

Ages is one thing; to date their elaboration directly to these periods is another, more problematic, question. Similarly, because of its presence across (nearly) all the Indo-European cultural universe, they claim that the institution of the Divine Twins dates back to the Corded Ware/Bell Beaker period. Such extreme claims are as unrealistic as unnecessary. As acknowledged by Kristiansen and Larsson themselves in their discussion of the cosmological differences between the Bronze and the Iron Ages, oral tradition and their material inscription are ever-changing and redefined: continuity can only be retrieved through an appraisal of the variation which makes history.

Lastly, if Kristiansen and Larsson's enthusiasm renders their book enthralling and enjoyable to read, sometimes it leads to statements which are difficult to agree with. For instance, on page 90, they declare that:

In many parts of central and southeastern Europe, the impact of bronze prestige goods on the local societies, lineages and families had, during the late third millennium BC, accelerated competition, rivalry of the process of social stratification. Indigenous deities were worshipped and the leaders of chiefly families were seen as the holders of the strongest bonds to the gods and goddesses through their imagined first-hand genealogy leading back to the ancestors and deities.

If most scholars would largely follow the first sentence, probably few would blindly agree with Kristiansen and Larsson's vivid depiction of the last centuries of the third millennium BC in the second.

In conclusion, Kristiansen and Larsson deliver a book which is dense, deliciously seductive but by no means representing a consensus in the field. Nevertheless, it is a book which presents the most crucial virtue of all: it makes one think about material culture and about the kind of past that we, archaeologists, try to describe and explain. As they state in their epilogue, 'the truly historical contribution from past histories lies in our ability to learn something new and unexpected from their otherness' (p. 371). Let us hope that this book will indeed lead to all the reactions it deserves and open an unforeseen era in the study of later European prehistory.

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Peripheral Matters?

Global Archaeological Theory: Contextual Voices and Contemporary Thoughts, edited by Pedro Paulo Funari, Andrés Zarankin & Emily Stovel, 2005.

New York (NY): Kluwer/Plenum;
ISBN-13 978-030648651-7 paperback,
£36.57 & US\$59.95; vii+380 pp., ills.

Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology, by Ian J. McNiven & Lynette Russell, 2005.
Lanham (MD): Altamira; ISBN-13 978-075910907-0
paperback, £21.84 & US\$29.71; 328 pp., ills.

Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage, by Laurajane Smith, 2004.
London: Routledge; ISBN-13 978-041531833-4
paperback, £24.99 & US\$43.95; 272 pp.

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The task of reviewing two of these books (*Appropriated Pasts* and *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*; no such issues apply to a consideration of *Global Archaeological Theory*) has posed some interesting challenges, given that my actions (with respect to events in Tasmania) and my views (with respect to the importance of history in accounts of Australian indigenous peoples) have been variously described in these books as 'positivist', 'colonialist', 'imperialist', even 'theoretically naïve'. Acknowledging that all of the authors represented here would likely subscribe to the view that there is no such thing as objectivity, and that it would be (possibly) 'positivist', 'colonialist', 'imperialist', even 'theoretically naïve', to pretend otherwise, I could take this as a warrant to turn this review into a personal response. But of course epistemology, and even archaeology or cultural heritage management, is always more complicated than this. Even allowing for the warm inner glow that might attend a righting of wrongs and a demonstration of the evils of selective quotation, of grotesque misapprehension or misrepresentation, and of totally one-sided discussion of complex matters, such activities rarely make good copy. So, at the risk of damning myself before I begin, this review will genuinely attempt to consider both books on their merits.

These days everywhere you look there is post-colonialism. There are many reasons for this, ranging from the purely cynical — here is another academic

bandwagon for careerists to jump on — to the much more positive — the issues raised by societies coming to grips with the consequences of colonialism are real, vital, and enduring. Rightly, archaeologists have not been slow to get involved in postcolonialism, and there is a vast (and growing) literature testifying to the diversity of contexts within which archaeologists and archaeological heritage managers have attempted to come to grips with it. This review is hardly the place to gloss such an active and diverse field, but it is possible to single out two contexts of ‘postcoloniality’ that I think are particularly germane, and which I will focus on in the context of this review.

