

Archaeology and the politics of pedagogy

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Abstract

It is argued here that pedagogy, rather than being a passive process of delivery, is part of the field of cultural politics, a contested domain, a public sphere where knowledges, views and perceptions on the past and the present are debated and contested, or valorized, reproduced and legitimized. Recent archaeological theory has neglected the field of pedagogy, which, as a result, has been largely colonized by the instrumentalist discourse, in its new, market-oriented reincarnation. This dominant view of archaeological pedagogy is presented in objectified, neutral terms as the natural, inevitable course of affairs: it has become the 'doxic' regime that is presented as being beyond criticism at its core, save for peripheral managerial points. Archaeology, however, has the ability to undermine this objectified discourse by showing the contingency, historicity, and the inevitably transient and unstable nature of the present-day pedagogical regime in archaeology. Current instrumentalist pedagogy, despite its dominance, does not go unchallenged. One way of challenging it is by devising pedagogical processes that create a space for critical reflection, reconnect subjectivity and experience with knowledge, and allow students not only to understand the material and social processes that generate and reproduce their own subjectivity, but also question and even transform these processes and conditions. Student-centred journals that promote critical reflexivity are an example of one such pedagogic process. This paper presents the experience of the author in using such a device in the teaching of a course on the archaeology and anthropology of eating and drinking.

Keywords

Archaeological theory; pedagogy; instrumentalism; neoliberalism; reflexivity; student-centred journals.

Introduction

Why is there so little discussion on pedagogy in archaeology?¹ How come that the flourishing and vibrant domain of archaeological theory has thus far ignored the field of teaching, an activity on which most producers of archaeological theory spend so much of their time? I hope that some answers to this paradox will emerge from this paper, the

primary concern of which, however, is to review and critically analyse the current framework within which the teaching of archaeology takes place, primarily in Western countries, and to point towards some possible alternatives to the established consensus. It is hoped that the paper, which focuses primarily on higher education and adopts a deliberately polemical stance, will generate further debate, in the pages of this journal and elsewhere. This desire is grounded in the conviction that pedagogy in archaeology, or in any other field, is not simply the passive transfer and delivery of produced knowledge nor the training of students in certain skills and abilities, as the current dominant discourse would have us believe. It is rather a socially crucial and politically contested field of cultural production, the effects and implications of which permeate everything we do in archaeology, from the production of archaeological knowledges and the reproduction of the field of archaeology as a whole, to the economic, social and political articulations of our activity and its products. To quote Henry Giroux:

Pedagogy... is not defined as simply something that goes on in schools. On the contrary, it is posited as central to any political practice that takes up the question of how individuals learn, how knowledge is produced, and how subject positions are constructed. In this context, pedagogical refers to forms of cultural production that are inextricably historical and political. Pedagogy is, in part, a technology of power, language, and practice that produces and legitimates forms of moral and political regulation which construct and offer human beings particular views of themselves and the world.

(Giroux 1991a: 55–6)

The paper will start with a discussion on some crucial parameters that shape the current pedagogic landscape in Western higher education; it will briefly explore the philosophical basis of this pedagogic regime in general and in relation to archaeology in particular, before offering some suggestions on the relevance of archaeological pedagogy; the paper will conclude by showing how a specific pedagogic device, student-centred journals, can engender a potentially emancipatory process, grounded in critical reflexivity. This article, in addition to the research on published resources, is based on the ‘participant observation’ ethnography of the author, on the ‘insights and frustrations of familiarity’ (Strathern 2000a: 3) with the field of higher education in the UK context, at the turn of the third millennium.

Teaching archaeology in higher education: instrumentalism meets neoliberalism

The academic landscape in which the teaching of archaeology takes place today in most Western countries is bleak. I am not going to embark here on senior common room tirades on ‘falling standards’ nor I am going to lament the passing of the mythical ‘golden age’ of the university. Long-term perspectives have shown the fallacy of both theses (e.g. Collini 2003). I shall rather take another route and discuss the direction and the political agendas and implications of the recent changes, teasing out in the process some of their philosophical and pedagogical premises.

Those of us who teach in Western universities are now experiencing the rapid colonization of our working spaces by the practices, the mentality and the logic of corporate business; in other words, we now live and work in the era of the corporate university, the era of academic capitalism (see, e.g., Aronowitz 2000; Castree and Sparke 2000; Kirp 2000; Lyotard 1984; Miyoshi 2000; Monbiot 2000: 281–301; Press and Washburn 2000; Shumar 1997; Warde 2001). It is not only the close links between universities and large corporations, the diversion of public funds towards research that will benefit primarily private interests; it is also the notion of ‘entrepreneurship’ as the primary value of the university; the establishment of an internal market within universities and, among the sector as a whole, the notion of relentless competition for funding, resources, students and staff, and positions in league tables. Above all, it is the colonization, the attempt gradually to take over one of the last spaces that has been reserved for social critique, for the questioning of authority and of the established orders, by mentalities and practices that valorize individualism above everything else, practices that establish as one of the main goals of all university activity the maximization of profit, be in the terms of university income, spin-off company share values or graduate earnings.

The examples here abound: the decline of public funding for universities (and the naïve belief that private funding comes with ‘no strings attached’) has led more and more institutions to accept funding from private companies; in one of the recent and well-publicized cases, Berkeley University accepted \$25m from the Swiss pharmaceutical giant, Novartis, in exchange for first rights to negotiate licences on one-third of the beneficiary-department’s discoveries. Moreover, the company acquired the right to hold two of the five seats on the department’s research committee (Press and Washburn 2000), with obvious consequences for academic autonomy and freedom. In many other cases, funding by oil companies often directs university research away from the search for renewable energy sources. To give a rather different example, the recent decision of the British government to let the market determine the prices for courses and degrees, by introducing differential tuition fees paid for by graduates during their working careers,² is premised on the assumption that university education is a private, profit and career-enhancing choice that benefits primarily the individual, rather than a public good that benefits the community as a whole.

