The Postprocessual Condition

Robert W. Preucel[1]

Previous evaluations of postprocessual archaeology have regarded it more as a critique of processual archaeology than as a viable research program. Today this statement needs to be modified to account for the diversity of frameworks that have grown up within and adjacent to the early postprocessual formulations. These new approaches include various admixtures of structural Marxism, poststructuralism, critical theory, and feminism. Significant philosophical differences separate some of these positions, but rather than being debilitating, the active exploration of these areas holds out new possibilities and prospects both for linking archaeology more securely to the other social sciences and for making unique contributions to the nature of social theory.

INTRODUCTION

Postprocessual archaeology is a label that actively resists definition. At its most basic level, the term refers not to an unified program but, rather, to a collection of widely divergent and often contradictory research interests. If anything can be said to unite these archaeologies, it is that most share a common dissatisfaction with the standard positivist paradigm, a concern for recapturing the distinctive human qualities of the past, and a preoccupation for the uses of archaeological knowledge in the present. This dissatisfaction, however, should not be interpreted to imply the wholesale rejection of processualism. Postprocessual archaeologies are not so

[1]Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

much a movement beyond processualism as they are a fuller exploration of process through a consideration of historical context.

Postprocessualism has generated and continues to generate considerable debate in the archaeological literature. One important response has been a tendency to accept much of the "radical critique" (Earle and Preucel, 1987) but to draw the line on the issue of methodology. This reaction, however, can be shown to be limited by its implicit adherence to positivism and allegiance to a narrow view of the scientific method. Postprocessual approaches offer multiple ways of knowing the past and these are best evaluated from within their own frameworks. In this review essay, I give a brief historical account of the processual/postprocessual debate, provide several alternative typologies of some of the major varieties of postprocessual archaeologies while discussing the limitations of such exercises, and finally, touch on some postmodern dilemmas that constitute what I call the "postprocessual condition."[2]

THE PROCESSUAL/POSTPROCESSUAL DEBATE

Although postprocessualism has important antecedents in art history and historical archaeology, it became codified in the early 1980s largely through the writings of Ian Hodder and his students at Cambridge University. Influenced by symbolic and structuralist anthropology, the Cambridge group developed the first sustained critique of processual archaeology. On their account, processualism was compromised by its reliance on the scientific method, functionalist explanations, systems theory, and general laws (Hodder, 1982b). In addition, they argued that it paid little or no attention to the social construction of meaning and the playing out of power relations in the social arena. This critique led to experimentation with poststructuralism, neo-Marxism, gender theory, and critical theory (see contributions in Miller and Tilley, 1984; Spriggs, 1984).

In the mid 1980s several counterreactions to the radical critique arose from within processual archaeology. The majority of these was pessimistic. In a pointed response, Binford (1987) claimed that Hodder and the "textual-contextualists" were raising metaphysical issues that were irrelevant to an archaeological science. His position was that Hodder was advocating truth as rendered by sociopolitical moralizing rather than as objective statements about past dynamics secured by middle-range theory. Schiffer (1988)

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[2]This review does not cover cultural materialism, historical materialism, and structuralism, the three main varieties of processual archaeology. For reviews of these approaches see Hodder (1986) and Trigger (1989).

argued that symbolic and neo-Marxist approaches are tragically flawed be-
cause of their neglect of middle range social theories. In a slightly less
polemic vein but an equally positivist manner, Timothy Earle and I favor-
ably evaluated the radical critique, but found problems with postprocessual
methodology which we felt was too subjective (Earle and Preucel, 1987).
Each of these responses, however, betrays a strict adherence to positivism,
an epistemology that has come under withering attack in the social sciences
in the last three decades.

     By the end of the 1980s further movements within postprocessual ar-
chaeology allowed Thomas Patterson (1989, 1990) to identify three inter-
related schools. The first of these was the textual or contextual approach
of Ian Hodder (1982b, 1984a, 1986). This approach identified the signifi-
cance of the individual as a social actor actively negotiating his/her position
within society. The second was the neo-Marxist approach of Michael
Shanks and Christopher Tilley (1987a, b). This approach merged elements
of deconstruction with a focus upon power relations. The third was the
critical theory approach of Mark Leone and his students (Leone, 1986;
Leone et al., 1987). This approach examined how the institutions of modern
capitalism came into being, how they reproduce themselves, and how they
affect archaeological interpretation. For Patterson, these three schools em-
body radically different epistemologies and therefore cannot be easily
merged into a single unified program.

