Throughout the 20th century most of the social sciences worked under a ‘hierarchical value system’ that gave priority to originality at the expense of relevance. Looking at this phenomenon from a broader perspective, historian and philosopher of science Noretta Koertge focuses on the ‘credit problem’ in science, meaning the problem concerning the criteria over what kinds of work get recognized and encouraged. She calls the attention to Robert Merton’s view that, “the distinctive feature which is the key to the scientific reward system is its emphasis on originality” (KOERTGE, [19—]).

The issue at stake is that this reward system has an obvious and sometimes disastrous influence on problem choice, leading to a “clustering of research efforts around hot topics” (KOERTGE, [19—]).

As a consequence of this frenzy for authorial rights over the ‘new,’ ‘original,’ or ‘fashionable’ – be it findings,
questions, models, theories, explanations, or interpretations – as a means of advancing academic careers, issues of importance, relevance, and accuracy end up taking a back seat. In fact, those who focus on social or political relevance are labeled ‘applied’ anthropologists, and are marginalized and considered less scholarly, and less scientific, because their objectivity is tainted by motive, in other words, their research is not ‘pure’ (PYBURN; WILK, 1995).

On the other hand, the public media make strange bedfellows for pure science. Often newspapers and television draw attention to a scientific discovery before peer evaluation can take place. The repercussions of the constant hype of unexamined research are problematic both inside and outside academia. In the case of the early human from Kennewick, Washington, unfortunate publicity resulted at least in part from the use of loose language by anthropologists, resulting in absurd misunderstandings and reinterpretations by the media. But when obscure underpaid academics go from anonymity to stardom overnight, it becomes difficult to listen to peer review, much less take the unglamorous road of applied research.

Written by a sensationalist journalist, “Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon” exploded like a bomb very close to the foundations of anthropology, exposing a side of the discipline that many believed should be forgotten. The target was the discipline of anthropology, its goals, aims, and especially, its methods. The intricacies and specificities of this attack were discussed to exhaustion even before the publication of Darkness, and we do not intend to recapitulate them here (TIERNEY, 2000). But though some of the accusations are unfounded and even silly, several sources questionable, and a great deal of complex political context – including missionaries, government officials and other scholars – ignored, there is no disputing the fact that the book raises very serious ethical issues about anthropological research.

Of course every story has multiple sides to it, and Tierney himself was operating within a hot topics perspective.
He accuses Chagnon of inventing quotations and creating non-existent villages – Chagnon could argue that he was trying to protect the anonymity of his informants; Chagnon is also accused of fabricating lurid stories about Yanomami violence – but still, he could be trying to show respect for the values of the ‘fierce people’; the promotion of warfare and the staging of ‘events’ for his films might be Chagnon’s attempt to allow the Yanomamo to teach us by example; and finally Tierney goes through what he characterizes as a series of unethical procedures aiming research questions and playing politics for personal interests – but still, how do you tell a desire for fame from a desire for scientific truth, when exciting scientific discoveries do make people famous? Our point here is that no simple explanation is sufficient or free from biases and that peeling apart the complex layers of perspective, and intention requires contextual analysis. And it is in this analysis of the context of their own perspectives that both Chagnon and Tierney fail; neither is interested in a complex analysis of his own motives or of the impact of his claims on other people. Has either author actually helped the Yanomamo? Who should be the judge?

Commenting on *Darkness in El Dorado*, Marshall Sahlins states that “The Kurtzian narrative of how Chagnon achieved the political status of a monster in Amazonia and a hero in academia is truly the heart of Darkness in El Dorado” (SAHLINS, 2000). The reality is that this issue should be understood through the prism of a political economy of ‘culture,’ where *Yanomamo: The Fierce People* (CHAGNON, 1983) is the ultimate commodity. Objectification of research on culture while disregarding the people whose culture we observe, makes anthropologists the ultimate cultural capitalists, importing raw materials (in Chagnon’s case fierceness, brutality, cruelty, and treachery) and exporting manufactured exoticism (in his case primitive identity). Chagnon became something of a celebrity and his publicity sold huge numbers of introductory textbooks¹, reproducing and reinforcing a view of cultural phenomena which hindsight sees as perniciously
oversimplified, and this was the view of culture that thousands of students and an admiring public retained.

