

# Introduction

## *Ethnography and the Social Construction of Archaeology*

Quetzil E. Castañeda

Archaeology is no more, or no less, than the work of its practitioners (Shanks 2001: 294). This book is based on a collaboration between several authors who draw from a common interest in the potential of ethnography to interpret, critique, and productively reconstruct archaeology as a modern practice that investigates, produces, and is deeply invested in knowledge about the past. The collaboration was initiated as a workshop held at the Open School of Ethnography and Anthropology, Chichén Itzá, Mexico, in June 2005. One result of this workshop is the central concept of this book: ethnographic archaeology. In many ways ethnographic archaeology is a novel hybrid of two anthropological subfields, yet, simultaneously, and as is materialized by the particular interests of the editors, it is an approach that draws on distinct concerns within ethnography and archaeology about the meanings of archaeology in the present. To discuss and relate these concerns to the definition of ethnographic archaeology, the editors present in the following some of the issues from their own areas of expertise independently. Readers will see that both discussions share with Shanks in the above a focus on knowing more about what archaeology actually does in order to know what archaeology is. Yet, by exploring the role of an ethnographic approach within archaeology both discussions problematize archaeology as a social, cultural,

ethical, and political institution about which all anthropologists have much more to learn.

## **Reflections on Ethnography and the Social Construction of Archaeology**

**Quetzil E. Castañeda**

Over the last twenty years, archaeology has undergone a sea change in the way it is conceived and practiced. Post-processual archaeologies have proliferated not only in relation to the multiple critiques of the once reigning positivist epistemology, but in reaction to the pervasive association, if not complicity, of the discipline to the political projects of nationalism, colonialism, and capitalism. As archaeologists have increasingly grappled with the social and political construction of archaeology, an idea forcefully expressed by a variety of postprocessualists, the ethics of the discipline that had been formulated by the values and a vision of science as a transcendent, objectivist good have eroded. The scientific ethos and morality of universal heritage that must be known and preserved in the name of generalized humanity has dissolved as archaeologists recognize the legitimacy of the specific claims of particular groups over their material past and intangible archaeological heritage. New ethical frameworks have emerged that prioritize and value the public meanings, interpretations, and rights of ownership that descendent communities and stakeholders assert over the archaeological record. In these changing relationships between archaeology, the past, and stakeholders, many archaeologists have turned to ethnography as a means and method for addressing the political, ethical, epistemological, and social issues that researchers must today confront as they reassess and reshape archaeological practices of making the past and engaging with interested publics. This volume offers a sustained critical reflection on and conceptual elaboration of these new uses of ethnography in archaeology, which we are calling ethnographic archaeology.

Ethnographic archaeology has emerged as a specific kind of answer to contemporary dilemmas of archaeological science. We are here proposing it as a broad term to encompass an array of methods, objectives, uses, and rationalities. The contributors in this volume, for example, present visions of ethnographic archaeology in a variety of ways as the means for critical engagement with stakeholders, as public policy debate, as ethnocritical archaeology, as the study of what archaeology does in field sites, and as a foundation for transnational collaborations among archaeologists. Ethnographic archaeology is radically different from the previous uses of ethnography that temper the history of archaeology (see chapters by Castañeda and by Hollowell and Nicholas).

One crucial difference can be identified if we consider not so much how ethnography is used, but the originating “problem” in archaeology that triggered the methodological developments in the first place. Given the nuanced discussions below, for the moment in this introduction we can stereotype for heuristic purposes to say that previously ethnography was called in to solve the problem of how to analyze the symbolic or material patterns of archaeological remains. Over the last decade, in contrast, ethnography is being called in to address the problem of how to ethically engage the diverse publics, especially descendent stakeholder communities, with which archaeology has a primary responsibility. Although both of these characterizations are reductive, they point to two crucial ideas.

The first point is that archaeologists—processualists and postprocessualists, as well as the culture historians of previous eras—have always been reflecting, even critically reflecting, upon the nature and conduct of archaeology in order to identify and address the “normal puzzles” and “paradigm-breaking problems,” as well as to assess and evaluate routine practices that are posed and conducted by the field. It is true that in any field of study, practitioners, whether or not they are scientists (in any sense of the term), will always pause at different points in their process to reflect on the nature of their field, the success or failure of research, the significance of current debates, the status of questions that have been asked but not answered, and the

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possibility of problems that have yet to be formulated. Reflection in any field is common and necessary. This reflection, or critical reflection, is not always of the same style and format, nor conceived by its practitioners in the same way. Furthermore, the focal points and objects of attention of these reflections across divergent philosophical traditions and theoretical camps are certainly never the same, despite any surface similarities that may exist. It is because of the uneven status and role of these reflections in different theoretical traditions and of “reflection” in general that the call by some postprocessualists to create a critical archaeology, critical-reflexive archaeology, or reflexive archaeology can provoke strong reactions, as if it were a call to arms for those antagonized, a promise of salvation for the faithful, or a hollow fad for otherwise “enlightened” cynics.