     A second round of critiques was initiated at the beginning of the
1990s. While pessimistic responses continued unabated (e.g., Binford, 1989;
Spaulding, 1988; P. J. Watson and Fotiadis, 1990; R. Watson, 1990, 1991),
two new developments can be distinguished. The first of these is a growing
positive reaction to certain aspects of postprocessual thought. In 1990, I
organized a conference on the current debate at Southern Illinois Univer-
sity at Carbondale which brought together advocates on many sides of the
issues. Although sharp differences were expressed, many participants ac-
knowledged that the current polarization was harmful for the discipline and
that new and deeper analyses were needed (Preucel, 1991a). Additional
constructive evaluations can be seen in the last three American Anthropo-
logical Association distinguished lectures by Redman (1991), Brumfiel
(1992), and Cowgill (1993) and the recently revised editions of textbooks
by Renfrew and Bahn (1991), Thomas (1989), Willey and Sabloff (1992).

     The second development is the exploration of theoretical and prac-
tical tensions within and between postprocessual approaches. One vehicle
for these debates has been the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG)
meetings in Britain. Recent debate has focused upon understanding the
complex relationships between the postmodern and the postprocessual ar-
chaeology (Bintliff, 1991; Thomas and Tilley, 1992). Another vehicle is the

Cambridge seminars on archaeological theory. The recent 1989 conference, for example, yielded two widely divergent publications. One (Bapty and Yates, 1990) presents a poststructuralist critique of archaeology, while the other (Baker and Thomas, 1990) takes a critical attitude toward authority and elitism embodied in postmodern discourse. In the United States, the Radical Archaeology Theory Seminars (RATS) held at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and the State University of New York, Binghamton have played an important role in articulating differences between strains of Marxism (McGuire, 1992a). Finally, Cheryl Claassen (1992, 1994) has hosted the Boone Conferences on women and archaeology at Appalachian State University in order to explore different conceptions of gender and feminism.

VARIETIES OF POSTPROCESSUAL ARCHAEOLOGIES

The task of categorizing different schools of postprocessual thought is fraught with dangers. No single typology can possibly suffice to capture the range of positions currently espoused. Not only do scholars routinely combine different theoretical approaches internal to archaeology, but also they often borrow theories across disciplines and in the process reformulate existing concepts to address new needs. In addition, many scholars for their own reasons prefer not to be associated with particular schools. For example, the slow development of a Marxist archaeology in the United States can be attributed to the strong anticommunist sentiment (Gilman, 1989). Nonetheless, typologies do have their place, in part, because of their potential to expose contradictions and confusions and the following attempts are offered in this spirit.

The postprocessual scene currently encompasses a broad spectrum of epistemological commitments. Three different positions can be distinguished—analytic, hermeneutic, and critical (cf. Preucel, 1991b). An analytic epistemology refers to those approaches seeking to provide explanations of systemic relationships in terms of cause and effect. It is associated with empiricist and more recently realist ontologies. A hermeneutic epistemology, in contrast, attempts to provide an understanding of the meaning of an event from the actor's point of view. This position is closely allied to the phenomenological position that meaning is grounded in experience. Finally, a critical epistemology seeks to expose past and present ideological structures for the purposes of emancipation. Significantly, this approach can be associated with either empiricist or anti-empiricist ontologies.

Crosscutting these three epistemologies are several discrete histori-
cally constituted frameworks for producing knowledge. Some of these
frameworks (poststructuralism, feminism) have shared origins in post-En-
lightenment thought, while others (structural Marxism, critical theory) have
their roots firmly embedded within the Enlightenment tradition. Currently,
there is growing experimentation within and between these different frame-
works by different archaeologists, and in some cases, productive alliances
have been established. These alliances appear to be playing a special role
in bridging the empirical and relativist extremes commonly singled out by
both processualists and postprocessualists in debate. In the following sec-
tion, I characterize postprocessual approaches in terms of three different
historical frameworks and their related epistemologies.

Neo-Marxist Approaches

Neo-Marxist approaches were introduced into archaeology during the
late 1970s. These draw from recent developments in western Marxist
thought largely mediated by French social anthropology and German phi-
losophy. Although varied in nature, these approaches rework classical his-
torical materialism by reexamining the relationships between base and
superstructure in the context of precapitalist societies. Considerable re-
search has focused upon defining and redefining the concept of ideology.
Not surprisingly, neo-Marxist approaches have received wider exposure in
Britain and Europe than in the United States particularly though the writ-
ings of scholars based at the University College, London.