This last example reveals the fundamental change in the prevailing definition and character of knowledge and education that the present-day Western university is predicated upon. According to the sociologist Bernstein (1996; cf. Beck 1999), it is a view of education as training in utilitarian technical competences, a view that ruptures the link between knowledge and the self, denigrating the ability to make ethical judgements and develop a wider vision about the world. It is a definition of knowledge as a commodity to be sold and exchanged, rather than as a life-transforming, experiential process; it is the final product now, rather than the process itself that is being valorized. To put it in another way using terms of political economy, knowledge has lost its ‘use value’ and is seen as having primarily ‘exchange value’ (cf. Lyotard 1984: 4–5). Consequently, education is seen purely as an instrumentalist procedure, that is, something that delivers knowledge, information and skills which have a distinctive, easily definable, measurable and quantifiable character, which can be assessed in a direct way, and more importantly,

have a specific market value (cf. Heyman 2000). Here is what Lyotard had to say, twenty years ago:

The question (overt or implied) now asked by the professionalist student, the State, or institutions of higher education is no longer 'Is it true?' but 'What use is it?' In the context of the mercantilization of knowledge, more often than not this question is equivalent to: is it saleable?

(Lyotard 1984: 51)

Instrumentalism as an ideology is not of course new; in fact, it has been a central ideological foundation of capitalist modernity (cf. Heyman 2000; Pluciennik 2001a) and a reasoning that has been the focus of powerful critiques from Max Weber (cf. Turner 1992) to Francois Lyotard (1984), as shown in the quotation above. On many occasions in the distant or more recent past, knowledge was seen as the 'tool' to achieve specific aims, be it the socialization of individuals into aristocratic and upper-class manners and life-ways or the formation of a national pedagogy and of an ideal national citizen, among others. This inherently impoverished view of education is now linked more clearly and explicitly to one specific agenda, that of individualist, entrepreneurial academic capitalism (cf. Shore and Wright 2000; Barnett 1994 on a historical account of this trajectory, especially in the UK).

As the university thus is fast becoming a corporate service industry, all other trappings of the service industry mentality were bound to follow. The discourse on auditing and accountability (which is, of course, far wider than higher education: Power 1994, 1997) is perhaps one of the most powerful and omnipresent (cf. the papers in Strathern 2000b). Auditing as a mentality is not new to higher education; Strathern has even suggested (1996–7), that the notions of enhancement, improvement and accountability central to auditing originate from the university sector, were transferred to business world and are now being re-introduced but with a radically changed meaning. While accountability may have potentially empowering effects (when promoting honest transparency and critical reflexivity, for example), its deployment within the neoliberal regime of governmentality acquires disempowering connotations. The customers of higher education (be it students and their parents, private companies or even the state) will need to be reassured that the product they are buying satisfies certain standards of 'excellence', 'efficiency' and 'quality' set by the sector itself, through devices such as 'benchmarking' statements, so the argument goes. The whole auditing industry is sustained by a number of similar devices, such as mission statements and charters, teaching and research quality evaluations, and league tables, that rank universities, departments and even individuals along a sliding scale of quantified scores, on the basis of abstract, decontextualized criteria of 'excellence' and 'quality' (cf. Beck 1999; Shore and Wright 1999; Barth 2002: 8–10). These procedures and practices, as applied today, are complex instruments that perform various operations: they form a new culture, the culture of auditing and accountability, where the financial and the moral meet (Strathern 2000a: 1). It is a culture that does not largely monitor primary action (e.g. teaching) but it is rather based on the 'control of control', the periodic monitoring of internalized measures of self-surveillance (cf. Power 1994: 19); a culture thus that changes institutions and individuals by reshaping their own view of themselves, their rhetoric and practice, in order to make them auditable; in other words, it is a culture that

defines 'quality' rather than simply monitoring it (Power 1994: 33). Audit therefore becomes in the Foucauldian sense, a political technology of the self (cf. Pels 2000): 'A means through which individuals actively and freely regulate their own conduct and thereby contribute to the government's model of social order' (Shore and Wright 2000: 62).

These procedures act as market regulators, but they are also techniques of panoptic self-surveillance (cf. Shore and Roberts 1995; Amit 2000). They are rituals of verification (Power 1997), elaborate staged performances that combine the two main scopical techniques of capitalist modernity, the spectacle and the surveillance, but, more importantly, they operate as power devices that mask and legitimize existing inequalities among universities and departments. They hide (ironically, given their calls for transparency) the fact that access to resources is unequal from the start and, as a result, the ranking in league tables is inherently unfair, in the same way that school league tables hide social and class inequalities. These procedures also reinforce the existing status quo by channelling resources to the high-ranking institutions (as has happened for example, with the research funding in the UK); they can also be used as punitive 'management' tools against departments and individuals that do not perform according to the set targets of 'excellence'; occasionally, these devices may help some non-established departments to compete with established ones in fields such as teaching, but whether in fact these departments benefit from this operation in the long run is debatable. In teaching, devices such as the benchmarking statements, result in an increased homogenization of the curriculum; the policing of disciplinary boundaries that they entail stifles intellectual innovation and cross-disciplinary fertilization (cf. Hamilakis 2001; Pluciennik 2001a: 23; and other commentary in Rainbird and Hamilakis 2001). The performance of auditing encourages tokenism and ritualization, at the expense of serious engagement (cf. Shore and Wright 2000: 81), and the bureaucratic overkill associated with it discourages a serious debate on teaching and learning.