Our goal in this volume is not to advocate for reflexivity, much less to idealize and promote a certain “brand name” of reflexive archaeology. Instead, we seek simply to underscore the already present existence of diverse types of reflexivity and reflection in archaeology and to positively valorize the processes and dynamics of ongoing “self”-assessment. Specifically, we appreciate the diverse reflections and assessments of the state of archaeology that are offered by the contributors in this volume. While each chapter offers distinct solutions of a tangible nature that we have here grouped under the banner of ethnographic archaeology, the authors are motivated and stimulated by a shared core problem that archaeology and archaeologists must increasingly and ever more effectively address. This is the issue of the ethical, political, economic, and social engagement with the diverse publics to which archaeology has a variety of obligations and responsibilities.

The second point is that underlying the diversity of post-processual reflections on the status of archaeology—and, thus, as well, the range of programmatic “answers” to its perceived shortcomings—is a basic recognition that archaeology, in all its manifestations as an inquiry into the past, is a social construction. Archaeology, in other words, is a sociocultural phenomenon that has historically developed in specific sociocultural circumstances, in particular institutional and organizational

form, with determinate economic bases, using exclusive languages, codes, and knowledges, and with definite sociohistorical roles and political functions in civil society. Regardless of one's theoretical alliances and political inclinations, this fact of the social constitution of archaeology has become undeniable. Certainly, these ideas have been explicitly and overtly changing archaeological practices. Going further, we even suggest that this notion of the irreducible sociality of archaeology and the recognition of how it is inextricably embedded in conflicted situations of power, authority, status, ownership, rights, and legal consciousness are now so pervasive that it has implicitly transformed the very foundations of archaeology. Consider that virtually all of the postprocessual archaeologies concur on this point; moreover, they cite this fact as a point of departure to develop their own specific intervention in the vision and practice of what archaeology is, what it must do, and how it should get accomplished. As a field of study, science, discipline, and set of practices, archaeology must remake itself by grounding its work on the fact of social construction as its foundational premise. What this might entail in the long run is still, of course, up for considerable debate and creative innovation. Nonetheless, we feel strongly that the ethnographic turn in archaeology is the inevitable next move in this trajectory of the "decolonization of archaeology" that was initiated in the aftermath of the postprocessual transformations of the last decades. Ethnographic archaeology, as discussed in this volume, is going to be an essential component of how archaeology addresses itself as a socially constructed and politically constituted agent that claims expert knowledge of and responsibility for, if not always stewardship over, the past.

It is useful at this juncture to advance a working concept for the key term of this volume. By *ethnographic archaeology* we refer to archaeological projects based in research and management of the past that have integrated ethnography into their core processes and dynamics as a way to develop archaeology as a reflexive and social science through the investigation of and engagement with the sociopolitical and economic dimensions of its own enterprise. While they do not offer a unified voice, the

chapters in this volume all contribute to illustrating the rich possibilities and potential of this understanding of ethnographic archaeology. The title of the volume, which is in the plural—ethnographic archaeologies—underscores the multiplicity of ways of using ethnography. Further, it points to the fact that we are not seeking to define and defend a new orthodoxy with a fashionably current brand name and logo. There is no solution to problems of archaeologists, only ongoing processes of addressing specific issues in contexts of particular projects. The contributors are in agreement, however, that the sociality of archaeology is the foundational assumption and driving motivation for their distinct reflections on what archaeology is, the nature of its shortcomings, and the potential to develop new strengths and solutions. This common assumption and motivation of the chapters is most clearly expressed in the way the authors question the nature, concept, and status of the “public” in archaeology by concretely expanding the practical ways by which archaeologists can and should engage the various stakeholders, descendant communities, funders, trainees, collaborators, colleagues, audiences, and interlocutors with whom and for whom archaeology practices.

