

Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice: Cultural Encounters, Material Transformations¹

Edited by Matt Edgeworth²

Introduction by Lawrence F. Van Horn³

Whose culture is it? That of those of the past whose physical evidence of habitation or other activities is investigated by archaeologists? That of the local community members whose heritage is being studied archaeologically? That of the archaeologists themselves who design research projects, excavate sites, and analyze findings? That of the cultural anthropologists who observe these archaeologists during excavation and thus participate in the ethnography of archaeological practice? An apt answer would seem to be *all of the above*, especially if we heed Matt Edgeworth and his authors in this fascinating book titled *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice*.

This book offers intriguing examples from different parts of the world of how ethnography can contribute to archaeology. That is not surprising since *culture* remains the core concept that integrates the four fields of anthropology. These are, as we all know, (1) archaeology, (2) biological or physical anthropology, (3) cultural anthropology including ethnography as the description of a society's beliefs and mores and ethnology as societal comparison, and (4) linguistic anthropology as relating to the influences between language and culture and vice versa. What is surprising is how jargon-laden this book seems to be in spots. In the two reviews that follow, both Thomas F. King and Darby C. Stapp, comment on the book's occasional but still unseemly use of jargon.

No doubt the overuse of jargon should not be surprising in light of the observation of the late anthropologist Carleton Coon (1904-1981) that

in the academic world...people will express much more awe and admiration for something complicated which they do not quite understand than for something simple and clear (Coon 1980:12).

Does Matt Edgeworth fall into this category? He rightfully accepts Lisa Breglia's "series of suggestions for how ethnography of archaeology

can aid in building a locally meaningful, ethical context for fieldwork" (p. 181). But then he allows this sharing of ideas to be muddled when, as Thomas F. King reports in his review, 'she insists that the disciplines not "be entirely caught up in a closed hermeneutics of disciplinary self-reflexivity" (p. 182).' Does that mean we might talk and think too much about how ethnography can help archaeology?

Please enjoy the reviews of Thomas F. King and Darby C. Stapp, and by all means enjoy the book itself. In spite of annoying instances of jargon exemplified by that of Lisa Breglia, let us be reinforced by the ethnography of archaeology and realize once again that we anthropologists of whatever specialties are trying to understand how culture works and how it changes. As the book *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice* excitingly shows, we can do so from the past and the present. We can do so by seeing how cultural content and cultural process interact and influence one another, respectively, as material artifacts and products of behavior, and as ideas and beliefs behind behavior.

Or is my assertion above too full of jargon? Perhaps it verges *On Bullshit* as discussed and analyzed by Princeton philosopher Harry G. Frankfurt (2005) and as reviewed in *The Applied Anthropologist* by Pennie L. Magee (2006), Barbara L. Scott (2006), and me (Van Horn 2006) via our multi-review treatment. Whether jargon is *bullshit* remains a question for another time. Suffice it to say that *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice* is an important and inviting book even if muddled in places by jargon that could have been smoothly clarified by more straightforward word choices.

Notes

1. Lanham Maryland: Alta Mira Press, 2006. 213 pages, foreword, preface, acknowledgements, photographs, bibliography, notes, index, about the contributors. Cloth \$72.00 U.S. and paperback \$24.95 U.S.

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Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice: Cultural Encounters, Material Transformations¹

Edited by Matt Edgeworth²

Reviewed by Thomas F. King³

In the last few decades, a number of archaeologists have begun doing more or less formal ethnographic studies of themselves, their colleagues and students, and their field projects. At the same time, some professional and student ethnographers have taken archaeological field schools and other excavation projects as venues for their exercises in participant-observation. Matt Edgeworth, a practicing applied archaeologist in the United Kingdom and an international leader in ethnography-of-archaeology (EOA) practice, gathered 15 EOA studies for this volume.

I am not sure I can honestly call this book a piece of applied anthropology, I am sure that at least some of the authors would object to having their work so labeled. Some of the authors define themselves as anthropologists, others as sociologists, others just as archaeologists dabbling in the study of themselves and other live people. More importantly, I am not sure to what extent the studies recounted are really “applied” to anything. They are certainly examples of ethnography done in novel contexts, but for the most part the authors seem to have little interest in how or whether the results of their work might be used. Yet as an occasionally practicing archaeologist, as I read some of the articles, I found myself thinking that having an ethnographer observing a field crew in action could be pretty useful as a means of improving my understanding of how the crew members’ and my own assumptions and beliefs influence the nature of the data produced. Such an application, however, seems to be remote from the minds of most of the authors. The use of ethnography as a basis for understanding and defusing conflicts between archaeologists and resident communities is clearly on the minds of some, but few seem inclined if a bit embarrassed to acknowledge this application as a rationale for the work. For the most part, the authors are content simply to reflect upon how archaeological sites and people – including themselves – influence and in some

senses construct one another.