Many of the above changes are supported by two powerful but ultimately hollow arguments. The first is the 'anti-elitist' argument: most university sectors in the West are now massive in scale, both in terms of number of institutions and numbers of students.³ This 'inflation' of titles and degrees is another factor which has led to the auditing processes, as it created the need for market 'regulation'. The critics of the auditing phenomenon therefore are branded as elitists who not only resist the interference in their own affairs but also implicitly oppose mass higher education. This argument, however, falls apart if one considers the long-term effect of some of the above changes: taking the UK as an example, as the government's own report admits, despite the huge increase in the number of students, 'the social class gap among those entering university remains too wide' (Department of Education and Skills 2003: 4). Furthermore, the individualist attitude on education and the rapidly established differential market value of universities and courses not only damage the notion of education as a public good, but will lead to 'working class kids getting working class degrees' (to paraphrase Willis 1977): students from unprivileged backgrounds will attend only the colleges and universities they can afford, institutions that will provide primary 'training' with meagre resources, as most resources will concentrate on research-intensive, elite institutions, which will allow their students the 'luxury' of critical thinking and liberal education. The second argument

deployed is that of ‘relevance’; here the cliché of the ‘ivory tower’ is the red-herring that is waved, along with calls that the universities should become more ‘relevant’ and link-up with the ‘real world’. In the present climate, however, these calls are meant and interpreted in a very specific way: the real world is primarily the world of business, and the ‘relevance’ is the relevance to profit maximization and economic ‘efficiency’.⁴

The language of these discourses and practices deserves close scrutiny. The combination of neoliberal instrumentality and the culture of audit and accountability has produced a new linguistic terrain, a constellation of keywords and concepts that forms a pervasive semantic cluster (cf. Shore and Wright 2000: 60): teaching has become delivery, the courses, units (the successful completion of which leads to the accumulation of credits), the quantifiable effects of teaching have become learning outcomes; teaching should demonstrate ‘excellence’ and ‘value-added’, and all these should be ‘accounted for’, and ready to be audited, based on the stated charters, mission statements and benchmarking criteria. Linguistic productions are grounded on social relations. This language, which evidently comes from business, does not only shape the teacher’s and students’ attitudes to knowledge and education and propagate the culture and values of commodification (cf. Giroux 1992a: 155). More importantly, it presents the whole process as a neutral, depoliticized affair, an uncontested, common-sense procedure. Language here, as a technology of power, removes an essentially political and contested issue, education and knowledge, from the domain of the political, making it simply an issue of neutral managerial procedure, an issue of ‘good practice’. Furthermore, it presents monetary values and profit mentalities as an objective, generally accepted reality, as a *natural state of being*. The phenomenon is typical of the process whereby *doxa* is produced (cf. Bourdieu 1990): a discourse that ceases to be a context-specific world view, linked to distinctive interests, and becomes the state of affairs, the unquestioned and unquestionable view, beyond orthodoxy and heterodoxy. As such, this discourse becomes difficult to question and oppose. After all, who will be against quality, good practice and efficiency?

Archaeology and the new instrumentalism

The humanities as a whole find themselves on the receiving end of much of this pressure; after all, they are the disciplines that are constantly asked to legitimate and justify their ‘relevance’ to the real world, and to demonstrate that their knowledges can produce profit and benefit the individual financially. Archaeology, in addition to the pressure to justify its relevance and in addition to the auditing and accountability discourses and practices it is subjected to, is increasingly under pressure by the professional sector, the ‘CRM (Cultural Resource Management)’ industry; it is asked to produce graduates who will be suitably trained to perform the prescribed operations within the professional sector. Calls for academic archaeology to link up to the ‘real world’ abound here. In most Western countries, however, the CRM sector is a huge business that operates under the principles of the most aggressive competitive capitalism, where maximization of profit and minimization of cost (including the cost of training its employees) is the ultimate aim (cf. Blinkhorn and Cumberpatch 1999; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001; Bishop 2001). It is a business that supplies primarily the raw materials for the heritage industry, an

industry that has replaced the declining traditional industries in many Western countries (Walsh 1992). Universities are now asked to redefine and revise their curricula in order to suit the needs of the sector for personnel who would perform ‘efficiently’ within this framework (cf. Bishop 2001); this call ignores the fact that the vast majority of graduates of archaeology in most countries do not wish to pursue a career in archaeology: for example, in the UK, only 10–15 per cent of graduates are interested in pursuing such a career (Chitty 1999: 6). The formation of initiatives such as the Archaeology Training Forum in the UK lobbies for these changes. The emphasis on ‘training’ as opposed to education is not accidental here; archaeology graduates, according to this logic, should be equipped with certain operational skills, and abilities, but, to quote Collini (2003: 6), ‘although a number of “skills” may be a byproduct of a university education, they are not its defining purpose’. University education is primarily about critique, about the ability to articulate critical and ethical judgements (cf. Bernstein 1996), about questioning of the established orders, of the received wisdom, of the common-sense truths and statements. These values feature very low, if at all, in the debate on archaeological education.

Academic archaeologists themselves have responded in different ways to the above developments: most of us, while acknowledging the pressures of the auditing and accountability processes and expressing our anger and frustration to various degrees (cf. papers in Rainbird and Hamilakis 2001), choose to reluctantly go along with them, without further engagement with their substance; thus doing, we also implicitly consider teaching to be simply a process of ‘delivery’, and we often end up internalizing and subconsciously perpetuating the audit and managerial mentality. A number of others have actively embraced these processes, either because they believe in their merit (thinking, for example, that procedures such as ‘teaching quality assessment’ will bring the elite universities that neglect their students ‘to account’), or because they consider that compliance to be for the good of the discipline, or because they treat them as another career path. Finally, a much smaller number is actively engaging with the substance of these practices and attempts to work against them and provide alternatives. As mentioned in the introduction, one of the great paradoxes in this situation is the disjuncture between the highly developed and lively theoretical debates on archaeological research, on interpretative, ontological, epistemological and political aspects on archaeology, and the poverty of theorizing with regard to teaching and learning, aspects which are, after all, as relevant to the ontology and epistemology of the discipline as any research topic. To give just one example, archaeological theory has successfully critiqued formalist economics and discourses on resource maximization and efficiency in prehistory, and in most recent pre-capitalist societies. Yet, it is this maximization and cost-efficiency discourse that archaeologists are asked to implement in teaching, along with a context-free, objectified notion of quality and excellence. In other words, while much of the recent archaeological theory has embraced critical reflexivity and has attacked objectivism, the domain of archaeological teaching is still seen in instrumentalist terms, as the delivery of produced knowledge, the end result of a completed and closed process (cf. Heyman 2000: 299).

