

closest to endorsing such a position in his vitriolic rebuttals to the “individualist” and humanist tendencies he attributes to post-processual critics [Binford, 1989], as do the most strident advocates of evolutionary archaeology when they decry any consideration of the “behavioral” dimensions of cultural systems as causally and explanatorily irrelevant [O’Brien *et al.*, 1998]. Salmon’s trenchant critique of the ontological claims implicit in systems models has been influential in this debate [Bamforth, 2002; Salmon, 1978a], but I know of no systematic philosophical analysis of the claims central to this internal debate about evolutionary and eco-system theories and it is sorely needed.

The post- and anti-processual critics who rejected the New Archaeologists’ ecosystem models have explored a range of theoretical perspectives that emphasize, variously, individual agency [Collingwood, 1946; Dobres and Robb, 2000; Hodder, 1991; Tringham, 1991]; social networks, hierarchies, and institutions [Meskell and Preucel, 2004]; the symbolic and semiotic (broadly, “ideational”) dimensions of cultural lifeworlds [Byers, 1999; Gosden, 1994; Hodder, 1982a; Hodder, 1982b; MacWhite, 1956]; and the cognitive underpinnings of all these aspects of human behavior and cultural life [Gardin and Peebles, 1992; Renfrew, 1982b; Renfrew and Zubrow, 1994; Whitley, 1998]. In the process, the case has been made on many fronts for reconceptualizing material culture in much richer terms than envisioned either by the New Archaeologists, for whom it was an “extra-somatic means of adaptation” [Binford, 1962], or by the “normative” theorists they reacted against. Structural and symbolic archaeologists had reopened the case for considering the “ideational,” normative dimensions of cultural life; they urged an understanding of material culture as meaning-encoding and meaning-bearing, its form and structure constituted by a linguistic-like grammar. By extension, the advocates of a more agentic view insist that material culture must also be recognized to actively constitute social and cultural meaning. Although Latour has not been invoked in this connection until recently [Meskell, 2004], this approach seems to presuppose an actant-agent ontology along lines he advocates in *We Have Never Been Modern* [Latour, 1993]. This represents the most radical departure, ontologically, of all the possibilities for theorizing the cultural past currently being explored by archaeologists.

2.5 Archaeological Ethics

The pressure to engage normative issues has been mounting since the early 1970s when a number of factors conspired to fundamentally change the conditions of under which archaeology is practiced. I have argued that these give rise to three constellations of issues that are currently transforming the disciplinary identity and the practice of archaeology [Wylie, 1996b; 2005].

One set of issues, long a concern for archaeologists but now especially acute, is the rapidly accelerating destruction of archaeological resources as a consequence of land development, war, and the demands of an international antiquities market that expanded dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s, now exacerbated by on-line

trading [Green, 1984; Lipe, 1974; Vitelli, 1996]. A conservation ethic, first articulated by Lipe, is the centerpiece of many archaeological codes of conduct and statements on ethics [Archaeological Institute of America, 1991; Society for American Archaeology, 1995; Society for American Archaeology, 1996; Society for Historical Archaeology, 1992]. A number of questions have been debated in connection with this conservation ethic, all of which focus attention on tensions between a commitment to protect archaeological resources, consistent with this ethic, and the research goals of the discipline, when these would be served by the destructive investigation of archaeological sites and material, or by collaborating with commercial salvors or publishing looted and illegally traded antiquities. Lipe has since taken up the question of whether archaeologists are ever justified in excavating sites that are not otherwise endangered [Lipe, 1996], and active debate continues on the question of what responsibilities archaeologists have to avoid entanglement with, or to actively counter, commercial exploitation of the archaeological record [Elia, 1992; 1993; Gill and Chippindale, 1993; Messenger, 1999; Renfrew, 2000].