Analytical neo-Marxism is associated largely with a philosophy known
as structural Marxism. This approach has its origins in the work of Louis
Althusser, who, through an analysis of the writings of the mature Marx,
developed the model of structural causality and an influential theory of
ideology. These ideas have been imported into anthropology by the French
anthropologists Maurice Godelier, Paul Meillassoux, Emmanuel Terray,
and P. Rey. In Britain, several anthropologists have reinterpreted some of
these ideas; for example, Jonathan Friedman regards the economic base
as constraining rather than determining sociopolitical organization. An-
other important influence has been Immanuel Wallerstein and his world
systems theory.

Analytical neo-Marxism is now well established as a theoretical fra-
mework. In Europe, Michael Rowlands and Barbara Bender at University
College London and Kristen Kristiansen at the University of Copenhagen
have modified and extended structural Marxism to address the divergent
developmental pathways of social evolution brought about by dominant re-

lations of production (Bender, 1985a, b ; Frankenstein and Rowlands, 1978; Friedman and Rowlands, 1978; Gledhill and Rowlands, 1982; Kristiansen, 1978, 1984). In the United States, the impact of structural Marxism has been less strong but can be seen in studies of political economy (Cobb, 1991, 1993; Gilman, 1981, 1984; Patterson, 1985, 1986, 1991) and class (Leone, 1984). Recently world systems theory has attracted considerable interest from both sides of the Atlantic (Kohl, 1987a, b, 1989; McGuire, 1989; Rowlands et al., 1987).

Hermeneutic neo-Marxism places ideology and power on center stage. It is inspired by the work of the philosophers Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Jürgen Habermas. Here ideology surrenders its meaning as the opposite of truth or the reflection of the infrastructure and becomes redefined as the intersection of power and knowledge. It is viewed as a discursive practice conditioned by the material force of society. Ritual, for example, is seen as a discourse designed to reaffirm existing social conditions by enhancing the power of individual and groups. Ideology, however, is never all embracing and counter-ideologies are always present. Hermeneutic neo-Marxist approaches typically adopt a realist position that statements about the past can only be judged in terms of internal conceptual relations and not on the basis of externally imposed standards.

Hermeneutic neo-Marxism is gaining considerable popularity despite critiques from within the fold (e.g., Kristiansen, 1988). Considerable research has focused on power relations (Johnson, 1991; Miller and Tilley, 1984; Shanks and Tilley, 1987a; Thomas, 1991), ideology (Parker Pearson, 1982, 1984; Shanks and Tilley, 1982; Thomas, 1990), and resistance (McGuire and Paynter, 1991; Miller et al., 1989). A particularly good example of this approach can be seen in Johnson's (1989) careful analysis of domestic architecture in sixteenth-century Suffolk, England, where he shows how the intended and unintended consequences of individual goals vis-à-vis feudalism led to wider social and enconomic transformations and ultimately the rise of capitalism.

Critical neo-Marxism is associated with the Institute for Social Research founded in 1923 in Frankfurt, Germany. Its members, especially Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer, argued that the empirical sciences could only be superseded by a contextual reinterpretation of their results with the goal of exposing ideology. Horkheimer challenged the nature of scientific explanation by arguing that prediction is not related to some ideal truth but, rather, to the extent to which social relations are relations of unfreedom. More recently, Jürgen Habermas has reformulated the critique of ideology as a critique of systematically distorted communication. The critical project is thus concerned not with verification

but, rather, with tracing out the particular historical conditions that give rise to present forms in order that they may be transcended.

The critical neo-Marxist project can be subdivided into those approaches tied to the Frankfurt school and those working with Habermas. Shanks and Tilley (1987a), for example, have argued for a value committed archaeology that examines what kind of interests current interpretations serve. Mark Leone (Leone, 1991; Leone et al., 1987) has begun a sociological analysis of the questions that archaeologists ask. Parker Potter (1992) has extended this research to consider how site interpretations can be made more responsive to the concerns of visitors. Others have turned to Habermas's work as a means of achieving a more democratic consensus. Leone and I (Leone and Preucel, 1992) have used Habermas's theory of communicative action to evaluate the impact of the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) upon the practice of archaeology. Baker (1990) has also used Habermas to propose a model of archaeology as dialogue with different publics with the potential of recovering previously silent areas of history.

