

# Introduction: Ethnography in Retrospect

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We are archaeologists and not something else because we dig and use excavated data, but self-definition does not end there. Historical archaeology is defined paradigmatically, not simply by the character of its data; the field has outgrown static definitions presented in the past and now is perceived by most of its practitioners as comprising the global, comparative study of the spread of European colonialism in the early modern era, of resultant interactions with indigenous populations (incorporating both indigenous and European responses and accommodations), of *in situ* development of multicultural colonial and post-colonial communities in various parts of the globe, of the effects of capitalism and the industrial revolution, of post-colonialism and its effects, and of manifestations of social inequality, ethnicity, gender, and race relations in the early modern and modern eras. The shift in focus and definition results in part from incorporation of the notion of world systems into the practice of historical archaeology.<sup>1</sup> Other influences emanate from the post-modern trend in the social sciences (see, e.g., Rosenau 1992) with its emphasis on non- and post-positivist approaches, on multiple meanings, and self-reflexivity, and, particularly relevant here, its concern for individual case histories as basic units of analysis.

Hence historical archaeology is not defined solely on the basis of the presence of documents; such a definition fails to distinguish historical archaeology from other forms of text-aided archaeology (including Classical, Near Eastern, and now Mayan archaeology; see Trigger 1989; but see also Little 1992). The sources at our disposal are manifold and include oral history, ethnohistorical accounts, pictorial images of all sorts (paintings, graffiti, prints, engravings, drawings, photographs, etc.), material culture in seemingly endless forms, and archaeological data of constantly expanding variety—in addition to documentary “texts” in all their diversity.

The essays in this volume pursue the theme of the interrelationships among the various sources available to historical archaeologists and move toward a recasting of historical archaeology as historical anthropology (cf. Schuyler 1988; Beaudry 1988, 1993, 1995; Yentsch 1994). Implicit in the approaches taken by the contributors is the notion that if historical archaeology is rightly historical anthropology, it is necessary for us to reframe or recast our enterprise, to view ourselves first and foremost as students of historical culture, and, like others pursuing “cultural studies,” employ a transdisciplinary approach to our studies of the past. The place to begin is with the concept of culture itself and to address the historical topic or issue that engages us, employing in innovative and creative ways all necessary, available, appropriate, and relevant sources in the processes of investigation, explication, and interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

Documentary sources provide a means of establishing cultural context in the most general sense by providing the ethnographic background, the cultural frame or milieu for

interpreting archaeological data and often for generating questions to ask of the archaeological record (although just as often the archaeologist turns from the buried record to the documents with new insights and unanticipated queries). Documentary research is the basis for the identification of sites, artifacts, buildings, and so forth; through techniques of documentary analysis (e.g., family reconstitution), we are able to reconstruct or reconstitute the cast of characters who created the archaeological record; and, through close critical readings of primary sources, we are able to delineate “action events” for past processes through which material culture was rendered meaningful and employed in everyday life.

As with all anthropology, historical anthropology employs the comparative method, but it makes use of a far wider range of sources<sup>3</sup> than is customary in recent ethnographic research. Some of the methods employed are borrowed from ethnohistory. This includes the use of multiple accounts of similar events and other pertinent information, past and present, testing them against one another; the technique of “upstreaming”—examining historical accounts using current ethnographic information about the group under study; and (with impetus from ethnohistory), an attempt to piece together insider, or emic, perspectives, including emic representations and interpretations of the past. Most important is the avoidance of presentism or “temporo-centrism,” the historical equivalent of ethnocentrism (MacFarlane 1994:104).

