

THE INTERSECTIONS OF IDENTITY AND POLITICS IN ARCHAEOLOGY

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■ **Abstract** This paper traces the conjunction of two interrelated epistemic phenomena that have begun to shape the discipline since the early 1990s. The first entails theorizing social identity in past societies: specifically, how social lives are inscribed by the experiences of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on. The other constitutes the rise of a politicized and ethical archaeology that now recognizes its active role in contemporary culture and is enunciated through the discourses of nationalism, sociopolitics, postcolonialism, diaspora, and globalism. Both trends have been tacitly shaped by anthropological and social theory, but they are fundamentally driven by the powerful voices of once marginalized groups and their newfound place in the circles of academic legitimacy. I argue that our disciplinary reticence to embrace the politics of identity, both in our investigations of the past and our imbrications in the present, has much to do with archaeology's lack of reflexivity, both personal and disciplinary, concurrent with its antitheoretical tendencies. The residual force of the latter should not be underestimated, specifically in regard to field practices and the tenacity of academic boundaries.

GETTING PERSONAL

Returning home to Australia in 2000, I was reminded that racism runs riot in the small towns and suburbs of this supposedly young and lucky country. My first recollection is a newspaper clipping, placed prominently, advocating that “white” Australians stop apologizing to Aborigines for the sustained atrocities of colonization and genocide. Australia is largely populated by migrants of British and European descent whose recombinant identities are often privileged over newer foreign arrivals. You can feel how prejudice is enacted, each conversation suffused with deep-seated fears surrounding difference—be it racial, ethnic, cultural, or even sexual. The federal government had just legislated against same-sex couples’ or single people’s rights to in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment: It declared that such people exist outside the bounds of the natural family. Dislocation and mis/identification are often foundational in delineating what Irigaray calls the burning question of our time: identity. Put simply, identity refers to the ways in

which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities (Jenkins 1996, p. 4). In the “social and cultural sciences, what was once called ‘identity’ in the sense of social, shared sameness is today often discussed with reference to difference. Difference points to the contrastive aspect of identities and thereby emphasizes the implicit condition of plurality” (Sökefeld 1999, pp. 417–18). Self-definition today coalesces around genealogy, heritage, citizenship, and sameness, but underlying that are also diverse and troubling contemporary concerns about disenfranchisement and difference. The constitutive outside, premised on exclusion and otherness, forms the corona of difference through which identities are enunciated. Why has archaeology been reluctant to formulate these topics, to consider them integral to archaeological praxis? The discipline is fundamentally social: social life, social history, social meanings, even social theory. Theoretical time lag and lack of sociopolitical engagement might be justifications for our disciplinary profile; however, the political is always personal.

Archaeology shares with anthropology that specific biographical lens through which certain intellectual strands are prefigured—those that are inflected with our own lifetime experiences and preoccupations. Yet part of the reason for our slow development of identity politics might be the lack of personal narrative, such as the above, and self-reflexive analysis of our own motives and practices. In the past two decades, following the literary turn, anthropologists have produced a surfeit of introspective studies (Clifford 1997, Clifford & Marcus 1986, Geertz 1995, Gupta & Ferguson 1997) and poetics of practice (Ghosh 1992). Presumably archaeologists feel their subjects are dead and buried—as opposed to the conundrums faced by fieldwork with participants—and that they are not implicated in the representation and struggles of living peoples. The ethical dimension of our work is often overlooked or rendered mute by force of scientific objectivity and research agendas. Fieldwork is still shrouded in mystique for ethnographers, whereas it is generally considered mundane in our discipline (Lucas 2001). The tactics of fieldwork, its interventions and ramifications, have only recently been called into question (Fotiadis 1993; Hodder 1998, 1999; Meskell 2001b; Politis 2001). Western academics themselves could be characterized as a highly mobile, rootless group (often by virtue of occupation), who are on the whole analytical and somewhat detached from politics, despite their leftist leanings. Perhaps by getting personal, archaeology has finally entered the contemporary field of debate; Marxist, feminist, indigenous, queer, disenfranchised, and politicized archaeologies are the most transparent examples. In the past 20 years these archaeologies have revitalized the field, made it socially relevant and cross-disciplinary, and given some much-needed heart and soul to an archaeology mired in systems, process, and disembodied external constraints.

In this arena, archaeology as a discipline has something to contribute, other than simply providing ancient fuel to the fire of land claims, ethnic superiority, or historical lineages. Identity issues in archaeology—be they studies of class inequality, gender bias, sexual specificity, politics and nation, heritage representation, or even

fundamental topics like selfhood, embodiment, and being—have the capacity to connect our field with other disciplines in academe but more importantly with the wider community at large. Theorizing identity forms a critical nexus in academic discourse bringing together sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, psychologists, geographers, historians, and philosophers (Jenkins 1996, p. 7). The topic frames a diverse set of intellectual positions from Giddens' (1991) notions of modernity and self-identity, to those surrounding postmodernism and difference (Bauman 1992, Butler 1995, Derrida 1978), to feminist interventions (Butler 1990, 2000; Lennon & Whitford 1994) and the political struggles involved in the global resurgence of nationalist and ethnic tensions (Barth 2000, Cohen 2000). Bauman suggests that identity has come to operate as a verb, rather than a noun, and occupies the ontological status of both a project and a postulate (1996, p. 19). Subjectivity and human agency are also central. Following Foucault (1978, p. xiv), this is not tantamount to a theory of the knowing subject or modern individualism at its extreme but rather moves toward a theory of discursive practices.

