

Handbook of Archaeological Theories

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Marxism

RANDALL H. MCGUIRE

Relics of by-gone instruments of labour possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economical forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economical epochs. Instruments of labour not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labour has attained, but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labour is carried on.

—Karl Marx, *Capital*

MARXISM IS A rich intellectual tradition that originated with the ideas of Karl Marx and has matured, developed, and grown for more than one hundred years. Like other grand theories of humankind and society, it has come to include a variety of different perspectives, drawn insights from other theories, and served as a source of inspiration for persons outside of the tradition. Also like other grand theories, it has been bent and hammered into an instrument for pernicious purposes. For social science in general and archaeology in particular, this tradition is a rich source of insights, theories, concepts, and ideas about the nature of cultural change.

Karl Marx recognized the potential of archaeology to contribute to an understanding of extinct societies in terms of their economic activity and their social conditions. Neither he nor his colleague Friedrich Engels ever developed this potential into a Marxist archaeology, in part because of the underdeveloped nature of archaeology as a science at the end of the nineteenth century. A Marxist approach to archaeology is very much a product of the twentieth century and in the West very much a product of the last three decades of that century. My consideration of this theory springs from my perspective as an English-speaking archaeologist working primarily in the Anglo-American tradition of archaeology. After World War II a distinctive Western Marxism developed in Europe,

Latin America, and in the United States (McGuire 1992a). This chapter focuses on Western Marxism in English- and Spanish-speaking archaeology with only brief consideration of Marxist theory or archaeology in the former communist countries of Europe.

MARXISM

Marx' thought lives in so far as it is interpreted anew by others in light of their changing needs.

—Sayer 1986:ix

Marx did not leave us Marxism; the term was unknown during his lifetime. Marxism starts with the ideas of Marx, but this tradition of research has grown and matured through scholarship. Today Marxism is not a single, unified, doctrinaire, theory of society that can be simply hitched to our empirical cart or simply dismissed in a few terse sentences. It is instead a tradition of thought, a philosophy, a mode of theoretical production that has and will produce many theories. Through the twentieth century scholars developed many and diverse strains of Marxism that often paralleled major trends in Western social thought. These theories always, however, start and return to the work of Marx. Marx pondered the basic questions of social life in order to formulate a critical theory of capitalism. He did this in tentative, dynamic, and often paradoxical ways. Modern social scientists cannot escape these basic questions, and this is why, much like biologists rereading Darwin, they return to Marx.

Marxism is many things. It is a way to know the world, a critique of the world, and a means to change the world. All well-founded Marxist approaches incorporate these three goals, and the tension between them warns us away from a sterile scholasticism, a nihilistic skepticism, or politically self-serving delusions. Approaches to Marxism can be differentiated based on how they weight these goals and on how they relate these three goals one to the other. They also differ in the amount of tolerance they will give to competing Marxisms (Trigger 1995). In cases where states have

transformed Marxism into an ideology to legitimate their exercise of political power this tension has been lost. The results of this loss have been alienation, domination, exploitation, and repression (Klejn 1991:70; Trigger 1995:326).

A Marxist approach to archaeology begins with Marx's (1906) study of *political economy*. Marx developed his study as a radical critique of capitalism. His political economy was an integral and original approach that entailed its own logic, theory, and method; that is, a dialectical logic, a theory of capitalism, and the method of class analysis. This approach applies this logic, theory, and method to the study of the development of society as a whole. A Marxist political economy focuses on the historical reality of lived conditions and on how these conditions produce and are products of social action.

There is no simple or unambiguous way to define the *dialectic*, and disagreements about the nature of the dialectic define differences within Marxist thought. But a few general principles are shared by most definitions. The dialectic views society as a whole. Society is a complex interconnected web in which any given entity is defined by its relationship to other entities. You cannot have teachers without students; each social entity exists because of the existence of its opposite. If interconnectedness is broken, the opposites dissolve away or are transformed into something else. By this same token, causes do not exist free of their effects and no variable is ever independent. This social world has an intrinsic dynamic because change in any part of the world alters the whole of the relations, sustaining all elements forever in flux.

In the dialectic the entities that make up the social whole are not expected to fit comfortably together. They may fit, but the dynamics of change are not to be found in these functional relations. Rather, they lie in relational contradictions that spring from the fact that social categories are defined by and require the existence of their opposite. Thus slavery defines both the master and the slave. For one to exist so too must the other, yet they are opposites and as such potentially in conflict. Each has contrary interests and a different lived experience in the context of a shared history. Change in these relations is never simply quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative changes can lead to qualitative change, and qualitative change necessarily implies a quantitative change. Conflicts that result from relational contradictions may result in quantitative changes in those relations that build to a qualitative change. Rebellion by slaves may lead the masters to

enforce stricter and stricter discipline, thereby heightening slave resistance until the relation of slavery is overthrown. The social relations that result from such a qualitative change are a mix of the old and the new; the old social form is remade, not replaced.

In formulating this theory of capitalism, Marx found it necessary to first address fundamental questions concerning the nature of the human condition and human society. Marx argued that the ultimate determining factor in human history is the production and reproduction of real life (Marx and Engels 1977:75). He also argued that the development of the productive forces in society over time would lead to both quantitative and qualitative changes in real life. Marx's goal, however, was not to create a grand theory of human history but rather to understand, critique, and transform capitalism. Archaeologists can find much of use in Marx's general propositions about the human condition and the nature of change in history, but they must be critical and creative when applying these insights, especially to noncapitalist societies (Bloch 1983).

Marxism ultimately relies on a radical concept of *history*. For Marx, history created the context for social action but history was also created. The creation of history involves culture, identity, and interpretation and thus affords the possibility for people to come to a critical consciousness of their own social actions.

Marx began his theory from the observation that the labor process is a necessary condition for human existence (Marx 1906:197–207). People work by expending energy to transform and manipulate nature. *Labor*, however, implies more than just work because human labor presupposes a web of social relations and meanings that structure energy expenditure. Labor is conscious action. People must first imagine what they will make before they produce it (Marx 1906:198).

As did many of his contemporaries, Marx embraced a labor theory of *value*—the basic measure of value is the labor necessary to transform nature into commodities. Since labor is socially determined, value is a social relationship between people that expresses the particular historical form of labor. In communal relations producers receive the full value of their labor. Exploitation exists when others have the ability to extract *surplus value* from the primary producers without an exchange or return of equivalent values. Marx saw the social form of surplus value as the main defining characteristic of a society. *Primitive accumulation* exists when elite individuals extract surplus value through direct or coercive means such as tribute

or enslavement. In capitalism the relations of wage labor obscure the extraction of surplus value.

Marx called the objects that people use to transform nature *instruments of production*. Thus the labor process always entails three factors: (1) social, conscious human beings, (2) nature (raw materials), and (3) the instruments of production. The products of the labor process entail the social relations and consciousness that are part of the conditions of their existence.

Through the labor process social relations, culture, ideas, and meaning, indeed the whole of the human condition is objectified; that is, it takes a material (objective) role in the process of the production and reproduction of real life (Roseberry 1989:26). The labor process is objectified in all things that can be perceived by the human senses; sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell (speech, music, text, art, manners, customs, food, drink, artifacts, buildings, rituals, etc.). These objects include what archaeologists call material culture. Thus a Marxist archaeology views material culture as a product of social, conscious labor, and as part of the material conditions of the world that structure that labor. In other words, people produce material culture through social labor, but once produced, material culture both enables and limits the production and reproduction of real life. It is just as much the symbolism of the material as its physical substance that engages in a dialectic with social actors.

Marx and Engels (1970) characterized the development of the productive forces in society in terms of modes of production. In their various works they defined many different modes of production that had existed in human history. Their scholarship, however, remained focused on the Capitalist Mode of production, and they examined other modes primarily to lay bare the historical development of Capitalism (Bloch 1983:1–20). The mode of production is made up of the *forces of production* and the *relations of the production*. The forces of production include the *means of production* (instruments of production, the raw materials, technical knowledge, the technical organization of labor, and skills necessary for labor) and labor power (people). The relations of production are those social relationships that people enter into to produce and reproduce real life. Traditionally Marxists have stressed those relations such as property relations that connect most directly to the production of commodities. Other Marxists have used the concept more broadly to include all social relations including gender, kinship, and race.