The contributors to this volume share many of the prevalent concerns and central issues that are currently under discussion in the broader fields of archaeology. First, the authors share the widespread recognition of the social construction of archaeology and view this as a primary fact on which to rearticulate and reformulate archaeological practices, agendas, and ethics, and a starting point in interfacing with diverse stakeholders. Second, this understanding and grounding of archaeology in its social contexts and effects has stimulated diverse reflections—call them assessments, commentaries, critiques, or critical reflections—in all varieties of postprocessual archaeologies that point to the need for the discipline to rigorously address this sociality. The present contributors share in this general assessment and push this critical evaluation to the point of advocating the integrated use of ethnography in archaeological research to investigate the social basis, construction, and effects of archaeology. Third, the chapters in this volume, as well as the volume as a

whole, seek to bring the understandings produced in such work as well as the ethnographic methodologies themselves into a productive form of interactive engagement with archaeology's publics. Underlying these concerns is archaeology's troubling relationship to and conceptions of "publics" and "stakeholders." While the contributing authors themselves do not explicitly sustain or necessarily articulate a critical commentary of these two terms, the problematization of stakeholders and publics is a thick thread that weaves all the chapters together. Therefore, this introduction now turns to critically reflect on these concepts and their meanings as part of an assessment of the prospects of and potential to move beyond what is typically identified as public archaeology.

## **The Meanings of "Stakeholders" and "Public" in Ethnographic Archaeology**

**Christopher N. Matthews**

The initiatives undertaken here toward developing an ethnographic archaeology raise the question of how to conceptualize in theoretical and in practical terms the notion of stakeholders and the public in archaeology. To better understand what stakeholders are, the contributors to this volume encourage archaeologists to define more concretely what is actually at stake in archaeological research, public outreach, and the dissemination of results. The chapters identify some specific economic, political, cultural, social, symbolic, and educational stakes that define (and define as different) "stake"-holders involved in archaeological research. They also explore how and to whom stakeholders reveal their stakes, that is, their interests as well as what roles exist for stakeholder interests in professional archaeological practice. Finally, the way archaeologists record, understand, and articulate diverse stakeholder interests in the design, interpretation, and dissemination of archaeological research is examined.

A key point in this volume is that archaeology's stakeholders are many, diverse, and often conflicting. Equally, we present the

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idea that not only do stakes in archaeology vary for different groups, but these divergent interests can identify powerful social subtexts that allow archaeologists to make sense of the meaning of archaeological research in particular cases. From Mark Leone, for example, we see that some of archaeology's stakeholders consist of those invested in the divisive debates surrounding human origins, whether creationists or scientists, as well as African Americans interested in taking control of their own origins and thereby changing the content and color of American history. Yet, what is at stake for these groups, even in these debates, is not the validity of one or another perspective but the authority of those who create and adopt standpoints based on the nature of their relationship with science and archaeology itself. Leone's point is that archaeology is always already a political project that is both picked up and lent out for the sake of creating positions within debates about "who we are." So, while many, including archaeologists, consider archaeology's role in these debates stable if not fixed, the stakes surrounding and invoking archaeology are too high and demand too much to retain this stability, since it is in fact archaeology's role to produce the "new and surprising" and therefore to be potentially disruptive to the dominant discourse in any place. In a similar vein, Anne Pyburn shows that the global and humanistic expectations established for full participation in world heritage by non-Western nations and archaeologists create stakes that are typically suppressed in the name of archaeology itself. Rather than engaging with the social meanings of archaeology on their own terms in local settings, Pyburn shows how archaeologists from developing countries seek to gain standing through their affiliations with Western archaeologists like herself who can provide "theory" and thereby legitimacy on the world stage. Leone and Pyburn identify stakeholders whose interests bear directly and often successfully on how archaeology is actually defined as a scientific and professional practice. Moreover they show that interests such as these will remain invisible and thus out of the realm of archaeological consideration unless a critical engagement with communities, specifically one that is ethnographically developed, becomes an inherent aspect of archaeology.

At issue, then, within ethnographic archaeology is an engagement with stakeholders that breaches the distinctions so often made between archaeologists, publics, communities, and other interested outsider parties. Avoiding an approach that constructs separate spheres of interest, this volume examines instead the common ground that varied stakeholders construct in order to speak across social and cultural divides to connect with each other through archaeology. This common ground is the conceptualization of archaeology itself though, importantly, stakeholder conceptualizations are neither necessarily transparent nor overlapping. To consider this diversity and the questions of fit ethnographic archaeology identifies two methodological goals. First, stakeholders are seen as operating with independent constructions of archaeology that must be identified, recorded, and made a part of the results that any archaeology project produces. Second, that as stakeholders engage with archaeology they define a different sort of “public” archaeology; one that is more dialogic and self-critical than is traditionally conceived within the discipline today. In the following sections I discuss this distinction to better outline the effort in this book to reconsider the way archaeology is itself conceived by defining and drawing into archaeological practice conceptions of archaeology constructed in public by those outside of the discipline.