How can we explain this paradox? A variety of factors may be at play here: most academic archaeologists were attracted to the subject because they have found the engagement with the material past fascinating, and, while many are passionate and effective teachers, teaching does not feature as highly as research in our academic practice.

This, however, has resulted in the domain of teaching being largely colonized by the discourses and practices of managerialism and instrumentalism, acquiring thus associations that make it unattractive to most academic archaeologists. There may be other factors at play, related to the development of specific theoretical trends in recent archaeological thinking. For a start, the political dimension of archaeological practice (be it in the field, in the laboratory, and mostly in the classroom) is an issue that has attracted less attention, in relation to others. In addition, archaeologists are rarely seen as cultural producers and as intellectuals: their more conventional role, codified in many professional codes of practice, is that of the 'steward' and advocate of the past material 'record', a reductionist self-definition that valorizes and fetishizes an entity (the record) that is produced by archaeologists themselves out of the fragments of the past (cf. Barrett 1988; Hamilakis 1999, 2003; Patrick 1985). This close association with stewardship, and with the record, makes archaeologists more vulnerable to the pressures by the professional sector, and undermines and overshadows the role of archaeologists as producers of ideas and as critics. Moreover, recent theoretical developments (in archaeology as well as the humanities and social sciences as a whole), in order to redress previous imbalances, have focused on the individual at the expense of the community, on often fractionalized identity discourses at the expense of broader subordinate collectivities and at exclusively localized processes at the expense of broader macro-economic developments. While these shifts have produced more nuanced narratives (and most of the advocates of these theories were and are positioned from within the academic left), the dominance or heavy influence of these ideas in certain fields, including recent Anglo-American archaeological theory, has made it difficult to articulate a discourse for the support of public, collective values (such as free education, for example) and to trace the links between the micro-economy of the classroom with the macro-economy of capitalism (cf. Miyoshi 2000: 44–7; Zizek 1997). It will be a mistake, however, to see this process as monolithic, unidirectional and largely undisputed; these phenomena have produced their powerful critiques, as shown here; moreover, many teachers find different ways to implement diverse, inspirational and imaginative teaching, and subvert many of the instrumentalist procedures (cf. Shennan 2002). Several critics have used the theoretical and intellectual tools of their discipline, be it Foucauldian theory of power (e.g. Shore and Roberts 1995), the anthropology of organizations (e.g. Shore and Wright 1999) or post-structuralist and feminist theory (e.g. Bensimon 1995) to understand, expose and undermine market instrumentalism and its homogenizing practices.

Teaching archaeology as critical emancipatory pedagogy

Teaching and learning in archaeology is in need of rescuing from the managerial, bureaucratic, market-oriented discourse. Teaching is not about procedures or about course outlines, assessment criteria and learning outcomes. I do not mean to underestimate the importance of these, yet teaching is primarily a field of cultural politics and, by implication, a field of archaeological politics: the classroom, the laboratory, the field are all public spheres, are all social domains where ideas, values and mentalities, past and present, are debated, contested, evaluated, critiqued and rejected, or valorized, produced

and reproduced. As such, the teaching and learning of archaeology poses a series of key questions: who is applying to study archaeology and who is being accepted on to degree programmes? What motivated these students to study archaeology in the first place? Why is it that lower socio-economic strata and students from ethnic minorities are underrepresented or totally absent?⁵ What kind of stories do we tell to students, and how do these stories relate to our and their present-day class, ethnic and national, gender and sexual identities? Do we reproduce (and how?) structures of power and hierarchy in the teaching and learning domains? How does our authority as teachers promote certain views, values and ideas on archaeology, the past and the present? These are issues that in a similar form have been debated in other archaeological domains, such as public and community archaeology, for quite some time now. Yet, they are still largely absent from or under-theorized in the teaching and learning spheres. In public archaeology, these issues are often discussed under the framework of the politics of the past. I suggest that teaching and learning is no different in that respect, and the politics of pedagogy should therefore be seen, debated and incorporated in the field of the socio-politics of the archaeological past.

One of the first tasks that such a field faces is to engage head on with the two key issues that are forced upon us: the first is that of audit and accountability, and the second that of the relevance of archaeology to the present. As mentioned above, the culture of auditing and accountability has been already the subject of some cogent and powerful critiques that can form the basis for an appropriate archaeological response. The first question to ask is, accountable to whom? And, further, who is driving the accountability agenda, under which framework and on the basis of what criteria? In other words, we should expose the assumed neutrality of its language and practices. A further response could be to replace the managerial notion of accountability with that of responsibility: as a concept, responsibility carries a more substantive ethical and political weight, and, more importantly, it relates to the notion of academic archaeology as a community which includes teachers, students, administrative and support staff. The concept of the academic community (now heavily eroded by the mentality that valorizes individual profit) implies shared responsibilities towards the public that (should) fund public education, towards the diverse publics that are implicated in archaeological practice, towards groups and communities that are affected by that practice, towards the environment. Within the academic community another parallel set of responsibilities arise: these are not the responsibilities of the service provider (university, teaching staff) towards the customer (student), as the present dominant discourse suggests, but the shared responsibilities of teachers, students and support staff, towards each other and towards the democratic, dialogic process of debate and critique that this community is founded upon. Responsibility, of course, as a concept is not without its ambiguities and problems (cf. Pluciennik 2001b), yet it is the notion of political, relational and contingent responsibility that I am referring to here (cf. Pels 2000), not its abstract or managerial versions.