Edgeworth kicks the volume off with a retrospective on EOA origins – in the 1990s, though he can trace the idea back to the mid-20th century – and then turns to its history and potential. He sees the latter as lying in EOA’s “capacity to facilitate alternative ways of looking at things....to look at things [in archaeological practice] in new and surprising ways” (p. 16), which does seem like a useful thing to facilitate, and hence like the activity’s primary application. Having a systematic interpretation – or multiple systematic interpretations – of what goes on during one’s survey or excavation, and how the differing viewpoints of different participants and stakeholders may influence the outcome, could make for much more interesting, thoughtful, balanced, and perhaps reliable interpretations of the archaeological record.

I suspect, though, that Edgeworth and many of his authors would reject the idea that a “reliable” record is achievable or worthwhile. Virtually all the papers are rather aggressively post-modern in orientation, and focus on telling stories from different perspectives rather than seeking any sort of mutually agreed-upon “truth.” I do not object to that perspective, but I do wish those who espouse it could be less pompous about it and lose the jargon. If I see the words *reflexive* or *hermeneutic* one more time, I think I will scream.

Following Edgeworth’s introduction, Thomas Yarrow describes the way academics, archaeologists, volunteers, landowners, and the financial benefactors supporting a Yorkshire excavation construct their own versions of the same site, and what these varying versions reveal about the site on the one hand and the people on-site on the other. David Van Reybrouck and Dirk Jacobs write about the mutual creation of an Iron Age house and the archaeologists excavating it. Charles Goodwin, a linguist, provides a somewhat more abstract treatment of how the observation of phenomena in a site gets trans-

lated into written descriptions and interpretations that in effect create the phenomena described. Blythe E. Roveland, an archaeologist who carried out EOA on her own excavation of a late Paleolithic site in Germany, discusses the difficulties and rewards in doing so. Jonathan Bateman focuses (literally, using photography) on the process of graphic record-keeping on an archaeological dig, and the role of that process in creating the identity of both site and artist/draftsperson. Cornelius Holtorf describes relationships (and non-relationships) among Italian, Scandinavian, and American archaeologists and field-school students working on a site in western Sicily, and the sociological results of the enterprise.

John Carman's contribution on the sociology of an archaeological excavation emphasizes the social activities and patterns of activity distinctive of the archaeological enterprise – isolation as a group, engagement with material things, beer-bourn camaraderie. Oguz Erdur describes a day in the life of an ethnographer on a dig, reflecting on ethnographic versus archaeological perceptions. The apocryphal names he gives his subjects are rather distractingly cute, and though his use of presumably verbatim quotes makes for a lively paper, I came away from it scratching my head and wondering what I had just read.

Michael Wilmore, observing work at a Bronze Age site in Cornwall, emphasizes the relevance of class and status to the perceptions and interpretations of both the site and the work by different participant groups.

Angela McClanahan shifts the focus to the management of what she calls heritage sites (p. 126), and to the perceptions of such management by local residents. She analyzes the attitudes of Orkney residents to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) designation of the *Heart of Neolithic Orkney* as a World Heritage Site, and to the management style of its administrator, Historic Scotland. Not surprisingly, the locals are less enthusiastic about the designation than Historic Scotland might have expected; the monuments play roles in their lives and identities that are not necessarily compatible with World Heritage status. Håkan Karlsson and Anders Gustafsson address a similar set of issues in their

examination of how Swedish heritage authorities have managed through burial and interpretation an endangered rock art site at Tanum, effectively asserting their authority to control both the site and the visitor's experience.