Nevertheless, the last decades have witnessed a profound change in attitudes toward anthropological and archaeological practices and consequently toward the nature of the discipline and its role in the modern world. Besides being academics and researchers, many cultural anthropologists and archaeologists now acknowledge their status as powerful actors in the social dramas resulting from data they ‘uncover.’ Archaeologists not only investigate the influence of the present on their understanding of ancient social, political, and economic issues, but also have begun to take active roles as participants and mediators in discussions about political hegemony and economic justice. In addition to the old and well-known uses of the past for nationalistic and political purposes, arrival on the scene of institutions such as Unesco and the multitude of agencies geared to protect heritage and patrimony has catapulted the whole enterprise into the realm of the global political economy.

Through a consideration of the nature, practice, and critique of anthropological archaeology we survey and evaluate the mechanisms through which relations of power are established and contested in this new context where an objectified culture becomes the ultimate commodity. We look at the public impact of archaeologically generated models, as well as to the interpretations and uses of this symbolic capital with interests possibly incompatible with cultural resource management practices.

ACADEMIC VS. PUBLIC USES OF SCIENCE

Alison Wylie once said “It is a serious mistake to let methodological commitments and disciplinary ambitions determine how you conceptualize your subject” (WYLIE, 1992, p. 51). But how much worse is it to let the media define it? This is a critical point because, ironically, archaeologists and anthropologists now find we are “not criticized for oppression
through bad science, but for trying to use science at all” (PYBURN, 1999, p. 356). The public is unable, and our peers progressively more unwilling, to make the distinction between good and bad science, and as a consequence, the entire discipline loses.

Too much media attention too soon abbreviates the ability to evaluate the research or consider its impact. But the members of the press make use of scientists for their own purposes, not only to sell periodicals, but to advance their own political agendas. Chagnon’s claims sold well during the cold war, and sold magazines again when he was attacked; Chatters unfortunate choice of the word ‘Caucasoid’ (in the Kennewick case – when he thought he was dealing with an historic period burial) played directly into the political economy of race relations in the United States. In neither case did the media give new information to the public resulting from scientific discoveries; instead stereotypes of gender, race and culture were validated with reference to scientists.

Archaeology is particularly susceptible to a kind of behavior that separates the practice of anthropological research from its consequences. After all, many would seriously argue, what we say about the distant past surely has less relevance in the present day than even research on some economically inconsequential living tribal group. We may remember the past to avoid repeating it, a quote archaeologists love to trot out to the public, without ever being nailed down to what exactly it is that we wish not to repeat. Archaeologists who are uncomfortable with the idea of multiple pasts are usually perfectly happy with multiple presents. Indeed, if we had wanted to engage with the world and help people, we would not have specialized in the study of those forever beyond the reach of social services!

This attitude reveals the real political economy of research, and shows how a market for a specific kind of cultural commodity (exoticism, primitivism, violence, fierceness, antiquity, authenticity, and ‘art’) is generated and maintained. This commodity creation, through the establishment and articulation of simple and static views of culture, guided by
the logic of a quest for the ‘new,’ ‘original,’ and ‘fashionable,’
has become the subject of discussion among scholars working
in Latin American countries. The necessity for academic
engagement and the desire to make our intellectual
contributions competitive in the global market of knowledge
seem to contradict the ideals of relevance we have been
discussing. How can we recognize the colonialist history of
scientific research and still compete in the global marketplace
of intellectual ideas? How can we produce knowledge without
validating the media hype of ‘discoveries’ that stereotype our
citizens and ignore our history? How can we fail to be
marginalized for having a political and an economic agenda
regardless of whether we embrace an applied approach?

SOME ASPECTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

If we want to understand why we, as archaeologists
and anthropologists, have so little impact and in most cases fail
so miserably when it comes to public outreach, mediation of
the social impact of the models we generate, and management
of public heritage in this global era, we first have to take a
look inside, briefly considering the structure and history of
the discipline.

