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**Peter F. Biehl,
Alexander Gramsch, Arkadiusz Marciniak (Hrsg.)**

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**Geschichte, Methoden und Theorien/
History, Methods and Theories**

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DANUTA MINTA-TWORZOWSKA

Between a community of inspiration and the separateness of archaeological traditions

In attempting to describe the visage of contemporary archaeology, one should consider the geographic and linguistic differentiation of archaeology, which runs along the line of Anglo-American archaeology and Continental-European archaeology. Is there a certain observable asymmetry between these archaeologies? A cursory observation shows that whatever their selection, the import of theories into East European archaeology has provided more irritation than inspiration. East European theoreticians don't, as a rule, make a career in their homeland if they concern themselves with subjects discussed in Anglo-American circles, which do not provoke interest in their own countries. This situation has been observable since the 1960s, when an intellectual awakening occurred, particularly in the USA; at that time, a "new archaeology" appeared that eventually transformed into its processual form. Despite the fact that it was methodologically coherent and theoretically grounded, there was not much interest shown in it on the European continent. Nonetheless, in looking at situation, it should be considered, whether at any level there was space for the adaptation of processual archaeology in the European context. It appears that at that precise point, a clear differentiation of those traditions began to emerge. American archaeology is based on its achievements in cultural anthropology, whereas the European tradition is grounded in history or a highly developed form of ethnological diffusionism. It thus makes little sense to look for processualism in the continental European archaeology of that time. Positivist, inductionist means of cognition had once been dominant. In Central Europe, in the cultural sciences, establishing a basis for a new methodology based upon Marxism had been attempted.

Despite the fact that these archaeologies should be considered as separate and different, an attempt shall be made to find in them certain common elements, and to articulate the differences on a different level than has commonly been done. In my view, there is a fundamental difference between traditional positivist archaeology and antipositivist (modernist) as well as postmodernist archaeology. Here it should be noted that in the Polish philosophical tradition, modernism is understood differently than by West European research. According to Polish tradition, modernism is anti-positivism, whereas West European works tend to combine modernism with positivism. C. Renfrew, P. Bahn or M. Johnson see what has been defined in Central European archaeology as a traditional approach, to be a non-scientific phase in the history of archaeology. In the Polish understanding of positivism, stress is laid on those of its characteristics such as inductionism, naturalism, faith in "pure facts", stress on the absolute role of the observer and experience as the only basis for real knowledge. The antipositivist breakthrough, initiating the onset of the modernist phase of scientific development, should be connected with a tendency toward antinaturalism and antiinductionism. In the Polish situation, antipositivism

has been connected with the adaptation and creative interpretation of Marxism, particularly in the methodological sense of the Poznań School, created by L. Nowak and J. Kmita (Kmita / Nowak 1968), and in the course of history according to J. Topolski (1968; 1977; 1983).

The contemporary situation of archaeology has thus been a product and a superimposition of its various "worlds". It is a unique confrontation of those wanting to view science in an exact sense, with those who treat it as literature. Near the end of the 20th century these two approaches of understanding archaeology have met, and this has resulted in a diffusion of traditions of various kinds and different approaches to the past as well as various (pre) historical narrations. All of these depend upon the world of prehistory, which is not only a world of the past, but also belongs to the present. It is this latter thesis that is probably the greatest "discovery" of archaeology at the end of the 20th century.

Three fundamental worlds of archaeology: the traditional, modern and postmodern represent various aims and offer an assortment of possibilities. Traditional archaeologists, representing cultural-historical archaeology believed that the past could be reconstructed, and did "reconstruct it in terms of linear sequences of archaeological-cultural time-space." This archaeology remained under the strong influence of ethnology and diffusionism. It was only then that European and American archaeology represented a common approach to the past. Following this phase, their roads parted. This is why modern archaeology is represented by various trends, such as: processualism, structuralism, neo-Marxism and logicism. Their representatives, however, mutually agreed that the aim of archaeology is to explain phenomena and processes from the past through explanatory procedures. They perceived a lack of objectivity in data as well as scientific cognition, but believed in an objectivist theory of history. Postmodernist archaeologists believe that archaeology constructs the past.