Poststructuralist Approaches

The arrival of poststructuralism on the archaeological scene dates to the Cambridge seminars on symbolic and structural archaeology in the early 1980s. Significantly, while many of the Cambridge group developed sharp critiques of functionalism they were equally critical of structuralism, particularly its inability to explain specific historical contexts and the meaningful actions of agents (Hodder, 1982a). A series of seminars held in 1986 explored structuralism, hermeneutics, and poststructuralism by critically examining the writings of their leading proponents in philosophy and anthropology (Tilley, 1990a). Recent conferences have featured poststructural approaches alongside pointed criticism from feminists and neo-Marxists. The 1988 Cambridge seminar on poststructural archaeology, for example, has produced papers on representation, power, and ideology (Baker and Thomas, 1990; Bapty and Yates, 1990; Yates, 1988).

Hermeneutic poststructuralism attempts to recover structures of meaning related to both the intentions and practice of past actors. It is geared toward producing knowledge-as-understanding rather than knowledge-as-explanation. This goal requires the translation of meaning from one interpretive context to another in a dialectical process best described by the philosophers Paul Ricouer and Hans-Georg Gadamer and the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Characteristically, it employs a textual metaphor whereby the archaeological record is to be read like a literary text. Uni-

versal principles of meaning are assumed to be encoded in material culture and the task of the archaeologist is to develop reliable ways of interpreting these texts. This process is secured by context which actively constrains interpretations.

This approach consists of a bewildering array of subfields created largely through the productive scholarship of Ian Hodder. After a brief interest in structuralism (1982b, c, 1984b), Hodder has championed a hermeneutic poststructuralism as the operating epistemology underlying his interpretive or contextual archaeology (1986, 1988a, b, 1990, 1991a, b, 1992). The most coherent presentation of this approach is his recent book on the domestication of Europe (Hodder, 1990). In this study, which explicitly avoids ponderous theoretical debate, he views domestication as a mental as well as a material process that involved new ways of controlling people as well as plants and animals. Other recent examples include John Barrett's (1987, 1988a, b, 1989, 1990a, b) substantial work on Gidden's structuration theory, Phillip Duke's (1991, 1992) *Annaliste* studies of the prehistory of the northern plains of the United States and Canada, and Joan Gero's (1991) recovery of "lived experience" at Queyash, Peru.

Critical poststructuralism represents a turn away from knowing the past on its own terms toward the ways in which the past is constructed in the present. Drawing liberally from the work of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, it takes the position that original meanings are inaccessible because of the polysemic nature of material culture. On this argument, meanings depend upon the placement of material culture within a network of signifiers, but because material culture participates in many different networks and these networks often produce different and sometimes contradictory meanings, there can never be any ultimate fixity of meaning. For this reason, critical poststructuralists bracket past meaning and problematize the practices of reading and writing and the uses of the past in the present.

This approach has a small but vocal following. Some have focused on the practice of writing the past in the present. For example, Hodder (1989) has written about the production of archaeological site reports and the ways in which they constrain interpretation. Tilley (1988) has analyzed the genre of the Cambridge Inaugural lecture focusing on issues of legitimation and rhetoric. Others have explored the structures of archaeological discourse. Olsen (1991) has argued that the international scene is dominated by English language scholarship to the exclusion of other nationalities and languages. Still others have embraced phenomenology and are interested in the ways in which we experience the past. Tilley (1989) has written of archaeology as theater emphasizing the performative nature of knowledge production, and Shanks (1992) has discussed dramas of death, decay,

and the Other while focusing on the human body as a metaphor for social experience.

Feminist Approaches

Despite the presence of feminist theory in the social sciences and archaeologists who defined themselves as feminists, feminist archaeology is a relatively recent phenomenon dating to the mid 1980s. The first widely read feminist contribution was the article by Meg Conkey and Janet Spector (1984), which defined the status of women in the profession and the issue of gender as the twin foundations of a feminist agenda. In 1990 Meg Conkey and Joan Gero (1991) organized the Wedge conference in South Carolina to explore the significance of gender using several case studies. More recently the 1991 University of Calgary Chacmool conference on gender drew over 200 papers (Walde and Willows, 1991) and sessions on feminism and gender are now becomming commonplace at national meetings (Seifert, 1991).