REVEALING IDENTITIES IN THE PAST

As demonstrated by the enmeshed themes and evocative studies described below, identities are multiply constructed and revolve around a set of iterative practices that are always in process, despite their material and symbolic substrata. Who we are, what we study, and the questions we ask are not simply trendy polemics of high modernity: These formulations underscore the types of archaeology, the level of political engagement, and the points of connection archaeologists experience. The politics of location is central to our understanding of archaeological subjects and affects us as practitioners today. Part of that locatedness, however, entails evaluating the historicity of our conceptual frameworks and challenging their seemingly natural or foundational constitution. Identity construction and maintenance may have always been salient in the past; taxonomic designations such as ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, for example, may not have existed as the discrete categories we find so familiar (Meskell 1999, 2001a). Many of these domains are now being refigured in contemporary society (Yanagisako & Delaney 1995) and should similarly be interrogated more fully before they are applied to archaeological or historical contexts. If we fail to push these questions further, we risk an elision of difference, conflating ancient and modern experience in the process. What makes questions of identity so intriguing is how specific societies evoked such different responses prompted by categorical differences in their understandings and constructions of social domains.

Archaeology's engagement with identity issues could be described as diffident. If one charts the development of archaeology's commitment to identity and/or politics, as reflected in conference sessions at the Society of American Archeologists meetings, for example, the results demonstrate a relatively recent and gradual growth in interest (see Figure 1). There has been a slippage between the epistemic

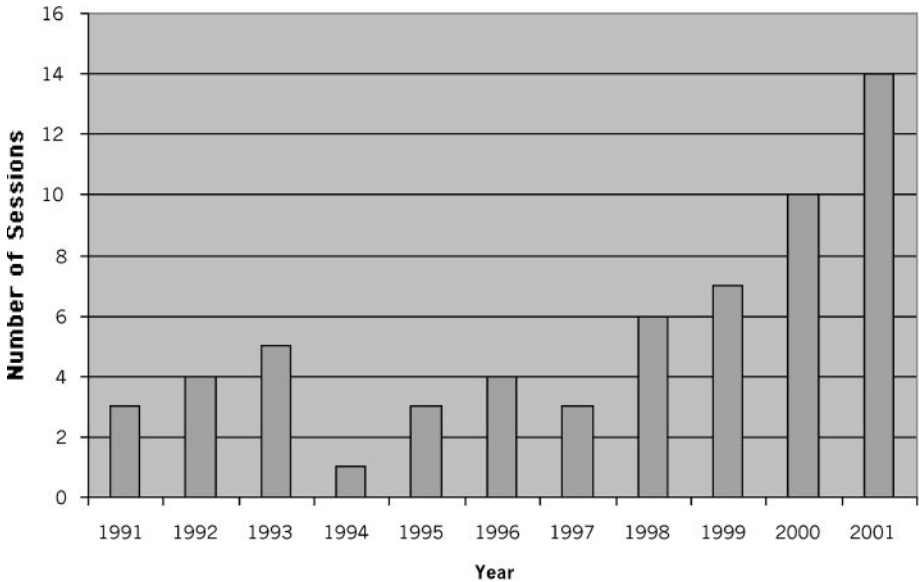


Figure 1 Society of American Archaeologists sessions from 1991 to 2001.

subjects of study and the recognition of context, implication, and connectivity in contemporary settings. Yet as many scholars have argued, archaeology as a discipline was forged in conjunction with the burgeoning national identity and state formation in Europe and elsewhere, in itself a very specific and reductionist construal of identity. However, the particular study of identity in past societies has followed several variant timelines. For example, ethnicity is a category that has sustained interest since the nineteenth century, foregrounded by writers such as Morgan, Kossina, and Childe (Trigger 1989), spurred on by the refashioning of national boundaries, diasporic movements, and ethnic tensions within twentieth-century Europe. We might look to the negative associations of early ethnic studies and their political deployment to explain the subsequent time lag between the first half of the twentieth century and its rather different articulation in very recent scholarship. Additionally, interest in class or status has a longer history than the study of gender or sexuality. Issues of class and status were deemed more relevant to social structure at large, albeit from an unreflexive male perspective. In archaeology, specific vectors of identity reach their own historical moment when the interpretive time and space make it possible—recent interest in sexuality is a salient example—although archaeology has been out of synch with developments elsewhere.

