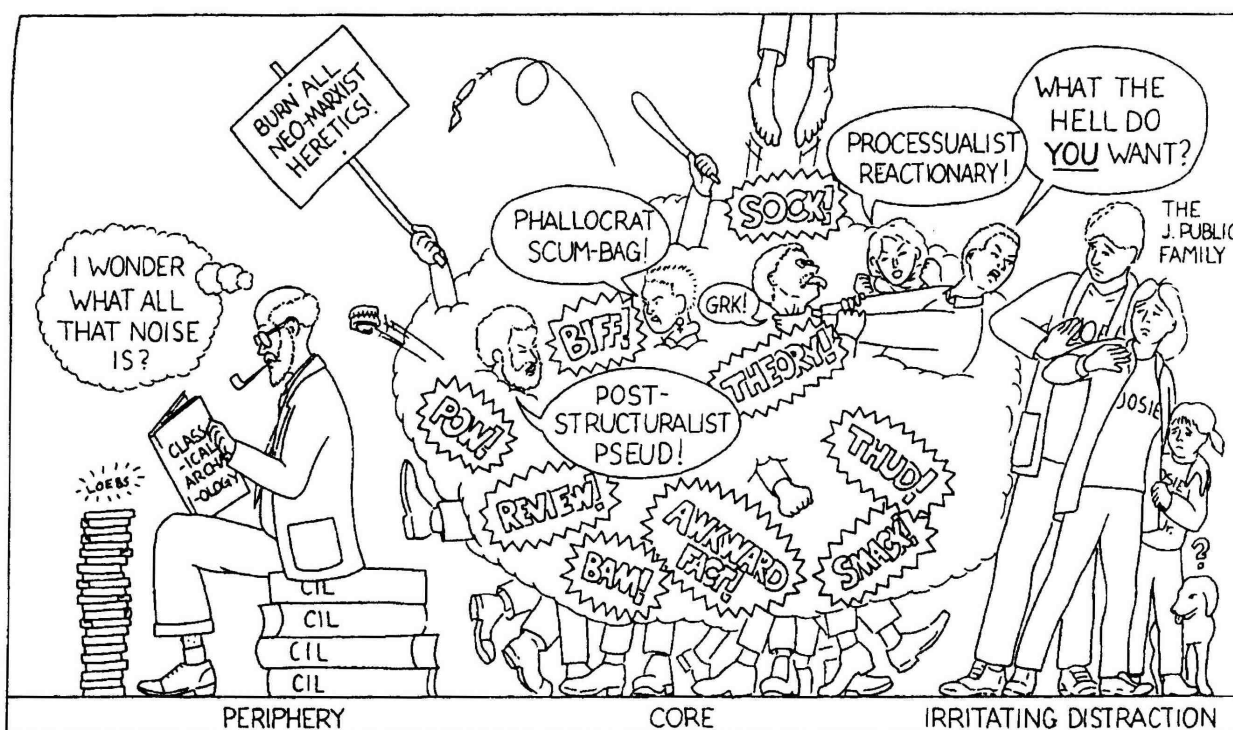


SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
— ARCH 471(W)-5 —
ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY

Dr. George Nicholas
— Spring Semester 2013 —



Archaeological Theory in 1988, by Simon James (in Johnson)

Classroom: Saywell 9152
Lecture Monday 2:30–5:20
Seminar Wednesday 3:30–5:20

Office EDB 9627
Office Hours M, Th 10–11; T 9–10; by appointment; by chance
Contacts: Office: 782-5709; e-mail: nicholas@sfu.ca

Course WebCT <http://webct.sfu.ca/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct> (to log on)

T.A. Sarah Carr-Locke
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30-2:30 (Office EDB 9628)
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COURSE PROSPECTUS

“It’s not what you find, it’s what you find out.” This oft-cited statement by David Hurst Thomas characterizes much about what differentiates contemporary Americanist archaeology from its predecessors. And what we find out about the past is dependent upon the questions asked. What those questions consist of, in turn, is based upon *how we think about the past*—or, in other words, upon archaeological theory.