THE NATURE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS
CONSEQUENCES

So, what is it that archaeology is supposed to do? If
we were to quantify the definitions available in the literature,
from the end of the 19th century up to the present, it is safe to
say that most of them would include the word ‘past’ and
something about material culture (e.g., archaeology is the study
of past societies through their material remains). A few scholars,
influenced by historical archaeology and behavioral approaches,
now define archaeology as a discipline interested in “the
interaction between material culture and human behavior and
ideas, regardless of time and space” (RATHJE, 1979, p. 2).
In both approaches the focus is still on material culture. Although 1972 saw the first book entirely dedicated to the topic of public archaeology (McGimsey, 1972), followed in 1974 by L. Lumbreras’ landmark “La Arqueología como Ciencia Social,” it is only in the mid 1980s, that the present becomes part of the everyday vocabulary of archaeology – though not without controversy and resistance. The point here is that for more than a hundred years the exclusive focus on artifacts helped validate and justify a particular sort of basic research, one with an agenda oriented by a rationale and logic imported from the natural sciences that privileged the ‘new,’ the ‘different,’ the ‘oldest,’ and never the common, necessary or relevant. Not long ago Brian Fagan noticed,

Archaeologists live within a hierarchical value system that considers research, excavation, new discoveries, and publication the pinnacle of achievement. Anything else, for all their talk to the contrary, is secondary to this enterprise. Almost all doctoral programs in archaeology emphasize basic research (Fagan, 1996, p. 239).

So, one way to characterize the history of the discipline would be by beginning with a long period in which artifacts and the past were the main preoccupation of archaeologists, followed by a brief period where conflicts over the role of the present started to emerge (1970s and beginning of the 80s), which in turn culminated with the social upheavals of the mid 80s and 90s. There is still great confusion when the issue of the political present and the nature of the discipline come under scrutiny. Public awareness if not engagement are now agreed by almost all archaeologists as necessary, “it is no longer enough to meet the demand of the 1980’s to be relevant. Now archaeologists must begin to be responsible” (Pyburn; Wilk, 1985, p. 81).

It is obvious that the object of study in archaeology is material culture; the problem is that it is not so obvious what the real aim and consequences of such a study may
be. A clear example of this is a very short statement by the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) called “Four Statements for Archaeology,” which considers “the field of archaeology,” “methods in archaeology,” “ethics for archaeology,” and “recommendations for training in archaeology.” This brief document was the closest thing to a code of ethics for the SAA from 1961 until 1996, and at no point did it consider the political present (CHAMPE et al., 1961, p. 137-138.) It was not until 1996, with the publication of “Principles of Archaeological Ethics” that those issues were officially brought into consideration by the SAA. As very few academic disciplines, archaeology is a perfect mirror of the complexities of the political present.

We should have in mind that it is precisely during that first period when the discipline was completely focused on the material culture of the past, that most countries and international organizations devised their heritage and patrimony policies, having that very framework as its backbone (i.e., old and original/different/exotic/unique artifacts and monuments should be preserved, cared for, and given the most attention).

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE LAG BETWEEN CRITIQUE AND PRACTICE

Most scholars would agree that one of the prime movers of any scientific field, which contributes to much of its coherence, consistency, and relevance, is a solidly established critical tradition; a critical tradition aimed not only at the methods and theories of a discipline, but also at its goals, and the socio-economic implications of its practice. Archaeologists have a long tradition of discussion over disciplinary methods and theory, but there has been much less concern about its goals, aims, and implications of its practice. Such considerations have been regarded as self evident.

But what causes a scientific field to progress in a particular direction? Why does scholarship cluster around a
topic in one period and another in the next? This is a complicated question that has generated much debate. Scholars from two intellectual traditions are currently involved in this discussion: historians and philosophers of science, and sociologists of science.

On the side of the historians and philosophers there are four main perspectives, all structurally similar to models of biological evolution. First we have Carl Hempel’s ‘cumulative model of scientific development.’ Change would happen, according to Hempel, mainly through addition, where laws and events would be constantly subsumed under more inclusive entities, in other words, new knowledge would be added to knowledge previously accumulated. Karl Popper gives a different account in his ‘evolutionary model of scientific progress.’ For him the cumulative model is wrong basically because there are serious incompatibilities between theories at different historical moments. The key word in his model is correction. Popper approaches science as an adaptive mechanism, where the dominant theories of a field would be constantly exposed to experimental tests. In response to negative results of those tests new theories would be produced. A sort of natural selection from the new tentative theories would then follow, allowing only the better theories to survive and be perpetuated. According to Thomas Kuhn, both previous models are wrong. His ‘revolutionary model of scientific development’ sustains that change happens when the accepted paradigms of a field are challenged and that in consequence of this change a scientific field is given a completely new world to investigate: new theories, methods and goals. The key word in his model would be revolution; his model proposes a sort of punctuated equilibrium for scientific practice but is true to a Darwinian perspective in seeing change over time as related to environmental pressures and not a metaphysical idea of progress. Finally, in Laudan’s model of scientific development, gradual replacement is the key concept. Laudan agrees with Kuhn that new theories sometimes give scientists new worlds to investigate, but not always. He argues that scientific theories, methods, and goals
function somewhat independently. His gradualist model advocates for a succession of gradual and separate changes (KOURANY, 1998).