Gender archaeology arrived late on the theoretical scene (Conkey & Spector 1984), first through the lens of first-wave feminist theory (Claassen 1992a, Engelstad 1991) and then by a flurry of substantive case studies outlining women's

place in the past (Gero & Conkey 1991; Gibbs 1987; Gilchrist 1991, 1994). Gender remained, and in some circles still remains, the preserve of women, rather than the more dialogic or holistic study of gendered relations, which considers men as gendered beings with a concomitant construction of sexed identity (Knapp 1998, Meskell 1996). Some earlier studies took more radical paths to sexed identity (Yates & Nordbladh 1990); yet they were not seen as representing engendered studies, owing to their lack of explicit focus on women as a monolithic category. The stirrings of a third-wave feminist approach in archaeology were heralded by Elizabeth Brumfiel (1992), although it took several years before these programmatic changes were enacted. Third-wave feminist studies positioned gender as relational to a host of other identity markers such as age, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on (Meskell 1999). Its positionality must also be contextualized through other modalities of power such as kinship (Brumfiel 1992, Joyce & Gillespie 2000) and at the nexus of other "naturalized" domains (Meskell 2001a). Identity, in its various manifestations, operates under erasure in the interstices of reversal and emergence and thus cannot be studied in the old ways (Hall 1996, p. 2). This entails interrogating the old taxonomies and categories that we have reified as doxic and impermeable and happily projected across the spatiotemporal divide.

Part of this revisioning has already happened in what is traditionally thought of as gender archaeology. Gender has been instantiated within the wider social context of the life cycle (Gilchrist 2000, Meskell 2002) or linked to age (Moore & Scott 1997), expanding the social milieu, rather than restricted to single-issue polemics. More problematic is the separating out of special categories such as children (e.g., Sofaer-Derevenski 2000), given their particular positioning within recent Western history (Foucault 1978). Instead of falling into the trap of prior gender archaeology, which privileged the female above all other gender constructions, studies of age-related phenomena could be more productively discussed within frameworks of life cycle, life experience, and other constituents of social difference.

After some 15 years of engendered archaeology it is finally possible to interpolate sexuality as a shaping constituent of social life (Schmidt & Voss 2000). Sexuality is key in the formation and lived experience of an individual's identity, and, like gender, it should be integrated into a wider set of social vectors rather than singled out as privileged terrain. The creation of specialty topics, like gender or children, as discursive taxonomic entities has resulted in a predictable ghettoization, whereby the majority of scholars still consider such areas outside their interpretive remit. Sexuality, like gender, should be seen as integral to studies of social life and not simply the preserve of those who feel privileged to speak because of their own construal of sexual difference (Dowson 2000). Moreover, sexuality must be considered in all its variability rather than isolating queer sexualities as the primary locus of study: This again leads to marginalization and leaves categories such as heterosexuality as unproblematic zones. Despite the recent flurry of interest, queer theory and the centrality of Judith Butler have had significant trajectories in archaeology (Claassen 1992b, Joyce 2001, Meskell 1996).

Unlike gender, analyzing wealth and status has always been integral to the archaeological project. Whether in culture historical, processual, or contextual approaches, the study of relationships between elite and nonelite has been key. Yet the degree to which this has coalesced around social identity rather than simply examining exchange, bureaucracy, and power is debatable. Locating those connections in the distant past, however, has not always necessitated or entailed a politicized stance in the present. In fields such as historical archaeology (Hall 2000, Paynter & McGuire 1991) or archaeologies of the recent past (Buchli & Lucas 2001), our findings have sociopolitical valences, and many researchers feel impelled to engage with living communities. Plantation archaeology is a salient example, situated within the larger framework of African-American archaeology—the latter developing out of social, political, and intellectual movements such as black activism, historic preservation legislation, academic interest in ethnicity, and the role of public archaeology (Singleton 1995, p. 122). The focus of study has moved from the identification of slave quarters to more nuanced discussions of power and identity and the complex machinations between plantation owners and their slaves. The archaeology of racism is prefigured in all such discussions, and though there might seem an obvious connection to ethnicity theory, the two should not be conflated (Babson 1990; Orser 1999, p. 666). As Orser warns, whiteness must be denaturalized. Moreover, archaeologists should consider the material dimensions of using whiteness as a source of racial domination, which is inexorably linked to capitalism (Leone 1995). Historical archaeologists are, however, faced with a complex mosaic of racial, ethnic, and class reflections in material culture, which has proven difficult to disentangle. Brackette Williams (1992, p. 611) has questioned how processual archaeologies “can interrogate the culturally ‘invisible’ that historical processes of contact produced, but which cannot lay claim to cultural autonomy in a manner that allows their creations to be counted in an inventory of ‘distinctive culture traits.’” She is similarly concerned that theories of domination and resistance have focused on categories rather than the processes by which production, reification, transformation, or ultimate elimination occur. More recently, such theories have been displaced by multifaceted explanations involving race, class, gender, religion, lineage, and representation (Mullins 1999, Rotman & Nassaney 1997, Russel 1997, Stine 1990, Wall 1999, Wilkie & Bartoy 2000), and the recognition of contemporary sociopolitical relevance. There has been an avid move to include descendants in the participation process and to advocate a wider responsibility and accountability for archaeologists and historians. This also includes important work in the representation and “musealization” of historic sites, such as Colonial Williamsburg, largely investigated by social anthropologists (Castañeda 1996, Handler & Gable 1997).