Marx and Engels (1970) used a building-like metaphor of *base* (foundation) and *superstructure* to ad-

vance the idea that the mode of production of a society (the base) conditions the political forms, social consciousness, belief structure, and ideology of a society (the superstructure). *Ideology* refers to a distortion of thought (a false consciousness) that conceals social contradictions both within and between the base and superstructure. The more materialist strains of Marxism recognize a dialectical relationship between base and superstructure but argue for the primacy of the base over the superstructure in the last instance (Engels 1954). These materialist perspectives tend to see contradictions between the forces and relations of production as being the primary basis for revolutionary changes in the mode of production. Such a revolution produces contradictions between the base and superstructure that transform the ideology of the society. Many others have argued that the base cannot be primary or determinate of the superstructure because both require and bring about the existence of the other. Thus, the origin of change lies in the dialectic between base and superstructure and not in one or the other (Ollman 1971, 1993; Sayer 1987).

The concept of *class* is central to Marxism where the term refers to historically constituted groups of people, a driving force in history (*class conflict*), and to the starting point for the Marxist method of *class analysis*. The class structure of early capitalism and the class struggles of this society formed Marx and Engels's referent point for their concept of class. In the abstract, class refers to social groups that stand in different relationships to the means of production so that one class can exploit the other by extracting surplus production. The nature of these relationships to the means of production will differ depending on the mode of production. Classes, however, never exist in the abstract, but only in concrete historical circumstances. In such concrete cases Marxists study class relations as a process that is inherently conflictual. Dominant classes will seek to maximize the rate of exploitation of subordinate classes, and these classes will resist such exploitation. This class conflict or class struggle drives the dynamics of history. To study class struggle Marxists first identify the class structure of a historical case and the interests of different classes and class fractions. They then analyze how that struggle plays out in specific historical circumstances (Marx 1978).

Classes result from the operation of underlying relationships of surplus production. Surplus exists in a social relationship where by one social group (a dominant class) can extract products from primary producers (a subordinate class). Such relationships do

not exist in all times and places and appear relatively late in human history. This fact led some Marxists to create romantic egalitarian visions of the prehistoric past and to discard class analysis as a method to study this ancient past (Engels 1972; Bloch 1983). In the 1970s and 1980s a variety of anthropologists argued that scholars might use class analysis to examine contradictions, struggles, social relations, and ideologies in relations of age, gender, and kinship as long as we recognize that the dynamics of these processes are not the same as class (Diamond 1974; Godelier 1977, 1986; Meillassoux 1981; Wolf 1982; Bloch 1983). This has led some archaeologists to speak of prehistoric interest groups that can be studied using class analysis (Gilman 1984).

A Marxist political economy takes a holistic approach to the study of human history—it is antireductionist. It rejects the idea that scholars should reduce real life to its parts (culture, economy, politics, society, or history) and develop different theories to account for these parts. The logic of the dialectic dictates that society must be studied as an interconnected whole, and people only experience and participate society as a whole, not part by part. There can thus be no Marxist approach to archaeology separate from Marxism as a whole. Marxist archaeologists reject the idea that archaeology needs to construct its own autonomous theory.

MARXISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The application of Marxist theory to archaeology should stand or fall based on how well it allows archaeologists to comprehend the realities of human history (Trigger 1995:325). Archaeologists should ask, How well does Marxism aid us in gaining knowledge of what happened in the past? How well does it lead us to critique the realities of the modern world and our place in it? And how well does it facilitate action in the world? Marxism addresses these goals by means of the logic of the dialectic, with a theory of social development, and through praxis.

The dialectic helps archaeologists to escape many of the oppositions that bedevil debates about archaeological theory and it provides a method for us to study change. The oppositions include science versus humanism, objectivity versus subjectivity, the material versus the mental, and evolution versus history. The dialectic leads us to examine how these poles are interconnected rather than seeing them as irresolvable opposites. Scholars are interconnected to the social world that they study and they thus must critically

examine their role in that world. The dialectic as a method for the study of change also emphasizes the interconnectedness of human society; but unlike a systems approach, it examines this interconnectedness for the contradictions that form society. These contradictions provide a source for the cultural change that is internal to the society and that springs from the social relations of real life.

Marxism is a rich conceptual source for the study of cultural change that can be practical for archaeology. Marx's basic and often somewhat ambiguous observations have been interpreted anew by many others in light of the conditions of economic development of their own times. This fruitful tradition of scholarship has produced a copious body of theories, concepts, ideas, and insights on human history. Marx's focus on the role of socially constituted labor in the production and reproduction of real life, and his realization that these social relations are objectified in various ways, including through material culture, are compatible with the craft of archaeology (Shanks and McGuire 1996). Thus the archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1944:1) noted that material culture reflects and participates in the social relations that produce it and that we can therefore study these social relations using material culture.

Marxism is also a theory of *praxis*. Praxis refers to theoretically informed practice (or agency). Praxis is the human activity through which people transform the world and themselves (see also Gardner, chapter 7). The ultimate goal of Marxism is a praxis that transforms both people and society. As a dialectical concept, praxis implies that our agency both as scholars and more broadly as social beings must lie in the interconnections between human free creative agency and the material (that is, concrete) conditions of human existence.

Archaeologists have explored and used many different Marxist theoretical approaches in their work. The diversity is noteworthy given the relatively low number of archaeologists who have embraced Marxism. The rest of this chapter will consider this variety both historically and in terms of current Marxist research programs in the Americas and Europe. Within the great variety of approaches that characterize Marxism in Western archaeology, there does, however, exist a set of general principles that all or most of these approaches share (Spriggs 1984; Trigger 1984; McGuire 1992a).

1. All recognize Marx as an important intellectual ancestor and use his work as a starting point, not

- an end point, for their own work. All participate in a larger community and tradition of Marxist thought that is greater than the works of Marx.
2. All advocate some form of the dialectic. This perspective eschews linear causal explanations. They find the explanations for history in the interconnectedness of society and they plot a path of change that is complex, crooked, and frequently retrogressive.
 3. All seek to account for sociocultural change in terms of a similar theoretical framework. This framework puts social relations at the core of our research and seeks to break down the oppositions that bedevil our research; oppositions between mentalism and materialism, humanism and science, history and evolution, and relativism and determinism.
 4. All must work creatively to apply Marxism to their research. This is especially the case for archaeologists who study forms of society other than capitalism. All must read Marx anew to fit their research to the realities of modern capitalism.
 5. All treat society as a whole, a totality that should be ultimately understood as such. They reject the idea that scholars can come to a better understanding of social process by reducing social phenomena to their parts and examining those parts. Consequently they are frequently uneasy with the disciplinary boundaries that structure our scholarship.
 6. All emphasize contradiction and conflict as vital features of human society and internal sources of change in those societies. As such they reject functionalism, the notion that social phenomena can be adequately understood in terms of how they function to maintain society or allow it to adapt to an environment.
 7. All take a human-centered view of history that gives human action or praxis some significant role in the process of history. They therefore reject any form of determinism (environmental, material, or technological) and the idea of abstract knowledge divorced from the action of people.
 8. All recognize that our knowledge of the past is created in a social and political context. They recognize that people make knowledge that can never merely be a reflection of the reality of that past. By the same token they recognize that there was a real past and that knowledge must include that reality. Archaeologists cannot simply make up history to fit our own political and social agendas.
 9. All share a commitment that the power relations and structure of the modern, capitalist-dominated

world are unjust and destructive of people. All advocate some form of socialism as the alternative to this mode of production.

The diversity of archaeological versions of Marxism in part results from the relatively recent development of a Marxist approach to archaeology in the West. By and large it was only in the 1970s that an appreciable number of Western archaeologists explicitly adopted Marxism (Spriggs 1984:7) and only in the 1990s that departments started to turn out a significant number of Ph.D.s trained in a Marxist approach to archaeology. This means that the majority of archaeologists using Marxism came to it independently of their training as archaeologists. They picked up their Marxism from diverse sources and reproduced in archaeology much of the theoretical diversity that existed in that tradition of thought.