Sociologists of science are characterized by diverse scholars such as Helen Longino, Sandra Harding, and Bruno Latour. They all see science as a context dependent phenomenon. They believe that knowledge is related to particular social contexts, which are the real determinants of change in the directional arrows of knowledge production. Richard Wilk provides an empirical example of the influence of context on research in his paper “The Ancient Maya and the Political Present.” He shows how the explanations of the collapse of Classic Maya civilization were in tune with political events in the United States during the 1960s and 70s (WILK, 1985).

The interesting thing is that despite all these competing models, it is the Hempelian perspective (which sustains that science is cumulative and progressive) that still prevails in textbooks in all scientific fields. This observation would seem to support arguments for the importance of context, since it is clear that it is the Hempelian perspective that most legitimizes science and the established socio-political order. Other less optimistic view of scientific objectivity and political independence would put peripherical groups at the same level as mainstream research and challenge the status quo. This shows, at a minimum, that the way science functions is quite complex and probably variable and that its agenda is set at different levels by differing and many times conflicting interests.

When approaching the way our discipline functions Laudan’s model is particularly interesting because it calls attention to the fact that methods, theories, and aims can operate somewhat independently from each other, leaving the doors open for anachronisms, and gaps of all sorts to accumulate in the discipline.

In archaeology one of the pervading anachronisms is a Cartesian dualism, or a differentiation between doers and thinkers, in the practice of the discipline, a modus operandi characteristic of the scientific fields in 18th, 19th, and beginning
of the 20th centuries. The French historian and philosopher of science Duhem (1861-1916) provides a good example. He believed that experiments in physics were divided in two parts. The first concerned the observation of selected facts, something that required an individual “to be attentive and alert enough with [his/her] senses” (DUHEM, 1998, p. 187). At this level of practice, according to Duhem, knowledge in physics was absolutely irrelevant. He says “It is not necessary to know physics; the director of the laboratory may be less skillful in this matter of observation than the assistant” (1998, p. 187-88). The second part related to the interpretation of those observed facts, and here acute observational skills are not enough, “it is necessary to know the accepted theories and to know how to apply them – in short, to be a physicist” (1998, p. 188).

We are not suggesting that this extreme situation has a direct parallel in the current practice of the discipline but it undoubtedly manifests itself at different levels through much more subtle mechanisms. There is indeed, in some contexts, a rather pronounced rift between those who have open access, authority, and decision-making power over the intellectual realm of the discipline and those whose prerogatives are much more technical in nature and essence. The relationship between theory and practice is permeated by a Cartesian dualist framework; in archaeology this is unacceptable for both ethical and scientific reasons. We cannot separate the people who do the labor from the people who think about the products of the labor. The person who digs a test-pit needs to know whether it matters if she or he moves its location 10cm to the left of the grid without spoiling the statistical predictiveness of the sample.

The classic model of data collection in anthropology and archaeology, that of fieldwork always outside the academic intellectual synthesizing centers, can also be approached through a Cartesian dualist framework. First embodied by the massive programs of visitation and living among the colonized peoples, it continues nowadays through the same process in Third World
countries and within minority groups living in First World nations. Most of those countries and communities function as a repository of raw data, as we mentioned before, data that is appropriated by the intellectual centers of power and analyzed and interpreted through an external logic over which the data providers have little or no control at all.