### **The Public’s Many Archaeologies**

Archaeology struggles a great deal in public, perhaps now more than ever, to explain its methods and to validate the benefits of its works. However, this is not the result of changing global and social dynamics or the complexity of issues presented by archaeology’s “many publics” (McManamon 1991), as some archaeologists claim. This struggle stems from an inadequate and inflexible conceptualization of archaeology itself such that archaeology has virtually no ability to understand and work in concert with what may be observed, in contrast, as the public’s “many archaeologies.” The result is that most public archaeology is now entirely public relations demonstrating how and why

archaeology—solely as it is defined by its professionals—is worthwhile.

Originally, and for many still, public archaeology is an outward-focused matter of exhibits, site tours, and similar considerations of how to make archaeological findings accessible to general and specific publics in print and other formats (McGimsey 1972; McManamon 1991; Stone and Molyneaux 1994; Jameson 1997, 2004; Little 2002; Merriman 2004). The message of this literature is that the public will benefit from knowing more about archaeology, that the public has a right to archaeology, and that archaeologists need to be better skilled at presenting their work. The bottom line in mainstream public archaeology is that archaeology is an inherently worthwhile and stable process of knowledge production in which the past is produced for public review. All that is missing are the promotional techniques and skills that will allow archaeology to shift from a “curatorial to [a] narrative” mode such that its methods and results may be better known, appreciated, and used (Kennedy 2002: xiii).

Within the public archaeology literature is a key assumption that lies at the root of this approach: that archaeology is an external and objective “resource” that is both publicly accessible and publicly owned. For example, in the following, a clear attempt to humble archaeologists into accepting their “public” responsibilities, a leading proponent of public archaeology and senior scholar, Brian Fagan, situates archaeology in an external “world”:

Whether we like it or not, we are performers on a public stage, in the full glare of an approving—and often disapproving—audience. Finally, after more than a century of science, we have come to realize that ours is not the only story of the past to be told. And we have begun to realize that to be a good storyteller is not to be the wise person who speaks from wisdom. Our job, ultimately, is to create an atmosphere in which the wisdom inherent in the world becomes apparent. (Fagan 2002: 254)

In this view, archaeology inhabits a distinct location that researchers typically refer to as the “field,” as in doing “fieldwork,” or which archaeologists commonly identify as the “site.” These

locations characterize archaeology as something that may only be encountered apart from the subjects who conceive of and engage with it, including here archaeologists. Most significantly, the “site” is where archaeology—in the guise of the detached persona of the archaeologist—and the public meet (Matthews 2006).

This approach is similar to that which Castañeda (1996) has criticized in the work of cultural anthropology regarding the idea of “impact,” such that cultures, societies, sites, and so on are stable formations that passively absorb and/or are changed by what occurs to them. An alternative is to reconfigure cultures, societies, sites, and so on as active historical agents that initiate and institute change from within. Yet even this internal agency is itself a dialogic construction of researchers and inhabitants alike. It is the result of a collaborative and mutualistic effort to articulate a reality. Therefore, it is determined as much by the languages, discourses, and ideologies of the groups, most specifically for Castañeda, anthropologists, and for the present volume, archaeologists, who conceived of notions such as “impact” or “the site” in the first place in order to imagine and negotiate a way for conversations, collaboration, and, indeed, research to proceed. Thus, the language required to be able to speak about archaeology at all embodies a range of interests that reproduce many components that critics highlight as signs of archaeology’s continuing commitment to the domination and exclusion of descendent and local communities (e.g., Jemison 1997, Tsosie 1997). Specifically, the externalization of archaeology from those who practice it to the sites where its subject matter is said to reside constructs a false meeting ground because the already existing archaeological significance of the place determines the content as well as the form of the discussion.

