.

Julian Steward's (1955) ideas of cultural ecology and multilineal evolution differed from White's but both approaches viewed culture as an adaptive system and ideology as ideas.

Steward, however, did not categorize ideas, beliefs, and values as epiphenomena. He instead argued that each society had a cultural core of traits closely related to subsistence activities. The core includes economic arrangements and related political, religious, and social patterns. As part of the cultural core, world views could play an active role in adaptation. Roy A. Rappaport (1967) showed how ritual pig feasts, myths, and folk taxonomies of highland New Guinea articulated with and regulated ecological relations. In archaeology, cultural ecologists rejected the view of ideology as trivial and examined how religion functioned in adaptation and in cultural evolution as a source of information, as a regulating mechanism for decision-making, and as propaganda (Demarest and Conrad 1992).

Making ideology synonymous with ideas deprives the concept of any real analytical power (Burke 2006: 130). Such reified, essentialist concepts of ideology oversimplify how ideas articulate with other aspects of social relations and imply that society as a whole shared a world view, values, and beliefs. Yet in reality we never find such uniformity within cultures. Rather, ideas exist in a pluralistic, strife-ridden social world made up of social groups or individuals who share some elements of a world view but diverge and clash on others. To understand how ideas come to be, affect cultural change, and enable and transform social relations, many Marxist, post-processual, and feminist archaeologists have adopted an explicitly Marxist notion of ideology.

3.3 Marxist Archaeology and Ideology

In the mid-1970s, several Western archaeologists began an explicit and sustained use of Marxist theory in their research that continues to the present (Patterson 2003: 91). They drew on a wide range of Marxist theory including classical Marxism, French structural Marxism, critical theory, and Hegelian Marxism. These approaches defined ideology in various ways and gave it different weight in analyses. Almost all of these authors rejected the notion that the economic base determined ideology and instead argued that ideology exists in a reflexive relationship to the economy and material culture. They directly challenged the processual archaeology equation of ideology with ideas. In their studies they demonstrated how people used ideology to legitimize and manipulate social relations of inequality and exploitation.

During the 1970s many British scholars embraced Jonathan Friedman's (1979) structural Marxist theory. Friedman challenged the structural causality of Althusser and argued for a more historical approach whereby scholars explained a given social form by exposing the structural transformation that created it. In their epigenetic model of early civilizations, Friedman and Rowlands (1978) emphasized the generative role of ideology in class formation and interpreted ideology in emergent class societies as religious expressions that legitimate the sanctity of chiefs by positioning them as intermediaries between natural and supernatural worlds.

In the United States, Mark Leone and his students (Leone 1995, 2005; Palus et al. 2006) proposed a critical archaeology derived from structural Marxism and critical theory. Leone defined ideology as the taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions that serve to mystify the true nature of social relations and thus maintain relations of exploitation by outwardly resolving contradictions that still exist within society. Leone urged scholars to expose how

such ideologies were created. He hoped that people would transform relations of exploitation once scholars pulled away the veil of ideology. Others have employed the Althusserian idea of interpellation to elaborate the many practical ways in which material aspects of ideologies contribute to the shaping of subjectivities of various dominant and subordinate groups (Bernbeck 2003–4, 2008).

Leone's Annapolis project investigated how the plan, architecture, landscape, and material culture of the city established and reinforced a Georgian (Enlightenment) Order (read ideology) of individualism, rationalism, equality, and social contract. The project also sought to reveal to modern tourists how the historic district of the city had been manipulated to reinforce an ideology of modern capitalism and the contradictions and social inequalities that the hegemonic history of Annapolis obscured. This challenge to the ideological narrative about Annapolis failed to overcome the official. The public responded to the alternative vision of the project by reinterpreting it in terms of assumptions directly derived from a capitalist ideology.

Marxist archaeologists have mostly rejected the dominant ideology thesis that underlies the early critical archaeology (McGuire 1988; Burke 1999). They point out that it is unlikely that elite constructions such as formal gardens duped waged and enslaved workers into a false consciousness that hid from them the reality of their oppression. Instead, they emphasize the negotiation of ideology in class conflict. Specifically they examine how dominant classes use dominant ideologies to create class-consciousness for themselves and how subordinate classes manipulate these ideologies in struggles against domination (Shackel and Palus 2006). In this light, the failure of the Annapolis Project's public programmes to emancipate tourists in Annapolis is clear. Annapolis attracts tourists primarily from privileged classes and these tourists interpreted the message of the programme using their class ideology.