Historical archaeology has effectively bridged the study of identity issues—past and present. The last decade of scholarship makes the connection across the flow of discourses, as evidenced by a growing scholarship devoted to stewardship and outreach (Franklin 1997; Jameson 1997; McKee 1998; Potter 1992; Singleton 1995, 1999). Exemplary here is Carol McDavid’s work (1997, 2000), which

focuses on the Levi Jordan Plantation in Brazoria, Texas, and the use of new media technologies for local community outreach involving descendants of both slaves and slave owners. Inspired by pragmatist philosophers such as Rorty and West, she has sensitively negotiated the divide between academic and other worlds, their respective practices, policies, and writings, recentering the role of archaeologists in both cultural and political milieus.

DIASPORIC AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES

The recent articulation of diaspora is an important, albeit late, development in archaeology as a direct offshoot from historical archaeology. Paraphrasing Agorsah (1996, p. 222), the examination of diasporic cultures brings together compelling issues beyond identifying ceramic sequences, namely family, gender, race, and minority communities, and is enmeshed with issues of cultural interaction and transformation, transfers, exchanges, race and power relations, and heritage development. This might be seen as a more theorized extension of archaeology's long-standing interest in migration, though imbued with a more critical stance toward correlating assemblages and enclaves with specific groups. Archaeologists have used the language of diaspora to circumvent the heavily ascriptive associations of ethnicity, while still allowing a discussion of community and identity that crosscuts spatial lines (Goldstein 2000, p. 182). Others have linked archaeological discourse on places and landscapes to some central concerns within diaspora studies, such as migration, displacement, and dislocation (Bender 2001). This has obvious contemporary salience and offers a resonant critique of phenomenological studies of place-making in the past.

Diasporic studies in archaeology have, in themselves, been highly localized. In the Caribbean, a politicized archaeology is being forged through this analytic lens (Haviser 1999, Sued Badillo 1995, Wilkie & Bartoy 2000). Prior to this emergence, few studies sought to document the nexus between archaeology, transnationalism, and political faction. Receptivity to social theory might form one explanation, and in Cuba this was intimately connected to the 1959 revolution and the predominance of Marxism (Davis 1996). Reports on diasporic sites in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica (Agorsah 1999), Brazil (Funari 1995/1996, 1999), and the Americas (Weik 1997) have recently been published. However, the archaeology of the African diaspora still remains confined to studies of New World slavery, despite rich variability in African experience outside Africa, whether in Europe, South Asia, or elsewhere. Suffice to say, archaeologists have lagged behind historians and anthropologists, a delay explained to some degree by a disciplinary reticence toward Islamic archaeology or that of the modern world (Orser 1998, p. 64).

The broader question of identifying ethnicity materially and symbolically extends back to scholars such as Montelius and Childe, through to Hawkes, Piggott, the ethnoarchaeological work of Hodder (1982), processual approaches (Auger et al. 1987, Emberling 1997), and contextual ones (Aldenderfer 1993, Wells 1998).

Yet isolating ethnic specificities has proven to be elusive and potentially teleological in archaeological writing. From this perspective, racial and ethnic studies share a common ontological terrain. As Upton (1996, p. 3) demonstrates, while archaeologists view slave culture as a product of racial experience and a response to the social, economic, legal, and interpersonal conditions of the institution, we have come to expect a particular material resistance. Slaves' artifacts are supposed to be distinctive, and we are suspicious when they are indistinguishable from those of masters. Studies still focus on the articulation of difference in reductive terms by examining ceramics, textiles, architecture, food, burials, etc. Looking for ethnicity mirrors the strategies of gender archaeology, which simply looked for women as discrete and familiar entities. And theories of ethnicity, like those of gender, have moved from a focus on the biological to the social, and from the category to the boundary. The axial ideational, social, and subjective dimensions are lived and potentially porous or changeable, yet often materially invisible. Assuming a specific ethnic identification "must depend on ascription and self-ascription: only in so far as individuals embrace it, are constrained by it, act on it, and experience it will ethnicity make organizational difference" (Barth 1994, p. 12). Manipulation, masking, and passing (Butler 1993, Fanon 1967) are tactics that inhere around difference, problematizing notions of the "real" or "authentic," both socially and materially. Hall (1997, p. 4) reminds us that "identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse" and are "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies." The fluidity and permeability of those identities produce real problems for archaeologists in contexts lacking historical documentation, and even text-aided settings can be complex (Meskell 1999).