In practice, these approaches meet. Thus the modern contains elements of the traditional, and the postmodern contains bits of both. It is presently obvious that in the humanities everything is interwoven and interspersed. There are no theories, which would "bring down" previous ones and rebuild our knowledge on the rubble from the very beginning. Changes of theory in the humanities occur in a "civilized" way, by means of employing current developments and putting in motion further levels of interpretation based on new research questions.

The appropriate metaphor, expressing the situation of contemporary archaeology, particularly the continental variety, is that of the bridge, since it suggests phenomena, which occur as inevitable features of contemporary existence. Until recently, it appeared that the greatest desire of archaeologists was to make the culture of archaeology a fully scientific area with its own scientific theory. In East European archaeology, this crisis of theory occurred at the time of the breakdown in Marxist theory and its objectivist vision of history, which caused a loss of confidence in the previously accepted theory. Precision and clarity have always been traditional characteristics for which scientific cognition has aimed. This means that statements do not have a metaphorical character, but are performed in an empirical language. The current view is that of archaeology as an area of culture, as are the other sciences. Portrayals of the past world, which archaeologists create, always refer to concepts and cultural values among which we ourselves live and function. This is why there is no objective strategy of cognition, no

objective theory. This is why we can agree with the view of J. Topolski, who felt that metaphor might be an addition to historical narration, one expressed in the metaphor of the bridge. Contemporary views in this matter, however, consider metaphor to be something original, deeply rooted in language and culture, and not only an addition. All the signs today indicate how important reflections on archaeological theory, on its character in the contemporary world, continue to be.

This is important as for a long time it was thought that in the methodology of science in every culture, science, in its general development, could be ascribed to cognitive progress. Attempts at formulating criteria for progress were undertaken by, among others, K. Popper (1977), T. Kuhn (1968), P. Feyerabend (1979). The criteria of scientific development were considered; and despite the fact that this did not lead to a formulation of the principles of this development, the discussion did show two significant traits: (1) the inability to logically formulate scientific progress and (2) the variability of cognitive norms and methodological directives. This led to a conviction of the incommensurability of subsequently appearing theories, one that was to have been based on a lack of logical connection between subsequently occurring theories. The appearance of an incommensurable theory with relation to the previous one has been considered a methodological breakthrough. In many sciences today, it is said that such a breakthrough apart from the philosophy of science does not exist. The example of archaeology also indicates that there is little sense in speaking of incommensurability in theory. There do exist phenomena, which are based on the absorption of theories by other ones, which give a better explanation of reality.

At this point it is necessary to answer how is theory in archaeology to be understood? One may speak of empirical theories (general and detailed – see J. Topolski 1983), which consider not only the knowledge and culture with which research is begun but also the scientific approach used and hypotheses stated. The knowledge and culture with which we proceed in our research are decisive of the selection, hierarchization and generalization of information. According to the view of A. Pałubicka and S. Tabaczyński (1986, 78): “Theories are the result of research and a consciously created, conceptual apparatus, i. e. a given research tool. These exist in their own form and function on various levels of research, both in the phase of empirically observed facts, of which none is free from theoretical interpretation, as well as in analytical phases, interpretations and constructions of a system of explanations in a given area of reality.” If theory and its functions are to be understood in such a way, then in the case of archaeology, we can only refer to change (not necessarily progressive) in the historical dimension. We can thus merely identify the traditional archaeological phase (cultural-historical) and isolate it from the modernist (processual) and postmodernist (postprocessual) ones. From the point of view of introducing theory into archaeology trends such as processualism, neo-Marxism, logicism, were of great significance. All were aimed at developing their own theories, models and research procedures within archaeology through the inspiration of overall achievements by cultural anthropology, history, philosophy of science and, above all, the inspiration resulting from systems theory. The example of processual archaeology shows how the systemic approach led to a change in the research questions posed in constructing a theory and models of prehistoric processes dependent on its demands. Processualists were interested in processual actions and their effects considering the complicated dependencies between them. Processual archaeology moved

towards the creation of a perfected methodology, achieving objective knowledge, constituting a union of cultural theory, cultural practice, and reflection on sources. New scientific methods were introduced, including the testing of hypotheses as verification of all conclusions with respect to the past. This was no doubt a novelty in the research approach of archaeology.