One purpose of ethnographic archaeology is to challenge and help archaeologists and stakeholders to recognize how this ongoing social construction of archaeology as an external site-based resource limits archaeological practice, especially regarding the discipline’s capacity to foster a sustained social critique. Through theoretical and illustrated explorations on various aspects of conceiving and approaching the public in archaeology, the contributors consider and incorporate more nuanced notions

of reflexivity, transculturation, and power to guide new and ongoing reconstructions of archaeological practice. The key throughout is to understand how the diverse public meanings of archaeology, specifically those aspects on which it relies for recognition, function in all aspects of archaeological practice. In the following I offer some reflection on certain public meanings that carry much weight in the way archaeology exists.

### **Public Meanings vs. Public Archaeology**

As archaeologists currently work to construct a subfield of “public archaeology,” it is vital to understand that they have entered an unfamiliar arena where they confront questions about themselves that they have not been trained to answer. When asked “why do archaeology?” or “what is archaeology?” professional archaeologists realize that they are at the edge of their comfort zone. In Barbara Little’s words, they become “speechless” (2002: 3). They are in a place that positions them as neither in the “field” nor talking about being in the “field.” They are in a space previously categorized as the world-outside-of-archaeology, even of its own externalizations. The issue is not so much that archaeologists over-compartmentalize their experiences, though perhaps they do. Rather, the issue is that in these nonarchaeological contexts archaeologists find their authority over “what archaeology is” collapses as their practical and professional linguistic and ideological certainty faces the public meanings of the archaeological past. It is only in public that archaeologists discover their limitations: that the purposes for their research and their aspirations for what it might accomplish compete with other equally well-formulated, and often more prominently situated, “outsider” conceptions of what archaeology is.

The term “public meanings” is offered here as a corrective to what is a common mistake among those working in public archaeology. For some, the purpose of bringing archaeology to the public is to combat the misuse of archaeological methods and results to authenticate nefarious finds or disruptive distractions that run parallel to scholarly research. However, the public

meanings of archaeology do not refer to the unchecked use of “archaeological data” to verify inauthentic, dangerous, and fanciful ideas such as the existence of aliens, lost continents and civilizations, ancient cults, or racial or national superiority (Arnold 1990; Feder 2005; Kohl and Fawcett 1996; Meskell 1995, 1998). Rather, the public meanings of archaeology are constituted by the ways archaeology is put to use by persons and groups archaeologists would typically consider as reasonable collaborators and credentialed colleagues: it is the archaeology of mainstream society that in large part constructs what archaeology is, how archaeologists are perceived, and defines the stakes that drive contemporary professional archaeological practice. Most prominently, this is the archaeology employed by governmental and tribal agencies, universities, museums, preservation organizations, local and descendent communities, contractors, and landowners, to which archaeologists normally report. It also includes the understanding of archaeology by the patrons of cultural, educational, and other institutions, such as students and museum visitors, as well as peer-property owners and real estate professionals, who receive archaeological results as knowledge of both what archaeologists find, and more importantly, evidence of “what archaeology is” as that pursuit which discovers significant things in the ground (e.g., Matthews and Palus n.d.). These public meanings of archaeology relate in particular to the way archaeological information circulates within the larger society archaeologists traditionally inhabit.

It may be stated that this conception of the public that actually uses archaeology in a meaningful way places archaeology within a circumscribed political economy such that as archaeologists and collaborators convene they establish an industry that not only produces knowledge (about archaeology itself or its products such as sites, artifacts, heritages, and similar cultural resources), but more directly expects wages in exchange for this knowledge. It is important also to realize that this “public” is not the generic tax-paying public at large promoted by many writing about the public responsibilities of archaeologists. Rather, the public that archaeologists most often consider consists of a subset of active and interested collaborators committed to reproducing

their ways of life, most specifically the projects that generate their particular forms of power and wealth. It is worth emphasizing that these ways of life are revealed by archaeology's commitment to the notion that it is located at "sites" "out there," since such "sites" are in fact properties, and, whether owned by private individuals, corporations, communities, or the public, archaeology verifies that the significance of given properties is, to use Brian Fagan's term, inherent. What is at stake, that is, for these stakeholders is the effect archaeology has on the value of property. The political economy of archaeology that has been organized by the control of property-holding interests is evident in many of the chapters.