Historical anthropology developed out of a growing awareness among anthropologists that all cultures have histories and that culture change cannot be understood without cognizance of historical time depth; the frozen “slices and paradigms” of an arbitrary “ethnographic present” are no longer apt units of analysis. Likewise, acknowledging the importance of the historical as well as the cultural field in understanding the meaning of cultural phenomena and cultural change has led anthropologists away from universalist and totalizing perspectives (Ohnuki-Tierney 1990:1–2). The *Annales* school of history, with its stress on the long-term structure of society and culture, has influenced the practice both of history and anthropology. Marshall Sahlins led the way in incorporating Braudelian concepts of historical structure<sup>4</sup> into anthropology, and the relevance of *Annales* to archaeological research has been explored on several fronts (e.g., Crumley and Marquardt 1987; Knapp 1992; Little and Shackel 1989).

Braudel’s *long durée* refers to stability more than to transformation; the short-term or surface oscillations of a *conjuncture*, a period as short as a decade or perhaps as long as a century, can exhibit change that may or may not affect the long-term structure of society, while the event, which entails a very short span of time in which surface oscillations are readily apparent, may have little to do with genuine change in the structures of meaning within a culture. This chief issue in investigating cultural change within this framework is first to determine the basic structures of meaning within a culture and then to delineate and explain the short-term events or accumulation of events over the conjuncture that bring about culture change by affecting or altering the ways that meaning is structured.

The Braudelian approach presupposes that cultures have highly integrated, relatively explicit world views; the meaningful structures expressed in the cosmology of Sahlins’ elite Hawaiian chieftains is presumed to stand as a cultural universal for all of Polynesian society. Perhaps in the opening moments of “conjuncture”—contact with Europeans and its

aftermath—this was the case. But not all anthropologists share the notion that the core of culture—if there is a core—is fixed, determinate, and uncontested.<sup>5</sup>

The practice of historical anthropology is more complicated if we employ a definition of culture as a historically situated, fluid, often contested, and only partially integrated mosaic of narratives, images, and practices, recognizing that there may be alternative and competing histories and world views: gendered, generational, stratified, etc. (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993:19). If “we take culture to be the semantic space, the field of signs and practices, in which human beings construct and represent themselves and others, and hence their societies and histories,” we become uncomfortable with the notion of culture as a thing of order and structure:

[Culture] is not merely an abstract order of signs, or relations among signs. Nor is it just the sum of habitual practices. Neither pure langue nor pure parole, it never constitutes a closed, entirely coherent system. Quite the contrary: Culture always contains within it polyvalent, potentially contestable messages, images, and actions. It is, in short, a historically situated, historically unfolding ensemble of signifiers-in-action, signifiers at once material and symbolic, social and aesthetic (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993:10).

This open-ended definition of culture leads us to seek out the discourses that generate and comprise cultural expression, to examine not just the dominants in society but non-dominant elements, to seek out their contribution to the discourses out of which cultures, subcultures, and countercultures arise. The goal is not merely to construct counternarratives to dominant discourse or to replace “bourgeois chronicles with subaltern accounts” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993:16) but to restore from the disconnected fragments a picture of the whole<sup>6</sup> much as the archaeologist attempts to reconstruct a whole pot from disassociated sherds.

For archaeology, historicity is built in. The analytical challenge is to invest the historical “chronicle” with cultural meaning, to place it within the context of cultural discourse(s). The historical archaeologist as anthropologist begins with the key notion that culture has to do with meaning and representation, often symbolic, often in material form. By looking upon material culture as a medium of inscription, of “writing” discourse through and on landscapes, houses, bodies, pots, animals, and written texts, the historical archaeologist undertakes an ethnographic interrogation of sources produced by long-dead informants. Considering past behavior in terms of action, discourse, and behavior enables us to expand the notion of discourse and look at action and interaction, at formal and informal mechanisms, at control and constraint, at silences as well as assertion and defiance. Documents can be considered as a form of oral discourse, artifacts as performance discourse. The discourse resulted in and necessitated and occurred in context of production, use, interpretation, abandonment, alteration, and replacement of material culture (De Cunzio 1994:3). Through critical analysis of documents, we attempt to negotiate among areas of overlap and complementarity and areas of divergence, contrast, or contradiction to arrive at credible and persuasive interpretations of the meanings of artifacts and the archaeological record. Drawing upon diverse texts to construct contexts is an analytical process, not to be mistaken for “just telling stories.”