This is why, from the perspective of theory, there is an enormous difference evident between traditional (cultural-historical) and processual archaeology. In, for instance, the area of research on prehistory, traditional archaeologists are interested in the material attributes of culture, asking how a given culture is to be differentiated and understood. They don't want to accept that a change of artifacts does not necessarily signify a change of culture as a real entity. Often they consider the ethnicity of given cultures they have differentiated. Culture also undergoes change even when the same kinds of products start to function differently in society. The attitude of such an archaeologist is that of an observer, who treats the past as something external, which he tries to grasp, control and understand. Since the past no longer belongs to us, we attempt to "catch it in a net", comprised of ever more subtle typologies, classifications, more precise archaeological cultures. Many archaeologists almost immediately forget, that what is only a tool for grasping the past, is only real in their own minds, and begin treating the results of their own research as reality itself. Whereas, of course, classification and typology are but means for expressing the results of research, hypotheses and archaeological theory, and not ways of presenting the past. It had been felt that what a historian or archaeologist deals with was a genuine source, one from which the truth "flowed". Even if it was realized that getting to the truth was not a simple matter and that appropriate means, research procedures were necessary to achieve it, it was universally felt that the source had a unique status, one that carried the truth within it. The source was also considered to be more "real" and authentic than conclusions arrived at on its basis, or on any historical narration. In such a way, the myth of the archaeological, historical source, etc. was created. In traditional science, the source is "magical", as is the world of prehistory; history seen through its perspective is also "magical". Early positivistic traditional archaeology, (just like history) saw its main aim in establishing cultural (historical) facts. Sources played a fundamental role in this. They became the basis of all conclusions regarding the past; the image of the past was constructed from their "matter", as the only real background. The essence of the traditional approach of archaeologists to archaeological sources was grasped by L. Patrik (1985) who described this view as that of a "physical" model. The source, thus portrayed, is treated *de facto* as a fossil of the natural science type. Its "genus", "species", typological characteristics should thus be fixed in time and space. For the record, I would add that L. Patrik also differentiated the "textual" source model, placing it among modern views, however, she did not consider both opposing models, which have only now become clear. Most archaeologists of this time generally accepted the "mirror" concept of the source. Statements concerning archaeological sources were treated as fundamental information (requiring hardly any knowledge as to their origin). It must clearly be stressed that in the approach shown in K. Jazdzewski's statement (1981, p. 54), who wrote: "These, in the majority of cases, mute sources have that quality, which in the eyes of prehistorians favorably differentiates them from historical sources, in the strict sense, i. e. from written sources. Their quality is immanent objectivism, fundamentally different from naturally occurring sub-

jectivism (tendentiousness) in every kind of written record of past states and events.” Thus, in the opinion of archaeologists, traditional facts are not constructed; they are objective and the image of prehistory created on their basis is a certain and real reconstruction, because it occurred on a background reflecting the past. Is this not a beautiful and “magical” world?

Traditional archaeology was to be replaced Marxism in East European archaeology, however, I believe that Marxism in Polish archaeology did not exist as a theoretical orientation apart from the creative references of J. Żak (1962; 1966; 1975) and S. Tabaczyński (1970), and partially T. Wiślański (1969) or L. Leciejewicz (1956). The reason for this may have been that, the interpretation of Marxist theory taken up by the Poznań methodological school received a poor reception in archaeology. It developed, among others, a so-called regulative concept of culture as well as the idea of magical culture (Pałubicka 1985). However, the question remains open, which of its theoretical proposals arising from interpretations of Marxism, functionalism and structuralism, has actual value for such sciences as archaeology? It appears that West Europeans brought much more to the opening of inroads by Marxist theory into the anthropological and social sciences than did the Polish methodological school. Its proposals and inspirations were most clearly evident in the works of J. Żak and S. Tabaczyński. Other archaeological works attempted only to refer to Marxist classics (compare their description in the course of J. Lech’s polemics with P. Barford – see Lech 1997).