The first flows from a long-standing strategy of emphasizing the importance of the periphery with respect to the centre, in other words of reversing the traditional ‘colonial’ flow of influence and virtue. The second is the more recent trend towards the ‘indigenization’ of archaeology, where the authority of archaeology and archaeologists as culturally privileged interpreters of the past is countered by an emphasis on the rights of indigenous peoples, and where science is a tool of colonialism (even when it is acting in a postcolonial environment).

Of course there is absolutely no reason why arguments in favour of ‘indigenization’ cannot also be arguments attacking the theoretical pre-eminence of the ‘centre’ over the ‘periphery’. Indeed, in other cases where dominant readings of the archaeological perspective have been challenged (such as in the case of Marxist, feminist or queer archaeologies), the notion of expanding disciplinary boundaries has been tightly linked with the goal of transforming practice, wherever archaeologists work. In this reading postcolonial perspectives are not just relevant to the nations that have sprung up in the wake of colonialism and imperialism. Significantly they also apply to those nations created out of colonialism *within* contemporary European nations.

At the heart of both contexts is the issue of who gets to talk, and what they have to say about the past, the present or indeed the future of societies where archaeology occurs and where heritage is managed. The history of archaeology can be very important here, as the recent spate of books and articles about the complicity of nineteenth-century archaeologists in the creation of nations, colonies and empires should testify. Explorations into the murky pasts of archaeology, history and anthropology (disciplines that either came into being or were professionalized during that time) provide a rich harvest of quotable quotes about various forms of prejudice held by the centre against the periphery. Naturally these prejudices reached their most extreme and enduring forms when the centre encountered the

indigenous periphery in the Americas, Africa, Australia and in the South Pacific.

But what are the advocates of postcoloniality (of either or both of the contexts sketched above) to do with this history? It is certainly now entirely ho-hum to rehearse the colonial/imperial/nationalist/positivist underpinnings of archaeology. Historians of anthropology were just as influenced by the first flowerings of the postcolonial agenda back in the 1960s, as were the practitioners of its black arts. While these concerns took somewhat longer to penetrate into histories of archaeology (they were first really explored by the late Bruce Trigger), there is little doubt that they have been on our disciplinary agenda for at least the last 20 years. So, why the need to keep banging on about nationalism and colonialism, and to regularly (and somewhat breathlessly) reveal the awful secrets that lie at the heart of archaeology? Certainly there is not much new about these matters in *Appropriated Pasts*, a ‘horrible history’ of archaeology from the geographical periphery of Australia, or the other two volumes being reviewed.

Obviously such histories (and long-running postcolonial critiques) provide a warrant for attacking the authority of the disciplinary practices of archaeology and anthropology. On that score histories of archaeology can support both contexts of postcoloniality — attacks on the ‘naturalness’ of the domination of the centre over the periphery, and moves towards indigenization of our discipline. Part and parcel of both contexts is an attack on the authority of ‘science’ as a technology of colonial domination. Postcolonialists can also undermine the authority of ‘science’ by arguing that the history of archaeology demonstrates the reality of epistemological relativism even among colonialists and imperialists. For example, archaeologists of the twentieth century engaged in the critique of the simple linear models of social and cultural evolution so beloved of their nineteenth-century forebears. Indeed, histories of archaeology written in the twentieth century spent much time rehearsing the social and cultural contexts of archaeological knowledge, and demonstrating how (for example) linear models of social evolution underpinned and were in turn themselves validated by, notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority. But this perception of the importance of context and of historical relativity did not prevent many of those same historians from advocating the importance of scientific approaches to archaeology.