A HISTORY OF MARXISM IN ARCHAEOLOGY

The history of Marxism in Western archaeology is a hidden one. The Marxist tradition of thought had a profound impact on Western archaeology from the 1940s onward, but this influence was rarely explicitly recognized. U.S. and British scholars working in the 1950s risked harassment, loss of support, and dismissal if they explicitly adopted Marxism. In other parts of the world such as Spain and various countries in Latin America an explicit engagement with Marxism could result in imprisonment or death. An explicitly Marxist archaeology developed in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, but with the notable exception of V. Gordon Childe, few Western archaeologists knew of it. In the United States Marxism had a profound but largely unacknowledged influence on the New Archaeology of the 1960s. In parts of Europe and in Latin America Marxism became a major theoretical approach in archaeology in the 1970s with a few English-speaking archaeologists also adopting the theory. It was only with the advent of alternative archaeologies in the 1980s that Marxism picked up a significant following among English-speaking archaeologists.

Marx and Engels

Marx and Engels investigated the idea of primitive societies. The most famous of these works is Engels's (1972) *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Engels (1972) also published a short work called *The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man*. In this later work Engels argues that labor defines human's relation to nature as totally interde-

pendent with human social relations. The *Grundrisse* contains much of Marx's (1993) unpublished notes and observations on precapitalist modes of production. Marx and Engels studied noncapitalist modes of production to demonstrate that the relations of capitalism were not timeless or universal and therefore could be transformed. They defined "primitive communism" to reveal that early human societies had held the means of production in common and to suggest that this was the elemental nature of society (Trigger 2003).

Marx and Engels, however, had only a slight knowledge of archaeology. They were aware that prehistoric artifacts had been found in caves and that archaeologists had excavated ancient cities in the Near East (Kohl 1983:25). Marx (1908:200) praised the three-age system (stone, bronze, and iron) of archaeologists for classifying the prehistory of Europe in terms of the development of material production and he derided the written histories for ignoring this development. Marx and Engels recognized that archaeological data could be used to gain knowledge on past societies. They argued that the key to gaining this knowledge lay in the fact that artifacts and tools objectified human labor and thus could be used as indicators of the social conditions necessary for that labor (Marx 1908:200). Throughout the life of each, however, archaeology remained an emerging science, and the development of an explicitly Marxist archaeology would not begin until the 1920s in the Soviet Union.

Soviet Archaeology

In 1918 the Soviet Union became the first Marxist state, and by 1945 a distinctive Soviet archaeology had developed. Starting in 1924, Soviet archaeologists turned away from typology, chronology, diffusion, and migration to the study of prehistoric social organization and social change (Trigger 1989:223–228). They did extensive excavations in domestic contexts and sought techniques to demonstrate matrilineal residence in these contexts. In many ways this shift paralleled the interests of the New Archaeology that came along forty years later in the United States (Klejn 1977). With Stalin's consolidation of power in the Soviet Union, archaeologists had to fit their research to his dogmatic view of evolutionary stages. This placed severe constraints on Soviet archaeology, but within these bounds archaeologists emphasized internal social dynamics, were optimistic about human creativity, and explicitly rejected racism (Trigger 1989:227). In the late 1930s a new interest developed in ethnogen-

esis, that is, how ethnic groups are formed and change (Bulkin et al. 1982:277). Soviet archaeology, like the rest of Soviet society, suffered greatly in World War II. Numerous important Soviet archaeologists died in the siege of Leningrad, on the front lines, and in prison camps during the war (Klejn 1993:140).

The Soviet state sought to form an archaeology in service of the official ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Klejn (1993:110) has argued that Soviet archaeology was never strictly Marxist either in the sense of being a rigorous Marxism or in the sense of only using Marxist theory. In order to appease the state, however, archaeologists had to learn to write and read between the lines in a code that used the approved words but allowed for some degree of creativity and original thought (Klejn 1993:125–138). In this manner Soviet archaeologists developed a number of themes including the study of ethnogenesis, the construction of a rigorous methodology to describe the archaeological record, methods for the technical analysis of materials, studies of social organization and of the relationship of society and the environment. In many of these efforts Soviet archaeology anticipated and then paralleled developments in Anglo-American processual archaeology. With a few notable exceptions, such as S. A. Semenov's (1964) seminal study of lithic use wear patterns, these developments had little direct impact on Anglo-American archaeology. The parallels are not, however, coincidental; their origin lies, at least in part, in the work of V. Gordon Childe.

V. Gordon Childe

Childe is probably the most cited English-speaking archaeologist of the twentieth century, and he was also the first archaeologist in the West to use Marxist theory. Through the middle of the 1930s Childe's studies of European prehistory emphasized diffusion and migration to counteract the racial theories of a growing fascist archaeology in Germany and elsewhere (Arnold 1990). In 1935 he visited the Soviet Union and he subsequently published a series of books (Childe 1946, 1951) that lay out his own Marxist view of European prehistory. This perspective involved a multilinear theory of evolution within which changes in technical knowledge affected social, political, and economic changes. Childe viewed archaeology as a means of testing and refining Marx's observations about the long term of human history. He chided Soviet archaeologists for assuming in advance what they in fact needed to prove (Childe 1951:28–29). Following World War II Childe moved away from Soviet

archaeology and rejected Stalinism as "the Marxist perversion of Marxism" (Childe 1989:15–17). He went back to Marx and read Marxist philosophy, and this interest produced his most theoretical works (Childe 1956). In these later works he considered what knowledge is and how archaeologists create it. He died in Australia in 1957.

The United States

During the reign of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the early 1950s a noticeable chill fell on U.S. intellectual development as the federal government actively suppressed public and academic discussion of socialism. The witch hunts of the House Un-American Activities Committee discouraged U.S. scholars from participating in the theoretical debates of Continental Europe that had taken a markedly Marxist turn. In Great Britain, Tories attacked socialist thought and scholars but with less success than in the United States. In his preface to the first U.S. edition of *Man Makes Himself*, Glyn Daniels (1951:xiii) felt compelled to deny that Childe was an "out-and-out Marxist."

During the 1950s and early 1960s Anglo-American archaeology began turning to many themes that paralleled the interests of Soviet archaeologists but without an explicit engagement with the Soviets or Marxism. In both the United States and Great Britain archaeological theory turned to ecological themes as in Graham Clarke's (1954) study of Star Carr and Gordon Willey's (1953) Viru valley settlement pattern study. In the United States Julian Steward's cultural ecology provided a theoretical base for this interest. At Chicago's Oriental Institute Robert Braidwood (1989:90) drew inspiration from Childe and began his search for the origins of the Neolithic revolution in the Near East. Braidwood's student Robert McCormick Adams (1966) used the work of Steward, Childe, and the Soviet Assyriologist Igor Diakonov in his classic study of the urban revolution in the Near East and Mesoamerica.

The New Archaeology of the 1960s developed on the heels of McCarthyism from a U.S. cultural materialism that had Marxist influences but little understanding of Marxism. The New Archaeology combined the evolutionary theory of Leslie White (1949, 1959) with an extreme form of *logical positivism* (the idea that knowledge is built by testing predictions on observed phenomena) drawn from the work of Carl Hempel (1966). White had visited the Soviet Union in 1929 and was impressed by the last days of the New Economic Program (Peace 1998). He read Marx and

Engels, reaffirmed his commitment to socialism, and returned to Morgan to formulate his theory of unilinear cultural evolution (Peace 1998). His student Louis Binford brought these ideas along with Hempel's positivism to archaeology, but he left behind any explicit Marxism or commitment to socialism. David Clarke (1968) developed a British version of this theory, but it never became as popular in Great Britain as it did in the United States. These archaeologists absorbed the already established emphasis on ecological themes and read Childe as a unilinear evolutionist.