A second interesting aspect branching out of the discussions over progress in science concerns the authority of scientific discourse and the interdisciplinary character of the scientific disciplines. In archaeology this is a serious problem because what we can experience is an imbalance between our discipline and the ones it relates to, be it history, socio-cultural anthropology, or any other. No matter what, the approach tends to be always the same: certain amount of historic/ethnographic information is selected and applied to archaeological questions, making the derived model apparently ‘work,’ backed up by the authority of the historic/ethnographic model. Thus, instead of using archaeological data for questioning ecological, historic, and ethnographic models, we fall into the trap of applying these same data to our questions, weakening, as a consequence, our explanations and interpretations. We use the auxiliary disciplines as means of authenticating our data precisely because we refuse to understand that methods, theories and aims should walk together and that it is through their articulation and a well informed consideration of the political present that we should look for this authentication that we end up trying to find elsewhere.

We are not used to taking into consideration that the establishment of channels of communication between disciplines is a very delicate enterprise – as the history of archaeology demonstrates –, and that the only way of guaranteeing the sovereignty of the discipline is by putting methodological procedures, disciplinary goals, and theoretical perspectives under constant assessment, consideration, and criticism.

Finally, a third topic concerns the nature of the questions we ask. We know that the questions we ask generate and/or articulate models, some of which are appropriated by
the popular media/culture, becoming highly valuable commodities. But where is it that our questions come from? According to Leone and Potter (1999, p. 21),

*Prehistoric archaeologists [...] inherit a set of questions formulated over the last century and a half. These questions are so well established and agreed upon that they are not only uncontroversial, but are also embedded in popular historical consciousness. Where do humans come from? How did humans occupy the whole planet? Where does culture come from? Where, why, and how were the first plants and animals domesticated? And the first cities and civilizations?*

Our questions, as those scholars point out, are generated in our social setting: from the way we are taught and trained as professionals, and most importantly in our case, through inheritance–some problems we deal with nowadays have been continuously passed through several generations, in some cases going back to the sixteenth century or even earlier! Our intellectual concerns and the questions we ask were strongly influenced by disciplines such as geology, geography, geomorphology, the biological sciences, and by the social and human sciences. The main problem is that there is usually no arena for the discussion of the relevance of such questions within undergraduate and graduate programs, which tend to obsess over methodological problems and to take the questions themselves for granted.

Hence, what is it that we are looking at the past for? Many of us would certainly have to think for a while before answering this question. A good example here is the topic of the initial peopling of the Americas. Questions concerned with the antiquity of sites within entire areas deserved special professional attention since the beginnings of the discipline in the Americas. Nevertheless, it is the initial peopling of the continents that are amongst the preferred of an elite of professional practitioners (which not always consider the social nature of our work), of financing agencies, of heritage/
patrimony organizations, as well as of the media in general. This mutual interest creates a vicious circle, where the interests and curiosities of each of those stakeholders are constantly fed by the interests of the others.

In his 1987 *The Great Journey: The Peopling of Ancient America*, Brian Fagan gives a comprehensive account of not only the survey on the topic up to the mid 1980s, but also of the ideas behind it, which start to appear documented immediately after Columbus’s arrival and stem from an old Western tradition of obsession over ‘origins’ explained initially through theological speculations and later substituted by the also Western Renaissance-Enlightenment generated scientific curiosity, and used always as a backstage for the promotion and justification of dominating strategies and ideologies.

Although radically different from a philosophical standpoint, questionings on the origin of the inhabitants of the ‘new world’ are at the foundation of the formation of the different traditions of American (South, Central, and North) archaeologies, and we do not intend to argue that they do not have any intrinsic importance, but rather that most archaeologists working directly with such topics fail to convey the relevance of such questioning, creating an unnecessary sense of expectation and an unjustifiable mask of importance and validity. As a consequence, this largely unevaluated topic becomes a highly valuable commodity, used not only by academics but also by governments, and an uninformed media and forced upon the general public and taxpayers. In Brazil, as noted by Funari, it generated in some cases a “vicious nationalism and lack of critical judgment in students and the public in general” (FUNARI, 2000a, p. 184), and seriously contributed, as still does, for the disempowerment of the native populations in the country.

Without a solidly established critical tradition anchored in the history, philosophy and sociology of science, and tempted by the spotlights of stardom and power, several
of us succumb to the demands for novelties, exotic findings, and antiquity imposed by a system we helped create (historically) but over which we have little or no control at all at the present moment.