History is thus a powerful tool for deconstructing contemporary practice and for supporting arguments for alternative disciplinary visions. Therein might lie one of the reasons for this regular rehearsal of our shameful past. Another reason might also be that archaeology is not moving forward quickly enough down the pathway towards indigenization or ‘peripheraliza-

tion' and that practitioners (both new and old) require encouragement by way of additional exemplification. I think that these are valid explanations, but they miss one vital point about history making in postcolonial settings. This is the significance of *context and locality*. Notwithstanding the apprehension of archaeology's complicity in nationalism/colonialism/imperialism/positivism among the global elites of the West, the need for individual groups to explore their own experience of archaeology (or indeed cultural heritage management) is of paramount importance in redefining their own relationships with both fields. This sense of context and locality and the need for stories of domination, oppression and exclusion to be told applies to a tremendous diversity of groups and peoples around the world. While much work has been done by indigenous groups in defending their cultural identities from domination by the nations that were created out of colonialism, similar stories from minority groups that exist within modern nations are still to be told. From this perspective while writing these new histories might not change *global* discourse in the history of archaeology, they can (and should) have a powerful impact on the practice of archaeology and archaeological heritage management at a *local* level. Understanding these local histories is a crucial part of the process of developing effective archaeological or heritage management relationships with such groups.

But I am moving far beyond the limited discussion of such matters that appears in *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* and *Appropriated Pasts*, where the focus is on defending the status of indigenous knowledge of the past. In both works the authors are exercised by tracing what they see as an unbroken line of colonialist thinking from the time of first 'contact' to the contemporary world. These are very broad-brush histories (and diagnoses of the contemporary state of relations between indigenous groups, archaeologists and heritage). There is very little attention paid to context and locality, and it would seem that any position apart from some version of 'whatever indigenous groups say about what can be said about their pasts is OK' is deemed colonialist or imperialist. It's pretty simple stuff as the authors manipulate big blocks of generalizations about concepts, categories, experiences and ethical positions. There is no sense of dialogue (it is implied that because asymmetries in power exist between indigenes and 'non-indigenous scientists' no proper dialogue can occur) nor of ambiguity. What we have instead is 'positivist science', or just 'science', 'indigenous knowledge of the past', and 'appropriation', among a host of other narrative and analytical elements. Where *Appropriated Pasts* is strongest is in the detailed discussion of the basis of strong

working relationships between archaeologists and indigenous people (particularly in the Torres Straits of northern Australia). Where it, and *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* are weakest, is in not realizing that many of the concepts that lie at the heart of their analyses are not as unambiguous, as static or as monolithic as these authors assume.

But then that is one of the problems with history. Concepts, categories and other analytical and narrative entities have histories too, which makes them unstable and dynamic, and generalization a potentially hazardous business. A simple example is the notion of 'science', superficially glossed as 'positivist science' by Smith or just 'science' by McNiven and Russell. I mentioned earlier that historians of archaeology (indeed historians of many sciences) have demonstrated again and again that scientific knowledge is a social and cultural product. The notion (derived from positivism) that science is an epistemologically privileged way of knowing is something that has been challenged by generations of philosophers of science, which makes all the huffing and puffing in *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* and *Appropriated Pasts* look like a classic straw man argument, or perhaps simply dated. But the reverse notion raised by the approach taken in both books, that in comparison to indigenous knowledge systems about the past, science is an epistemologically *underprivileged* form of knowing, is a much more interesting and consequential thing to consider. In the present context I can only examine a few of the many issues raised by this notion.

On the surface of it *Appropriated Pasts* seems to accept that indigenous groups can (and do) articulate information derived from scientific processes (such as radiometric dating) into indigenous knowledge systems — which are obviously transformed from what may have existed before colonialism. But for McNiven and Russell the use of such data does not imply the replacement of indigenous knowledge by 'science'. It would be very difficult to disagree with them. Post-positivist philosophers of science are keen to promote the notion of science as 'another way of knowing', no more epistemologically privileged than any other. But McNiven and Russell are deeply suspicious of this kind of epistemological pluralism, citing the existence of asymmetries in relations of power as tending to support 'science stories' over 'indigenous stories'. So what we seem to be left with is not pluralism but a privileging of one cultural perspective (that of indigenous groups) over other potential ways of knowing. Non-indigenous people with an interest in indigenous pasts would seem (in their analysis) to have little option but to either shut up or only pursue questions or uses methodologies sanctioned by indigenous owners.