At the same time within U.S. anthropology a group of scholars were forging a Marxist approach to the study of culture that would become known as anthropological political economy. Most of these scholars, such as Eric Wolf, Morton Fried, Elman Service, June Nash, Sidney Mintz, Marshall Sahlins, and Eleanor Leacock, were students together at Columbia University in the 1950s (Wolf 1987). Nearly all worked with Julian Steward, and their initial work reflected Steward's cultural ecology and multilineal evolution (see also Jordan, chapter 26). They, however, brought a historical dimension to their studies that Steward's ecological functionalism lacked and with it a broad and temporally deep view of historical change. In the 1960s their research became explicitly Marxist, and in this context Eleanor Leacock introduced a Marxist-feminist approach to anthropology. In the 1960s Marshall Sahlins edited a series of classroom readers for Prentice-Hall that included many of these authors. These readers were used widely in anthropological classrooms of the late 1960s and 1970s and formed a common part of the education of a generation of U.S. archaeologists.

Processual Archaeology

Processual archaeology developed out of the New Archaeology of the 1960s and dominated archaeological theory in the United States through the 1990s (see Watson, chapter 3). With its mix of cultural materialism and cultural ecology, processual archaeology shared many empirical concerns with Marxist approaches. These common concerns spring in large part from the covert and overt transfer of ideas from Marxism to materialist theory in anthropology. The processualist's interest in knowing both how people made a living in the past (that is, on production) and how they organized their societies overlaps the interests of most Marxists. This overlap is even more pronounced among those processualists who recognize that relations of exploitation and power are embedded

in these social relationships (for example, see Brumfiel 1992; Hastorf and Johannessen 1993; Earle 1997; Haas 2001).

Major differences exist between processual archaeology and Marxism, however, in their assumptions about the nature of culture, and in *epistemology* (the study of knowledge acquisition and communication). Processual archaeology begins from the assumption that culture can be seen as a system of adaptation made up of three principal subsystems (technology, society, and ideology). They tend to see production as residing in the technological subsystem and assume that changes in technology drive changes in the rest of culture. Much of processual research has thus focused on functional questions about adaptation and tends to find the causes of change in factors such as environmental change that are *external* to the cultural system (Fitzhugh 2001). Marxists, on the other hand, see society as a complex interconnected web of social relations. These social relations embody contradictions that originate in the fact that social actors are defined by their opposites (i.e., master versus slave) and that the motor for change lies in these contradictions. Thus Marxists stress internal social factors (social inequalities and contradictions) as the source of change rather than technology and environment (on agency theory, see Gardner, chapter 7). Processualists also believe that through a positivist method archaeologists can come to an objective understanding of cultural processes. Marxists realize that scholars must live in society and that for this reason our scholarship will always have a political dimension because it exists to serve the interests of social groups within society.

Not all archaeologists accepted the processual archaeology during the 1970s. This theory was very much a U.S. development with considerable strength in Great Britain, but it did not gain much prominence outside of the English-speaking world. This was especially the case in Latin America and in Spain, where political developments encouraged the growth of explicitly Marxist archaeologies. Within Western Europe and the English-speaking world a handful of archaeologists used Marxist theory to question the processual program.

La Arqueología Social of Latin America

A self-conscious Marxist archaeology in Latin America sprang from the leftist revolutionary movements of the 1960s and the concurrent development of an anti-imperialist intellectual tradition (McGuire and Navarrete 1999; Benavidas 2001). In the 1960s Latin

American intellectuals formulated various critiques of imperialism and capitalism including the theology of liberation, dependency theory, and the pedagogy of the oppressed (Sturm 1998). Following the triumph of the Cuban revolution, revolutionary movements and parties sought power in many Latin American countries. Right-wing opposition to these movements culminated in the massacre of students in Mexico City in 1968, the military overthrow of Allende in Chile in 1973, and finally the military coup in Argentina in 1976. In various Latin American countries including Peru, Venezuela, México, Chile, and Argentina scholars worked independently to formulate a Marxist theory of archaeology (Dillehay, chapter 11). Starting in 1970 they gathered at a series of three conferences in México that culminated in the 1975 Reunion de Teotihuacan that sought to lay out a radical program in archaeology called *la Arqueología Social* (Lorenzo et al. 1976). These archaeologists expressed a profound concern for the social and political role of archaeology and asked the question, Archaeology for whom? (Panameño and Nalda 1978). In 1983 the Grupo Oaxtepec (including Felipe Bate, Iraida Vargas, Luis Guillermo Lumberras, Julio Montane, Manuel Gandara, and Mario Sanoja) met at Oaxtepec, Mexico, to try to synthesize *la Arqueología Social*.

La Arqueología Social was created as a reaction to both the cultural historical approach that dominated Latin American archaeology at the time and to the U.S. New Archaeology (McGuire and Navarrete 1999; Benavidas 2001). In many ways its critiques of culture history paralleled those of the New Archaeology. These Latin American archaeologists argued for a scientific approach and increased rigor both in method and in the formulation and testing of research questions. Their science, however, was based in a Marxist materialist dialectic and not in positivism (Bate 1998). They critiqued the New Archaeology for its functionalism, unilineal evolutionary theory, and its lack of political consciousness (Gandara 1981; Benavidas 2001).

La Arqueología Social found the starting point for archaeology as a social science in the work of V. Gordon Childe but realized that his work could not be applied directly to their context (Lorenzo et al. 1976:6; Vargas and Sanoja 1999:60). *La Arqueología Social* sought to reformulate the concepts of Marx to apply them to the aboriginal history of Latin America (Benavidas 2001). The synthetic work of the Grupo Oaxtepec sought to construct a categorical system of concepts that consisted of the socioeconomic formation, mode of production, mode of life, mode of

work, and culture (Vargas and Sanoja 1999:65). They sought a system that would account for the development of society as a concrete totality, as a structured whole in transformation, and in terms of a process of internal dialectical development. As Vargas and Sanoja (1999:70) state, The fundamental aim of social archaeology is the critical study of history as a dialectical process, considering the past as that which determines the present and, conversely, the present as the source of the manipulation of the past.

La Arqueología Social has had an important impact on archaeology in the Spanish-speaking world but is not well known in Anglo-American archaeology. For most of the 1970s and the 1980s this approach dominated archaeological training in Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, and was highly influential in many other countries but has only of late been discussed in Chile or Argentina (Alvarez and Fiore 1993). More recently the program has been criticized for being too theoretical and abstract, and for failing to produce a large body of substantive studies (Oyuela-Caycedo et al. 1994). Although a number of U.S. archaeologists who read Spanish have praised la Arqueología Social for its originality and contribution to theory (McGuire 1992a; Patterson 1994), there are only a few examples of English-speaking archaeologists using the theory of la Arqueología Social in their research (Ensor 2000). Numerous Latin American scholars continue to pursue la Arqueología Social and to produce original considerations of Marxist theory in archaeology (Benavidas 2001).

La Arqueología Social in Spain

In Spain the explicit development of a Marxist archaeology only became possible with the death of the dictator Franco in 1975. At this time a very empirical culture history dominated Spanish archaeology, and there was only slight interest in the Anglo-American New Archaeology (Varela and Risch 1991). As in Latin America, Marxist archaeologists formulated their theory both in reaction to an entrenched culture-historical approach in their country and to the Anglo-American New Archaeology. In this context Marxism became a major theoretical movement in Spanish archaeology with research groups in many Spanish departments of archaeology. One of the most creative and internationally influential of these groups has been at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Barcelona.

The research group in Barcelona adopted an explicitly scientific archaeology that focused on the history and evolution of socioeconomic formations, the levels

of development of productive forces, and the complexity of relations of production (Varela and Risch 1991:37). In this work they have integrated Marxist and feminist approaches into a theory of the production of social life (Castro et al. 1998).

This theory begins with the assumption that social life requires the existence of three objective conditions: men, women, and material objects. They use an all-inclusive notion of production that views men and women as both products of society and as the producers of society. Men and women are products of society both in terms of their own social and biological production and in the social relations that they enter into as social beings. They are producers of society because as social agents they allow and shape the reproduction of society. Their theoretical framework is highly structured with a typology of types of production that include basic production of human beings, object production of food and other products intended for consumption, and maintenance production that increases the social value of things without altering their use value. In order to understand the dynamics of social change, they consider the problem of how products are distributed and consumed. They argue that economic exploitation exists when some part of the product does not revert to the group or individual producer; instead others appropriate this property as surplus value. They posit a dialectical relationship between production and property that forms the internal dynamic that drives social transformation.