Shifting back to the study of archaeological fieldwork but continuing to attend to the viewpoints of the non-archaeological public, Denise Maria Cavalcante Gomes discusses the construction of modern identities by Amazonian Caboclo communities (p. 151), and how these identities play out in a community's attitudes toward an archaeological project. Similarly, Timoteo Rodriguez examines conflicts that developed between archaeologists seeking to study, preserve, and develop the Maya site of Kochol – with the intention of benefiting the local Yucatec Maya community – and the community itself, which saw the site as a particularly good place for growing crops. In the final paper, Lisa Breglia provides an examination based upon participant observation of worker-archaeologist relationships at Kuchol and the apparently nearby site of Chunchucmil. Based on her observations, she sets out at the end of her paper to offer “a series of suggestions for how ethnography of archaeology can aid in building a locally meaningful, ethical context for fieldwork” (p. 181). Regrettably for me at least, her postmodern prose renders whatever suggestions she offers almost incomprehensible to this old-style archaeologist. When she insists that the disciplines not “be entirely caught up in a closed hermeneutics of disciplinary self-reflexivity” (p. 182), I think she is cautioning against navel contemplation. That would point to a malady that, it had struck me while reading the preceding papers, seems to be something of an occupational hazard for EOA practitioners. But it is hard for me to be sure.

Breglia's is the only paper in which I found an explicit reference to applied anthropology. Without explanation of her apparent distaste for our practice, she insists on page 182 that EOA must “first and foremost” not be “cast under” applied anthropology's “rubric.” This seems to me rather too bad, because in many ways her work seems to have the most hardheadedly useful application in identifying and heading off conflicts between archaeologists and local residents arising out of their disparate histories and

culture-grounded perceptions.

The EOA approach, as portrayed in this book, seems to be something of an adolescent sub-discipline in that it is gawky, gangling, flailing about in all directions, uncertain of purpose but bursting with somewhat unformulated promise. While it appears that some of its practitioners would regard it as anathema, I agree with Michael Wilmore's observation that EOA can "suggest areas that could repay careful consideration in relation to the practical conduct of archaeological research" (p. 115). His comment and others reminded me of a time when I discovered that a volunteer on an excavation I was supervising was discarding important evidence and thus information. He was an attorney, as it happened, and he simply could not see why it was of value to keep fish bones, and as a result was tossing them out, thus biasing my analysis of fish consumption at the site. It struck me at the time that we archaeologists often have a pretty thin understanding of the attitudes that inform the behavior of our fieldworkers, even when we all originate in the same society, and that the fruits of these attitudes can have profound implications for the reliability of our results. A more balanced understanding of fieldworker attitudes, and our own, perhaps obtainable through the conduct of EOA, could improve that reliability. I surmise, though, that most of the authors in *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice* would sneer at such an application. The applicability of studies like McClanahan's, Karlsson's and Gustafsson's to archaeological site management is more straightforward and obvious; it would, I think, be enlightened of organizations like Historic Scotland and the Swedish heritage authorities at Tanum to pay attention. The work of ethnographers like Breglia, Rodriguez, and Gomes could be vital to avoiding mutually damaging confrontations between archaeologists and residents. These all seem like worthy applications, but my analysis may reflect a flawed hermeneutic.

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Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice: Cultural Encounters, Material Transformations¹

Edited by Matt Edgeworth²

Reviewed by Darby C. Stapp³

The majority of archaeological research in North America has become increasingly sterile in recent decades. Despite the intellectual advancements of the last quarter century, most archaeologists continue to produce descriptive archaeological reports in the scientific tradition. The field, at least in its Western intellectual form, is insular, and few opportunities for outsiders, descendants of peoples under study, or contemporary local communities exist.

Why do archaeologists provide so few alternatives to the standard archaeological program? Why is archaeology restricted to its genre? And why, even in these standardized scientific texts, do archaeologists provide and incorporate so little context, so little *meta-data*, if you will?

As an archaeologist raised in the *New Archaeology* tradition and then tossed into the highly charged political environments of North American Indians, I have come to believe that there is little objectivity to be found in archaeology today. Bias exists throughout the system as an inherent part of our work. It affects our selection of sites to excavate, our choice of collaborators and hiring (or use) of people to do excavation work, our selection of sampling strategies and analytical techniques, the patterns and objects we choose to document or not document, and the stories we choose to tell. Economic constraints, intellectual backgrounds, and political environments all affect the “science.” While this situation itself is disturbing, what really bothers me is the failure of most archaeological reports to document these biases so that other researchers can be aware of why certain choices were made during the recovery, analysis, and reporting of archaeological materials. By deciding not to document these biases, we make it unnecessary to think about them, and as a result, we fail to learn, we fail to grow.