The question at hand is why archaeologists are so uncomfortable operating in this public field, which lies essentially two steps from the discipline's front door? The quick answer is that most archaeologists are not trained to understand the public meanings of archaeology, a thought echoed by Fagan (2002) and many others (e.g., Bender and Smith 2000). Archaeological training is normally an intensive study in how the archaeological record forms and how it may be recovered and understood through fieldwork, analysis, and interpretation. There is little time in the current archaeology curriculum devoted to the public except as it is conceived as an audience of archaeological work. The idea that the public may independently conceive of and use archaeology has no place in current archaeological training. Still, one must wonder why the roots of archaeological practice, specifically its validation of propertied interests, is left largely unstated. For some this may be interpreted as an obvious sign that archaeology is complicit with the ideological mechanisms employed by the propertied class such that, as described above, archaeologists have adopted certain implications of these interests, such as the idea of the site, among their base operating assumptions about what archaeology is.

Thus, a more important answer is that many of the nonarchaeologists with whom archaeologists collaborate are in fact trained well enough in the public meanings of archaeology to master its terminology such that they can appear to speak on its behalf, even though it is more accurate to say that they speak as

those who have appropriated archaeology for ends conceived quite independently of archaeology itself. The result is not necessarily or typically the misuse or abuse of archaeology; rather, it is simply the production of archaeology by nonarchaeologists, a nonhybrid process that has profound implications for professional archaeologists and especially the construction of a field of “public archaeology” itself.

It is exactly these sorts of contexts that need to be brought forth for archaeology to contribute a sustained critical contribution to the ongoing construction of contemporary society. Our purpose in this volume is to present ethnographic archaeology as a proper method for meeting this goal. If it may be summarized, the purpose of an ethnographic archaeology is to allow archaeology to operate knowing more about how it is a social construction of the present aimed at creating and instituting meanings about the past and the present. In ethnographic archaeology, an ethnographic approach is incorporated within archaeology (1) to bring to light and into regular archaeological practice the diverse stakes and strategic social forces that establish archaeology as a viable and appropriate social concept and then (2) to reflect on how this archaeology-concept functions in specific sociocultural contexts, most especially in how it is employed by those invested in archaeological work. In the following we provide an overview of the chapters in this light.

## **Reflections on the Contributions in this Volume**

**Quetzil E. Castañeda and Christopher N. Matthews**

In chapter 1, “The Ethnographic Turn: Research Positioning and Reflexivity in Ethnographic Archaeologies,” Quetzil Castañeda presents a broad framework for thinking about and conceptualizing the ways in which ethnography can be conjoined to archaeology. In part this is motivated by the desire to categorically clarify the confusion of labels that have sprung up with the diversification of uses of ethnography in archaeology. He differentiates “archaeological ethnography” from “ethnographic archaeology”

in terms of two problems to which ethnographic methods can be directed. In the first, ethnography becomes a method directly subordinated to the task of interpreting or explaining the past (as in ethnoarchaeology). While in the second, ethnography is integrated into archaeology in order to study different aspects of archaeological research, the social contexts of research projects, and the interface of archaeology with stakeholders and publics. In this regard, ethnographic archaeology has affinities to the ethnographic study of archaeology. While the anthropology of archaeology can certainly provide archaeology with some important understandings, this still amorphously defined field of study is not subservient to the archaeological agenda and it will develop its own particular paradigmatic debates and issues. Thus, archaeology must integrate ethnography into itself in order that its methods, practices, and strategies be always directed and designed toward contributing to the process and goals of archaeology as a field of study and a discipline. Castañeda defines three general strategies by which ethnography can be incorporated into a vision of archaeology: first as thick description of research practices, second, as the ethnographic study of research positioning, and third as a means of transcultural exchange. In his discussion of the inevitable questions of reflexivity that are raised by the ethnographic study of archaeology, Castañeda suggests downplaying the significance of reflexivity in relation to the more crucial criteria and value of ethics.

In chapter 2, "A Critical Assessment of Ethnography in Archaeology," Julie Hollowell and George Nicholas offer a panoramic review of the diverse ways in which ethnography is currently being used in archaeology. Their analysis identifies five general types that include the use of ethnography to facilitate community relations, enhance archaeological interpretation, include diverse voices, make research relevant, and to document and reflect on the archaeological research process. They also offer a view on novel methods that have emerged within the realm of critical archaeology that make use of ethnographic methods and results to produce different sorts of archaeological results. They conclude with a "best practices" analysis that synthesizes the agenda and methods for the continuing development of an ethno-

graphic archaeology, especially emphasizing the significance of dialogic methods and the questions of appropriate training. They contend that the use of ethnography as a tool in archaeology can lead to the development of more nuanced and sociologically engaged dynamics and process of archaeological research.