As for the notion of relevance to the 'real world', a response that focuses on a much wider and richer interpretation of relevance (rather than simply economic profit) and a much wider definition of the real world (rather than simply the world of business and private capital) is called for. These definitions should not only go beyond the dominant interpretations, but also actively undermine and overcome them. Archaeology is relevant

to the present-day world as a broad field of ideas, discourses and practices that link the material past with the present, long-term history with identity, with social and material memories, with sameness and otherness. As such, it provides an extremely rich field for critique and debate on a number of present-day issues and problems. Archaeology's main teaching aim could be to show that things *could have been otherwise*, that the present conditions are historically contingent and explainable. It can show how certain power relations, inequalities and asymmetries have been *objectified*, have been inscribed into the landscape and on the material world, so as to appear natural and eternal. It can also show how, often, these objectified material relationships have proven vulnerable, unstable, ephemeral. This aim and aspiration is of extreme importance, given that the present-day status quo portrays the established order (be it the nation-state, capitalist economics or gender relations and more besides) as the natural, inevitable, irreversible state of being. This sense of contingency and historicity has therefore immense emancipatory potential, as it can form the basis upon which to imagine and dream up alternative features. At the same time, this critical reflection should include the self-reflexive examination of archaeology's contingent character as a discourse of modernity, linked to certain identity processes such as the development of nation-states.

Archaeology, both as material reality and as academic and intellectual practice, is directly linked to many present-day key social and political problems. We need only to be reminded of the crucial role of monuments and sites in the construction of national, ethnic, gender, race and class identities around the world, or the entanglement of archaeology with current conflicts such as the recent invasion of Iraq (cf. Hamilakis 2003b). As a result, archaeology continues to be inextricably linked to processes of identity and, by implication, notions of sameness, otherness and diversity. A cornerstone of a critical and emancipatory pedagogy in archaeology should aim at unsettling common-sense preconceptions and demolish stories that have produced pasts to suit present-day dominant practices and identities: from the racist conceptions of primitiveness when referring to people in prehistory, to the current allochronic strategies (cf. Fabian 1983), seen for example in the recent war in Afghanistan, the people of which were portrayed by large sections of the media as living 'in the Bronze Age'. Archaeological pedagogy thus becomes immensely relevant in pointing out the constructed, fluid and historically contingent nature of identities, and simultaneously emphasizing the need for inclusive emancipatory discourses that go beyond fractionalized identities; without erasing and glossing over difference, it can point to the shared values of human experience, helping thus to forge new forms of communal existence that go beyond sameness and otherness.

These issues of course are central to the discussion on the ethics and politics of archaeology as a whole, not just in relation to teaching, and they cannot be adequately explored here, given their complexity, but their discussion within a debate on pedagogy is crucial in situating the pedagogical discourse within the socio-politics of archaeology as a whole. For teachers of archaeology, the classroom, the laboratory and the field are public spheres; these are the most common and immediate public domains within which their intellectual interventions take place. If, as shown by research on the politics of the past, archaeology today is as much about the present as it is about the past, if it is about contemporary as much as about older pasts, then the notion of the 'field' should be expanded and reconfigured, to incorporate, in addition to the site, the survey field and the

museum, *all* present-day locales (from our immediate surroundings to the mediascapes and the Internet), including the classroom and the teaching laboratory (cf. Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Hamilakis 2000). In that sense, what happens in the classroom is not just teaching, and definitely not 'delivery': the dialogic process of engagement with the past and the present can also be seen as research, in the sense of the production of new ideas, ideas that emerge from the way students and teachers perceive and reproduce the past, and the way their own experiences and backgrounds inform and shape understandings about the past and its role in the present. A critical archaeological pedagogy should, therefore, collapse the divide between teaching and research. This issue is explored further in the next section.

Teaching reflexivity, challenging instrumentalism: student-centred journals

For the past three years I have been teaching a third-year undergraduate option course at the University of Southampton, on 'The Anthropology and Archaeology of Eating and Drinking' (the course was also taught twice previously at the University of Wales Lampeter). In this section, I discuss briefly a teaching and learning process adopted as part of this course, which I believe to be a suitable tool towards the development of critical, reflexive and potentially emancipatory pedagogy: student-centred journals. As a teaching method, student-centred journals are not new, and are fairly common in some disciplines outside archaeology, although the logic and framework within which they have been deployed seem to be quite diverse (cf. Fischer 1996; McCrindle and Christensen 1995; Morrison 1996; Wetherell and Mullins 1996). In this case, the source of inspiration was the use of this method as part of a course on the geography of food, taught by Ian Cook at the University of Wales Lampeter (Cook 2000). I have opted, however, for a modified version of his idea.

The aims of the course is to examine critically the main approaches to food and drink consumption in archaeology and anthropology, and develop alternative theoretical and methodological avenues that do justice to the complexity of the phenomenon, beyond dominant reductionist paradigms, such as the one based on 'subsistence studies'. The notion of the consuming body is the basic interpretative angle adopted. The course attempts to link the embodied experience of eating and drinking (and the associated elements of bodily senses, bodily memories, emotions and feelings) with broader social and political phenomena (cf. Hamilakis et al. 2002). It thus allows the revisiting of topics such as food consumption and power (including phenomena such as colonialism and nationalism), ethnic, gender and other forms of identity, and feasting, among others, from a novel perspective that links corporeal experience and social dynamics. The course is structured around a range of ethnographic, historical and archaeological case studies, and covers methodological as well as theoretical ground.