Analytical feminism regards our current knowledge of the past as biased due to sexism and androcentrism within the field and seeks to rectify this by putting women back into prehistory. This position regards past male scholarship as producing a partial view of the world, consistently ignoring the roles and contribution of women in actively effecting social change. Analytical feminists argue that it is necessary to take account of the activities of women in prehistory in order to conduct a more objective science. This tenet directly challenges the value free assumption of normal science by showing that objectivity depends upon the politics of emancipatory social change. Curiously, most analytical feminists do not acknowledge feminist scholars in other fields, although the work of women like Helen Longino and Ruth Hubbard is directly relevant.

Analytical feminism is attracting a considerable following perhaps because of its close historical ties with processualism. Recent research has focused on such traditional questions as paleolithic subsistence, the origins of agriculture, and state formation. Kehoe (1990), for example, has argued that fiber products and their manufacturing tools, possibly the products of women's activities, are systematically neglected in interpretations of the Upper Paleolithic, and yet these are subject to empirical investigation. Other examples of this approach are Wright's (1991) study of Harappan society which implies that the state did not wrest control of pottery production from the hands of women, Brumfiel's (1991) analysis of changes in Aztec gender ideologies in response to changing economic and political condi-

tions, and Hastorf's (1991) analysis of the changing role of women pre- and post-Inka conquest.

Hermeneutic feminism retains the political agenda of analytical feminism, discards its scientism, and introduces a focus on women's lived experiences. This approach borrows widely from feminist scholars in other fields such as Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, Evelyn Fox Keller, Louise Lamphere, and Henrietta Moore. These scholars have demonstrated that science works to describe and explain social experience within androcentric conceptual schemes that systematically neglect the distinctive character of women's experience. Seen in this light the current practice of science creates a fundamental contradiction between women as women and women as scientists. What is needed, many feminist argue, is a science *for* rather than *about* women.

Attempts to recover past lived experiences of women are still in the early stages and the few studies that exist make use of narrative approaches. A particularly good example is Janet Spector's (1991, 1993) "awl narrative" about the Wahpeton (Dakota) peoples of the Little Rapids site in Minnesota. In this story, she presents an archaeological ethnography of a young girl's life that uses a decorated bone awl as a metaphor for understanding the transitions to womanhood. Another example is Ruth Tringham's (1991) short "eyewitness" account of the burning of Opovo, a Late Neolithic village in Yugoslavia that follows her more traditional analysis of the social relations of production. Using a version of Geertz's thick description, Rosemary Joyce (1993) has explored how public representations of human images in Classic Maya society were a medium for the negotiation of male and female status.

Critical feminism seeks to expose the pervasive character of androcentrism in all areas of society. Two related research projects are developing. The first of these is the status of women within academia. Issues of employment, pay, publication, and funding are now topics of investigation. The second of these is the historical character of this bias. Some scholars are seeking to challenge science on its own terms, while others are more postmodern in outlook and reject science as an irretrievably flawed project. While their goals may vary, most critical feminists are concerned to forge a sense of solidarity between disempowered women in order to more effectively challenge existing power relations.

Critical feminist archaeology has generated a set of powerful critiques of the sociology of the discipline. For example, several studies have now documented how women scholars are consistently underfunded (Gero, 1983) and underpublished (Victor and Beaudry, 1992). This is particularly the case in fieldwork which Gero (1985) has analyzed in the context of the broader "women-at-home ideology" within contemporary society. Others

have begun to investigate how gender ideologies are formed and repro-
duced through the popular media (Gero and Root, 1990). Finally, Alison
Wylie (1991, 1992) has examined questions of the timing of feminism in
archaeology and the relationships of a feminist archaeology to feminism in
the social sciences.

SOME COUNTER-TYPOLOGIES

This exercise in categorization does two things. It provides one pos-
sible structure for understanding the articulation of the major epistemolo-
gies and theoretical frameworks currently espoused by different
practitioners of postprocessual archaeologies. And, at the same time, it also
exemplifies some of the difficulties in trying to encompass this variability
in a single, reductionistic schema. In this section, I discuss the strengths
and limitations of my analysis and then sketch the beginnings of two coun-
tertypologies.