This tip-of-the-iceberg course reviews the history of archaeological theory, from its earliest manifestations through to what’s going on in the current issues of *American Antiquity* and *Journal of Social Archaeology*. In doing so, we will examine each of the major schools of thought, including culture history, processualism, and various flavors of post-processualism. In addition, we will also look not only at the historical context and sociopolitics relating to the development of these different approaches, but at how archaeology has influenced contemporary society and also who benefits from archaeological research.

A basic understanding of archaeological theory will thus provide you with a greater understanding of the dynamic nature of archaeological thought, an appreciation of how and why archaeological thought has developed, and the means to evaluate different ways of looking at the past.

Course Requirements

The structure of this course includes both lecture and seminar components. You are required to attend scheduled classes, to participate in seminar discussions, and to complete all assigned work on time. The mid-term exam consists of short- and long-answer questions, plus essay-type questions; the final is a take-home, consisting of a series of four essay questions.

The grading for this W-course is structured as follows:

- Written Exercises (4 pts each/20 pts)
 - “Reading for Content/Effective Note Taking) (4 to 5 page (total) synopses of two articles)
 - “The Legacy of Processualism” (2–3 page essay)
 - “Phenomenology for Dummies” (2–3-page essay)
 - “Deconstructing Archaeology Journals” (2–3-page essay)
 - “What Theory Looks Like” (a graphic visualization)
- In-class Presentation and Written WebCT Summary (2-page) (5 pts) (*separate handout*)
- Mid-term Exam (25 pts)
- Final Take-home Exam (4 essays) (25 pts)
- Term Project (25 pts) (*see separate handout*)
 - prospectus and preliminary bibliography (5% [factored into final term paper grade])
 - complete draft for review and preliminary grading (20% [same])
 - final draft incorporating requested revisions for final grading (75%)

There will also be several ungraded class exercises that feed into class discussions. Attendance, will be tracked but grading is based primarily on your contributions to seminar discussions (and if you’re not in class, you’re obviously not participating). Keep in mind that a seminar format is more enjoyable than lectures, but does requires input from everyone.

Late work is penalized 5% a day. Extensions will be granted for *documented* medical situations. If you anticipate a problem before the due date, let us know.

You will find it very helpful to form discussion groups, of any size, to meet on a regular basis to discuss course readings and assignments and to complain about readings and assignments (ha!).

Readings and Videos

There is a significant amount of reading, but no more than is expected for an upper-level course (see *Some Advice*, below) The required texts for this course are *A History of Archaeological Thought* (2nd ed.) by Trigger; *Archaeological Theory* (2nd ed.) by Johnson; and the *ARCH 471 Custom Courseware Package* (bookstore). Additional required readings are on line through the SFU Electronic Library, on WebCT, and/or placed on Library Reserve. Two additional books are recommended: *Archaeology: The Key Concepts*, edited by Renfrew and Bahn, and *Fit to Print: Canadian Student's Guide to Essay Writing*, by Buckley. You will find the various readings interesting, important, and often provocative. There's other fun or interesting stuff on WebCT.

It is essential that each of you complete all readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. My lectures tend not to be reviews of material covered in readings. Instead I often use the readings as a starting place, or as a source of alternative examples and ideas. Thus, without having first done the readings, it may be difficult to understand important concepts and examples presented in lecture. More importantly, commenting intelligently on an article being discussed in seminar is difficult if you haven't read it.

Since archaeology is such a visual discipline, a number of videos will be shown throughout this course to provide additional information or points of contrast. Careful viewing and note taking is important and should be done *analytically* and *critically*. You should consider each video to be the same as a lecture. A viewing guide will be provided for each.

Some Advice. As noted above, there *is* a substantial amount of readings for this course. But I believe that this is necessary to give you an adequate sense of, and appreciation for the immense literature of archaeological theory (you are seeing only a miniscule amount—really and truly). Also keep in mind that at 5 credits, this course is almost two courses.

My advice: 1) develop an effective reading strategy; 2) form study or discussion groups; and 3) read to grasp the essentials (see WebCT handout on the latter).

In-Class Presentations (*see handout*)

Each student will responsible for one ten-minute in-class presentation, done individually or jointly with another student. This will focus on the life and work of a key individual whose work will be covered in the Required Readings list (see handout for the list of individuals to choose from).