As an explicitly scientific approach, much of the work of the Barcelona group has focused on how to observe and measure the social relations that they define in the archaeological record (Barcelo et al. 1994; Castro et al. 1998). They pose two questions to direct their analysis: (1) who participates in the social production of men, women, objects, and in the maintenance of all of these things, and how do they do so? And (2) who benefits from the products so produced? They have developed a series of archaeological (or methodological) theories to allow them to answer these questions, identify exploitation, and define the nature and degree of this exploitation using archaeological observations.

They have applied these theories in a wide range of archaeological contexts. Jordi Estévez and Assumpció Villa (1998) study the archaeology of Tierra del Fuego and theorize about hunting and gathering societies. They identify a primordial contradiction between the production of the material conditions of life and the process of biological and social reproduction that pro-

vides the internal dynamic for change in these societies (Estévez et al. 1998). This contradiction allows them to apply a Marxist analysis to hunting and gathering societies and to place gender at the center of that study. Roberto Risch (2002) has examined the relationship of the economy to the reproduction of human communities in the El Argar culture (2250 to 1400 B.C.) in southeast Spain. His analysis examines how value and surplus value were created in the production of lithic artifacts and how these social relationships shaped exploitation in El Argar society.

The Barcelona group contributes several things to Western Marxist archaeology. They have gone further than others in developing the archaeological implications of their theory and consequentially produced an impressive corpus of substantive works applying that theory. They have made major contributions to a Marxist theory and methodology of observation in archaeology. They have also developed a theory that integrates considerations of gender and class. They accomplish this by including gender relations as part of the basic objective conditions of social life and by viewing the social and biological reproduction of people as an integral aspect of production. María Encarna Sanahuja (2002) develops this focus on gender in her book *Cuerpos sexuados, objetos y prehistoria*.

Marxism in Anglo-American Archaeology

Not all Anglo-American archaeologists welcomed the New Archaeology. Some shared the New Archaeology's dissatisfaction with traditional archaeology but disdained the evolutionary deterministic approach of the New Archaeology. Many of these came to Marxism as an alternative (Patterson 2003).

During the 1970s many British scholars embraced Marxism. Some continued the strongly cultural and historical approach of the British Marxist historians (Thompson 1963, 1978; Hobsbawm 1967, 1975; Williams 1963, 1980) while others embraced French structural Marxism (Althusser 1969, 1971; Godelier 1977, 1986; Meillassoux 1981). Numerous British archaeologists who turned to Marxism did so within the structuralist theory defined by Jonathan Friedman (1974, 1989). He challenged the structural causality of Althusser and argued for a more historical approach which, by acknowledging that each individual society is simply too complex to be explained individually, explained a given social form by exposing the structural transformation that created it (Friedman and Rowlands 1978). He worked closely with Michael Rowlands (1987, 1989) and Barbara Bender (1981, 1985,

1989), and a Dane, Kristian Kristiansen (1982, 1984).

The first explicitly Marxist archaeologists in the United States were all self-trained in their Marxism. Bruce Trigger (1978) went to the works of V. Gordon Childe and found the critical dialectic between history and evolution, theory and data, and mentalism and materialism that he thought lacking in the New Archaeology. In the early-1960s Thomas Patterson (1973, 1989) began his studies in Peru where he came into contact with Marxist political thought and increasingly saw it as a useful theoretical perspective for archaeology. Mark Leone (1972) trained as a processualist archaeologist at the University of Arizona but encountered Althusserian structural Marxism when he taught at Princeton. In the 1970s Marxism remained a concern of only a handful of individuals in U.S. archaeology (Gilman 1989:63). A decade later Matthew Spriggs (1984) published the first explicitly Marxist collection of articles in *Anglo-American Archaeology* including researchers from Great Britain, the United States, Italy, and Mexico.

In the mid-1970s the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) advanced a Marxist theory to account for the formation and growth of capitalism. Many archaeologists adapted this world systems theory for broader issues of cultural change in the ancient and prehistoric worlds. Most of these researchers embraced the theory's systemic thinking with a functionalist view of long-range economic dependencies between regions without reference to the Marxist underpinnings of the theory. Stripped of this Marxist foundation, the theory loses the tension and ambiguity between stability and change that Wallerstein so carefully tries to place in the original (McGuire 1996). A few archaeologists have, however, maintained the Marxist core of the theory and critically and creatively applied it to the development of empires in the Near East (Kohl 1979, 1989), to the dynamics of ancient relations between core and periphery (Rowlands et al. 1987), and to the historical development of the Connecticut River valley (Paynter 1985).

In the 1980s various alternative archaeologies were formulated as critiques of the processual archaeology that had come to dominate theory in Anglo-American archaeology. These archaeologies included a post-processual archaeology, a feminist archaeology, and a flourishing of Marxist approaches. These alternative archaeologies challenged the positivist epistemology of processual archaeology, emphasized the political nature of archaeology, replaced systems thinking with a notion of agency, and emphasized the importance of

human consciousness and meaning for interpreting the past. As Patterson (1990:198) has pointed out, an archaeology grounded in Marxism overlaps and deviates from aspects of processual, post-processual, and feminist archaeologies but still defines a theoretical space that none of them occupies.

Critical Archaeology

In the United States one of the first and most prominent of these alternative archaeologies was the critical archaeology of Mark Leone (1981, 1982) and his colleagues (Handsman 1983, Leone and Potter 1984; Leone et al. 1987) in historical archaeology. Leone drew on the structural Marxism of Althusser and the work of the Marxist Frankfurt School of critical theory and their emphases on meaning as expressed in ideology. From Althusser, Leone defined ideology as the taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions that people have about society. He argued that an ideology serves to mystify the true nature of social relations and thus maintain relations of exploitation by resolving contradictions that exist within society. From the Frankfurt School Leone argued that the role of the scholar was to expose how ideologies were created and maintained with the conviction that people would transform relations of exploitation once the reality of such relations was revealed to them. Critical archaeologists analyzed how material culture served to maintain ideology in museum displays (Leone 1981; Handsman and Leone 1989), in formal gardens (Leone 1982), and in the mundane objects of everyday life (Little 1988).

The key study of critical archaeology was the Annapolis project (Leone and Potter 1984; Leone et al. 1987). The project studied how in the past 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. In the present the project sought to engage in a praxis that would reveal to visitors how the historic district of the city had been manipulated to reinforce an ideology of modern capitalism. The project questioned the ideological construction of Annapolis's past, on paper in reconstructed and restored buildings, and in the ground.

For example, one aspect of the project concerned the purpose of the extensive gardens at the estate of William Paca, a wealthy judge and governor who signed the U.S. Declaration of Independence. The gardens innovatively used terraces that narrowed as they ascended toward the house, lending an illusory appearance to the house of greater size and stature.

Leone (1988) considered two hypotheses about the purpose of the gardens. The first was that Paca's gardens were designed to evoke confidence and awe in the visiting public as he prepared for the risk of signing on to a revolution. The second hypothesis was that the gardens were intended as a positive, instructive example for other patriots in the community. By separating artifactual evidence from historical evidence, and focusing on the disagreements between the two records, Leone (1988) concluded that Paca's gardens did in fact serve as illusions of wealth and power, both of which were being undermined by British legislation and growing difficulty with control of slaves and relations with poor white farmers.

In this way, the project sought to reveal the contradictions and social inequalities that the hegemonic history of Annapolis obscured (Leone et al. 1987; Leone 1995). The organizers of the project sought to set up a participatory experience that would engage the tourists in a critical reflection on the colonial history of the United States. In the end, however, this challenge to the standard ideological history of Annapolis failed to overcome the official history and the cultural and social relations that produce it (Leone 1995; Potter 1994). The public generally responded to the alternative vision that the project offered by reinterpreting this vision in terms of their preconceptions derived directly from the ideology being critiqued. Their responses expressed assumptions directly derived from a capitalist ideology such as a preoccupation with the value of objects, the time necessary to produce goods, and their availability in the market.