Influenced largely by Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Jones' study of ethnicity provides a detailed account of the discipline's engagement and its problematics. She shows that teasing out ethnic difference from the complex fabric of identity more widely is fraught with difficulties if not impossible for many archaeologists. Her definitions are necessarily vague enough to stand for any vector of identity—one could easily replace it here with status or religion:

Ethnicity is a multidimensional phenomenon constituted in different ways in different social domains. Representations of ethnicity involve the dialectical opposition of situationally relevant cultural practices and historical experiences associated with different cultural traditions. Consequently there is rarely a one-to-one relationship between representations of ethnicity and the entire range of cultural practices and social conditions associated with a particular group. (Jones 1997b, p. 100)

How different is this statement from those made by Childe in works from the 1950s such as *Social Evolution*? This divide characterizes the theoretical impasse archaeologists face. If indeed ethnicity is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of social agents and is shaped by practice, how might we approach this? Historically, theorizing ethnicity seems to have either correlated pots with people

or written material culture out of the record almost entirely. Other studies took tangential routes to cultural identity in an attempt to move beyond these isomorphic and deterministic studies (Shennan 1994). Some studies argue that not all archaeologists can study ethnicity or that social structures may not indeed correspond to our current classifications, which impels us to revisit anthropological and sociological literatures (Hegmon 1998, p. 274). Archaeology's most compelling studies of ethnicity emanate from historical (Staski 1990, Wall 1999, Woodhouse-Beyer 1999) or ethnohistorical contexts (David et al. 1991, Dietler & Herbich 1998), where diverse sources are inflected with the nuanced valences that represent social complexity. Newer research has moved from ethnicity to crystallize around issues of community, as a more localized perspective on identity (Canuto & Yaeger 2000). In many respects, theorizing ethnicity has not moved far from the position set forward by Hodder two decades ago.

Research into the specificities of ethnic identity and constructions of place lies at the intersection between the two fields of identity politics. On the one hand, investigating ethnicity answers questions about social difference in past societies—on the other hand, in extreme circumstances, it forms a locus for extrapolation to contemporary questions about origins, legitimacy, ownership, and ultimately, rights. That entanglement has singled out ethnicity as the dangerous vector of difference, as opposed to gender or age taxonomies. The latter have not been mobilized by contemporary groups in the same manner and magnitude to instantiate claims of legitimacy, superiority, and territoriality.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL MODERNITIES

Over the past decade we have witnessed a proliferation of studies of archaeology and archaeological narratives in the service of the state. This is, in part, an outgrowth of earlier studies that linked the rise of archaeology with the construction of the modern nation state (McGuire 1992, Patterson 1994, Trigger 1989). Ensuing studies focused more closely on European nation building (Atkinson et al. 1996, Díaz-Andreu & Champion 1996, Graves-Brown et al. 1996), whereas more recent work has brought this into wider global and contemporary perspective (Kohl 1998, Kohl & Fawcett 1995, Meskell 1998, Ucko 1995). Questions of theory in specific countries and the particular relationship between national concerns and theoretical development also emerged as important issues (Hodder 1991, Ucko 1995). Philip Kohl has provided a useful summary of these processes by documenting the development of archaeology in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, linking nationalism to considerations of ethnicity and identity. He argues (1998, p. 225) that many cases demonstrate the manipulation of archaeological materials, and though there are sensational examples of this (Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy), I would suggest that many national engagements are more complex, nuanced, and less deterministic in their relationships with the past (e.g., Atatürk in Turkey; see Özdoğan 1998). Yet Kohl is correct in stating, following Hobsbawm,

that “there are real limits to the invention of tradition” (1998, p. 233). In general, one can argue for a whole series of relationships between nations, regions, and individuals and their respective pasts, and it is dangerous to assume that conscious construction and manipulation are the primary rationales. It is also crucial to provide sociopolitical linkages: The twentieth century was rife with political restructuring and ethnic/religious upheavals (e.g., Balkans, Soviet Union, Israel, India), which sparked relationships with particular historical trajectories, nostalgia, and commemoration, and with the forceful materiality of archaeological remains. National modernities are constructed through dialogic relationships between archaeological materiality and heterogeneous narratives of the past that recursively offer horizons of hybridization. We might question how cultural heritage has been deployed in quests for specific modernities, sometimes at the expense or erasure of others. How do political agendas inhere in monumentalized space?

A surfeit of papers has dealt with the national character of archaeology in European countries (Shnirelman 1995). In the context of France, scholars have discussed a national archaeology rather than a nationalist one (Fleury-Ilett 1993). Here the discursive construction of archaeology is linked to wider developments such as the loss of foreign colonies, sociopolitical change, and the role of collective memory in the shaping of national culture. Identity and unity are foregrounded and monumentalized, especially since the political upheavals of May 1968 (see Demoule 1999; Dietler 1994, 1998; Schnapp 1996). More substantial studies have been undertaken for Germany, specifically its relationship to the Nazi regime (Anthony 1995, Arnold 1990, Marchand 1996) and the divisive effects of the Berlin Wall (Härke 2000, Härke & Wolfram 1993). European scholars have also turned their attention to the deconstruction of field practices, the place of local workers, and remnant colonial hegemonies (Fotiadis 1993; Given 1998; van Dommelen 1997, 1998), reinforcing the suggestion made earlier that trends toward self-reflexivity resonate more strongly outside Americanist archaeology.