After some self-critique, Leone adopted a post-Marxist approach that uses Habermas's notion of communicative action and Foucault's idea of governmentality (Palus, Leone, and Cochran 2006). He recognized that people who have been directly and negatively affected by the contradictions of interests, inequalities, and exploitation of capitalism would be the most receptive to ideological critiques. Since 1990, Annapolis archaeologists have worked in collaboration with African-American communities (Palus, Leone, and Cochran 2006).

In the 1980s some US archaeologists took inspiration from a Marxist anthropological political economy and used dialectics as a way to understand the lived experience of people (McGuire 1992; Marquardt 1992; Delle 1998; Wurst 2006). Following the critical archaeology they also adopted a self-reflexive awareness of archaeology's place in the modern world. A reflexive, Marxist archaeology recognizes that class exploitation always intersects with other forms of exploitation such as sexism and racism. This approach places the motor for social change in the conflicts that result from the ambiguities, tensions, and contradictions that exist within social relations. Social relations can only exist in historical contexts and structures, and between living human beings; they do not exist in the abstract. Therefore, human action in the form of collective agency makes history as it both transforms and reproduces social structures. They also argue that the economy and ideology do not exist as separate levels of society but rather form a social totality. Thus it is nonsensical to speak of base determining superstructure because the existence of the base necessarily requires and entails the existence of the superstructure. It is the relationship between modes of production and superstructure that shapes society so that ideology becomes an active force in

social change. From this perspective, a single class does not possess ideology and ideology does not hide reality but rather ideology exists in processes that negotiate, and transform social relations (Burke 2006: 141).

These archaeologists tend to view ideology as a relational component of lived experience (Burke 2006: 137). Ideology has observable material and behavioural manifestations. Ideology may have multiple functions in the negotiation of social relations. No unified ideology exists because the same sets of beliefs and symbols may evoke different meanings in different social sectors and at different times. Ideologies are the product of, and a prerequisite for, a group attaining a political consciousness and serve to integrate social groups (classes, genders, professions, lineages, etc.) in power struggles. Specifically, a ruling class needs to remain coherent to dominate others by relying on a unified ideology that at the same time mystifies such domination by representing its particular interests as those of all. This ideology may be accepted by subordinate classes or they may rework it into subordinate ideologies. Conflict may result from inconsistencies between the ideology of elites and the ideology of subordinates. Change in consciousness moves people to actions that transform the reality again challenging the ideal. Subordinate ideologies therefore may reveal power relations but, because they are cultural, they also mystify reality and serve to reproduce and legitimate inequalities in society if subordinate groups come to dominate. As Burke (2006: 141) notes, 'ideology is continually emergent. It is not an entity, but a highly dynamic process that always changes in response to its engagement in the world and the patterning of relationships between social groups.'

3.4 Post-processualist Archaeology

Post-processual archaeology borrowed heavily from Marxism, including a definition of ideology as a mystifying force in social relations that generate and reproduce conflicts of interest (Miller and Tilley 1984). Post-processualists drew on French structuralist Marxism and the Frankfurt School. Marxist and post-processual archaeologies have similarities but their differences are not trivial. Both view archaeology as a politically engaged practice that is more than a search for knowledge and study ideological uses of the past in the present.

Post-processual approaches to ideology differ from Marxist concepts of ideology because the post-processualists emphasize the relationship between ideology and individual agents. Miller and Tilley (1984: 14) asserted that 'ideology and power are inextricably bound up with social practices; they are a component of human *praxis*, by which is to be understood the actions of agents on and in the world, serving as an integral element in the production, reproduction, and transformation to the social'. The post-processualists find ideology in the consciousness of individuals, specifically in the meanings that social actors use to make sense of the world (Shanks 1992). In contrast, Marxists tend to spotlight ideology as it is manifest in relations between social groups, with a focus on how ideology forms class consciousness.

3.5 Feminist Archaeology

If ideology is an active component of social relations that masks or builds group consciousness and reproduces or instigates transformations of social inequalities, then ideology must be in the service of particular group interests (Burke 2006: 134). These can be class-specific,

but ideology can also serve racial, ethnic, and gender interests. Feminists and feminist archaeologists use Marxist-derived concepts of ideology (Weedon 1987: 29–32). The most obvious distinction between the two approaches is that Marxists focus more on class and feminists on gender.