Nevertheless, much of our work involves constructing narratives, and often the results of our work give voice to otherwise “voiceless” groups in society. But, as Comaroff and Comaroff note (1993:9–10, 19), there is no special revelation to be had merely by offering the histories of the oppressed as counternarratives to and deconstruction of “universal historiography”; it is the unraveling of the discourses both of the dominants and the “repressed” that is key to our understanding of what is meaningful in human action and in the construction of cultures and ideologies.

While of course it is true that we “read” documents, the archaeological record, and artifacts separately, in the end they must be interpreted together. If we conceive of the relationship among the various lines of evidence available to the archaeologist as being one of *intertextuality*, we can begin to frame an approach that uses material culture, archaeological evidence, and documents in conjunction to arrive at credible interpretations of the past. *Intertextuality* refers to the interdigitation of different lines of evidence through a synergistic research endeavor such as that espoused by many but achieved by very few.<sup>7</sup>

Yet by their very diversity and richness, our sources, written and wrought, demand a diversity of approaches; historical archaeology done as historical anthropology is more about exploration and interpretation of evidence and of sources than it is about discovery and proof. Indeed, no one will be able to come up with a formula or fixed set of procedures that suit every case, but we can explore the relationships among sources, explore ways of making connections. In this volume the editors have brought together a strong group of essays that extend the process of exploration. The authors recognize that documents and the archaeological record should not be treated as separate elements in the study of the past. Both sorts of evidence originated as processes, and the results of such processes once had meaning for their makers and users. Items of material culture and the archaeological record, like documents, acquire the fixed characteristics of written text as they become separated from their makers and users through the distance of time. Both documents and archaeological evidence contain traces of their original, dynamic meanings—both once shared time and place and both were once about the same people, events, and motives—which can be interpreted through detailed analysis and close critical readings.

These essays are compelling because they begin from the vantage that all is wrought, written or otherwise, and *all* of our sources require close critical readings. For example, the chapters that deal with gender, gender relations, and patriarchy illustrate how close critical readings of diverse data sets sharpen our awareness of hidden assumptions and misconceptions brought about by superficial readings and yield insight into underlying and multiple meanings.

Alison Bell challenges the devaluation of women’s participation in trades and manufacturing through her reanalysis of documents pertaining to pipe making in Britain—documents used extensively by other historical archaeologists who saw little significance in the presence of women in this industry. Following the lead of scholars such as Judith McGaw (1989), Christine Stansell (1986), Amanda Vickery (1993) and others (see Kerber 1988), Bell unmask the fallacy of incorporating the nineteenth-century ideology of separate spheres into the conduct of twentieth-century scholarship.

Eleanor Casella continues the examination of the ideology of a male-dominated society in its use of presumptive gender roles in the service of symbolically civilizing the

Australian outback. Here gender negotiation is intensified through the manipulation of distinctive material culture. Playing against one another the examples of contradiction and ambiguity in gender roles on the cultural frontier of the outback with that of the struggle over gender identity between women incarcerated in the Female Factories and the men who imprisoned them (whose 'medical gaze' was clouded by conventional notions about women's roles), Casella highlights the recursive properties of cultural definitions of gender and sex-stereotyping and of the material culture employed to reinforce and control individuals' reinterpretation of rigid archetypal denotations.