Thus the owners of indigenous pasts also own and control the mechanisms through which such pasts can be understood. The practical basis of such ownership (in countries such as Australia) is set down in Federal and State legislation where access to the physical remains of pasts (such as sites) is controlled by indigenous groups. Without formal agreement (based on informed consent) access is impossible. Agreement is most readily reached in cases where communities perceive a strong benefit (either cultural or economic) from archaeological research. Again, notwithstanding the impression given in both *Appropriated Pasts* and *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*, such agreements are not uncommon in Australia, many of them concluded without compromising the integrity of indigenous knowledge systems or the principles of scientific inquiry — even in previous locations of conflict such as Tasmania! So in practice the relationships between indigenous communities and archaeologists are not all based on the strict principles advocated by McNiven and Russell. Context and locality are important here too, especially when we move from considering monolithic groups and blocks of discourse to people and ideas.

Indeed, the participation by indigenous communities in projects where the impacts of development on heritage are archaeologically evaluated and mitigated is a major source of income for such communities. Furthermore such projects can and frequently do deliver longer-term benefits in training and capacity building that advance indigenous interests. But having said that, it also needs to be observed that in such heritage settings a much stronger emphasis on the scientific objectivity of analysis and interpretation is required by regulatory bodies and by clients. This inconsistency in the *de facto* ceding of scientific authority in pure research settings and the *requirement* of such authority in applied contexts is worthy of further discussion. However in this context it's worth observing that the analysis of the links between scientific authority and legislation presented by Smith in *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* is very worthwhile in its generalities, if not in its particulars.

While it should now be impossible to argue against the idea that relations between indigenous groups and archaeologists must be based on informed consent and a recognition of mutual rights and interests, neither *Appropriated Pasts* or *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* offer much more than a re-statement of the problem and some very sketchy and ill thought-through 'solutions' that rarely rise beyond motherhood and apple pie. At one level it is hard to see them doing much more, as their focus was so firmly on arguing the case for perspectives that have long been part of

the context of archaeology in Australia but which clearly are regarded as being potentially controversial elsewhere. Again, because both books were so focused on defending indigenes against the depredations of archaeologists (now seemingly kept on a tight leash by heritage managers as guardians of legislation), we missed all-important discussions about what the other side of the 'mutual rights and responsibilities' equation might look like. We are left, once again, with the notion that archaeologists (because they are 'powerful') have no rights but many responsibilities, and that society can be best served by this arrangement. I disagree. For the record, I am not a positivist (indeed McNiven and Russell have me spotted as a postprocessualist!), but I do believe in old-fashioned values such as the conversation of humankind and the importance of people striving to understand each other as the basis of a moral society.

The contributors to *Global Archaeological Theory* have a somewhat different agenda from Smith or McNiven and Russell. Here is a book with the most expansive of titles, but which seems to be tightly focused on a consideration of postprocessual archaeology from a Latin American perspective. There is nothing terribly global in that, but at root an interesting collision of regional traditions that can lead (at their best) to some challenging takes on old problems. The editors are at pains to focus discussion on the first context of post-coloniality, that of advancing the cause of the periphery in terms of the centre, but then we find that they are Europeans and North Americans (such as Thomas, Karlsson, and Stovel) talking conventional postprocessual theory as if a Latin American perspective does not exist. The papers by Orser and McGuire are honourable exceptions.

Significantly, in the present context, we hear no indigenous voices — a curiosity given the sense in which these might also provide the basis of a de-centring of archaeological discourse. Again, honourable exceptions are Ferreira's very interesting discussion of archaeology, ethnography and romanticism in imperial Brazil, and Sequeira's consideration of indigenous identity in Brazilian archaeology.

The sense of a lack (or is it a diversity?) of focus in this collection, peripheral without being peripheral, core without being core, global because it's not Europe or North America, is noted by Johnson in his carefully worded concluding essay. I echo his call for the development of a truly peripheral take on theory, but I note that, notwithstanding regional traditions in archaeological practice, and the prime importance of the history of archaeology in each locality around the globe, the contributors to this volume seem to accept the veracity of a global archaeological discourse that also transcends locality.

