

study demonstrates the important point that a concern with gender can lead to important revisions of archaeological interpretations that might seem well-removed from the sphere of gender studies.

CONCLUSION AS DECONSTRUCTION

Having now reached the end of our analysis of the impact of post-processual theory on South Asian archaeology, it is time (in true post-processual fashion) to get self-critical. There is indeed, much to question in the story that has been related here, but perhaps the most obvious is the term post-processual itself, which has been used again and again throughout this paper. While the problematic nature of a specific focus on post-processual theory was hinted at in our opening paragraphs, a crucial caveat has not yet been raised. Our discussion has given the impression of a very rich interpretative reassessment and critique within South Asian archaeology that can certainly not be classed as either cultural historical or processual in theoretical outlook. However, simply because such work does not seem to fit into either of these categories, are we right to appropriate it, all of it, as post-processual? The problem (or perhaps the advantage) of post-processualism is that it advocates (or at least claims to) plurality, a multiplicity of viewpoints, and a diversity of approaches, rather than any monolithic paradigm. This quality leaves post-processualism (as a school, or a phase, or whatever we want to call it) in the convenient, and perhaps enviable, position of being able to label all interesting, different, and critical new approaches 'post-processual'. Post-processualism is thus like a giant disciplinary black hole, absorbing all differences as it grows ever weightier and more powerful. Is it right to just buy into this mentality, albeit in a sense, sacrifice everything at the altar of an ever hungrier post-processual god?

Issues raised in the feminist critique of scholarship and theory may hold some relevance in dealing with this problem. Various feminist scholars have questioned whether in fact post-processualism holds positive implications for gender archaeology (Englestad 1991), and, on a more general front, have argued that post-modernism itself has perpetuated the gender biases that initially catalyzed the feminist critique of positivism (Lutz 1995). Such a recognition argues against the wisdom of subsuming feminism and gender issues under a post-modern umbrella, when they continue to constitute an external critique that has not been adequately satisfied by the post-modern dialogue. A post-modernist archaeology, committed entirely to disruption and critique, also presents dangers of rendering the past meaningless by making it no different from our plural understandings of it, it is after all archaeologists 'who have the unenviable job of maintaining that the past did once exist independently of our understanding of it ... [and] to whom we look to sustain our awareness of the plurality of social times' (Moore 1994: 53). The concept of maintaining a healthy skepticism towards paradigms that claim to have routed out all bias is perhaps relevant to non-Western, particularly post-colonial, archaeological contexts. Such a perspective would be open to critique Paddayya's assertion that 'although the war of paradigms in archaeological theory has broken out in the West, the actual battles will

be fought in areas like [South Asia]' (Paddayya 1990: 46). This view seems to see South Asia as little more than a testing ground for the theories of Western archaeologists, rather than as a location for the development of indigenous paradigms that may well offer up an external critique of such theories. Thomas has compared the export of Anglo-American archaeological thought to the Third World to 'a form of academic colonialism' (Thomas 1995: 346), and argues that 'the most impact that one would hope that western archaeological theory would have in the rest of the world would be as an object with which to engage, in the production of knowledges which are locally appropriate' (ibid.).

Paranjpe, in his radical critique of Western theory vis-a-vis India, goes much further than this. He argues that the Western critical enterprise resembles a commodities market where 'what is in demand is what sells, not what is True' (Paranjpe 1990: 159). In Paranjpe's view, Indians, by acting as avid consumers of Western theory, do little to upset the balance of power that is produced and reproduced by Western theoretical discourse. He furthermore argues that Western theory is fundamentally parochial, and that any pretense it makes to universality is false. Paranjpe thus advocates a sort of intellectual nationalism, which he defines as follows:

By nationalism I have in mind concepts like *swatantra*, *swarajya*, and *swadharna*; but a more appropriate expression for intellectual nationalism might perhaps be *swadeshi*—home made. After all, ideas too are produced, manufactured. Can we make our ideas at home rather than importing them as we used to all our goods at one time? So, I suggest, just as we made bon-fires of imported English fabrics during our freedom struggle, let us now make, so to speak, bon-fires of imported ideas which still bear the mark, 'Made in Europe' or 'Made in USA' and which we so proudly blazon. (Paranjpe 1990: 151)

Paranjpe's desire for locally-produced knowledge is something that is shared by many of the archaeologists discussed in this paper, both South Asian and Western, though most offer a significantly less radical solution. More important to our present point, however, is the need that is advocated for a separate discourse, which is not imported from abroad, nor, when indigenous, subsumed under global, Western-produced labels.

Thus our own framework is effectively deconstructed. We have looked for post-processualism in South Asia, and we have found it, only to come to the recognition that our enterprise has been misguided from the beginning. Post-processualism is such an all-encompassing category as to be meaningless, and, anyways, there is something quite morally questionable about subsuming such rich ideas, all undoubtedly at least partially the product of their regional and historical context, under a Western heading. There are certainly many interesting new perspectives emerging in South Asian archaeology today, but we would certainly be wrong in classing them all as 'post-processual'.

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