Anne Yentsch begins with artifacts that are among the tiniest of small finds and, through a process of tacking back and forth among disparate sources, establishes the ethnographic context in which beads found at the Calvert site in Annapolis, Maryland, were worn; she employs them as a way of drawing black women out of the background of slavery studies at historical sites. It cannot be overemphasized that by looking at objects in new ways—beads are usually studied for what they reveal about chronology and trade—we gain new insight into the action contexts in which such items were deployed. What is more, perhaps it is no accident that rescuing often overlooked items from the small finds oblivion makes women visible and shows them as active agents in their own right. This recontextualization back to the ethnographic setting, the structure of daily life, affirms what Henry Glassie observed: people are only mute and inarticulate when we look in at them from the outside and from the perspective of those who dominate them. In their own worlds and within the structure of their everyday lives, they are active participants in shaping their own lives (Glassie 1992). This underscores the point that "one of the main tasks of historical anthropology is to reconstruct images of the world which are representative of different epochs and cultural traditions. This requires reconstruction of the subjective reality" of a community or social group (Gurevich 1992:4, quoted in MacFarlane 1994:105).<sup>8</sup>

Martin Hall, in seeking to examine "the materiality of colonialism," finds that a close reading of the ownership histories of a distinctive group of gabled houses in the Cape region of South Africa leads him to the recognition of the critical role of kinship connections, of networks of kin centered around a specific set of females, linking these houses together as genealogical mnemonics. As Yentsch (1988a) demonstrated so elegantly in her essay, "Legends, Houses, Families, and Myths," seeking out the connections within the female line in property transfer and descent is essential for understanding the mechanisms whereby houses become symbols of patriarchy—or not. Hall shows how the close web of carefully cultivated kin connections functioned to constitute a class that set itself apart by "keeping white," as it were, and signaled this separation through consolidation by adding elaborate adornments to their otherwise fairly typical homes.

Margot Winer's essay is a fine complement to Hall's in that she expands and deepens the process of close critical readings of the "materiality of colonialism" in South Africa by demonstrating how visual texts, such as maps and landscape paintings, serve to construct mythicized landscapes that legitimate and justify colonial ambitions and intent. These then act powerfully to reify domination and subordination of both the landscape and its indigenous inhabitants. We can see the gabled houses and the products of the artist and the map-maker as all imbedded in the process of colonialism, indeed, as prime media for it. Here we are struck by the fact that we also have to "read" the omissions; what we and contemporary observers

were not shown and not told possesses as much or more significance as do those things the producers of material culture want us to know.

The chapter by Deetz and Scott offers an attempt to explain the meaning of a series of deposits found on the Atlantic seaboard of North America. Many historical archaeologists have addressed this problem, and a great deal of recent work has linked the timing of these with generational events, often involving women and women's roles. Deetz and Scott argue that this approach is unsatisfactory and espouse that the appropriate explanatory context is global, not site-specific, and pertains to major historical events, seen as the only events of consequence. The authors confront us with an issue of some importance regarding how we ought to approach the exercise of querying our data to arrive at satisfactory explanations. Here we are confronted with the presumptive dichotomy between structure and event—one that Sahlins sought to overcome in developing analytical methods for examining historical processes within the context of culture and the world system (see, e.g., Sahlins 1985).

Both historical archaeology and the new cultural history have increasingly emphasized structural relationships and social settings as well as situation, contingency, and agency. The message seems to be that we should embrace rather than reject these directions and consider context at increasingly wider scales without ignoring the initial step of site-specific interpretation, and we should not privilege one scale over another. On the one hand, the propositions of Deetz and Scott seem to suggest that the initial stage of analysis is largely irrelevant, but, on the other hand, by providing an umbrella concept for site-level processes—"material event"—they imply the need to describe and understand such events as a vital step in moving to the broader explanatory context of "historical event."<sup>9</sup>