Historiographical studies, such as the aforementioned, are certainly less volatile than contemporary encounters or less susceptible to partisan politics or fierce argumentation by different interest groups. Many of these contributions dealt with issues of representation or memorialization, rather than addressing the more pressing concerns over the results of war (Abdi 2001, Naccache 1998), the erasure of heritage (Chapman 1994), the residual effects of colonialism (Chakrabarti 2000, Hall 2000, Loren 2000, Reid 1997, Reid et al. 1997, Trigger 1984), or violence and persecution (Bernbeck & Pollock 1996, Meskell 2000). Although these themes unite many groups across the globe, there has been a notable lack of cross-fertilization between those writing on the topic from Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America, India, and Australia. For instance, there is a growing body of important writing on the politics of archaeology in Latin America, which is more evocative and compelling than much of the literature on Europe (e.g., Mamani Condori 1996, McGuire & Navarrete 1999, Paddayya 1995, Patterson 1995, Politis 1995, Ramos 1994, Vargas Arenas 1995). Chinchilla Mazariegos (1998) has outlined how excavations at Copan shaped the incipient independence of Guatemala,

providing the new nation with its own ennobling history, and Higuera (1995) has demonstrated the positive contribution of archaeology to Peruvian national esteem. The iconicity of ancient remains, whether Machu Picchu or Chan Chan, figures prominently in the collective consciousness, yet with little historicity. This places more tacit responsibility on the role of archaeologists, both indigenous and foreign, to promote current findings in the form of museums and community outreach.

More familiar perhaps are the discussions of Mexican archaeology, for which ethnicity, class, and race are crosscut through competing narratives and representations (Bernal 1980, Hyland 1992, Jones 1997a, Patterson 1995). Through displays in the National Museum, "Indianness," past and present, is privileged over other identities. The end result is that Mexicans are presented as Aztecs. Despite the evocative nature of archaeology and its political mobilizations, few archaeologists have seen the potential for linking heritage, national modernity, and tourism (Hyland 1992; Meskell 2000, 2001b). Archaeological monuments lie at a powerful nexus between ethnoscaping and finanscaping and so on. Alternatively, ethnographers have theorized the intersection between performing the past, potent tourist locales, and divergent interest groups (Abu el-Haj 1998, Edensor 1998; but see Odermatt 1996). This conjoins with Herzfeld's (1996) call for more integrated archaeological and ethnographic projects.

Geographically, there are clear imbalances in the scope of literature produced, and this is undoubtedly linked to a perceived receptiveness toward archaeological theory or the place of sociopolitics. For example, only a handful of available studies focus on Southeast Asia (Fawcett 1995, Loofs 1979, Pai 2000, Tong 1995, Tsude 1995, Von Falkenhausen 1995). Few studies have been produced for African countries or, more importantly, by their respective scholars (Andah 1995a,b; Jeppson 1997; Kent 1998; Lewis-Williams 1995; Schmidt 1995), although Peter Ucko has been instrumental in supporting these ventures. From a Sudanese perspective, Elamin (1999, p. 3) argues that cultural identity has recently become a more appealing subject for academics, intellectuals, politicians, and the media to debate. Martin Hall's prolific output has done much to change perceptions about politicization, responsibility, and ethics in the archaeology of South Africa (1992; 1994a,b; 1995). Most recently (2000, p. 160), he has documented Johannesburg's District Six, its destruction and subsequent rise with the success of protest against the apartheid state, teasing apart the transcripts of domination and resistance. His poetics of place and commitment to an archaeology of the recent past have been groundbreaking.

THE COLONIAL QUESTION

Issues of nationalism and archaeology cannot be separated from larger global processes such as colonialism and exploitation. Two decades ago Bruce Trigger brought to the fore a certain frame of political discourse in archaeology. It has

taken time to sediment, as this review suggests. Trigger sought to interrogate the history of archaeology (1989), outline the contours of nationalist, colonialist, and imperialist archaeologies from a global perspective (1984), and underscore the social milieus underpinning those discursive productions (1995). As an established scholar, his contribution has had monumental effects in instantiating a responsible and ethical archaeology. In the more recent climate of postprocessual and indigenous archaeologies, scholars have become more politicized and outspoken. Central to this development has been a recognition of the politics of location, both in regard to the effects of colonial hegemonies or transnational tensions, and in terms of our own situated scholarship.

Yet the residual effects of colonialism have occupied distinct trajectories in different countries. There has been an outpouring of literature on Native American issues in the past decade, specifically the problematics of archaeological intervention, reburial and repatriation, representation, the place of Cultural Resource Management and museums, and so on (Dongoske et al. 1997, Echo-Hawk 2000, Goldstein 1992, Goldstein & Kintigh 1990, McGuire 1992, Schmidt & Patterson 1995, Swidler et al. 1997, Thomas 2000). Significantly, the impetus for this shift was initiated by indigenous activists, rather than being an emergent recognition for archaeologists. North American archaeologists were relatively slow in acknowledging the rights of indigenous peoples, especially when compared to legislation on this issue in Australia. They "seem not to have recognized an emergent pressing need to single out Native Americans for attention before such a course of action was imposed upon them by interests which are not naturally sympathetic to archaeological concerns and perhaps even middle-class concerns more generally" (Lilley 2000, p. 113).