There will be a sign-up sheet for the presentations on my office door. Presentations will begin in Week 3.

Presentations will be biographical in orientation, including who the individual was influenced by and their contribution to archaeological theory. As with conference presentations, the 10-minute limit is firm. A 2 to 3-page biographical summary (including highlights of their careers; key publications) will be submitted for posting on the course web site. Your grade for these is based on peer evaluation.

Other Materials

In addition to the recommended readings list here, and others recommended in class, you should spend some time reviewing archaeology journals to get a sense of the nature of archaeological thought both today and in past decades. You are thus strongly encouraged to peruse *American Antiquity*, *Antiquity*, *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, and *Journal of Social Archaeology*, as well as such regional journals as *Australian Archaeologist*, *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, *Mid-Continental Journal of Archaeology*, *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, *North American Archaeologist*, and others. You have access to these and others through the SFU Library. Use it!

Course Web Site

A copy of the course syllabus and other handouts, as well as lecture slides, will be available on the ARCH 471 WebCT site. Other course-related materials will be placed there for distribution.

Research Project (*see handout*)

A major element of this course is a research paper that provides you with the opportunity to explore a particular aspect of archaeological theory that you find particularly interesting. A separate handout is provided on this, which includes examples of topics.

This is not a stand-alone project; you are expected *to connect* your topic to materials read and discussed in class. A separate handout covers this project.

Writing Workshops

One of the most important tasks in university is developing solid writing skills. Unless you can effectively convey what it is you want to say, you are doing yourself a disservice. Plus, potential employers look very carefully at applicants writing skills; this is true even in consulting archaeology because report writing is such an important task. And if you are considering graduate school—or a career in consulting archaeology, you absolutely need to have good writing skills.

The SFU Student Learning Common offers a variety of workshops, as well as personal appointments, that will provide substantial assistance towards improving writing, studying, and other critical skills. Everyone is strongly encouraged to at least check out their website and list of services: <http://learningcommons.sfu.ca/> Please consider taking advantage of these free programs, especially so for those of you who may find writing difficult. But *everyone* can benefit substantially.

This syllabus is subject to change. An updated syllabus will be posted on the website.

Any changes in weekly readings will be announced in class and also posted.



— COURSE SYLLABUS —

Part 1: Introduction1) January 7th Week¹

- The Past is a Foreign Country: Putting Theory into Context
- Basic Epistemology; When are Ideas Wrong?
Readings: Trigger Ch. 1; Johnson: Preface, Ch. 1; Renfrew and Bahn²

Part 2: A History of Archaeological Theory

2) January 14th Week

- Classical Beginnings, Antiquarian Yearnings, and Scientific Glimmers
Readings: Trigger Ch. 2–4; (Trigger 1966)
Video: *Belzoni in Egypt*
- Colonialism and the Rise of Imperial Archaeology; Culture-Historical Archaeology (Pt1)
Readings: Barnard; Trigger Ch. 5; Waxman
Video: *The Lost City of Zimbabwe*

3) January 21st Week

- Culture-Historical Archaeology (Pt 2)
Readings: Carlson; Webster; Willey and Phillips 11-43; (O'Brien et al.)³
Video: *Looking for One Beginning: The Fallacy of Diffusionism?*
Exercise 1 Due: “Article Synopses of Barnard and Waxman”
- Functionalism: A Growing Concern with Ecology and Economic Issues
Readings: Trigger Ch. 7; Longacre 2010; Steward and Setzler

4) January 28th Week

- The Emergence of the “New Archaeology”/Archaeology as Science
Readings: Trigger Ch. 8; Johnson Ch. 2–3; Binford 1962, 1972; Clarke;
- The Transition to Processualism
Readings: Trigger Ch. 9; Johnson Ch. 4, 5; Flannery 1982; Longacre 1964
Term Project: topic due

Part 3: Key Contemporary Themes

5) February 4th Week

- Ecological Archaeological Theory, Behavioral Archaeology, and Beyond
Readings: Bettinger; Kelly; Wilson and Rathje; Yesner
Video: *Garbage!*
- Contextualizing Archaeology: The Life and Times of Patty Jo Watson
Video: *Secrets Underground: A Profile of Patty Jo Watson*
Exercise 2 Due: “The Legacy of Processualism”

February 11th Week

- Reading Break

¹ For each week, the bullets (“•”) represent the class (Monday) and seminar (Wednesday), respectively.