Probably the most important contribution of the analysis is its de-
monstration that each of the three frameworks has a critical component.
We can speak of a critical neo-Marxism, critical poststructuralism, and criti-
cal feminism. Of these, critical Neo-Marxism is perhaps the best known,
and this is due largely to its longer history in the social sciences, especially
the writings of the members of the Frankfurt School. Important themes
are the critique of ideology and the uses of knowledge to further class in-
terests. Critical feminism extends this argument to consider the ways in
which androcentrism has structured and continues to structure archaeologi-
cal discourse. Critical poststructuralism questions our ability to access the
past in any objective way and turns instead to a consideration of how knowl-
edge of the past is created and experienced in the present.

An examination of the distribution of individuals working with each
of these epistemologies reveals two interesting patterns. All individuals es-
pousing a critical approach also advocate either an analytic or a herme-
neutic one. The implication here is that critical approaches cannot stand
on their own and must be combined with a second epistemology. This find-
ing is entirely understandable when one realizes that critical approaches
are largely about the legitimization of knowledge claims. On this account,
one can claim that critical approaches are not incompatible with different
varieties of processual archaeology, and indeed the work of Binford (1987,
1989), Flannery (1982), and Trigger (1989, 1991) tends to bear this out.

The second pattern is that there are certain linkages that are not in
evidence. For the most part, scholars are not linking analytic and herme-
neutic approaches. This may be because analytic approaches have strong

historical connections to processual approaches, especially in their acceptance of the scientific method. But it is also due to fundamental differences in how these approaches conceptualize their object/subject of analysis as Patterson (1989) suggests. Analytic approaches tend to focus on function or structure, while hermeneutic ones seek to recover meaning and intentionality. This observation suggests that while some philosophical boundaries may be permeable, others are probably not and need to be respected. A more nuanced analysis, therefore, should explore the differences between a critical analytics and a critical hermeneutics.

A *critical analytics* might describe an interest in exposing dominant ideologies through the use of the scientific method. This approach is embodied in the work of some critical theorists. For example, Mark Leone has been concerned with explaining the nature of class conflict within nineteenth-century society in the context of his Annapolis Project (Leone *et al.*, 1987). Equally important to him, however, has been his attempt to understand how the institutions of industrial capitalism affect the very questions that we ask (Leone, 1991). A critical analytics is also expressed in the work of many feminists, especially those with close ties to processual archaeology. Patty Jo Watson has been exploring substantive issues regarding the adoption of agriculture in the midwest for over three decades. Recently, she has initiated a feminist critique of standard interpretations that automatically attribute the act of domestication to men (Watson and Kennedy, 1991).

The consideration of how past and present social relations are experienced and given meaning through an interpretive reading of the material culture text could be called a *critical hermeneutics*. This approach can be seen in the work of some poststructuralists. Ian Hodder (1992), for example, has argued that his contextual approach is an attempt to be historical and hermeneutic while at the same time remaining reflexively critical. Some feminists have adopted this position to challenge more effectively the inevitability of present gender roles. Meg Conkey (Conkey with Williams, 1991) has begun the process of reconstructing Upper Paleolithic period contexts in which gender roles were played out. She questions the standard "original narratives" presented in the literature on the grounds that they are simply projections of modern gender ideologies back in time. What is especially problematic for her is that these roles are then used to legitimize present gender roles as "natural."

A second typology could be constructed out of different admixtures of the intellectual frameworks themselves. As modes of inquiry, these frameworks are historically constituted and in practice only certain combinations tend to be favored. Neo-Marxism, for example, appears to be a particularly fertile framework, as it is now beginning to be joined to both

poststructuralism and feminism. Ironically, poststructuralism and feminism, which on the surface seem to share strong affinities in their critiques of positivism, actually display sharp antipathies toward one another. Both of these patterns can currently be seen in the other social sciences.

Neo-Marxist feminism currently represents a small but productive area of study. In her study of the site of Queyash in Peru, Joan Gero (1992) combines neo-Marxist ideas with feminist insights to achieve a more rounded understanding of the role of gender in sociopolitical change. On her account, women's roles in ritual feasting was a locus of negotiation and contestation in the processes of power consolidation. Drawing from ethno-historic accounts and modern folklore, Elizabeth Brumfiel (1991) has suggested that the images of women's work in Aztec society were parts of an ideological discourse over the allocation of productive and reproductive labor. Vianna Muller (1987) has argued that the control of kin reproduction is a central feature in the rise of the state. In her analysis of Archaic Europe, she examines the struggles between legal codes demanding sexual purity and the processes of wealth accumulation among the elite.