Second-wave feminists in the early 1960s read French structuralist Marxism and critical theory (Weedon 1987: 29–32) and rejected the idea that the economic base determines ideology, as well as the juxtaposition of ideology as false consciousness and purportedly true knowledge. They viewed gender ideologies as being interrelated but not reducible to ideologies of class and class relations. Third-wave feminists in the 1990s incorporated post-modern ideas into feminism. Some of them dropped the concept of ideology to discuss the negotiation of gender relations in terms of discourse. Like post-processual archaeologists they stress the potential of individual agency (Gilchrist 1999: 26).

Margaret Conkey and Joan Gero (1991: 5) identified three goals to a feminist archaeology: (1) to expose gender bias in archaeological inquiry, (2) to find women in the archaeological context and identify their participation in gender relations, gender ideologies, and gender roles, and (3) to problematize underlying assumptions in Western culture about gender and difference. Ideology figures prominently in these goals and in feminist scholars' efforts to realize them (Nelson 2007; Joyce 2008). Feminist archaeologists confront ideologies of gender in the past and in the present.

4 IDEOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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In the 1990s, many archaeologists invoked ideology. This was particularly the case in studies of chiefdoms or mid-range societies. Archaeologists argued that the lack of institutionalized instruments of power in such societies give ideologies a crucial position in legitimating and reproducing chiefly power. However, Marx's theories have found their strongest proponents in Anglo-American archaeology among those scholars who study the modern world (McGuire 2008). Historical archaeologists have maintained a very active engagement with questions of ideology throughout the turn of the twenty-first century (Burke 2006; Palus et al. 2006).

By the first decade of the twenty-first century, ideology has lost much of its appeal in prehistoric archaeology. In part, this results from the critique of the dominant ideology thesis (Abercrombie et al. 1980). The realization that ideology does not in some simple way dupe people led some archaeologists to overemphasize agency. Post-processual archaeologists now argue that archaeologists should understand change in terms of the action of individuals. The archaeological literature is littered with statements about why the individual is the only force capable of creating cultural change (Hodder 2000). Post-processual theorists would have us believe that their positions are radical and transformative of capitalism (Shanks and Tilley 1987). Other authors have argued that the post-modernist focus on the individual is not really radical at all, but rather fits nicely as a component of the dominant ideology globalization and modern consumer capitalism (Thomas 2004; McGuire and Wurst 2002).

What happens when we ignore ideology or assign it to the scrap heap? Or to put it another way, after the pendulum of theoretical discourse has swung to the extreme of a history driven by human agents, why does ideology matter? At a most basic level, the explicit abandonment of ideology as a facet of all human life puts those who do so at the centre of a deeply ideological position—that of ‘absolute knowing’. In its present use, such a denial prevents us from recognizing the individual agent of post-modern theory as an ideology. Ideologies of individual agency—at the extreme, methodological individualism—shatter notions of the social whole so that social relations seem only to exist as a network of interpersonal relations. The idea that a society, a class, genders, or other totalities might be more than the sum of their individual parts is thus lost as today’s individuals consume identities and perform personalized subjectivities, destroying notions of solidarity and commonality in the process. Any projection of such late capitalist conditions into a closer or farther-away past serve only to reconfirm the very ideological conditions of their making. Forgetting about ideology makes it impossible to form a coherent praxis based on shared consciousness.

SUGGESTED READING

The primary literature on ideology can be pretty daunting to the novice reader. Terry Eagleton’s (1991) *Ideology: An introduction* and David Hawkes’ (2003) *Ideology* provide good summaries to start with. Chris Weedon’s (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* contains a brief discussion of ideology in feminism. An excellent reader of basic texts is Žižek’s edited volume *Mapping Ideology* (1994). A student interested in understanding more about ideology should read the primary literature beginning with Marx and Engel’s (1970) *The German Ideology* and following the historical development of the concept from Lukács through Žižek as cited in the article. Within archaeology Miller and Tilley (1984), McGuire (1992), Burke (1999, 2006), Leone (2005), and Palus, Leone, and Cochran (2006) provide good discussions of ideology.

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