Yet the recognition of Native rights in the United States, accompanied by Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) legislation, has ineluctably entered the slippery terrain of identity politics. On one side, there has been a scientific desire to definitively answer the specificities of ancient identity. Spurred on by a positivist ethos in archaeology that advocated a literal match between artifacts, human remains, and modern people, we have seen the results of manipulation and misuse. Such trends, particularly in the search for ethnic origins, have had a long and ugly history in archaeology, whether in Nazi Germany or more recently with the Saami (e.g., Odner 1985). On the other side, archaeologists of a more theoretical persuasion have spent decades problematizing the connection between ethnicity and artifacts, thus arguing for a more fluid and ongoing constitution of identity. This perspective has been hijacked by high-profile anthropologists who want unrestricted access to studying ancient human remains. Employing the musings of social science as a vehicle for denying indigenous interests, the chair of Anthropology for the American Association for the Advancement of Science has argued (Clark 2001, p. 3):

Ethnicity, or identity-consciousness, is a fleeting, transient thing—constantly changing, constantly being renegotiated, written on the wind. Anthropologists have known for decades that discrete ethnic groups, rigidly bounded in space

and time, have no existence beyond a few centuries (and even that is arguable). Too bad this little nugget eluded most American archaeologists. . . . As the position paper itself makes clear, claims of “pan-Indianness” are insufficient to justify repatriation. Does the archaeology and physical anthropology count for nothing here, or is oral tradition the only thing that matters? . . . Sadly, this is what happens when politics takes precedence over disinterested evaluation of the credibility of knowledge claims—in this case, knowledge claims about the human past.

Because a literal identification and correlation has been touted as foundational to the questions of identity posed by NAGPRA, broadly defined as cultural affiliation—a relationship of shared group identity—archaeologists have created a tenuous and spurious connection between positivist assertion and political outcome. Kennewick Man is the most volatile example: Here experts attempt to demonstrate cultural affiliation over some 9000 years with various tribal groups vying for direct descent. NAGPRA’s acknowledgment of Native American rights and concerns is not at issue here. Rather, it is the series of foundational claims upon which connections between contemporary communities and ancient cultural property are premised. These claims are dangerous because they are out of synch with everything archaeologists have learned about identity from the work of Gordon Childe onwards. And this is what enables Clark to claim scientific primacy over human remains, at the expense of all other groups—the logical outcome of a positivist argument in today’s political climate. Surely a more politically responsible and engaged archaeology can be forged without recourse to such reductionist science. With the recognition that other communities and groups have equally legitimate claims to stewardship, the resolution of such disagreements requires a clear understanding of the different standpoints, structures of power, and politics involved (Patterson 1999). There has to be an epistemic shift, entailing the legitimation of other discourses, rather than simply returning to something called science that privileges the desire for certain knowledge at all costs. “Cultural affiliation” and “cultural patrimony” are separate in the language of NAGPRA, but they still reside within a Western scientific purview, as evinced by Clark, which has yet to be fully interrogated. Within this system, however, one could argue that emphasis should be placed on the patrimonial relationship, which acknowledges that Native peoples can show traditional or historic continuity of connection instead of linear descent. Rather than trying to quantify past and present identities in the face of significant methodological hurdles, it may prove more fitting to argue that specific groups constitute appropriate custodians because they have traditionally, or historically, legitimate cultural or spiritual responsibility for the cultural property at hand. This places more importance on living groups and reconciliation in the wake of colonization, rather than attributing salience entirely to the archaeological record; thus my earlier point returns that our subjects are not always dead.

A more liberal position toward indigenous issues has been central in Australian prehistory for many years (Attwood & Arnold 1992, Hemming 2000, Langford 1983, Meehan 1995, Moser 1995, Pardoe 1990). Ian Lilley (2000, p. 109) has

compared Australian legislation with that of other settler societies such as New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa where indigenous claims are prioritized over those of all other interested parties. This stands in contradistinction to the United States, where many publics and multiple interests are acknowledged. Lilley believes that archaeologists and their institutional politics have been very different in the United States as compared to the aforementioned Commonwealth countries, a situation tacitly linked to nation-building. He contends that "in Australia, if not Canada or New Zealand, most archaeologists share a pervasive, middle-class, postcolonialist view that our country cannot be considered a 'whole' nation in the eyes of important others unless we achieve reconciliation with the continent's indigenous populations" (2000, p. 113; see also Pokotylo & Guppy 1999). Despite the progressive Australian legislature, racism runs deep, not only in terms of aboriginal peoples but in terms of other immigrants, such as the Chinese, who accompanied white colonists into Australia. Given disturbing developments in recent political history—staging racism against Asians in parliament and the media—the entwined histories of the nation's peoples have again come under scrutiny (Lydon 2000). But the penumbra of shame still haunts Australia, despite attempts by the federal government to distance past atrocities from present situations: Repudiation cannot simply be followed by loss of memory.