Another growing research area is *poststructural neo-Marxism*. Julian Thomas (1991) has emphasized the impossibility of escaping the confines of ones own cultural context to understand another culture on its own terms while providing a series of parallel stories based upon different categories of material culture to "stand for" Wessex culture. His motives are to recover the difference of the past in ways that delegitimize the present. Working from the premise that the past does not entail any absolute truths, Olsen (1986) examines the history of the Saami peoples of Norway and argues for a Saami prehistory written and used by the Saami to serve their own social and political aims in the present. He advocates an archaeology that seeks to reveal hidden partisanships though a self-examination of the interests our research serves.

The ambiguous relationship between poststructuralism and feminism appears to derive in part from the absence of any serious engagement by poststructuralists with feminism. Erika Englestadt (1989) has critiqued post-processualism as only paying lipservice to feminist issues and simply replacing one male dominated authority structure with another. This same point is made by Sarah Taylor (Baker *et al.*, 1990), who describes the atmosphere of the 1988 Cambridge seminar on poststructuralism as being charged with tension and hostility between poststructuralists and feminists. One of her most telling charges is that poststructuralism is an example of how academia insulates itself from change by absorbing would-be radicals into existing structures, thereby giving them a vested interest in not making changes.

POSTMODERN DILEMMAS

A series of postmodern dilemmas contours the current theory and practice of archaeology. Most conspicuously, these include questions of identity, representation, interpretation, power, and politics. Many archaeologists prefer to attribute these dilemmas to postprocessualism and conclude that since they have few or no implications for processual archaeology, we should quit our endless debating and get down to the business of doing "real archaeology." This reaction, however, is not tenable. Underlying its argument is a view of disciplinary growth that denies the work of Kuhn, Hansen, Harding, and Feyerabend. It also ignores how the current debates are already reshaping the face of processual archaeology. Examples of this are the renewed interest in cognitive archaeology (Cowgill, 1993; Flannery and Marcus, 1993; Renfrew, 1994; Renfrew and Bahn, 1991) and the emerging dialogue between archaeologists and indigenous peoples (Layton, 1989; McGuire, 1992b; Trigger, 1990).

Identity and representation are central issues in postprocessual discourse. What images do we use to portray the past and how should they be transmitted to others? These questions are currently being hotly debated in both Britain and the United States in the context of the Heritage Industry and Living History Museums. Merriman (1991) has drawn attention to the role museums play in contributing to class divisions within society between those who possess "cultural capital" and those who do not. Walsh's (1992) sociological analysis of the heritage industry has concluded that the processes of modernization associated with the expansion of industrial capitalism have resulted in the distancing of people from their pasts. In their critique of Colonial Williamsburg, Gable *et al.*, (1992) have drawn attention to how a concern for multiculturalism ironically can disempower minority cultures in conflicts with an objectivist view of history.

Perhaps the most controversial tenet of postprocessualism is the acceptance and, indeed, active encouragement of multiple interpretations. How are we to distinguish one reading of the past from another? One rather pessimistic answer (actually held by very few practitioners) is that we cannot and that the proper role for archaeology is critique. Yates (1990), for example, takes this stand in his argument for deconstructing archaeology by turning it against itself in order to open up the possibility of new pasts. In a similar fashion, Bapty (1990, p. 267) discusses methods of excavation and radiocarbon dating as the "technologies of truth," and proposes that postprocessual archaeology adopt a reactive posture "promoting a truth of the past by its rigor in questioning the ground upon which any such truth might be constructed." Ironically, this position runs the risk of undermining the authority of the discipline not so much on relativistic

grounds as is so often claimed (e.g., R. Watson, 1990, 1991), but because of the lack of attention to structures for forging a democratic consensus.

A more optimistic answer is that while no global solutions are possible, verdicts can be rendered on the basis of local conditions and data constraints. Wylie (1993) has argued that data are not so malleable that they can be construed to fit any theory of whatever form. Their materiality provides "networks of resistances," to use Shanks and Tilley's term (1987a, p. 104), which must be accommodated. The key to constructing strong arguments, then, is to exploit a range of different independent data sets that together are highly unlikely to possess identical errors. Similarly, Hodder (1992, p. 191) has argued that the past possesses an existence that is "partially objective" in the sense that it is distanced from its author and can influence the interpreter. This materialist quality implies that we are not simply interpreting interpretations but, rather, dealing with objects that had and continue to have practical consequences in the world.