Yes, it is important to provide the counts, the measurements, the maps, and the pictures of artifacts. But it is also important to explain the

background of the project, the intellectual history and perspectives of the researchers, the reasons why the site was excavated, the economic constraints and how they were addressed, the political contexts of the descendent populations and local communities, and so on. Rarely is such information explicitly provided to the reader

In several venues, I have encouraged the publication of books and reports that highlight not only the knowledge gained from the work, but also philosophical and political influences on the researchers, their professional settings, the sites in which they work, and the social impacts of their scholarship. Thus, when approached to write a review of *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice*, I was interested to find out whether some of my concerns would be addressed by editor Matt Edgeworth and his contributors. What I found was encouraging. Many of my concerns were addressed, while many new approaches were introduced that stimulated my thinking in fresh directions.

Most of the contributors in the book are ethnographers, not archaeologists, which may explain why many of the issues explored were outside my archaeology “box.” They deploy the ethnographic method in order to learn more about the process of doing archaeology itself. Some pursue issues that arise within an archaeological team; several others focus on relationships with local communities, which may or may not be descendant populations of those who left the remains under study.

I found the chapters in the book to be generally readable and interesting, if occasionally jargon laden. Matt Edgeworth lays out the background and objectives of the book quite clearly in the introductory chapter. Lisa Breglia provides a thoughtful concluding chapter and strives to give some direction for the future to those who would follow her model for the ethnography of archaeological practice. I am not convinced that there should be a specialized field of ethnography of archaeological practice per se, but I do

believe that archaeologists should let ethnographers examine what we do as archaeologists. We should become more aware of the context of our work and more explicit about it. And, as Matt Edgeworth demonstrates, cultural anthropologists pursuing the ethnography of archaeology can help.

I think the book can help address what I see as archaeology's biggest challenge today — the development of more sophisticated research designs. Archaeology, at least in its intellectual form, is about producing new knowledge. But this is where we have tended to fall short recently. We have great expectations about what we might learn from a site, which is usually well documented in a funding proposal, but we rarely deliver in our analysis and reporting. Why is that?

One reason may be the lack of new ideas accepted in mainstream archaeology, and here is where the approaches described in *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice* hold promise. The diversity of ideas that the ethnographic research described in the chapters is sorely needed in archaeology today. Perhaps the new ideas and approaches from our cultural anthropological colleagues may help lead archaeology in new directions. I hope so.

Most of the research in the book examines ongoing archaeological excavations, focusing directly or indirectly on the digging aspects of archaeology. Ethnographic studies of archaeological settings outside excavation might also be fruitful. I would like to see attention turned to the laboratory, to the writing up of research reports, and to the public dissemination of our work. Some chapters touched on these points, but I got the feeling that the researchers saw archaeology mostly as a means to discover artifacts.

I would also like to encourage ethnographers to assist archaeologists in evaluating their work once projects are completed. The research could take the form of assessment of the research design and its implementation within particular research contexts. Rarely is this done, and when it is, it is more likely to be performed by archaeologists. Anthropologists from different backgrounds might bring a more productive insight to our archaeological practice. There is, unfortu-

nately, much disparity between what we say we do in archaeology and what we really do, and ethnographers could help us be more honestly descriptive about our work.

Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice is successful in demonstrating that ethnographic approaches to archaeological research can make contributions to cultural anthropology, archaeology, and the communities affected by archaeology. The diversity of topics and approaches represented in the book confirm that this is an emerging area of intellectual endeavor. The use of anthropological jargon made it difficult to understand some of the ideas being presented, and the significance of the results is not always transparent. But these problems should subside in the future as archaeologists and ethnographers interested in working together co-evolve in their thinking.

Like the authors, I would like to see the further development of the *ethnography-of-archaeological-practice* approach. The case studies presented in the book give us a taste of what can be achieved, but in order to make progress, some focus is needed. A well articulated research design that can be used by ethnographers and archaeologists alike would, I think, be well received

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Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice: Cultural Encounters, Material Transformations¹

Edited by Matt Edgeworth²

Counterpointed by Matt Edgeworth

I would like to thank Larry Van Horn, Thomas F. King and Darby C. Stapp for their valuable comments. I am also grateful for this opportunity to respond to the issues raised.

Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice was based upon a session at the Fifth World Archaeological Congress held in Washington, District of Columbia, in 2003. The session was exceptional in that it attracted papers from a very broad cross-section of the academic community. Perspectives of heritage professionals, museum workers, commercial archaeologists, excavation team leaders, teachers – not to mention ethnographers and sociologists – were represented. If Stapp is correct in saying that much archaeological work is insular and exclusive, then this session at least was the very opposite.