Marxist archaeologists have by and large rejected the dominant ideology of the early critical archaeology (McGuire 1988; Johnson 1992; Orser 1996; 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. They have emphasized instead the negotiation of ideology in class conflict. Specifically they have examined how dominant classes use dominant ideologies to create class-consciousness for those classes and how subordinate classes manipulate these ideologies in struggles against domination. In this light the failure of the tourists in Annapolis to be emancipated by the Annapolis Project's public programs is clear. Annapolis is a high-end tourist destination that attracts primarily members of the privileged classes, and these individuals interpreted the message of the program within the dominant ideology. Based on the results of the Annapolis Project

and these critiques, Leone (1995) adopted Habermas's (1984) notion of communicative action. He recognized that those people who would be the most open to alternative histories were those who had been most directly affected in negative ways by the contradictions, inequalities, and exploitation in society.

Anthropological Political Economy

The second Marxist current of the alternative archaeologies found its theory in the anthropological political economy of the United States (Moore and Keene 1983; Crumley 1987; Paynter 1989; McGuire and Paynter 1991; Marquardt 1992; McGuire 1992a). These Marxist archaeologists adopted a relational, Hegelian concept of the dialectic with an emphasis on understanding the lived experience of people (everyday life) (Ollman 1976, 1993; Sayer 1987). Following the critical archaeology they also adopted a self-reflexive awareness of archaeology's place in the modern world. One of the key relational aspects of this theory is the premise that class exploitation exists in relationship to other forms of exploitation based in other social dimensions such as gender and race (Paynter 1989). This approach found the motor for cultural change in the conflicts that resulted from the ambiguities, tensions, or contradictions that exist within social relations. Social relations can only exist in historical contexts and between living human beings; they do not exist in the abstract. Therefore, history is the product of human action that is of socially constituted, purposeful agency (see Gardner, chapter 7).

Following Ollman (1976, 1993; Sayer 1987), these archaeologists see Marxism as a theory of internal relations. This dialectical view sees the world in terms of relations and not in terms of things. They take the key concepts of Marx, including mode of production and superstructure, and reject the traditional definition of these as distinct levels of society. They argue instead that these things are in fact different aspects of the same social totality. If this is true, then it is nonsensical to speak of one determining the other because the existence of one necessarily requires and entails the existence of the other. It is the relationship between mode of production (base) and superstructure that shapes society.

Alternative Archaeologies in Great Britain: Marxist and Post-Processualist

Archaeological interest in Marxism continued in British archaeology through the 1980s. Medieval archaeologists (Williamson and Bellamy 1987; Saunders 1991;

Samson 1992, 1993) followed the British historians to ask questions about the origin, nature, and transformation of feudalism in England and the rest of Europe. Julian Thomas (1987) drew on structural Marxism in his analysis of Neolithic Europe. Others such as Michael Parker Pearson (1982, 1984) paralleled the interests of a U.S. critical archaeology in ideology. But the major theoretical thrust of British archaeology in this decade was the post-processual archaeology developed by Ian Hodder and his students at Cambridge.

The eclectic theoretical borrowings of the post-processual archaeology included many things derived from Marxism, including a focus on ideology as a mystifying force in social relations, the importance of the political and social position of the researcher to the doing of archaeology, and a rejection of simplistic deterministic models (see Shanks, chapter 9). The post-processualists found these things in the work of the French structuralist Marxists of the Frankfurt School (especially Benjamin).

In part due to these borrowings from Marxism, the two approaches share a number of similarities, but the differences between them are not trivial. Both Marxism and post-processual archaeology attacked an entrenched processual archaeology. Both view archaeology as a politically engaged practice that is more than a simple search for knowledge. The overlaps are greatest between post-processualists and Marxists who practice a critical archaeology and less so with more "classically" oriented Marxist theorists. Many Marxists have attacked post-processual archaeologists for being too subjective, overly intellectualized, and too eclectic in their theoretical borrowings (Kohl 1985; Lull et al. 1990; Patterson 1990; Trigger 1995; Bate 1998). More humanistic oriented Marxists have questioned the post-processual emphasis on autonomous individuals and individual agency. The Marxists note that individuals exist in a dialectical relationship to society and that they are only empowered through social agency (Johnson 1989; Wurst and McGuire 1999; McGuire and Wurst 2002).

Feminism

Another major current of the alternative archaeologies of the 1980s was feminism (see Hays-Gilpin, chapter 20). Both Marxism and feminism confront real problems in the world; Marxism confronts economic inequality and oppression while feminism confronts sexism (read: gender inequality and oppression). The two approaches share a common developmental history but are incompatible if a totalitarian notion of

the subject (class or gender) is taken. With a nontotalitarian view of the world these approaches can be compatible and complementary.

The relationship and alliance between Marxism and feminism is broad and deep. It began in the nineteenth century and was renewed with the reinvigoration of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. This feminist revival drew heavily on the work of the Marxist Frankfurt School (Hammond 1993). The anthropological political economy of the second half of the twentieth century gave rise to a Marxist-feminist (or feminist-Marxist) approach in cultural anthropology that returned to the basic sources of Marxism. Eleanor Leacock (1972) promoted Engels's (1972) observation that the first oppression in the history of the society was the oppression of women by men. In the 1980s Leacock (1981) and her colleagues produced a series of studies of interest to archaeologists that looked at the relationship between the rise of the state and gender inequality (Rapp 1978; Gailey 1985; Muller 1987; Moore 1988). These studies uniformly found that the gender inequality and the exploitation of women increased with the rise of the state. Other Marxist-feminist scholars produced a series of ethnohistorical studies that examined the role of women in the indigenous empires of the Americas and how the Spanish conquest of these empires produced greater gender inequality (Nash 1980; Silverblatt 1987; McCafferty and McCafferty 1988; Brumfiel 1991, 1994). Such an engagement between Marxism and feminism also continues in Spain (Sanahuja 2002).

By the 1970s the alliance between feminism and Marxism was showing signs of strain. Women active in the political struggle of the epoch found that those struggles did not address their own liberation (Taylor 1990). In 1981 Heidi Hartman argued that Marxism and feminism were joined in an unhappy marriage and that as long as Marxism found the source of all oppression in relationships of class, scholars could not identify or address gender inequality. Fried's (1967) Marxist work on cultural evolution characterizes the type of scholarship that feminists took issue with. Fried (1967) defined band societies (the first evolutionary stage) as societies that lacked social differentiation except as defined by gender and age. Through this definition Fried made gender relations (and gender oppression) universal and unchanging. As such they were given in the nature of humanity and not subject to critique or modification. Fried's ideas, however, can be contrasted with the perspectives of

Marxist researchers such as Friedrich Engels (1972), Eleanor Leacock (1972), and María Sanahuja (2002), who do not find the oppression of women to be universal but to be the first form of social oppression and one that must always be addressed. What some contemporary feminist scholars have seemingly forgotten is that Hartman called for a reconciliation to build a happier marriage, not a divorce.

If scholars accept either a totalitarian notion of Marxism (class is the root of all exploitation) or a totalitarian notion of feminism (gender is the root of all exploitation), then Marxism and feminism must be at odds. The feminist notion of entry point, however, offers an alternative to these totalitarian ideas (Wylie 1991). If we take diversity and the complexity of oppression seriously, then we must recognize that it derives from many relationships including those of gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Each of these provides an entry point to the study of social relations and of oppression. Marxists will enter the study of the social world with the analysis of class and from this entry point examine the complex relationship between class, gender, race, and ethnicity in the construction of oppression. Feminists will begin their analysis with gender. As long as feminists seek a radical transformation of gender relations that must also address class, race, and ethnicity (hooks 2000) and Marxists recognize that relations of class also involve relations of gender, race, and ethnicity, then the two approaches will be compatible and complementary.