Mary Ellin D'Agostino reviews some of the sources available to the historical archaeologist. Her discussion makes it clear that historical archaeologists cannot rely on historians or other students of material culture for the sorts of documentary archaeology that our approach demands; only by becoming conversant with the range of archival and pictorial sources available and by developing distinctly anthropologically-informed, yet archaeological techniques for analysis can we exploit the richness of the complementary lines of evidence from archival and excavated sources. Her comparative analysis of probate inventory data from Plymouth Colony, Maryland, and Bermuda is provocative, however, and points to the need for generalized comparisons to be grounded in and informed by context, structure, and situatedness—by a concern for what Geertz terms "local knowledge" (1983:8). A good demonstration of this is Yentsch's (1988b) close study of probate inventories, contemporary accounts, and archaeological evidence in combination with modern environmental data from eighteenth-century Cape Cod, Massachusetts, which exposed differences in subsistence strategies and cultural practice within what many would be satisfied to categorize as a bounded and relatively homogenous geographical region. One expects that D'Agostino's rigorous data-collecting, analytical techniques and the impressive sample of probate inventories from each of her study areas will lead her toward similarly informative and detailed insights.

Elizabeth Prine addresses the fact that historical archaeology as historical anthropology is very much involved in the anthropology of historicization and that the creation of histories—and ethnographies—is always a politically charged endeavor (see Hymes 1972). Our work can give people a sense of their history (*historia*: see Faubion 1993)

or, more often, provide them with specific versions of their history that may be in conflict with versions developed through other means (cf. Yentsch 1988a; Fox 1993). Prine offers useful ways of conceptualizing communities; while she is in the early stages of her research and the connections she hopes to make are not yet clear, she sets forth an excellent program for conceptualizing and grounding her proposed study of communities in Clay County, South Dakota; her greatest strengths lie in her openness to multiple scales of analysis and her recognition that the work she does has import for the communities that serve as the focus of her study.

Politics and ideological conflict figure prominently in recent debates about scholarship and the interpretation of the lives of enslaved African Americans; Maria Franklin's essay engages this debate unflinchingly in assessing the ideological impact of omissions and silences in Colonial Williamsburg's public interpretation of slave life through its reconstructed slave quarter at Carter's Grove plantation. Franklin notes that the paucity of material furnishings and failure to present to visitors any sense of the communal character of slave life in the quarter conveys "the message that they possessed both a culture of poverty and a poverty of culture"—here absences and silences are as powerfully charged ideologically as any overt presentation, serving to "underscore the prevailing and erroneous belief that enslaved Africans lived completely powerless lives, and had no culture that was not given them by whites." Studies of the lives of enslaved African Americans often fail to achieve the degree of biographical immediacy available for white masters like Carter Burwell and his grandfather Robert "King" Carter. Franklin, however, demonstrates that careful research into documents and close readings of the archaeological evidence of the lives of slaves reveals compelling details of the creation of a creolized African-American culture, rich in spiritual beliefs and ritual practices. The power of makers and users of objects to invest material items with multiple and at times subversive meanings needs to be considered and rendered explicit in public interpretation. As Franklin makes clear, public presentations of the lives of enslaved Africans cannot be based solely on spotty and biased documentation but must rely also on archaeological and ethnographic evidence of what enslaved Africans made and did for themselves; we are reminded by John Vlach that this endeavor is barely begun: "But first the story of the black Americans needs to be gathered. It is an account often written not with words but with things made by the work of their hands" (1991:xviii). Here, indeed, is a largely unexplored realm, to which archaeology has much to contribute.<sup>10</sup>

Kathleen Bragdon makes a critical point that students of texts, whether written or wrought, do well to heed: the relationship between the form a text takes and its content is problematic and far from unambiguous. Among the Christian Indians of Massachusetts, alphabetic literacy supplanted visual literacy as a medium for religious observances. But because print culture was accessible only to those instructed in alphabetic literacy, the Massachusetts grew increasingly distinct from other native groups with whom they formerly had shared relatively open social relations. Such "loose" social organization had been reflected by multilingualism and by region-wide similarities in pictographic depictions of shamanic ritual, styles of pottery and stone tool manufacture and embellishment, and other aspects of material culture. A tightening of social boundaries in the post-contact period in part, at least, as a result of the discontinuous spread of alphabetic literacy, likewise seems to be reflected in the

material record. Here the form of literacy and the very forms it took in the end held greater transformative power than mere content.