The formal teaching session is a two-hour weekly slot, each with a specific theme, which aims at providing a basic framework of information and ideas, a summary of key approaches on the subject, and either one extended case study or a range of examples from different contexts. All these slots are structured around key controversial questions and themes, from the food taboos and their diverse interpretation, to competing archaeological

methodologies, and from the present-day food scares to anorexia nervosa. It is made clear to students that these slots are not conventional straightforward lectures, but a mixture of lecture, seminar and debating session. To that effect, they are asked to be prepared actively to participate in the debates, expressing and defending arguments, based on their own readings, on information from other courses, as well as on their own experiences. A number of feature films that explore the social meaning of eating and drinking are also shown (outside the two-hour slot), although their viewing is not compulsory. The course was initially assessed with a conventional essay, the student-centred journal and a final written examination, but subsequently the examination was abolished, leaving only the essay and the journal, which carry equal weight in terms of assessment (50 per cent each). The course attracts large numbers of students. More than 100 students have so far attended this course (at the University of Southampton alone) and have produced student journals.

What is the journal? It will be a mistake to see it simply as an assessment tool. It is rather a crucial pedagogical device, central to the aims, the content and the philosophy of this course. It is a process that encourages students to use this course as an opportunity to reflect on their own lives, backgrounds, experiences, routines and habits; it prompts them to attempt to situate these historically and materially, with the help of the knowledges and ideas debated in the course; and it even encourages them to question and reconsider these routines and habits. Furthermore, it encourages them to use their own experiences as way of engaging with the food practices (and their social meaning) of others, in the past and in the present. Students are asked to record in the journal, throughout the duration of the course, their thoughts and ideas on the knowledges discussed in the classroom and these encountered in their own readings, but, more importantly, they are asked to engage in a deep and honest, critical, self-reflexive journey that starts with food consumption in their own lives and inevitably expands to all aspects of their social being. This is critical reflexivity that explores the dynamic between the personal and the collective, beyond self-indulgence. The link between the personal-experiential and the academic is a key factor in the success of this exercise (see appendix for the guidelines issued to students).

What are the main benefits of this process, and how do they address the dominant instrumentalist logic of education, critiqued above?

1. This process valorizes students' personal life experiences, making them a central aspect of their education. In so doing, it does not treat students as the empty vessels who will be filled with information, in exchange of tuition fees, nor as the docile bodies that need to be disciplined in the archaeological process and its skill apparatus, as the banking and instrumentalist view of education does. By enabling students to connect the personal-experiential with the academic, it allows them to understand much better the social processes and dynamics in both, the past and the present (cf. Coleman and Simpson 1999).
2. The reflexive process encourages students to think not only about the content of the course, but also about the process of learning itself; in other words, it allows students to learn how to learn, to realize which aspects of their own work have been successful and which have not.

3. Journals enable students to link not only the academic and the personal, but also different kinds of knowledge acquired from different courses and from different sources of information. In so doing, journals counter the fragmentation of the learning process, one of the main outcomes of the modularized, instrumentalized pedagogy (cf. Morrison 1996: 321). In this case, students are able to connect theoretical insights and empirical data, and link, for example, their knowledge on pottery technologies with pottery function and meaning in food consumption contexts, and make comparisons and associations with data from varied chronological periods.
4. Journals make teaching and learning a much more dynamic process, by enabling a continuous dialogue among students and between students and the teacher, as students keep a record of their thoughts, ideas and criticism on the information presented in the class, and the ideas debated in the discussions. They thus provide a much more substantive form of student feedback than the evaluation forms and their quantified, often meaningless, indicators (cf. Ashbury et al. 1993).
5. This process transforms the classroom into a research field for both the students and the teacher, countering thus the instrumentalist artificial division between teaching and research: the exploration of students' lives, experiences, routines, backgrounds and social practices puts to the test ideas and pre-conceived knowledges on the subject. To give just one example, some of the students, partly based on their own experiences, expressed dissatisfaction with the heavy emphasis on the meaning of food consumption, on feasting and on dining rituals, at the expense of the politics of food shortage, deprivation and hunger. One male, overseas student writes:

What I normally eat is Asda spaghetti (15p per pack. I can finish a pack in three meals), Asda fast noodles (9p per packs. two packs for one meal) and Asda potatoes (now 88p for 500g, but they used to be cheaper before the summer, therefore I have already given them up). As a result I can probably spend less than £2 week on food. If I do not do so, I probably cannot afford to pay my tuition fees, which are £7100 this year.

(R, academic year 00–01)

This acted as a reminder of the shortcomings of a whole field in recent anthropological and archaeological thinking (including my own work), that places such heavy emphasis on consumption. Also, students can see how the boundaries between teaching and research blur; they can realize that their own experiences are of value and can contribute to the development of new ideas. Moreover, they can see that they themselves can become researchers, by exploring and interrogating their own subjectivity and experience, and explaining the historical contingencies of their own routines and practices, such as table manners for example. It helps them in other words, to construct informed and critical narratives about their own lives; more importantly, it allows them to see knowledge and ideas, not as a closed narrative that needs to be memorized, but something that can be negotiated, challenged, modified and rejected (cf. Giroux 1991b: 508). In this case, it is

important that the whole course was set as an opportunity to challenge conventional paradigms on the archaeology of food: students were made aware from the start that one of the main aims of the course is for the class as a whole to explore alternative paradigms.

7. Perhaps the most important contribution of the journals is that they encourage students to see education as a life-transforming experience, a journey of self-discovery, rather than simply a race to acquire usable, saleable skills and competences. As part of this process, students have to construct their own 'gastronomic biography', as one of them put it, excavate their own experiential stratigraphy and, through this exercise, explore the historical contingencies of their food habits and routines. But often, this process also leads them to question these routines and habits. One of the most common ways through which this questioning is expressed is through their buying habits. The politics of present-day food production, marketing and distribution is one of the areas that come under scrutiny. Here are a couple of passages that illustrate this point:

I had not realised before the course, how political my Christmas celebration was or how through food, my identity could be expressed. My use of food as a powerful tool has been demonstrated to me when I banned French food because they were attacking the safety of our 'national food' [the reference here is to the British reaction to the French ban on British beef, following the mad-cow disease epidemic].