² A Recommended text only, Renfrew and Bahn provides an excellent guide to key concepts as needed; reading it through before the mid-term exam will be beneficial. You will find a copy On Reserve

³ O'Brien et al. provide an excellent review of this history of processual archaeology, that begins with culture history. It is strongly recommended. You will find in On Reserve.

6) February 18th

- Exploring the Middle Range/Ethnoarchaeology
Readings: Binford 1980, 1982; David and Kramer
Slides: *The Archaeology of Early Place (The Robbins Swamp Project)*
Term Project: Prospectus due
- Post-Processual Archaeology(ies)/Archaeology as a Humanity
Readings: Trigger Ch. 10; Johnson Ch. 7; Heider, Hodder 1985; Shanks

7) February 25th Week

- Çatalhöyük and Beyond;
Readings: (Balter), Hodder 1997; Van Pool and Van Pool
- The Archaeology of Action: Thinking about Agency
Readings: Barrett; (Gardner)

8) March 4th Week

- **Mid-term Exam**
- Marxist and Neo-Marxist Approaches
Readings: Johnson Ch. 6, 10; McGuire; Paynter

9) March 11th Week

- Structural and Critical Approaches
Readings: Flannery and Marcus; Leone; Leone et al.
Exercise 3 Due: “Welcome to the Real World, Comrade”
- Symbolic, Cognitive, and Contextual Approaches
Readings: Hall; Hosler; Whitley

Part 4: Other Flavors

10) March 18th Week

- Interpreting Rock Art/Questioning Analogy
Readings: Lewis-Williams; Wobst
Video: *Images of Another World*
- Feminist and Gendered Archaeologies
Readings: Johnson Ch. 8; (Conkey 2007); Conkey and Gero 1997; Spector; Watson and Kennedy; Wylie

11) March 25th Week

- Indigenous Archaeologies
Readings: Johnson Ch. 11–12; Conkey 2005; Nicholas 2008; Watkins
Term Project: draft for review due
- Archaeology and Descendant Communities
Readings: Atalay; Blakey; Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman; Schmidt and Walz

12) April 1st Week

No class Monday

- Archaeology and Descendant Communities
Video: *Pagu Va: Archaeology and Native Americans at Fish Lake*

Part 5: Grounding Contemporary Archaeological Theory

13) April 8th Week

- Theory, Ethics, Power, and Prestige
Readings: Trigger Ch. 6; Arnold; Horning; Nicholas and Hollowell
Exercise 4 Due: “Deconstructing the SAA Conference Program”
- Putting Theory into Context; Anointing of the Trowels
Readings: Hegmon; Moss; Nicholas 2006
Exercise 5 Due (by 11am): “What Archaeological Theory Looks Like”
Term Project: Final version due
Final Exam: Take-home exam distributed

Take-home final exam due date: Wednesday, April 15th**REQUIRED READINGS****Part 1: Custom Courseware Package**

Bettinger, R.L.

1991 Chapter 3, Middle-Range Theory. In *Hunter-Gatherers: Archaeological and Evolutionary Theory*. Plenum, NY. (pp. 61–82)

Binford, L.R.

1972 Introduction. *An Archaeological Perspective*, pp. 1–14. Seminar Press, New York.

Carlson, R.L.

1983 Method and Theory in Northwest Coast Archaeology. In *The Evolution of Maritime Cultures on the Northeast and the Northwest Coasts of America*, edited by R.J. Nash, pp. 27–39. Publication 11, Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University.

David, N., and C. Kramer

2001 Chapter 2, Theorizing Ethnoarchaeology and Analogy (pp. 33–61). *Ethnoarchaeology in Action*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Flannery, K.V., and J. Marcus

1998 Cognitive Archaeology. In *Reader in Archaeological Theory: Post-Processual and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by D. Whitley, pp. 35–48. Routledge, London.