Attending to form as well as content also requires consideration of the manner in which “texts” are produced and the motivations for their creation. Justin Hyland’s ethnohistorical analysis of the production of Jesuit documents pertaining to Baja, California, demonstrates how the texts were embedded in a complex of other texts that they aimed to dispute or discredit; furthermore, these texts providing “accurate” and “objective” natural historical and ethnological descriptions of California had a subjective mission: to “defend and memorialize” the work of the Jesuits—who were then under critical scrutiny on the world stage—in California. The conditions and motivations for the production of this body of texts renders them problematic, however, especially “within the discourse of archaeological interpretation,” requiring a “dialectic between historical document and archaeological data,” as Hyland illustrates with an example drawn from his recent work on mission-period mobility and settlement among Baja’s indigenous population.

Hitchcock offers a rather more basic discussion of the value of one type of documentary source, reminding us of the potentialities and biases of local newspapers as sources for historical archaeology (cf. Mrozowski 1988; Praetzelis, Praetzelis, and Brown 1988; Potter 1992). His observation that local newspapers can afford the researcher unparalleled insight into the characters and everyday concerns of a community is important, for as both Hitchcock and Brooks (elsewhere in this volume) suggest, all too often the historical archaeologist overlooks “ethnographic” data in the process of mining documents for isolated facts and descriptions.

While the gross inaccuracies and biases of nineteenth-century newspapers may be exposed quite readily, the accuracy and ethnohistorical value of oral tradition and of texts based on oral traditions has been debated long and loudly. Mark Hall addresses this issue when he turns to the Norse sagas for ethnohistorical data about Viking age metal working. The sagas, accounts based on memory that have been inscribed as texts, have been treated by some as “accurate” historical accounts and dismissed by others as mere literary genre; Hall demonstrates, however, that the accounts can be used as a starting point for recovering cultural information about the social role of smiths in Viking-age society in addition to “facts” about ironworking that can be corroborated through archaeometallurgical and experimental analyses. Evidence for the status of ironworkers, of their supposed links to the supernatural, and for sex-based division of labor is gleaned by searching for comparisons and repetition of themes and specific types of information. By separating out the texts and analyzing each critically, Hall overcomes the difficulties of dealing with the “memory factor” inherent in oral accounts (cf. Fentress and Wickham 1992).

Allyson Brooks, in considering the impact of “the media” upon the formation of the cultural landscape of Nevada’s nineteenth-century mining frontier, brings us face-to-face with yet another critical issue for documentary archaeology: the effects of the consumption of print culture. As Brooks notes, the residues of such effects are to be found in the refuse heaps and trash deposits that constitute much of the archaeological record, rusting and decaying reminders that the printed word affected not just people’s purchasing practices, but their plans, ambitions, and short-term patterns of behavior. Her admonition that documents are “active



material culture” and should not be treated as analytically separate from the archaeological record is fundamental and cannot be overstressed or overstated.

While one cannot help but be a bit bemused by former Vice President Dan Quayle’s comment that “Hawaii has always been a very pivotal role in the Pacific. It is in the Pacific. It is part of the United States that is an island that is right here” (quoted in Ivins 1993:176), we have to admit that, though garbled, Quayle’s thought contains a kernel of truth. It is true that Hawaii played a pivotal role long before it was made a part of the United States, before it became a resort for vacationers and honeymooners. Hawaii now figures prominently in anthropological and archaeological circles because of the pioneering work of Marshall Sahlins and Patrick Kirch in their two-volume *tour de force*, *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii* (1992).