(A. female, mature student, 02–03)

Commenting on an article that discusses meat marketing strategies today, noting that very few people now associate cow's milk with the animal's pregnancy, a student will write:

When I next went shopping, I had this in mind, and more than usual was put off from buying any meat. I also had a closer look at the typical children's foods: burgers, chicken or fish, but all in butter or breadcrumbs, to disguise the meat as something more inviting.

(R. female student, 01–02)

In other words, to recall Bernstein's thesis mentioned earlier, this learning process encourages and enables students to reconnect selfhood and knowledge, to interrogate their own subjectivity, and to articulate critical and ethical judgements and stances; it helps students to develop a sense of ethical responsibility for their actions and practices, see the constructed nature of their own gastronomic identities and even cross boundaries by challenging or even overcoming their own established patterns of social practice.

In more general terms, both this course and the journal as a key learning and teaching practice relate to the pedagogical discourse that is known as border pedagogy, developed

by thinkers such as Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren and bell hooks (who developed her own version, known as engaged pedagogy (Florence 1998)). Briefly, border pedagogy is inspired by the earlier work of Paulo Freire (e.g. 1972; Freire and Faundez 1989) who advocated the transformative and emancipatory power of critical self-reflection. Rejecting the reductionist, banking view of education, border pedagogy encourages students to reflect on their experiences, routines and practices, engage with, critique and ‘unlearn’ deep-rooted values and stereotypes, and transform the social conditions of their existence. In other words, it encourages them to cross boundaries and borders, be it of their own identities or the disciplinary borders that often fence off knowledge and ideas. It teaches them the relational, situated and constructed nature of their identities (Giroux 1991b: 516), but also how to develop counter-discourses, produce their own texts (such as the journals), their own narratives on themselves as well as on the taught knowledges and ideas (cf. Giroux 1988, 1991b, 1992b; Giroux and McLaren 1994; hooks 1994; McLaren 1997).

Did journals always work, and did they work for all students? Of course not. For a start, within an instrumentalized pedagogic environment, students are bound to focus on ‘what do we need to do, to get a good mark’; moreover, journals are not a ‘soft option’, and some students are not willing to engage in a process that demands from them the hard and often uncomfortable task of serious, critical reflexivity; a few others have the feeling that they do not ‘learn’ (which is usually equated to the number of pages that they have filled in with notes during the class), they do not get ‘their money’s worth’ (in the present fees-paying regime, meant in its literal sense); the fact that critical reflexivity is rarely incorporated into the curriculum makes an attempt such as this difficult, and I have to go through early drafts of all students’ journals (resulting in an increased workload) in order to provide guidance. The demands of instrumentalist pedagogy have also meant that this process had to compromise, altering some of its important aspects. For example, as has been noted (e.g. Segal 1990: 124), journals work much better if their assessment follows a pass/fail rule (removing thus the anxiety and the stress of marks), rather than the 100 per cent grading scale that is the required practice at the institutions where I have worked. Besides, this approach works much better with a socially and culturally diverse student body. In this case, 99 to 100 per cent of the class has been white, and mostly from a middle-class background. Some students also resisted the idea of the journals, arguing that this process reminded them of unhappy experiences during their childhood, when they were *forced* to keep diaries (cf. Gore 1993: 138). This reaction reminds us that the student–teacher relationship cannot escape the power/knowledge nexus, resulting in reflexive, emancipatory methods being perceived by students as authoritarian.

Student performance (in terms of engagement with the basic principles of experiential, critical reflexivity) varied, with mature students performing much better than school-leavers, and female students performing better than male ones. Despite the limitations and the problems, however, the vast majority of students felt that they had benefited greatly from this process and realized how it helped them to explore, rethink and challenge aspects of their subjectivity, making archaeology much more relevant to them and their lives. Here are some examples from the journals:

May be it is British peculiarity, but I have certainly been brought up to believe that it is rude to talk about oneself, and it is often difficult to write explicitly about personal experiences and emotions without a feeling of vulnerability.

(K. female, mature student, 02–03)

It was shocking for me to hear such an academic view of eating and drinking. Academic work, in my opinion is something highly theoretical and philosophical that is beyond the reach of average people. . . I have the chance to study my own 'life'! This is the most exciting part of the course.

(R. male overseas student, 00–01)

[T]he demanded reflexivity has enabled me to make a great deal of sense of many personal experiences relating to food and to realise that some of my personal moral 'values' surrounding food consumption were less well grounded than I would have liked to believe. This has in turn given the academic information passed to me in lectures and gained through reading an added value, turning it from the abstract to the real.

(S. female, mature student, 00–01)

I am not suggesting that this device will work in all cases and in all contexts, and it is undoubtedly true that a theme such as the archaeology and anthropology of food (especially as approached in this case) lends itself much more readily to experiential and reflexive procedures than some others. Nor can the reflexive and experiential dimension be a substitute for in-depth critical study; it is simply an essential component of it. The use of reflexive journals, an unpredictable and risky but, in the end, rewarding venture, cannot defeat by itself instrumentalist pedagogy; but it can help undermine and challenge it, opening up a small but important path towards alternative pedagogic practices and futures.

Conclusion

Despite the sophisticated discourses in archaeological theory, archaeological pedagogy in many Western contexts has been largely dominated by instrumentalism, which in its most recent reincarnation is tightly linked to neoliberal governmentality: the banking view of knowledge has been combined with the mentality of market forces and profit maximization, in a framework of auditing and accountability; this is the ground where the financial and the moral meet, a new technology of the self that, in the name of transparency, encourages self-surveillance rather than critical reflexivity. These developments, however, are neither homogeneous nor necessarily monolithic and stable. Despite their portrayal as the new 'doxa' that makes their critique difficult, they have been challenged by a variety of social agents. Academic discourses, and the accumulated concepts, knowledges and ideas from different disciplines from anthropology to critical accounting and gender studies, have historicized and deconstructed these developments, opening up a critical space for alternative pedagogies.