In chapter 3, "A Dangerously Elusive Method: Disciplines, Histories, and the Limits of Reflexivity," Richard Handler questions the underlying epistemological assumptions of reflexivity in a cautionary tale that can usefully guide those of us who seek to develop a new "marriage" of ethnography with archaeology. Specifically, he points out the effective power of the artificial differentiation between disciplines and notes that these differences do not simply constrain but also enable and facilitate (innovative) research agendas and (interdisciplinary) practices. Similarly, he insists on the incommensurability between the cultural conceptions of the past as heritage for descendent communities and social science conceptions of the past as history for archaeologists. This difference, which can, must, and is, in fact, always negotiated by archaeologists and stakeholders, must be consciously held in mind by archaeologists or otherwise risk the ethically questionable imposition of the archaeological agenda onto others. Finally, Handler reframes lessons from Edward Sapir in order to identify reflexivity (and ethnography) as an elusive and dangerous method for archaeologists to seek out in creating new solutions to the sociopolitical contexts and conflicts of archaeology.

In chapter 4, "The Foundations of Archaeology," Mark Leone explores the role of archaeologists as public intellectuals in contemporary U.S. politics. He contends that among our obligations and roles is to engage the contemporary public debates in which archaeology and archaeologists have something to contribute to the broader social good. He highlights the need for archaeologists to understand and challenge the power structures that sustain archaeology so that archaeologists may, in fact, remain in control of the political influence they have within dominant culture. His case in point is of the increasing power and validity given to the thinly concealed theological "theories" of intelligent design of human origins by different political groups and governmental agencies in Washington, D.C., as compared to the

long-standing archaeological understandings of human origins. Leone discusses the need for the validity and authority of science to be sustained within such contexts and uses his research collaboration with various African Methodist Episcopal churches in Maryland as an example of how archaeology and archaeologists can negotiate public and political constructions of the past.

In chapter 5, "The Pageantry of Archaeology," Anne Pyburn discusses the politics of archaeology across the national and cultural divides and hierarchies of science in the context of globalization. She offers insight based on her own participation and experiences with archaeologists situated in non-Western countries. She critically comments on the processes of collaboration across power differentials of science and global advocacy. For example, she targets international heritage organizations and what she views as their lack of positive valorization of the interests and needs of local communities, which are viewed as troublesome. She concludes with some thoughts on how to break from mainstream masculine structures of authority, status, and referential practice in archaeology.

In chapter 6, "The Location of Archaeology," Christopher Matthews investigates the sociological dimensions of his research with an African American community in New Orleans. He analyzes how the issues of race both interrupted and enabled the production of a community archaeology program. His chapter explores how the legacies of race feed archaeological research interest in stakeholder communities and the way that these communities construe archaeological research as an important, politicized facet of their lives. He argues that researchers must engage the constitutive tensions between, on the one hand, archaeology as the purveyor of a certain scientifically sanctified past and the multiple public meanings of that past and, on the other hand, the diverse publics that lay claim over the past with different meanings and the political negotiation of these often divergent values. He proposes a form of ethnographic participation, observation, and analysis as means by which to productively negotiate these tensions that inhabit ethical collaborations.

In chapter 7, “Real People or Reconstructed People? Ethnocritical Archaeology, Ethnography, and Community Building,” Larry Zimmerman presents a programmatic vision of what he calls ethnocritical archaeology. Based on his extensive work with diverse archaeological projects and field schools researching the Native American past, he has developed a series of collaborative practices of ethnography, knowledge exchange, self-critique, and reflexivity that are especially salutary examples of ethnographic archaeology. His vision of ethically and ethnographically engaged archaeology, which emerges out of the specific contexts and situated work with and among indigenous communities exemplifies the notion of research positioning that Castañeda conceptualizes in the opening chapter. Creatively adapting Arnold Krupat’s notion and terminology of ethnocriticism that was developed in literary analysis, Zimmerman proposes as the central contention of ethnocritical archaeology that archaeology must effectively collaborate with living descendent communities of the archaeological past in order to make the research a meaningful engagement with real people, to make the interpretations valid and significant to persons and communities other than scientific archaeologists, and to provide an ethical grounding of archaeological research.