Marxist interpreters L. Althusser and E. Balibar (1975) and M. Godelier (1973) developed the social theory offered by West European neo-Marxism. Thus in France, Italy, or in England there was room for reflection on the Marxist classics, creating a unique “bridge” between it and humanistic and social sciences, described as neo-Marxism. Marxism introduced new concepts, new ideas, elements of analysis, terms such as means of production and forces of production. Just as the whole of modernism, it emerges from a systemic approach to culture, to society, to the reality being researched (see e. g., J. G. Clark 1957; J. Friedman 1974; J. Friedman and M. J. Rowlands 1977; Ch. Tilley 1984). Neo-Marxism proposes a social theory, thanks to which we obtain the characteristics of social structure in categories of ownership and production, where ideology is assigned the role of masking inequalities – a somewhat background role (e. g. A. Gilman 1984).

Concepts in the cognitive model of science make sense at the same time when they are interwoven in a coherent research procedure, one connected with theory. This sense results from accepting both the concepts as well as the theoretical principles behind them. In Polish archaeology there was a particular lack of such a “bridge”. Marxism was foreign to the cognitive tradition of Polish archaeology; it only supplemented the cultural-historical model with new concepts, particularly economic categories, which allowed traditional archaeology to catch a fresh breath and expanded the significance of the area of its interests; it did not, however, provide changes in the theory itself. There existed works, in which new research problems were taken up, some of them “initiated”, others confirmed by Marxist theory, concerning the economy, settlement pattern and material culture. Few of them arose from the creative inspiration of Marxism. However, during the 1980s, Polish archaeology came under a humanistic influence and objectivist interpretation of biocultural evolutionary theories and processualism.

Theoretical changes in archaeology during the 1960's were brought on essentially by processualism. A systemic approach was proposed in the course of research on culture. As well, it included an objectification of culture; research questions, however, concerned interpretations of functional culture. Sources were to ensure access to culture. It was, however, in processualism that the process of "demystifying" the prehistoric world was to be found. To the processualists, the only alternative to mystification is to be found in a rationalized world, where through a rational network of ordered relations originating with the intellect – everything can be classified, typed, presented in terms of figures, percents, with a deep conviction that the structure of the world is thus being discovered and explained. In this view, the source is both a fossil from the past, as well as a certain "text" to be read from the point of view of certain functions of the then contemporary world. It may be said that the source contained information that appears to be obvious, as well as potential information, which the archaeologist brings out by asking subsequent questions, thus activating further layers of information. This requires attention to not only its classification as a "genus or species" (although this, too, is important), but particularly in terms of cultural qualities, speaking for their producer, user, etc.

Thus modernism introduces a different approach to sources. This is connected with a systemic understanding of culture and connected sources of cultural subsystems, in other words, those individual categories of sources representing the proper subsystem, be it economic, social or ideological. However, as L. R. Binford noticed earlier (1972), the actual meaning of a structure or object was also lost forever. We will, therefore, be unable to say what it meant for a given person or group. This is despite the fact that Binford proposed a division into archaeological sources corresponding to activities and the effects of cultural functions in the area of cultural subsystems, i. e. technological (technomic sources), social (sociotechnical) and ideological (ideotechnical). He treated them as a representation of the past cultural system, assigning them the role of independent testers of hypotheses and theory formulated by archaeologists. It is because he believed that the "formal structure of product units together with the contextual connections between elements should and do represent a systemic and comprehensible vision of the whole extinct system of culture" (Binford 1972, 95).