The indisputable success of the Sahlins-Kirch approach to historical anthropology in the Anahulu study calls for extension of the methods developed there to other locales in Hawaii and elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Pia-Kristina Anderson’s study of the Halawa valley on Moloka’i Island follows the Sahlins-Kirch model of integrating intensive ethnohistorical and ethnographic analysis of written texts with close readings of landscapes through archaeological survey and excavation. Records of the *Mahele*, a mid-nineteenth-century conversion of lands from public (i.e., held by nobles and elites but available for use by commoners) to private ownership are a rich source of evidence for local patterns of land use, residence, inheritance, and socio-economic organization, Anderson notes, and that changes in all of these areas as a result of contact and its outcomes can only be understood in the context of the long term, only if one comprehends the gradual emergence of settlement and land-use patterns throughout the prehistoric period.

The archaeology of history, Patrick Kirch observes, is very much a process of reading back and forth between the texts of landscapes and artifacts and the more “conventional” texts of the written record, but each type of record reflects contestation over land as well as over territory of other sorts. In the past as in the present, landscape and the built environment hold different meanings for different individuals and groups.<sup>12</sup> Drawing upon the mutually reinforcing evidence of the written and the wrought, both “archive and artifact,” in exploring physical changes to the “lived space” of the Anahulu region, Kirch illuminates the human values that prompted conflict and renegotiation of the landscape. Archaeology enriched by close critical readings of documents does more than merely delineate the material manifestations of political and economic shifts; when documents are used to construct cultural and historical context, the archaeological evidence can be analyzed and interpreted in an appropriately situated and contextualized manner. In Kirch’s study the Hawaiian people appear as cultural actors in the contact drama, as people who exercised choices that may not always seem wise or worthy to us. It is nevertheless clear that cultural change and the “disintegration of traditional Hawaiian culture” did not come about through forced acculturation alone. Kirch’s work demonstrates that we would be mistaken to see Hawaiians solely as victimized losers of contact and to read the archaeological text as a record of unwitting adaptation and cultural resignation; the “rich interplay between documentary text and material record” reveals to us a range of responses: the elites’ greedy accumulation of consumer goods leading them consciously and deliberately to a dissolution of the traditional system of land tenure; equally venal foreigners promoting such disintegration by means fair

and foul; and commoners acting in what ways they could to insure their chances of survival and to improve their quality of life.

Margaret Purser encourages historical archaeologists move beyond the U.S. and Hawaii to consider the entire Pacific Basin as a field for historical archaeology's study of ethnic and economic interaction in the world systems framework. The connections among circum-Pacific nations and cultures are long-standing, multifarious, and complex, a situation acknowledged by the 1992 vote by members of the Australian Society for Historical Archaeology to change the name of their organization to the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology. Historical archaeologists working in Australasia have begun to tap the rich historical archaeological potential of the circum-Pacific region,<sup>13</sup> but Purser rightly points out that there is room for much more work elsewhere, especially in the northern reaches of the Pacific.

Considered together, the essays that follow develop a series of analytical techniques for reconceptualizing our field through acknowledging the intertextuality of our multiple lines of evidence, the importance of close critical readings, and modes of recontextualization made possible through the application of ethnographic method to material culture analysis. Perhaps the true value of doing historical archaeology as a kind of historical anthropology is that it makes us do our "ethnographic fieldwork" on the ground, cross-questioning the sources and moving outside standardized schemes and reductive typologies. If we seek to know *how* things were used, practically and symbolically, we also learn who used them, for what purposes, and under what circumstances. In this manner we begin to people our analyses of the past with a fuller and more diverse cast of cultural actors; we begin to comprehend the materiality of colonialism and of post-colonial developments from the outside, as a process that resulted in material worlds expressing and affecting structured relations, and on the inside, from the perspective of social actors. Through systematic and consistently critical interrogation of sources written and wrought, we transform historical archaeology into a way of doing ethnography in retrospect.