UNESCO’S WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

We believe our historical lack of concern for relevance, never questioned from within due to the lack of a critical tradition, and the intellectual furor through which we dedicate to the pursue of hot topics is to a certain extent responsible for helping create, validate, and justify a distorted philosophical perspective and approach to heritage/patrimony conceptualization and management adopted by several agencies worldwide. Discussing the dominating perspective on heritage understanding, Deniz Kandiyoti says “It is biased towards the élite and the masculine; the monumental rather than the homely, the literate rather than the oral, the ceremonial rather than the profane […]” (CUÉLLAR et al., 1996). Here we bring Unesco into the discussion and use it as an example due not only to the international character of the organization but also to the fact that it serves as a model through which other agencies develop their own standards for approaching cultural heritage.

Unesco counts nowadays with well over 700 sites (cultural and natural) protected worldwide. For a particular site to be included on Unesco’s World Cultural Heritage List it must meet the selection criteria of that organization². The Article 1 of the ‘Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage’ defines ‘cultural heritage’ as:

monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, ‘which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science';
groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are ‘of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science’; sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are ‘of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view’.

Now, any particular piece of ‘cultural heritage,’ as defined above, nominated for inclusion in the list “will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purpose of the Convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and the test of authenticity”:

1. represent a masterpiece of ‘human creative genius’; or
2. exhibit an ‘important interchange of human values’, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments ‘in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design’; or
3. ‘bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony’ to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; or
4. ‘be an outstanding example’ of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) ‘significant stage(s) in human history’; or
5. ‘be an outstanding example’ of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or
6. be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works ‘of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria cultural or natural’).
We call the attention to the architectural nature of ‘cultural heritage,’ to the concept of outstanding, but mainly to the privileged viewpoints. We feel very uncomfortable with our involvement, as anthropologists and archaeologists, in this process of debating or deciding what is and what is not outstanding and/or genial!

The hot-topic perspective that we discussed in the social sciences, organized through the same rationale of geniality, originality, difference, uniqueness, could not be better exemplified anywhere. Here it is clear and crystalline: outstanding monuments are the real heritage of humanity and should be preserved and cared for. It is interesting to notice not only to the monolithic view on heritage (i.e., architectural and monumental), and to the elitist nature of the standards through which that heritage is given meaning and value (i.e., genial and outstanding), but also to the monolithic view on culture (i.e., a common and universal humanity). And who decides what should and should not be considered outstanding, or better, who defines the very idea and concept of being outstanding? The elites at all levels, of course, the sciences of which point of view are considered relevant, who in turn apply this monolithic model all around the world as if the grand theory ideals of the Enlightenment, that aimed at subsuming all phenomena under a single model, had in fact triumphed and should be urgently implemented.

Now, we are by no means denying altogether the fact that there is a very positive potential to several of the World Heritage Sites in the southern hemisphere, but what we notice is that very seldom this positive potential becomes a de facto potential. Usually most of those sites (which are imposed over the population and established without any kind of popular consent and/or study over potential socio-economic impact, positive and negative) are the stage for the advancement of poli-tico-economic agendas of a small elite and end up being perceived by the general public (local and national) as ‘monumental’ open-air museums where people gaze at a past in which they are denied any role (past, present, or future).
In fact, a series of educational programs usually follow the implementation of most of these sites, but because of the inherited paternalism of archaeology in most countries, education and technical training become the tools for the naturalization of not only the models themselves, but of local elites and non-local authorities, and the valorization of non-local socio-political agendas, and usually local populations end up benefiting from their heritage by developing their skills as busboys and waitresses. Pedro Paulo Funari once noted that “Alienation and poverty go hand in hand and information and education are possible liberating tools” (FUNARI, 2000b, p. 200). He was right when he chose to use the word ‘possible,’ since, as we know, those tools can also have the opposite function, depending on to what agenda and aesthetics the organizers behind a particular enterprise are responding to. And here lies the biggest contradiction between local and global.

How is it that local populations will benefit from their heritage and from the socio-economic outcomes of the implementation of World Heritage Sites? Who are the main investors of such projects? Where is the money coming from? Is it local or external money? Regional, national or international? Were local groups consulted and are they involved in the decision making process? Is there any risk that the potential influx of capital that is expected will get channeled away from the local economy and into the hands of a couple of investors? What kind of training and education are the local people receiving? Normative or critical? What kinds of positions are they assuming within the project? What are the economic consequences (positive and negative) of such an implementation? And the cultural ones? These are some of the questions that need to be considered before the actual implementation.