On the other hand, in postprocessual archaeology, particularly its contextual variety, Hodder (1995) treats material culture as a text to be read by the archaeologist. Some feel that sources are a "chain of opposition" that impose certain limitations about what may be said about the past. Whereas, according to I. Hodder, features and structures, which an archaeologist discovers, are not merely a passive reflection of the past. He believes that there should be less "writing" of the past, and more reading of material culture. However, the question arises as to how this reading should be accomplished. According to Hodder, two elements comprise this "reading": the "objective" and interpretative (hermeneutic). Objectivity is connected with the creation of "data", which is comprised of limited (completed and not random) interpretations of structures and matter that are remnants of the past. Such created data are to ensure the objectiveness of conclusions concerning the past. The very concept of "data" refers to both the real world and our thoughts about it, i. e. theory (Hodder 1995, 33). Construction of an image of the past depends to a large degree on the present context – on the context of the archaeologist, himself (Hodder 1985, 34). At the same time, his "data" contains elements which arise from the culture of the past reality as well as those resulting from the

culture of the present. These continue to be real despite the fact that there exist no independent instruments for testing theories and hypotheses against them (Hodder 1995, 35). Their reality is confirmed by the fact that contextual archaeology is based on the objectivity of material culture. Hodder made an attempt at conceptualizing an archaeological source. He decided that behind every element of material culture, settlement structure, or burial site, there are hidden structures confirming the existence of prototypes throughout all of culture for ways of acting and of thinking. These meanings are present in archaeological remains. The archaeological source contains a structure granting significance, a "hidden" structure from which the whole meaning must be extracted.

Another element of reflection on Hodder's archaeological source concerns material products in the aspect of their social function, legitimization of their social status, authority and social roles. Artifacts in I. Hodder's view play an active rather than passive role, shaping and symbolizing social relations in a given social group. Artifacts and their spatial arrangements mirror the social rules to some degree. The fundamental role of data is to serve as a basis for reading a distant contextual meaning. In this respect, I. Hodder (1985, 218) refers to two types of meaning (connected with L. Patrik) – significance in the physical sense (objects as products, things fulfilling everyday needs) as well as "textual" significance (to the content of historical traditions and culture). He treats these as necessary to reading meanings. In this view, the fundamental role of context is observed. To spatial configurations of archaeological materials, relational analogies, not ethnological ones, are sought. This view combines interpretation with analysis. The context here has a distinct connection in deciding upon the significance of a product or site in a given social group. The second element in "reading" material culture, according to I. Hodder (1991, 7-18) is that interpretation, which is based particularly on Gadamer's hermeneutics, is based upon a "dialog" between the past and present, the whole and the part, the "object" and the "subject". This hermeneutics has the aim of establishing the meaning of the past by way of present day meanings. Interpretation aims at finding coherence between these meanings. In arriving at a thus understood meaning, the archaeologist ever more frequently refers to the results of actualistic research, which on a broad scale had been used by I. Hodder in *Baringo* (1982) and earlier processual archaeologists, e. g. L. R. Binford in *Nunamiut* (1978). This concerns artifacts, human culture products, as well as ecofacts of a wide group of natural sources marked, however, by signs of human activity. Ecofacts play a fundamental role in archaeological interpretations; this is why it is so important to differentiate between whether bone deposits occurred due to human cultural activity, due to the actions of other animals (predators) or are the effect of interwoven cultural and natural factors. Actualistic research is helpful in such solutions, however, they too may not give the proper diagnosis or illustration of behaviors which led to their formation (Marciniak 1996). In order to describe the significance of products or structures, certain principles must be accepted concerning their meaning, i. e. when we speak of luxury goods or about the economy. However, such descriptions as e. g. "grave" or "stronghold" signify something more than just a collection of physical traits; what is more, in various cultures, meanings underlying concepts such as grave or burial are different, and thus their sense may be different.

Here I wish to formulate a certain thought, extending somewhat beyond the ideas of I. Hodder, i. e. in understanding material culture in the modern sense, and thus not as an element of a tripartite division of culture into material, social and spiritual. I pro-

pose that it be accepted, as it was by P. Bourdieu (1979), that our world has become objectified and through its objectification – visualized, which allows us to experience the nature of our cultural order. The social world constructs the world of objects and vice-versa, objects create the social world. In such a way a chain of “becoming” for people and objects is formed. Since the life of people takes place among objects, and subsequently produced objects are included within the order of symbolic utility, it is through objects that people communicate the significant themes of their own culture.