MARXISM IN ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

It should also not be surprising that the clandestine history of Marxism continues in North American archaeology (Patterson 2003). Many of the issues and approaches that were radical in the early 1990s have entered mainstream research. World systems theory flourished during the 1990s and continues as a widespread approach today (Chase-Dunn and Mann 1998; Kardulias 1999; Peregrine and Feinman 1996), although with growing emphasis on the activity, rather than passivity, of those in the periphery (Kohl 1989; Gill 2002). Numerous archaeologists have embraced a Marxist definition of ideology as a socially necessary illusion that serves as an instrument of domination and a locus of power (Pauketat and Emerson 1997; Seaman 1995; Whitley 1994). Still others have asked questions about exploitation and how benefits from social relations accrue to some individuals and not to others (Arnold 2000; Diehl 2000). Despite the

popularity of these and other Marxist-derived ideas and approaches, most U.S. archaeologists have been unwilling to adopt the dialectical epistemology of a Marxist approach or the political costs of explicitly labeling themselves Marxists. As has been the case since the beginning of the twentieth century, some scholars adopt these ideas and approaches with an explicit nod to their Marxist origin, but most seem unaware where these things came from.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, Marxism became more established in North American archaeology than it was in the 1970s and 1980s. The core group of scholars who used Marxism in the 1970s and 1980s—including Bruce Trigger, Thomas Patterson, Allen Zagarell, Mark Leone, Philip Kohl, Robert Paynter, Antonio Gilman, Charles Orser, and Dean Saitta—continues to be active and productive. These scholars have been joined by the first generation of North American graduates to be trained in a Marxist archaeology.

Bruce Trigger (1995a:349) has said, “Classical Marxism attracts me because in my opinion it accounts better than any other theory for human behavior as I understand it.” Numerous archaeologists in North America share his view and they have recently produced productive substantive, historical, and theoretical studies. Jon Muller (1997) has published a comprehensive Marxist interpretation of the material conditions underlying and stimulating political development during the Mississippian period in the southeastern United States. Thomas Patterson (1995, 2001) has published critical social histories of both American archaeology and anthropology. Bruce Trigger (1998) presents a Marxist appraisal of the concept of social evolution in social theory and more recently a brilliant comparative study of early civilizations (Trigger 2003).

There has been a marked expansion in the number of North American archaeologists explicitly applying a critical or relational theory of Marxism to their studies. Indeed, I cannot attempt to cite all such studies in this brief summary, but I will highlight some of the more important ones. This Marxist presence is much less in studies of the aboriginal past of the Americas than in historical archaeology, which studies the modern (i.e., post-A.D. 1500) era.

Marxists have established a small but pervasive presence in the substantive debates about the prehistory of North America. In general these studies have raised issues of power and exploitation in social relations as alternatives to ecological and technological explana-

tions for change in these societies (Nassaney and Sassaman 1995; O'Donovan 2002). Dean Saitta (1994, 1997) has developed a theoretical approach that argues for the relative autonomy of power and labor relations in the social life of middle-range societies, and he has applied it to both Cahokia and Chaco Canyon. Bradley Ensor (2000) has used the notions of social formation and *Modo de Vida* (“the concrete rhythms of daily life”) from Latin American social archaeology in a study of the prehistoric Hohokam of the Phoenix Basin in Arizona. In the eastern United States, Marxist-oriented studies have considered a range of issues from the replacement of stone vessels by ceramic pots (Sassaman 1993) to the introduction of the bow and arrow (Nassaney and Pyle 1999) and the political economy of stone hoes in the Mississippian (Cobb 2000). In each of these analyses the authors have sought to demonstrate the inadequacies of diffusionary or evolutionary models and have instead argued for the importance of understanding technology in the context of social relations, social power, and human interaction.

Marx's theory of capitalism has found its strongest North American following within the archaeology of capitalism, and currently Marxists represent a major school of thought in historical archaeology (Johnson 1996; Leone and Potter 1999; Matthews et al. 2002). This should not be surprising because class exploitation is clearly deep-seated in the post 1492 history of North America (Walker 2000), and Marx's analysis of class is plainly applicable (Wurst 1999). Moreover, archaeologists studying capitalism are themselves embedded in capitalist class relations (McGuire and Walker 1999). Even historical archaeologists who have not explicitly embraced Marxism now find it necessary to discuss labor in terms of social relations rather than as simple economics (Silliman 2001). Much of the explicitly Marxist work builds on the concept of ideology that Mark Leone and his students developed in their critical archaeology (Burke 1999; Leone 1995; Potter 1994; Shackel 2000; Matthews 2002). Both external and internal critiques have led the Annapolis project to move away from the study of elite architecture and ideology to the study of the African American working-class community of that city (Leone 1995; Mullins 1999; Shackel, Mullins, and Warner 1998). Other archaeologists have found a dialectical notion of power useful in the study of plantation slavery (Thomas 1998). Historical archaeologists working in the Marxist tradition have by and large rejected a totalizing notion of Marxism and have used class and Marxist analysis as entry points for studies that also consider

race, gender, and ethnicity as loci of oppression (Delle 1998; Delle, Mrozowski, and Paynter 2000; Nassaney et al. 2001; Matthews et al. 2002; Wood 2002).

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING CONTEMPORARY MARXIST APPROACHES TO ARCHAEOLOGY

In the broadest sense we can speak of two major Marxist theoretical currents within archaeology today. The first of these derives from what Trigger (1995a) has called "Classical Marxism." The second derives from a more humanistic approach based in a Hegelian dialectic and a relational theory of Marxism (McGuire 1992a). All Marxists seek to gain knowledge of the world, critique the world, and take action in the world but within these two broad approaches they differ in the weight they give each of these goals and how they relate each to the other. The similarities and differences of these two approaches are probably best illustrated by a comparison of how they lead to similar and different interpretations of real archaeological cases.

Each of these approaches begins with different concepts of the dialectic. Classical Marxists tend to accept Engels's (1927) concept of the dialectics of nature and apply the dialectic to the study of both the natural and the social world. In contrast, humanistic or Hegelian Marxists see the dialectic as a uniquely social phenomena. A dialectic of nature seeks the general laws governing the development of nature, science, society, and thought (Woods and Grant 1995). It treats all phenomena as being in a state of perpetual change and movement. The motor for this change lies in struggle and contradiction. The dialectics of nature tend to overlap and complement ideas of chaos theory and of complex adaptive systems (Wood and Grant 1995; Knapp 1999; Kohler and Gumerman 2000; Bentley and Maschner, chapter 15). A Hegelian dialectic treats Marxism as a theory of relations and society as a complex web of social relations within which the relation of any entity to other entities governs what that entity will be. Teachers do not exist independent of students nor students without teachers. It is the underlying relationship of teaching and learning that defines both. Such a dialectical relationship depends upon the entities involved forming a unity of opposites. Such a unity of opposites cannot exist in the study of nature. A unity of opposites exists in the study of the social world because scholars are part of the social world that they study. The scholar may be the subject and the object of the study; it is the relationship of study that creates scholars (subjects) and informants (objects).

The study of nature produces scientists but it does not produce nature. The study of geology creates geologists but it does not create rocks. The unity of subject and object that characterizes the study of the social world exists even when the people being studied are long dead. The dead cannot study the archaeologist but it is their silence that allows many archaeologists to define scientific goals as objective, universal, or even in the interest of the dead. We cannot dominate the dead but the assertion of an objective, universal, or true archaeology becomes a way to dominate the living and advance, justify, and maintain the inequities of today (McGuire 1992a).

These different interpretations of the dialectic have implications for how Marxists construct research and interpret social change. In Classical Marxism, the role of the scholar is to gain knowledge of the world and from this knowledge derive the laws of motion that drive social change and through this knowledge shape social change (Woods and Grant 1995:140). This enterprise begins with a critique of the world that identifies what needs change and ideally returns to critique as change is implemented. For Hegelian Marxists, critique lies at the core of research. The scholar obtains knowledge of the world through observation but must be constantly critical of how and why that knowledge is accepted. Interpretations of the past must fit the observations that we make about the past, but we must also critique how such knowledge flows from, creates, and reinforces the relational contradictions that define our society. In other words, all knowledge is social, a complex mix of our observations of the real world and of the social context of those observations. Social action follows from this complex understanding and is the ultimate test of it. That test again requires critique of both the knowledge and the action.

These contrasts lead Marxists of each persuasion to weigh differently the classic oppositions of social theory. Classical Marxists tend to accept the opposition of base and superstructure and see changes in the base as leading to contradictions with the superstructure and then to social change. The emphasis here is on the economic and how it structures society. Hegelian Marxists reject the validity of the base and superstructure opposition: one cannot exist in the absence of the other; thus one cannot be primary. They tend to emphasize the dialectical relationship of base and superstructure and the negotiation of this relationship through ideology. Classical Marxists, with their search for the motors of change, study historical processes to find evolutionary regularities in social change. Hege-

lian Marxists, with their emphasis on the relational nature of society, tend to favor historical studies that examine these relations in specific social contexts and seek regularities as guides as to where to find the key relations in historical contexts.