A point that came very clearly out of the session's discussions was that ethnographies of archaeology do not comprise anything like a neatly defined *field*. Rather, such work is being carried out in many different forms and for different reasons by workers in a host of different countries in both hemispheres and across a broad spectrum of archaeological and anthropological "isms." The idea of using the ethnographic method to investigate archaeological practices seems to be emerging independently at various points of origin. Much as I might like to be an "international leader of ethnography-of-archaeology," as King puts it, I have to admit that I am nothing quite so grand. This is simply not a discrete or bounded field of research, and there is no leader of it as such.

The purpose of the book, and my aim in editing it, was and is to preserve the diversity of points of view. I wanted to avoid falling into the trap of organizing disparate projects into a single encompassing field and to thereby put boundaries on it and thus to separate it from other fields. Many edited books do exactly that. They include contributions only from authors who share the same assumptions, work to the same goals, and use similar forms of language. Reference to

workers in other fields is often non-existent. That is how the insularity referred to by Stapp is created and reproduced.

Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice is different. The authors take up their own standpoints and develop their own forms of ethnography of archaeology. Some of the papers do deal with post-modern issues and use post-modern terminology, but actually these form only a small part of the book as a whole. It is true that discussion in the book ranges across internal and external disciplinary boundaries, but I think that King is being unduly negative when he describes this as "flailing about in all directions." It is also true that the book explicitly sets out to be experimental and to take risks, and does not claim to represent an established and mature field, as King seems to expect it to. In fact, it is only by confounding King's expectations, by not structuring the material too much, that the book turns out to be, in his words, "bursting with somewhat unformulated promise."

Van Horn, King, and Stapp all raise the issue of the use of jargon and whether the book might be jargon laden. Normally if we are working within a single field, we do not notice the jargon we use, while the jargon of others grates on our ears. We might gently remind one of the critics that even his job title of *cultural resource specialist*, with its meaning so clear to anyone working in that area, may actually be a form of meaningless jargon to someone from outside. The problem was particularly acute in editing this book. That was because the papers originated from or situated themselves within so many different fields, some of which do not normally communicate with each other. Nevertheless, the fact that workers from these different areas could come together to discuss a common theme, as they did in the session and the book, despite the various forms of technical language used, is surely an encouraging sign. This is much better than expecting others to use one's own forms of speech, or taking up a hostile attitude against

those who talk in a different way. King's overly defensive stance against post-modernist discourse is a case in point. As Van Horn so rightly points out, "anthropologists of whatever specialties are trying to understand how culture works and how it changes." Despite the internal cultural and linguistic variations a common ground does exist. There is room for dialogue across academic boundaries. There is space for books like this that serve as a meeting-ground for different points of view.

What *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice* asks the reader to do is shift between alternate ways of seeing. I accept that this can be an unsettling experience. It can be a shock for archaeologists or anthropologists, who are used to looking outwards in space or backwards in time at other cultures, to suddenly be made the object of the ethnographic gaze. Such an inversion of a habitual mode of looking at the world might have the disorientating effect of undermining belief in anthropological or archaeological "truth," and it would seem that this is at the core of King's somewhat negative attitude towards the book. However, I maintain that ethnography of archaeology ultimately enriches and enlarges rather than undermines.

Consider an ancient monument like Stonehenge. Try and explain it purely in terms of human activity in the ancient past and you are only looking at half of the story, for it is clearly also in part a construct of the present and the recent past. The political and social contexts within which the interpretation and physical form of Stonehenge have been shaped over the last century or two, and continue to be shaped by present day practices, is part of the overall picture. Stonehenge today is made up of modern material culture as well as ancient stones, the two being inextricably interwoven together. Our experience of the monument is shaped as much by walkways, car parks, fences and notice-boards as by the stone circles themselves. We need to understand it in terms of its significance to ourselves and to wider community groups as well as in terms of its significance to people in the past, broadening out our ideas of what archaeological "truth" is. Ethnography of archaeology can help us do that.

The issue of reflexivity is clearly crucial here

and it would be odd if it were not dealt with at some length in the book. As Stapp recognizes, there are thousands of archaeological reports that just describe, measure and present archaeological data. Anyone who wants to avoid talk of reflexivity or hermeneutics has plenty of places to turn. By way of contrast, several chapters in this book try to give more holistic accounts of (1) the archaeological evidence *and* (2) the cultural context of archaeological practices within which the evidence was brought to light. These papers go right against the grain of conventional writing. Attempting to take up a reflexive stance in this sense is actually quite a difficult and brave thing to do, all too easy to ridicule. King may scream, but his response illustrates well the resistance that exists within the academic and professional community to the development of reflexive methods or narrative styles.