Theoretical archaeology (in the processual, neo-Marxist, logicistic edition) constitutes a clear change with respect to what had come earlier. It is characterized by faith in a theory, which will allow for the explanation of everything, a means to unite hypotheses with facts. This is an objectivist theory, one based on a classical vision of truth. Despite this, it is in clear opposition to positivism with its faith in induction and “pure” facts.

Archaeology thus features a fundamental division among objectivists, who believe they are reconstructing the past and constructivists who believe visions of the past are being created. It is constructivism in the postmodernist and poststructural form that sees the fall of the enlightenment view of the world, the fall of the intellect and a return to life. Post-structuralism, on the other hand, introduced the categories of discourse, deconstruction and difference. It is difference in particular that constructs the postmodernist world (Z. Melosik 1995, 197). These categories were accepted by third wave feminism. What is surprising is the fact that feminism itself deconstructed constructivism as an approach created by men, so that if men can’t define truth, then it does not exist. And – as Z. Melosik suggestively states (1996, 276-277) – feminism-woman was once again seduced by postmodernism-man.

In postmodernism, which upset the concept of objective truth, casting aside a search for objectivity for relativism, the understanding of theory has also changed. This cannot include its classical approach, since everything that was classical had been negated. It consists of so-called contextual theory, which unites different varieties of postmodernism. It does not, however, have stable foundations, since it is not anchored in concepts and methods. Its basis lies in the fact of many approaches to reality, since the world of prehistory may be viewed from many different perspectives. Acceptance of a given way of understanding reality has a subjective nature, since it is connected with an element of culture, the one in which we live, whose values we prefer or unknowingly accept as being obvious. Hence our choice of a given theoretical orientation is not axiologically neutral, since we accept it due to the element of reality that formed us. Although a postmodernist does try to ascertain how a given group of people functions he is nevertheless conscious of the fact that there is no real possibility of clearly answering that question. Neopragmatists, in turn, believe that is not possible to “see” the world as it really is. The world is always “for us”, and, at the same time, it is we who create it. We thus obtain many “complete furnishings” and choose one, guided by the research question asked. This does not, however, mean that this “furnishing” may be treated as a reconstruction of the past. In postmodernist theory, reference is made to the context in order to answer which of the images is most appropriate. Reference to the context allows the researcher to give meaning to artifacts and their spatial configurations. The meanings resulting from the context are changeable, fluid, and the context itself is unlimited.

This, however, appears to be a road leading nowhere, since it suggests that meanings

assigned to products, in other words, conclusions made about them, are random. I believe that effective protection against such charges of randomness is provided by the idea of complementary theories, e. g. processual and contextual ones, conducted, among others, by I. Hodder (1986, 64-65) in analyzing the Dutch Neolithic. While I do accept relativism, I stand by the idea of "dialog" between various approaches, the kind being conducted quite universally in much of humanistic research today. This is also visible in archaeology since various theories, such as the processual and contextual ones, can meet in dialogue on the border of two paradigms. There are many more examples confirming that this is so. Such theories function alongside one another, despite the fact that they represent different options. In some areas of research, they even complement one another – permitting one to view an idea "from the other side of the looking glass". This does not, however, mean that they are necessarily in agreement with one another, although one can speak of the fact that there do exist areas of reality where concepts, models and methods are complementary. This is also a limitation of relativism. Such limitations also create the very mechanism of creating scientific knowledge, both in the humanities, as well as in the natural sciences. It has been found that this is not based on methodological principles, as the modernists have felt, but is more reminiscent of negotiations. Cultural mechanisms are decisive, rather than scientific research. The vision of the world created by the humanists as well as natural scientists is the effect of negotiation and consensus that a given group of researchers reaches. In this way, a canon of behavior is created for other researchers to follow. And thus, knowledge and authority become inseparable (extensively Zybertowicz 1995, 271-293, 355).