Colonialism, a topic of long-standing interest (Bhabha 1994, Chambers & Curti 1996, Dirks 1992, Thomas 1999), has also been revitalized through the incursion of postcolonial theory in archaeology (see Gosden 1999). Archaeologists are now pursuing notions of hybridity and creolization in the construction of material culture and social identity (Loren 2000; van Dommelen 1997, p. 309), moving between notions of blended or reworked articulations and the hard realities of repression. Though such studies make claims about past life experiences, they are also redolent of contemporary struggles and oppressions. This is powerfully evidenced in the resurgence of interest in South Asian archaeology, in terms of religious factionalism, transnational tensions, and the colonial legacy (Chakrabarti 1997, 2000; Coningham & Lewer 2000a,b; Lahiri 2000; Paddayya 1995). Much of this discussion has been mobilized around the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque in 1992 (Bernbeck & Pollock 1996, Mandal 1993, Rao 1994). Archaeological data have been deployed by opposing sides to prioritize specific historical moments and foci in the site's history, rather than constructing more encompassing narratives that would account for multiple identifications within a wider religious landscape (Shaw 2000, pp. 698–99). The multiplicity of religious traditions and connections might be accommodated within more plural and consensual histories, and this is where archaeology's role may indeed be emancipatory. Though sentiment ran high at the 1994 World Archaeology Congress meetings in Delhi, there has been little follow up given the rash of continued violence and destruction of religious sites across India. The fixity of monumentalized space is shot through with contingent histories and multivalent narratives, and though archaeologists can grapple with heuristic and ethical agendas, we cannot hope to police or monopolize the interpretive borders.

CONCLUSIONS

At the nexus of identity and politics lies the crucial terrain of ethics (Lynott & Wylie 2000, Vitelli 1996). Part of our problem rests with the illusion that the subjects of our research are dead and buried, literally, and that our “scientific” research goals are paramount. It has taken time to convince archaeologists that ours is a subjective enterprise that is far from agenda-free. And though some have been active in critiquing the metanarratives of Western scholarship, the micronarratives of scientific method often go unchecked (Scham 2001). Recently, our role in national arenas has fueled some rather outmoded and pointless arguing over relativism. Here the recognition of subjectivity has been grossly caricatured as an “anything goes” mentalité, ultimately leading to nihilism and fascism (see Lampeter Archaeology Workshop 1997). Despite the difficulties in reconciling archaeology’s role in national constructions, most scholars now affirm that the active nature of material culture precludes static readings of the past and that identity construction itself is a fluid, fractured, and ongoing set of processes.

But what sets archaeology apart from other disciplines seeking to represent the nation or culture, such as history or anthropology, is its materiality. The residues of the past are often monumentalized and inescapable in daily life. Individually, the past is memory—collectively, it is history. Both are constructs entangled with identity issues. Though history and memory are imagined, this does not mean that they are imaginary (Jenkins 1996, p. 28). According to Lowenthal (1985, p. 245) “history and memory usually come in the guise of stories which the mind must purposefully filter; physical relics remain directly available to our senses. This existential concreteness explains their evocative appeal.” Archaeological materials could be said to operate in thirdspace (Soja 2000), a dialectical position that recursively shapes individuals and is continually shaped by us. Their multivalency and plasticity also result in “a diversity of icons” (Higueras 1995, p. 399) that are prefigured in society through their residual nature. And though archaeological remains iconically signify materiality, identity formation is alternately fluid—the material and the immaterial in constant dialogue. Identification is always a process of articulation or suturing, rather than a subsumption (Hall 1996, p. 3): It is neither essentialist nor foundational, but strategic and positional. Meaning and identity must be construed as projects, sometimes grounded, other times contingent, but always ongoing.

It might prove productive to maneuver between levels of disciplinary engagement the lived experience of social identity and the wider political setting of archaeological praxis: Both entail issues of power and difference, be it national, racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, gender, class, and so on. Part of that engagement necessarily entails getting personal and rendering transparent our own motivations for pursuing different archaeologies. Constitutive identities are performed and iterated though the discourses of sameness and difference, as I outlined through the example of Australian racial and sexual politics. Archaeology has traditionally separated out studies of our dead subjects from the field’s contemporary valences;

yet the two domains emerged in tandem and are epistemically interlaced. Although slow to take root, owing to the intransigence of positivistic thinking, archaeologies of identity, past and present, represent one of the most significant growth areas in our discipline. They represent our contemporary engagement with other fields and audiences and fulfill part of our ethical responsibility as public figures charged with the trusteeship of the past (Bender 1998, Scham 1998). The increase in the number of presentations and publications and the diverse perspectives represented in the last decade are an encouraging hallmark of the discipline's integrity and theoretical maturation. It may be some time before we parallel the sophistication of our sister disciplines, but the progression over the last decade has been exponential and promises to lead archaeology toward assuming a more engaged place in the social sciences and toward other publics.

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