## Notes

- 1 See, e.g., the essays by Purser, Anderson, and Kirch in this volume.
- 2 These are characteristics of the field of cultural studies; it has been suggested that it might be under just such a transdisciplinary umbrella that, eventually, even a marginalized field such as the study of food might find a niche as a serious pursuit within the humanities (Kirstenblatt-Gimblett 1994). Perhaps historical archaeology, which also intersects with and shares methods and territory with many diverse disciplines, might find itself comfortably, albeit eclectically, taking shelter beneath this umbrella.
- 3 As Comaroff and Comaroff put it, "diverse texts: books, bodies, buildings, cities, etc" (1993:16).
- 4 See Braudel (1980), especially pp. 25–54.

- 5 For instance, Ortner (1989) replaces Sahlin's "moment of conjuncture" with a consideration of "key scenarios" while other historical anthropologists frame their analyses around what they perceive to be the dominant metaphors or tropes of a culture (e.g., Fernandez 1986, 1991; Ohnuki-Tierney 1984; see Ohnuki-Tierney 1990: 11–12).
- 6 Such a "picture" is only an approximation, however. My understanding of the Comaroffs is that they assume one is never able to compass a structure of a culture in its entirety, a sentiment I share.
- 7 See, e.g., Yentsch (1994). A notable but to date underpublished example is the work by John Worrell and his colleagues at the Emerson Bixby site in central Massachusetts (Worrell, Stachiw, and Simmons 1995). One reason this team's efforts remain underpublished is that reviewers for *Historical Archaeology* rejected a thematic issue on the project on the grounds that it was not "archaeological enough" (see Beaudry 1995 for a discussion of the "that's not archaeology" predicament).
- 8 Adapting this approach for historical archaeology through the process of "reconstructing the emic" is discussed in Beaudry (1993:91–94).
- 9 Though one could easily argue that we need to move beyond *event* at any level of interpretation if we are truly to get at the workings of culture. Comaroff and Comaroff (1993:26) note that event-oriented history or anthropology is essentially functionalist and reductionist: "If historical anthropology is to avoid recapitulating the eccentricities and ethnocentricities of the West, the individual and the event have everywhere to be treated as problematic." It is possible to employ a concept of explanatory hierarchies in which different levels of explanation are not deterministically linked; otherwise we are in danger of falling prey to the substantivist fallacy that because an association of two phenomena is repeatedly observed, there is a constant process that produces the effect (Fletcher 1992:44 and *passim*).
- 10 As Franklin indicates, social historians such as Herbert Gutman (1977), Charles Joyner (1984), Mechal Sobal (1987) and others in their work have focused on family, community, and creation of folk culture among enslaved Africans (see also Campbell and Rice 1991; Vlach 1991) and historical archaeologists trained as anthropologists likewise have taken their analyses in this direction (see, e.g., Ferguson 1992a, 1992b; McKee 1992; Mauer 1993; Yentsch 1992, 1994).
- 11 It might be worth giving some thought, however, to how we talk about what we do. A reviewer from American Studies commented that a "confusing aspect of these volumes is the terminology used to describe this work: *ethnography*, *historical anthropology*, *historical ethnography*, *ethnohistory*, *ethnographic history*, *archival ethnography*, *archaeological history* are all used apparently interchangeably .... [A] clearer explication of terminology defining method and product would help situate this work in the larger corpus of archaeological, historical, and anthropological studies" (De Wolfe 1993:310).
- 12 *Multilocality* is the term proposed to express the concept that landscapes are invested with multiple meanings (Rodman 1992). The parallel notions of place both as setting and as

socially constructed spatial experience are particularly relevant for archaeologists who study landscape and environment because our work comprises both the study of *place*, of spatial relationships (social space) as well as the study of *values* attached to places and relationships; our goal is to understand “lived space” (territories, activity areas) *and* social space, and values attached to both.

- 13 Volume 9 of *Australian Historical Archaeology*, for instance, contains a review of historical archaeology in New Zealand, and earlier volumes of this journal have regularly reviewed the state of historical archaeology in Australia; see also Connah 1988.

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