Archaeology's role in this challenge is crucial. It can show that things could have been otherwise, in other words explore the contingency of both the prevailing educational regime and social experience as a whole. It can demystify the objectified character of discourses, devices and practices, and show their links with the archaeology of capitalist modernity, the well-known modernist rhetoric of improvement and auditing, and the archaeology of surveillance. Archaeology can also regain the argument of its relevance, moving at the same time away from the ground of market mentality and profit. It can demonstrate, for example, how materiality has been central to processes of identity and memory and how, in order to understand current notions of sameness and otherness and the associated conflicts, one needs to engage with the processes through which these notions are materially produced and reproduced, in the past and the present. Finally, based on its experience in critiquing ideologies of formalist economics and profit maximization from prehistory to the present, archaeology can show the fallacy of the managerialist view of human sociality and the impoverished nature of the apolitical economic discourse.

There are many different ways through which these aims can be achieved. In this paper, I have suggested one such way by describing and evaluating my experience in using student-centred, reflexive journals in a course that deals with the anthropology and archaeology of eating and drinking. This is the critical and political reflexivity with transformative and emancipatory potential.

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Appendix: guidelines for the preparation of the student journal

Bear in mind that this piece of work is different from the assignments you are used to writing. Although it is linked to the course and its academic content, it is not an essay. You should view it as a 'navigation journal' as you 'sail' through this course. Its main aim is to encourage you to feel free to express yourselves, on reflecting on what you hear in the classroom and what you read, but also on how these academic knowledges intersect with **your personal or communal encounters with food and drink phenomena**. Are they relevant or

not and why? Does your personal experience help you understand the academic content? Does your academic experience affect the way you perceive eating and drinking phenomena? These are only some of the questions you should address.

More specifically, you should follow the guidelines below; *your marking grade will depend on whether and to what extent you have understood and followed these:*

1. You should aim to write *at least* one entry per week (ca 400 words); bear in mind that the whole journal should be ca 5000 words. **DO NOT LEAVE THE WRITING OF THE JOURNAL UNTIL THE SUBMISSION DATE.**
2. In your first entry you should reflect on the first session of the course, on its structure and teaching methods, on this journal as a different way of thinking about the course and about academic knowledge and experience
3. In each entry you should comment on the ideas, knowledges and approaches discussed by me as well as by your fellow students. You should make specific references to authors; *comment on two–three key readings for each session*; although you are not obliged to cite a full reference (as you should do for your essay, following the departmental procedures) you should state clearly the source, and distinguish between your thoughts and ideas and the ideas expressed by other, published and unpublished, sources. You should attempt to link these ideas and approaches with ideas and approaches that you have encountered in other courses and in other learning experiences, such as the films that we will watch.
4. It is very important that you make ‘external’ links and connections: reflect on public perceptions on eating and drinking, and on media discourses, and critique them in the light of the ideas and approaches encountered in the course.
5. ***It is very important that you make the links with your own views, perceptions, ideas and experiences.*** Try to be honest and frank. Your writings will be treated with the appropriate sensitivity.
6. Always use the first person and write from a ‘situated knowledge’ perspective: interrogate your own subjectivity and ask how your identity (age, gender, ethnicity and nationality, background, socio-economic status, etc.) and the specific social conditions of your life affect the way you think about and experience food and drink phenomena.
7. Attach and discuss any visual or other material you find relevant.
8. In the last session, reflect on the course overall: assess the things you have learned and the ideas you have developed, its overall impact on your own thinking, learning, living, and social interaction. Reflect on the journal as an experimental tool and compare it with other assignment methods.

Notes

- 1 Exceptions here are the discussion on the exclusion of archaeology in general, and prehistory (or aspects of) in particular, from schools, in a number of countries (e.g. Stone and Mackenzie 1990), the ideological messages of school textbooks (e.g. Hamilakis 2003a; Ruiz-Zapatero and Alvarez-Sanchís 1995; Shnirelman 2003;

- Stoczkowski 1990), feminist pedagogy (e.g. Conkey and Tringham 1996), museum education, and a few other broader discussions that include university education (e.g. the special section in *Antiquity*, 74(2000); Bender and Smith 2000; Henson et al. 2004); see also more recently, and from an explicitly critical point of view, the symposium and the resulting volume on 'Interrogating Pedagogies' (Rainbird and Hamilakis 2001).
- 2 The decision followed the launching of the most recent 'White Paper' on Higher Education (Department of Education and Skills 2003); for an engaging critique, see Collini (2003).
 - 3 To take the UK as an example, the number of universities increased from twenty-one in 1939 (with 50,000 students) to forty-four in 1980 (300,000 students), to 115 today with 1,750,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students (Collini 2003).
 - 4 One of the main recommendations of the UK government's 'White Paper' is that 'Universities need stronger links with business and economy' (Department of Education and Skills 2003): 4).
 - 5 For example, according to data provided by the British Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, pers. comm.), in 2002–3 the percentage of white students among the UK-based, first-year archaeology students was 97.1, whereas they were only 0.4 per cent Black, 1 per cent Asian, and 1.5 per cent other or students of mixed background. The figures expressing the ethnic make-up of professional (academic and non-academic) archaeologists working in countries such as UK and USA are also telling: while, according to the latest census (2001), the non-white populations of the UK is 7.9 per cent, the percentage of non-white archaeologists (based on the most recent survey in 2002–3) is 0.56 per cent (Aitchison and Edwards 2003: 25); in the USA, according to the 1994 census (Zeder 1997: 13), only 2 per cent of the archaeologists who participated classified themselves as of non-European heritage.

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