In its more radical views, the contemporary world blurs the borders dividing the investigator and the investigated, between the archaeologist and the past. It is a meeting that is expressive of dialogue and gentleness, the discovering of past human lives in us. This is because the past does not exist of itself (Mamzer 1998, 304), but exists for us. What arises is the idea of archaeology "for" us. Postmodernist archaeology speaks another language and has other expectations. It avoids definitions, since it believes these do not come from life; furthermore, they are a form of regulation (oppression). It rejects the idea of objectivist science with its cold, indifferent cognition. The most contemporary archaeologist looks at the past from the position of an actor rather than an observer, as had earlier been the case. He prefers the idea of dialogue and gentle discussion. The contemporary trend, one characterized by criticism of universalistic theories and metanarrations, tends toward the individual and microhistory. Narration is used here not only as a form of presenting the world, but of constructing it, as well. Such trendy terms as deconstruction, the death of the subject, contemporarily see the fall of the enlightenment vision of the world, the fall of ideas, the intellect, and progress. It has been concluded that the object is formed in discussions and through them; thus the object is not the same as the subject.

The contemporary world also flirts with the inanimate spirit of Marxism. It should thus be considered which elements of Marxist theory constitute the level of this dialogue, since it is a theory based on an objectivist vision of history. Perhaps it is dialectics, suggestively explaining the change that is the cause?

This is why it appears that the archaeology of the future has before it three important problems: an interparadigmatic dialogue, multivocal discourse, and "social archaeology" combined with gender studies. Contemporary trends perceive science within

categories of knowledge and "authority". They state that knowledge and authority are inseparable, and what is more, that the socio-political situation determines the development of science and the way in which scientific knowledge is gathered, made available, and utilized. Contemporary trends reflect our involvement. We become involved in what we do because we interpret the past, referring these interpretations to a "philosophy of life", to utility in human needs or to a decentralization of authority. We consider ourselves to be actors, engaged in experiencing reality and not merely viewers observing it. The fact that the knowledge of archaeologists is created has already become a kind of truism. However, we cannot divest ourselves of a desire to understand the people of past times. Ever more frequently, stress is laid on a holistic vision of humanity. This is why the world is divided into symbolic, material, economic spheres with technology connecting all of them. This is why there exists a longing to create new theories fulfilling the above expectations.

A certain variety of "social archaeology" has been created whose inseparable element is feminism. This proves that gender is a dynamic social process. Gender studies, however, are not conducted under the banner of feminism. Just as traditional archaeology had been politically committed and had solved the problems of ethnogenesis, so do many contemporary trends appear to be politically engaged (e. g. feminism). This is precisely the way that gender studies focus both political and cognitive emotions. These, in turn, constitute a good example of a multivocal discourse, as well as the politicization of archaeology. Postmodern archaeology, particularly feminism, celebrates and exhibits the qualities of difference, discourse and deconstruction. This subject matter has always been present in archaeology, but differently expressed or actually obliterated (as in traditional archaeology); and it is this difference that constitutes the postmodernist world (Melosik 1995, 197). It is in a category describing a world available to everyday experience.

It is thus that archaeology creates history, prehistory, micro-prehistory; it itself an area of culture conditioned socially and ideologically. Archaeology is the personification of the past (Mamzer 1998) because it is impossible to think of the past in categories other than our own. What is more, the past exists "for" us; archaeology is thus a memory "for" us.

In my opinion, today's differences between Anglo-American and continental European archaeology result from different philosophical traditions. American archaeology lacks roots in the tradition of hermeneutic philosophy, and its connections with phenomenology, whereas hermeneutics, particularly that of P. Ricoeur, has a serious influence on the European historical sciences. All this makes the assimilation of these two "worlds" more difficult. The representatives of a given theoretical option speak their own language. Archaeology is an example of a unique phenomenon, a different theoretical reflection among Anglo-Saxon and continental archaeologies.

It appears that archaeology, whose beginnings are in the investigation of archaeological cultures, has come full circle; this was followed by a systemic approach to culture and the prehistoric world. The last phase of the circle is in the variety of hypotheses offered and the attempt at dialogue between various theories. This does not mean that things will return to the beginning. Nevertheless, the fundamental questions remain, i. e. what constitutes the archaeological source, what constitutes the essence of culture, society, the symbolic expression of the world. In closing, I refer to the metaphor of the

bridge. It must be rebuilt today and while it must allow for earlier concepts and achievements, it must emerge in a manner completely different from that in the past.

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