Gardner, A.

2008 Agency. In *Handbook of Archaeological Theories*, edited by R.A. Bentley, H.G. Maschner, and C. Chippindale, pp. 95–108. AltaMira Press, Lanham, MD.

Hosler, D.

1998 Sound, Color and Meaning in the Metallurgy of Ancient Mexico. In *Reader in Archaeological Theory: Post-Processual and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by D. Whitley, pp. 103–118. Routledge, London.

Kelly, R.L.

1995 Chapter 3, Foraging and Subsistence. In *The Foraging Spectrum: Diversity in Hunter-Gatherer Lifeways*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. (pp. 65–110)

Leone, M.P.

1998 Symbolic, Structural, and Critical Archaeology. In *Reader in Archaeological Theory: Post-Processual and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by D. Whitley, pp. 49–68. Routledge.

Lewis-Williams, D.

1998 Wrestling with Analogy: A Methodology Dilemma in Upper Paleolithic Rock Art Research. In *Reader in Archaeological Theory: Post-Processual and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by D. Whitley, pp. 157–175. Routledge.

McGuire, R.H.

2005 Marxism. In *Handbook of Archaeological Theories*, edited by R.A. Bentley, H.G.

- Maschner, and C. Chippindale, pp. 73-93.
- Shanks, M.
2008 Post-Processual Archaeology and After. In *Handbook of Archaeological Theories*, edited by R.A. Bentley, H.G. Maschner, and C. Chippindale, 133-144.
- Spector, J.
1991 What This Awl Means: Towards a Feminist Archaeology. In *Engendering Archaeology*, edited by J. Gero and M. Conkey, pp. 388–406. Blackwell, London.
- Waxman, S.
2008 Finding Rosetta (ch. 2). *Loot: The Battle over the Stolen Treasures of the Ancient World*. Times Books, NY.
- Watson, P. J., and M. C. Kennedy
1998 The Development of Horticulture in the Eastern Woodlands of North America. In *Reader in Archaeological Theory: Post-Processual and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by D. Whitley, pp. 223–240. Routledge, London.
- Webster, G. S.
2008 Culture History: A Culture-Historical Approach. In *Handbook of Archaeological Theories*, edited by R.A. Bentley, H.G. Maschner, and C. Chippindale, pp. 11–28.
- Willey, G.R., and P. Phillips
1958 Chapter 2, Archaeological Unit Concepts (pp. 11–43). In *Method and Theory in American Archaeology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Wilson, D.C., and W.J. Rathje
2001 Garbage and the Modern American Feast. In *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power*, edited by M. Dietler and B. Hayden, pp. 404–421. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.
- Yesner, D.
2008 Ecology in Archaeology. In *Handbook of Archaeological Theories*, edited by R.A. Bentley, H.G. Maschner, and C. Chippindale, pp. 39-55.
- Wylie, A.
1997 Good Science, Bad Science, or Science as Usual? Feminist Critiques of Science. In *Women in Human Evolution*, edited by L. Hager, Routledge, New York, 1997, pp. 29-55.