At the same time, I think it is important to recognize that there are different kinds of reflexivity. Does being reflexive have to mean gazing at one's own navel, as characterized by its detractors? Or can we use reflexive methods to take us out of our insular self-absorbed worlds into more meaningful conversations and collaborations, not only with other parts of the disciplines, but also with other cultural groups? There is no muddled thinking, as Van Horn suggests there is, in embracing reflexivity on the one hand while cautioning against a tendency to create a closed, inward-looking discipline on the other. Ethnography of archaeology can help us focus our attention on our own practices, yes, but also on our interactions and encounters with other peoples. It can facilitate contact with alternative cultural perspectives, encouraging an "exchange of views," by which I mean the possibility of seeing the world from the radically different perspective of a cultural other, perhaps adjusting our own point of view to take account of it.

At least three papers in the book highlight disparities between how archaeologists configure the relationships between living communities and ancient material culture, and how members of local resident communities themselves see their relationship with the past. These papers go on to show how ethnographers, or perhaps even archaeologists with an ethnographic sensibility, can help bridge gaps in cultural understanding

over matters which are of great importance to both groups of people. How the past is to be configured, who the past belongs to, how the past is to be utilized in the present, and so on, are all issues which can be at least partly resolved through dialogue with living communities who have a stake and a voice in their own pasts. Ethnographers have an important part to play in that process.

There are numerous purposes to which ethnographies of archaeology can be put, and I resist the urge to focus on just one or two at the expense of others. As I see it, here are some of the main applications:

- Turning ethnographic attention onto the micro-processes of archaeological practice can shed light on the conditions that make archaeological knowledge possible, show how knowledge of the past is produced, and reveal how the “craft” expertise of archaeology is passed on from one generation of workers to another. Please see my own detailed study of excavation practices (Edgeworth 2003). There are clear links here with sociology of science, and Stapp is right when he says that other areas of archaeology, like laboratory work or project management, would be fertile ground for this kind of work.
- As already discussed, ethnography can be used as a reflexive method. The presence of an ethnographer on site, or indeed of archaeologists themselves taking up an ethnographic stance on their own activities, may have the effect of bringing about a more self-critical, self-aware and self-questioning practice.
- Combining archaeological investigation with ethnographic study of the activity of archaeological investigation itself can give a broader and more holistic version of archaeological “truth,” or, as King puts it, “make for much more interesting, thoughtful, balanced, and perhaps reliable interpretations.” For a recently published example, see the experimental site report on the excavation and survey of a Bronze Age landscape at Leskernick on Bodmin Moor, with contributions by ethnographers,

sociologists, poets, artists, geographers, and so on, as well as archaeologists (Bender, Hamilton and Tilley 2007).

- Ethnographies of archaeology can transform our view of archaeological monuments and the policies through which monuments are conserved, packaged and presented. The key here is seeing monuments as artifacts of the present as well as of the past, and studying them in their social and political context in the here and now. Ethnographers can investigate cultural encounters between the likes of heritage professionals, local residents, tourists, in the context of interactions between these groups and the monuments themselves. Their findings have important policy implications. As King says, it would “be enlightened of organizations like Historic Scotland and the Swedish heritage authorities at Tanum to pay attention.”
- On a broader scale, ethnography provides a means of apprehending the encounters and interactions that take place between archaeologists and indigenous peoples or other traditional communities. Often there are great dissonances between western and non-western perspectives on the past which ethnographers working on this cultural interface are well-placed to explore. See Lisa Breglia’s recent book on the “monumental ambivalences” that arise as an increasing number of important archaeological sites worldwide are coming under private ownership (Breglia 2006).

Neither reviewer picks up on the overarching question raised by the book, which in my view presents a challenge to the field of applied anthropology as it does for other branches of the discipline. The question springs from the knowledge that what we do as anthropologists or archaeologists is an embedded part of the complex social and cultural world that is the object of anthropological study. The question is this: What happens when the outward-looking anthropological method, normally applied onto cultural *others*, is turned back and applied onto the cultural practices of anthropology itself?

Notes

1. Lanham Maryland: Alta Mira Press, 2006. 213 pages, foreword, preface, acknowledgements, photographs, bibliography, notes, index, about the contributors. Cloth \$72.00 U.S. and paperback \$24.95 U.S.

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