There are interesting tensions at work here, and in the playing out of relations between archaeologists and indigenous communities and groups. At root I believe these tensions to be fundamentally creative, as well as being of the first importance in terms of transforming relations between communities at both the local and global levels. One gets tired of publishers' blurbs and fulsome endorsements when content so rarely lives up to hype. Nonetheless all three books have strong agendas that are real and important. Perhaps it was too much to expect more than politics and rhetoric, and to have all that passion and righteous anger matched by clear-sighted analysis that was sensitive to context and history. But this will come, the voices from the periphery will be heard, and archaeology will be transformed on both the global and local stages.

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Sex, Death, and Sacrifice in Moche Religion and Visual Culture, by Steve Bourget, 2006.
 Austin (TX): University of Texas Press;
 ISBN-13 978-029271279-9 hardback, £38 & US\$60;
 xiii+258 pp., 260 figs., 4 tables

Joan M. Gero

Bourget's topic, like his title, is sexy indeed, arguing that much of the extraordinary diversity and complexity in later Moche ceramics (AD 0–600, coastal Peru) represents various perspectives on Moche funerary rites and rituals. The bewildering array of subjects and activities in Moche art, Bourget tells us, in fact presents a rather reduced number of subjects and practices, primary among them depictions of Moche burials that include ritual sex, masturbation, sacrifice, blood drinking and a host of costumed performances by ritual specialists. Bourget's interpretations follow closely on the work of his mentor, Christopher Donnan, who first declared, in the early 1980s, that the complex interacting figures on later Moche vessels were not deities or supernatural or mythical beings but were real historic persons carrying out real ritual events, often in elaborate regalia. Paraphernalia recovered from elite Moche tombs

could be used to associate entombed individuals with the costumes they wore and the roles they played in ceremonial rituals. Bourget builds on this boldly literal interpretation to further explore the ritual personnel and ideologies of Moche funerals.

The book is richly illustrated with b/w (and a few colour) photographs and roll-out line drawings showing the elaborately painted (and sometimes modelled) vessels, mostly of phases III, IV and V, mobilized to support Bourget's thesis: that the subjects on Moche vessels represent three kinds of beings: naturalistic humans and animals who live in the world we know; 'transitional beings' who occupy the realm of the dead and who include mutilated prisoners close to death and skeletons recently dead; and the long-dead ancestors who live in the afterworld and exhibit supernatural attributes but also include anthropomorphized objects and animals. (Bourget allows that these are not cleanly distinct groupings but that they overlap in relations of continuity and contiguity along the journey of life-death-afterlife.) Bourget shows us how to understand these stylized 'beings' as they are shown participating in activities (especially sex and sacrifice) that ultimately tie them back to Moche burial ceremonies.

Bourget refers to his methodology as 'decoding' (p. 111), suggesting that Moche symbolic life exists below the obvious surface of what is shown. By closely observing single vessels with their complex and interwoven iconographies, Bourget identifies specific recurring actors and activities, across and within each life-death-afterworld realm. He points out how a primary attribute or actor from one pot may occur in a different context on another pot, and that some being or activity on that second pot will allow an association with still other pots (although it may not share any iconographic features with the first vessel). In this way, Bourget builds constellations of associated beings and activities that, he argues, are all significant to a given theme. Since no vessel shows the complete range of associated elements, and since Bourget seldom mentions how often particular traits co-occur (presumably only in single instances), this method for deriving large classes of associated symbols requires a certain amount of faith that they are real and that they are significant.

Bourget sustains this approach through his longest chapter (2, 'Eros', comprising almost half the volume). Here he explores the well-known corpus of Moche sexual depictions to argue that sex is intimately related to death, sacrifice, fertility and the afterlife. He begins with the familiar observation that Moche sex pots overwhelmingly portray non-vaginal sex (especially between humans), and he explains that this is because we are being shown a funerary ritual. Citing two central features of Moche symbolic organization — the notions