Again, we have to be very careful so that scientific discoveries do not end up introduced into a global arena where they have little to do with anyone’s culture history, and nothing to do with the science that valorized it to begin with. Otherwise, under the guise of ‘disinterested’ science political and economic agendas will continue to be served.
ARE WE READY FOR PUBLIC HERITAGE, AFTERWARDS?

Heirs of what was at first a playground for the rich and then a substratum for the advancement of political and academic agendas, most of us archaeologists are still entangled and struggling to come free of part of this inherited structure. Consequently, we are far away from having time and being ready to tackle public heritage – with all the applied training, abilities, and commitment that this enterprise requires in this global era. This implies, among other things, in a profound disciplinary restructuring of which the most serious elements were briefly considered here: the nature of archaeological science, Cartesian-dualism in the practice of the discipline, the problems with interdisciplinarity, the nature and social relevance of the questions asked, and the implications of the adoptions of archaeologically generated models in distinct social contexts. Only then will we be certified to handle the complexities behind cultural heritage management.

Most archaeologists are still struggling to accept the loss of disciplinary innocence and the consequent expansion of epistemic consciousness followed by such a loss, and are also resistant and somewhat horrified with the idea that our discipline is very much tainted by the endless flow of social, political and economic issues that distress the political present. The main problem with the denial of our role in the social dramas resulting from the data we unveil is that we may be behaving in a way that not only reinforces, but actually justifies hegemonic ideals, economic injustices, and the disempowerment of minorities worldwide (MINETTI; BEZERRA DE ALMEIDA, 2002).

In Brazil, for instance, archaeology was formally institutionalized in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and its first twenty years as an autonomous discipline were overshadowed and indirectly manipulated by the rationale of a military dictatorship that lasted over two decades (1964-1985) and tore the social fabric apart. During that period archaeology took shelter in the shadows of a naïve perspective of science, working under a right wing sponsored ‘neutrality,’ reinforced and justified
through the use of culture historical and positivist approaches to material culture studies. Universities and research groups were overly concerned with methodological issues, 

*dedicated to a kind of basic science, though not unlinked from a growing national consciousness [...] After 1964, with the debates and discussions under censorship, it followed that with the auspices of several foundations, the analyses of our problems started to be made through an imperialist perspective [...] (BEIGUELMAN, 1987, p. 202).*

We are still dealing with the social and economic consequences of such period (MENDONÇA DE SOUZA, 1991).

Brazilian archaeology’s institutional organization mirrors that of the larger picture of Brazilian society, in that it is extremely hierarchical with a strong paternalist/patronizing component. Both scientific practice and its social context reflect Brazil’s colonial past; as Brazilian archaeologist Pedro Paulo Funari notes, Brazilian “Archaeology was traditionally a discipline unconcerned with mundane implications of its practice, as if the scientific endeavor could be disentangled from the interests of states, groups and individuals” (FUNARI, 2001, p. 239). Brazilian scholars display their academic qualifications with the traditional overt disdain for applied research (LIMA, 2000).

The epistemological and methodological models in use in Brazil are still basically those implanted by foreign research teams in the 1950s and 1960s (LIMA, 2000). They are highly academic, over stressing culture-historical, systemic, and eco-determinist issues (LIMA, 2000), as an attempt to take part and guarantee membership in the global market that demands (or demanded) unprocessed raw data—data untainted by a local agendas. Public participation, involvement, or integration, when they exist (in rare situations), is always secondary to academic goals and subjected to patronizing attitudes, and like archaeologists everywhere we lack a well articulated discourse from the research community on the
issues concerning the social relevance of our discipline. Why should it matter? Who really ‘benefits from archaeological practice and theory and from the archaeological discourse?’ (FUNARI, 2001, p. 239); Can archaeology help generate a new arena for social development and social critique?

Brazil’s history as the subject of academic research by foreign scientists has produced an uncomfortable substrate for heritage management, which parallels and partakes of the academic desire to enter the realm of ideas on equal footing with colonial powers and the political desire to compete on the global media stage with new and fashionable discoveries. We, as scientists, and many times in the name of science, create a power structure in which, instead of simply being moderators, we are the main characters of the play. The outcome is that public perceptions towards our discipline tend to be extremely stereotyped and mystified, and by making this past inaccessible, our public believes that the past societies we study have an intrinsic value living people will never be able to match.