A second, closely related set of issues has arisen as the requirements of culture resource management reinforce the professionalization of archaeology. A majority of archaeologists are now employed in private industry, by contract firms that provide archaeological assessment services, or by the government agencies that oversee these assessments and manage public sites and monuments. This puts archaeologists in the position of negotiating the conflicting demands of employers, regulatory bodies, various public interest groups, and their responsibility to contribute to the research goals of the discipline of archaeology. Debate about how these conflicts should be resolved are ongoing, and independent codes of conduct have been drafted to provide professional archaeologists guidance under these circumstances [Society of Professional Archaeologists, 1991].

The most high profile and contentious issues with which archaeologists currently grapple have been raised by the governments of archaeologically rich nations, and by descendent communities and other interest groups who challenge archaeologists' rights of access to and use of archaeological sites and material, often on grounds that scientific investigation does not serve their interests in what they regard as their cultural heritage [Dongoske *et al.*, 2000; Gathercole and Lowenthal, 1990; Swidler *et al.*, 1997; Thomas, 2000; Watkins, 2000]. In some jurisdictions demands for repatriation and other forms of control of cultural sites and materials have been enforced by legislation, and a number of archaeological societies have instituted codes of conduct that specify archaeologists' obligations to indigenous peoples [Canadian Archaeological Association, 1997; World Archaeological Congress, 1991]. More broadly, issues of accountability have become the focus of intense debate which has, in turn, generated a searching reassessment of disciplinary goals and standards, evident in contention over the ideals embodied in an ethic of stewardship [Lynott and Wylie, 1995; Lynott and Wylie, 2000; Wylie, 2005], and in response to the relativist implications of some of these arguments [Clark, 1996; Salmon, 1997; 1999]. Thus far, most of the work on ethics issues in archaeology has been case-specific or oriented to the articulation of codes of

conduct, and it is almost entirely internal to archaeology. This is an area in which analysis that draws on the resources of philosophical ethics and social/political philosophy has a great deal to contribute.

2.6 *Metaphilosophical Issues*

Prominent in the exchanges between archaeologists and philosophers is a complex of questions about how metaarchaeology should be defined and situated and what, more broadly, philosophical analysis has to offer a field like archaeology. Some contributors to this growing interfield maintain that there are irreducible differences between the interests of philosophers and archaeologists, even when similar questions seem to be at issue [Embree, 1992; R. Watson, 1991; Clarke, 1973; Flannery, 1982]. Typically, however, a case is made for establishing metaarchaeology as an interdisciplinary venture grounded in both archaeology and philosophy, as well as a range of other science studies disciplines. At the very least, the early, acrimonious exchanges between archaeologists and philosophers made it clear that the interests of neither field would be served unless philosophical analysis is grounded in a robust understanding of the practice of archaeology, its major research programs, and its results. The provocative question now is whether philosophical analysis must also be naturalized in the sense of being grounded in an empirical understanding of the history, the social, political, and economic contexts of practice, and the disciplinary culture and institutions of archaeology. A growing number of the archaeologists and some of the philosophers engaged in interfield exchange argue that conceptual, philosophical analysis is inadequate to address many of the questions that are most pressing for archaeologists or, indeed, the questions central to conventional philosophical inquiry [Wylie, 2000a, 312-313]; it must be supplemented or, indeed, supplanted by (empirical) historical and sociopolitical studies of archaeology. Kelley and Hanen, and Gibbon, made the case for a socially naturalized philosophy of archaeology in the 1980s, and a thriving program of critical social history has since taken shape that documents myriad ways in which the intellectual agenda of archaeology is shaped by the influence of funding institutions and disciplinary reward systems [Patterson, 1995; Paynter, 1983; Wobst and Keene, 1983], as well as by nationalist and colonial interests [Abu El-Haj, 2001; Patterson, 1986b; Trigger, 1989a] and the race, gender, and class divisions that structure both internal disciplinary dynamics and the larger contexts in which archaeology is practiced [Gero and Conkey, 1991; Moser, 1998; Trigger, 1980]. As analytic metaarchaeology expands in these directions it exemplifies the socially naturalizing trends evident in post-postivist philosophy of science:

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