The differences between these two broad approaches are probably best illustrated with two examples of archaeological studies. The first of these in a classical vein is Vicente Lull's study of Bronze Age burials from southeast Spain. The second of these from a Hegelian perspective is my study of Hohokam burials from central Arizona.

Vicente Lull (2000a,b) analyzed burials from the Bronze Age (2200–1500 B.C.) Argaric state on the southeastern Iberian Peninsula. Individuals were buried in a sitting position under house floors. The burial goods included ceramics and bronze artifacts (axes, daggers, halberds, awls, and short swords). Lull treated each house and its associated burials as representing a nuclear family unit. He contrasted this burial pattern with earlier collective graves that he equated with lineages. He ranked the different grave goods based on the relative amount of labor necessary for their production. His analysis of the grave goods, based on this ranking, suggested the existence of five social categories within the burials and the possibility of social classes. In order to confirm this interpretation and in order to understand the social structure of the Argaric state, Lull also looked at how crop surpluses were centralized, the standardization of ceramic and bronze production, the restricted and exclusive access of some bronze items, the political territory of the state, and psychological coercion. He contrasted these aspects of the Argaric state with the earlier lineage-based societies of the region. He concluded that the basic kinship unit of the Argaric state was the nuclear family and that these families were embedded in a class-based society. Unlike earlier societies that were integrated by a shared ideology and religion, he found that the power of the dominant class in the Argaric state rested in force and force alone, not in ideology.

I studied Hohokam cremation burials at the Colonial and Sedentary Period (A.D. 725–1100) site of La Ciudad (McGuire 1992b). The vast majority of these burials were secondary cremations placed in special cemetery areas associated with clusters of houses. Burial goods included ceramics, shell jewelry, palettes, and censers. I treated each cemetery and associated cluster of houses as being evidence of an extended family or lineage. I ranked the different grave goods based on the relative amount of labor necessary for

their production and found patterns of differential investment in graves based on age and gender. The analysis examined the burials in the context of other aspects of the site such as architecture and compared them to the subsequent Classic Period. The analysis asked what the context of mortuary ritual was, public or private, and examined how individuals would have experienced the built environment they lived in. I found that in the Sedentary Period cremation and burial were public events with marked inequalities in scale and elaboration between different events. In contrast, the built environment exhibited differential labor investment primarily in public structures, ball courts and platform mounds, and little differentiation in domestic architecture. In the subsequent Classic Period these relations reversed. Burial rites became private, and status was marked more by location than goods; very obvious differences existed in domestic architecture with elite residences on mounds and others living in compounds or scattered pit houses. These differences in the mundane built environment would have created a situation whereby the day-to-day lived experience of people residing in each of these housing types would have been plainly dissimilar.

I argued that this reflected a change in how egalitarian and hierarchical aspects of the social structure were ideologically negotiated. The ideology changed from a denial of social differences in the Sedentary Period to a naturalization of those differences in the Classic Period.

The similarities between these two studies are marked. Both invoke a dialectical approach to the problem. This dialectic points to the need to understand mortuary remains in the totality of the social context and as dynamic, changing through time. Both measure the value of the grave lots based on the human labor that they represent. They both reject the processual idea that mortuary remains can be studied as a direct reflection of social structure and as a subsystem that can be studied apart from other aspects of the social context. Both of these studies see burials as social products and statements and reject the positions of both processual and post-processual archaeologies that view them as statements about individuals.

The differences between the interpretations illustrate the differences within current Marxist approaches. For Lull (2000a:579), the dialectic is a method to confirm or reject hypotheses. For me, the dialectic leads to a search for contradictions in the social totality (between public and private space, or between mortuary remains and architecture) that allows me to infer

the ideological negotiations in those totalities and how they changed. Lull views ideology primarily as a means of mystifying social relations that is missing in a Bronze Age context of raw power. He interprets the direct reflection of class differences in the burials as evidence for a lack of ideology. I see ideology as a process of negotiation. I argue that ancient Hohokam social groups manipulated asymmetries in grave lots in ideological contests to advance their own interests. For Lull the basic question is did the elite use ideology as an instrument of domination or not. My basic question is how did ideology mystify the true nature of social relations by either denying that inequalities existed or by making them natural and given.

WHAT MARXISM OFFERS THE STUDY OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The application of Marxist theory to archaeology should stand or fall based on how well it allows archaeologists to comprehend the realities of human history (Trigger 1995b:325). Marxism addresses these goals through the logic of the dialectic, a theory of social development, and praxis.

The dialectic helps archaeologists to escape many of the oppositions that frequent debates about archaeological theory; it also provides a method for archaeologists to study change. The oppositions include science versus humanism, objectivity versus subjectivity, the material versus the mental, and evolution versus history. The dialectic leads us to examine how these poles are interconnected rather than seeing them as irresolvable opposites. Scholars are connected to the social world that they study and thus must critically examine their role in that world (see also Shanks, chapter 9). The dialectic as a method for studying change also emphasizes the interconnectedness of human society and it examines this interconnectedness for the contradictions that shape society. These contradictions provide a source for the cultural change that is internal to the society and that springs from the social relations of real life.

A dialectical approach rejects either/or choices and instead of asking categorical questions inquires how dialectical relationships drive culture change. At the end of the twentieth century, southwestern/northwestern archaeologists were embroiled in a heated debate over whether the Late Pre-Hispanic Pueblos should be seen as ranked or egalitarian societies. From a dialectical perspective what is interesting about these societies is that they incorporated both egalitarian and hierarchical social relations, and that hierarchy and equality

existed in a dialectical tension that drove change in Pre-Hispanic Pueblo societies (McGuire and Saitta 1996). These observations shift the study of these societies from debates about evolutionary classification to questions about the relationship of equality and hierarchy in Pueblo societies.

Marxism is a rich conceptual source of models and theories for the study of cultural change. Marx's basic—and often somewhat ambiguous—observations have been interpreted anew by many others in light of the conditions of economic development of their own times. This fruitful tradition of scholarship has produced a copious body of theories, concepts, ideas, and insights on human history. Marx's focus on the role of socially constituted labor in the production and reproduction of real life—and his realization that these social relations are objectified in various ways, including through material culture—is compatible with the craft of archaeology (Shanks and McGuire 1996). Thus the archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1944:1) noted that material culture reflects and participates in the social relations that produce it and that we can therefore study these social relations using material culture.

Marxism is also a theory of praxis—theoretically informed practice (or agency). Praxis is the human activity through which people transform the world and themselves. The ultimate goal of Marxism is a praxis that transforms both people and society. As a dialectical concept praxis implies that our agency, both as scholars and more broadly as social beings, must lie in the interconnections between human free creative agency and the material (i.e., concrete) conditions of human existence (see Gardner, chapter 7).

Praxis implies an archaeology that can be a form of political action. In southern Colorado in 1914 the Colorado National Guard opened fire on a tent colony of striking coal miners and their families at Ludlow, killing twenty-four people including eleven children and two women. The Colorado Coal Field War archaeological project seeks to gain a richer and more systematic understanding of the everyday life experience of the Colorado miners and their families that led to the strike (Ludlow Collective 2001; McGuire and Reckner 2003). Our study of the Colorado Coal Field War seeks to transcend the traditional middle-class community that archaeology usually serves. The United Mine Workers maintain a memorial at Ludlow, and union people and the children and grandchildren of the survivors still gather once a year to commemorate the event. Our project is actively involved with this community of working people and their struggle. The

project integrates archaeological research with a community of working people by asking questions that are important to them, about events that are meaningful to them, with the goal of working together in the struggle for rights and dignity for working people.

The unique contribution that Marxism can make to archaeology comes from the integration of these three parts to gain knowledge of, critique, and take action in the world. If we accept a dialectical approach to Marxism, then this integration is an ongoing, dynamic, and never-ending process.

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