The idea that global recognition towards local monuments and that standardized models of preservation are good without previous consideration of contextual issues can lead to disastrous enterprises, since the mechanical adoption of global models tends to deny the very possibility of existence of local aesthetics and needs. In the early 1970s, Peruvian archaeologist Luis Lumbreras criticized archaeology and archaeologists for not paying attention to the social context of their practice, to the social and intellectual relevance of their research, and to the integration of their works with the public (LUMBRERAS, 1974). The idea that the incorporation of our data to established and accepted models is not only the right thing to do but that it actually should be the main aim of archaeologists around the world is based on a global perspective of foreign archaeology, and can be as damaging to the discipline and its intellectual health as the uncritical adoption of global models of site management can be to the public context of our practice. In other words, the indiscriminate adoption of global goals can, and usually does damage our internal and external economies.
As an attempt to undo the harm of the top-down approach to cultural management practices a recent publication from Unesco’s World Commission on Culture and Development (CUÉLLAR et al., 1996) scrutinizes this not so new paradigm and makes a claim for an anthropological approach to cultural heritage management practices. But the main question here is: Will the head merely join the body? Or will they work together to create the necessary degree of independence that will grant the headless body its own head and not an imported one?

We think that the last frontier for anthropological studies is the development of a conceptual framework that will allow us to deal with social complexity and public integration through a perspective that valorizes relevance and that will invariably diminish our authority in the overall power structure. In his *Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina* (The Open Veins of Latin America), a classic in Latin American historic-economic studies, Uruguayan social scientist Eduardo Galeano wrote a brilliant novel-like critical overview of 500 years of economic imperialism and its social consequences. The Open Veins in our title is taken from his and is an allusion to the resources (human and natural) that have been taken, constantly and continuously, from Latin American countries by the imperialist, colonial, and neo-colonial powers operating within and without from the arrival of Europeans up to present times. It is a look at how the richness of a few is sustained through the poverty of millions, and how the whole process is naturalized.

Perhaps it is really time for us to try to incorporate our primary identity, that of anthropologists, and to take on an ethnographic perspective on the different stakeholders involved in the public enterprise that our discipline represents. This is one possible way of guaranteeing that local aesthetics are going to prevail over (or at least stand beside) monolithic paternalist and global interests, and our academic community should stimulate its inclusion in our research designs. Only after this phase should a project on heritage management be
implemented. The incorporation of considerations of relevance as a means of approaching the specificities structuring internal and external economic cycles will certainly lead to the creation of a market for a distinct kind of cultural commodity, one in which commodities are no longer regulated by the demands of an external global market alone, but whose creative forces work from the inside to the outside and are controlled by and regulated through a local aesthetic.

We have been trying to show that, instead of taking advantage of our privileged situation to promote de-colonization and empowerment, archaeologists and anthropologists in general, and often inadvertently take part in this re-colonizing game. Our uses of the past continue to be imperialistic and colonial, even when we are trying to do the reverse. By dedicating our intellectual fervor to the pursuit of hot topics we maintain the channel through which public heritage continues to be plundered without affecting in any positive way the lives of those that should, by right, be the ones managing and deciding its destiny. In this sense, we reproduce the same structures of inequality we so loudly decry, instead of using our research and the possibilities of heritage management as liberating and empowering tools. How much longer can the veins remain open?9

Notas

1 See <http://www.nationalreview.com/20nov00/miller112000.shtml>.
2 See <http://whc.unesco.org/criteria.htm#debut>.
3 See <http://whc.unesco.org/opgulist.htm#para44>.
4 Our emphasis.
5 Our emphasis.
7 Our emphasis.
8 See footnote 7.
9 All the electronic citations made in this article were last checked on Monday, October 03, 2005, and were all working perfectly.
Referências


Abstract: in this paper we consider the impact and effects of scientific agendas oriented by a rationale of ‘hot topics’ and imported and de-contextualized models in the practice of archaeology and anthropology, in the public perceptions of these
disciplines, and in the development of cultural heritage management programs.

Key words: cultural heritage, globalization, hot topics, theoretical models, research questions