What is remarkable about these chapters as contributions to this emergent form of ethnographic archaeology is the unity of purpose and the parallels in methods. The multiple points and interconnections of a shared agenda can be clearly distinguished. Handler’s proposal for a more limited notion of reflexivity, while distinct from Castañeda’s discussion, resonates with the latter’s idea of research positioning as a key strategic role for ethnography in archaeological research. Hollowell and Nicholas advocate for an archaeological practice of ethnography that focuses this method toward the interactive dynamics, transcultural exchange, and collaborative processes that Castañeda has identified as a second key strategic function for ethnography within archaeology.

In turn, each of the contributors in this book provide field-tested analyses of the possible roles of, ways of using, forms of engagement with, assumption of ethical responsibility to, and

collaborations with nonarchaeologist communities that are sought in the contemporary ethnographic turn in archaeology. Pyburn is focused on the interactive and dialogical processes between archaeologists of distinct national traditions that are, furthermore, located in radically distinct socioeconomic and political positions of power, prestige, knowledge, and status. Her paper stands as a vibrant reminder that “archaeologist” and “archaeology” are reified labels that obscure the wide-ranging diversification of archaeological communities, some of which are very powerful, others quite marginalized, and yet others fragmented without collective voice. In this vein, the chapter also testifies to that too often overlooked fact that archaeologists are themselves also just another group of stakeholders who have historically speaking imposed their meanings of the past onto the general public as the only legitimate understanding. Her suggestions for archaeologists to make use of their position as knowledge experts thereby parallels Leone’s express enactment and taking on of the role of public intellectual. While Pyburn offers tactical guidelines for engaging power differentials within archaeology, that is, within the publics internal to archaeology itself, Leone negotiates the outside face of archaeology as knowledge specialist and takes a stand in relation to its external audiences in the public sphere of science. While Pyburn advocates a mutual learning and negotiated exchange among colleagues within the heterogeneous communities of archaeology as the basis of alliances and networking, Leone advocates seemingly the opposite, which is that it is indeed necessary to take a stand against certain (and therefore with other specific) interpretations, meanings, and understandings of the past that circulate among divergent stakeholders in the encompassing civil society.

Both of these engagements are motivated by an ethics that goes beyond the inherited notion of public archaeology as the univocal display or scientifically uniform discourse of the past. Both of these trajectories assume that there is no way to avoid the politics of knowledge, of science, of archaeology, and thus, in order to be ethical, archaeologists must assert their position and work toward negotiating the diversity of stakeholders. Both of

these papers imply ethnography—that is, studied observation of and conscientious participation in the social positioning of one's research project—as the basis of this negotiation. Whereas the “ethnographic” is an implicit and enabling strategy for Pyburn and Leone on which they base their actions as public intellectuals, ethnography becomes explicitly turned outward as a means and mode of doing archaeology in the subsequent two chapters.

Matthews and Zimmerman explicitly put ethnography into practice as strong methods at the forefront of their archaeological research. On the one hand, Matthews discovers the need to “do” and then deploys ethnography by virtue of having to negotiate the political, ethical, and interpretive problems posed by “race” in his work with a diverse African American community set within a large modern city that asserts claims of identity, belonging, and heritage to the archaeological materials. On the other hand, Zimmerman provides a programmatic statement of the ethical merits of collaborative archaeology that incorporates ethnography into the very design of the archaeological research and field schools that he directs. Matthews therefore inspects the sociopolitical points of conflict and contestation that sprung up over questions about ideologies of race, racial identity, and complex urban politics. Zimmerman brings these points of conflict and tension into the forefront as the impetus to develop collaborative ethnography and interactive archaeology. Both engage descendant communities and stakeholders without positioning their expertise as a superior form of knowledge or as a more legitimate and privileged claim over the past. In both, the ethnographic becomes a means and the medium through which communicative exchange occurs that might very well be identified as transcultural dynamics, that is, a mutual and reciprocal learning between communities of stakeholders, including archaeologists and descendants.

These contributions are each based in the specific sociohistorical situation and cultural contexts of the projects in which the archaeologists work. As such each manifests key differences in concrete problems, points of contestation, patterns of negotiating activities, and strategies for collaboration and successful research. Each put into practice an ethnographic archaeology that

is suited to the situation. The significance of this is that there can be no definitive paradigm or model on how to incorporate ethnography into archaeology, nor even for ethnographic archaeology. Rather, to follow Michel De Certeau's lead, each of us must "make do" within the locations and contexts in which we position our projects. This volume speaks to those seeking to understand and further expand the potential and possibilities of integrating ethnography into the archaeological agenda as part of the ethical commitment to making archaeology responsible to both the sociological conditions of its production and to the publics with whom and for whom we work.

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