A number of scholars are profoundly disturbed by the claim that archaeology cannot be separated from power and politics. The usual response is to draw attention to the dramatic abuses of archaeology in nationalist regimes. For example, Arnold (1990) has clearly documented how the Nazi regime used archaeology to promote the notion of Aryan supremacy. Similarly, Hall (1984) has shown how Great Zimbabwe was originally interpreted to be the product of a lost white civilization, reinforcing colonial power relations. What is important here is not that archaeology was pressed into the service of politics, however distasteful to us any particular case may be, but rather that these nationalist archaeologies did not include mechanisms for the rejection of their own concepts and for this reason the possibilities for self-critique were abrogated (Muller, 1991). It is this reflexive character of science that distinguishes it from other forms of knowledge production. There can be no defense for any archaeology, nationalist or otherwise, that does not possess this self-critical character, but to argue that all cases of science and politics are inherently evil is to confuse ideology with morality.

It is also possible to take a more constructive view and argue that archaeology has the potential to "make a difference" in the world. One area involves examining how the past is accessed in the social construction of national, racial, class, ethnic, and gender identities. Media reports of the turmoil in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, Israel, and South Africa serve only to highlight that pasts are contested on a daily basis. What we are only now beginning to recognize is that archaeologists have always been implicated in this process to the extent that the knowledge that we produce has been and is being used by different interest groups. More often than not this information is put to purposes that we do not intend. Con-

sequently, we cannot avoid thinking about which uses of the past we are willing to promote and which we feel we must oppose. A particularly good example is Russ Handsman's (1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991a, b; Handsman and Maymon, 1987; Handsman and Williamson, 1993) long term commitment to recovering the "hidden histories" of New England first peoples. Other examples include Janet Spector's (1991, 1993) work among the Dakota, Larry Zimmerman's (McDonald *et al.*, 1991) work with the Cheyenne and Dakota, and T. J. Ferguson's (1981, 1984) work with the Zuni.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

What can be said about the postprocessual condition? Do the recent "end of" theses put forth for history and philosophy apply to archaeology? If the death of the author is required for the birth of the reader, can we talk about a real past constituted by the meaningful actions of social agents? Is the postprocessual condition simply an expression of the postmodernist turn in archaeology? Each of these questions raises challenging issues, but because their phrasing is embedded within specific forms of discourse, they remain fragmentary and contradictory. I do not presume to have answers for these questions, but I want to conclude by offering two tentative moves that I feel may help archaeology begin its engagement with other social sciences and society at large.

The first move is exploring the nature of materiality, spatiality, and temporality in a trialectic. Three decades ago, Albert Spaulding (1960) defined the three dimensions of archaeology as space, time, and form. For him, material culture was acted upon by humans at different times and places to achieve certain goals. This definition became embedded in the new archaeology of Lewis Binford. Recent critiques by postprocessualists have shown why this view of material culture is inadequate. This passive view ignores how objects both shape and are shaped by social action. It is this dual character of material culture that is drawn upon by social actors in their daily life and that sometimes results in social transformation. For all our professed interest in material culture, we have made very little progress in understanding how objects move into and out of contexts of commodification, how they are ascribed value and meaning, or how they transform social practice. It is thus particularly ironic that social anthropologists are taking the lead in this area (e.g., Appadurai, 1986; Miller, 1987).

The second move involves taking Shanks and Tilley (1987a) seriously when they talk about reconstructing archaeology as a form of social practice. This requires extending the discipline in directions that we have tra-

ditionally avoided because of the hegemony of the natural science discourse. Instead of defining our object solely as material culture produced by members of past societies, archaeologists need also to confront the intersections of power and knowledge by examining the institutions, funding agencies, and professional vehicles for knowledge production and dissemination. This is necessary because, as Joan Gero (1985, p. 342) has written, archaeology is "fundamentally and uniquely an institution of state-level society. It is only the state that can support, and that requires the services of, elite specialists to produce and control the past." The result of this kind of reconstruction may be an archaeology closer to Foucault's definition of the term than Binford's (cf. Tilley, 1990b).

There are several encouraging signs that these moves are already underway to varying degrees. However, it is clear that their full realization will require further debate and dialogue within and across different varieties of postprocessual archaeologies. It is also clear that processual archaeologies will continue to play a role in this process. Rather than regarding the postprocessual condition as problematic, we should instead view these debates as sites for further differentiation and exploration that can potentially link archaeology to the humanities and social sciences in new and meaningful ways.

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