Part 2: Readings Available On-Line Reserve/WebCT

- Atalay, S.
2010 “We Don’t Talk about Catalhoyuk, We Live It”: Sustainable Archaeological Practice through Community-Based Participatory Research. *World Archaeology* 42(3): 418-429.
- Arnold, B.
1990 The Past as Propaganda: Totalitarian Archaeology in Nazi Germany. *Antiquity* 64: 464-478.
- Barnard, A.
1999 Images of Hunters and Gatherers in European Social Thought. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, edited by R.B. Lee and R. H. Daly, pp. 375–383. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. (webCT)
- Binford, L.R.
1962 Archaeology as Anthropology. *American Antiquity* 28: 217-225.
1980 Willow Smoke and Dogs’ Tails: Hunter-Gatherer Settlement Systems and Archaeological Site Formation. *American Antiquity* 45: 4-20.
1982 The Archaeology of Place. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 1: 5-31.
- Blakey, M. L.
2008 An Ethical Epistemology of Publicly Engaged Biocultural Research. In *Evaluating Multiple Narratives: Beyond Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist Archaeologies*, edited by J. Habu, C. Fawcett, and J. Matsunaga, pp. 17-28. Springer, NY. (WebCT)
- Clarke, D.L.
1973 Archaeology: The Loss of Innocence. *Antiquity* 47(185): 6–18.
- Conkey, M. W.
2005 Dwelling at the Margins, Action at the Intersection? Feminist and Indigenous Archaeologies, 2005. *Archaeologies* 1(1): 9–59.
2007 Questioning Theory: Is There a Gender of Theory in Archaeology? *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14(3): 285-310.
- Conkey, M.W., and J.M. Gero
1997 Programme to Practice: Gender and Feminism in Archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 411-437.
- Echo-Hawk, R., and L. Zimmerman
2006 Beyond Racism: Some Opinions about Racialism and American Archaeology. *American Indian Quarterly* 30 (3-4): 461-485.
- Flannery, K.V.
1982 The Golden Marshalltown: A Parable for the Archeology of the 1980s. *American Anthropologist* 84: 265-280.
- Hall, R. L.
1977 An Anthropocentric Perspective for Eastern United States Prehistory. *American Antiquity* 42: 499–518.
- Hegemon, M.
2003 Setting Theoretical Egos Aside: Issues and Theory in North American Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 63: 213–244.
- Heider, K.
1988 The Rashomon Effect: When Ethnographers Disagree. *American Anthropologist* 90(1): 73-81.
- Hodder, I.
1985 Postprocessual Archaeology. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 8, edited by M.B. Schiffer, pp. 1–26. Academic Press, New York.
1997 Always Momentary, Fluid and Flexible: Towards a Reflexive Excavation Methodology. *Antiquity* 71: 691–700.
- Horning, A.
2007 Cultures of Contact, Cultures of Conflict: Identity Construction, Colonialist Discourse,

- and the Ethics of Archaeological Practice in Northern Ireland. *Stanford Journal of Archaeology* 5: 107-133. (webCT)
- Leone, M.P., P.B. Potter, Jr., and P.A. Shackel
1986 Toward a Critical Archaeology. *Current Anthropology* 28: 283-302.
- Longacre, W.A.
1964 Archaeology as Anthropology: A Case Study. *Science* 144: 1454-1455.
2010 Archaeology as Anthropology Revisited. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 17(2): 81-100.
- Moss, M.
2005 Rifts in the Theoretical Landscape of Archaeology in the United States: A Comment on Hegmon and Watkins. *American Antiquity* 70: 581-587.
- Nicholas, G.P.
2006 On Archaeological Theory as a Rite of Passage. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 30(1): iii-vi. (webCT)
2008 Native People and Archaeology. *The Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, edited by D. Pearsall, Vol. 3: 1600-1669. Elsevier, Oxford. (webCT)
- Nicholas, G.P., and J.J. Hollowell
2007 Ethical Challenges in a Postcolonial Archaeology. In *Archaeology and Capitalism: From Ethics to Politics*, edited by Y. Hamilakas and P. Duke, pp. 59-82. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA. (webCT)
- Paynter, R.
2005 Contesting Culture Histories in Archaeology and their Engagement with Marx. *Rethinking Marxism* 17(3): 399-412.
- Schmidt, P., and J. Walz
2007 Re-Representing African Pasts through Historical Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 72(1): 53-70.
- Steward, J.H., and F.M. Setzler
1938 Function and Configuration in Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 1: 5-10.
- Van Pool, T., and C. Van Pool
1999 The Scientific Nature of Postprocessualism. *American Antiquity* 64(1): 33-53.
- Watkins, J.
2003 Beyond the Margin: American Indians, First Nations, and Archaeology in North America. *American Antiquity* 63: 273-286.
- Whitley, D.
1998 By the Hunter, For the Gatherer. In *Reader in Archaeological Theory: Post-Processual and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by D. Whitley, pp. 257-274. Routledge, London. (webCT)
- Wobst, H.M.
1978 The Archaeo-Ethnology of Hunter-Gatherers or the Tyranny of the Ethnographic Record in Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 43: 303-309.

