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The Archaeology of Racism and Ethnicity on Southern Plantations

Introduction

Ethnic studies have recently received great emphasis in American historical archaeology. Three groups have commonly been studied: blacks or African Americans, Hispanics, and Overseas Chinese (Staski n.d.). Each of these groups is seen as having an emic identity within the historic period being studied, an identity which is connected to the identity held by members of the present groups that descend from these historical ancestors (Staski n.d.). Indeed, a major reason why these three groups are studied is the desire of these present groups to understand their ancestors. Due to problems with biased or incomplete written records (Deetz 1977:7–8), archaeology is embraced as a method of inquiry, of building a bridge of understanding between these present groups and their forebears.

Such studies assume a continuity between the historical ethnic groups and their present descendants, so that, for instance, in the case of African Americans, a certain category or definition of ethnicity will be common between an 18th-century slave and a modern black person. To date, archaeology has attempted to describe this connection, first, by establishing the presence and vitality of past ethnic groups from the archaeological record—for example, Ferguson's identification of Colono ceramics as the products of black craftswomen (Ferguson 1980) and not of Native Americans, as had been thought previously (Noël Hume 1962a)—and second, by studying the "normative lives" of members of past groups. In the second instance, a narrative of everyday life is devised from which historical, social, or personal inferences can be drawn by the group's modern students.

Neither of these approaches is, in any way, wrong or misdirected. The social purpose they serve, especially in revealing the proud history of groups who have been unjustly discredited in the past or present, is vitally important. In this purpose, archaeology may serve well in creating a bond between present members of ethnic groups and their honored heritage as a way of fostering a strong, positive ethnic identity. Still, however, in simple procedural or technical terms, some problems may be encountered in fulfilling these most necessary functions.

One problem is that any study which proceeds simply on the basis of identifying ethnic markers, but stops at this basic level, will likely prove too simplistic to be of much value. Colono ceramics again provide an example. Recent research (Ferguson n.d.) reveals that these ceramics are not simply the product of enslaved African Americans, but rather of creole cultures created as adaptive responses to complex interactions between Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans, interactions which, furthermore, varied by the different geographical and cultural arenas in which they took place. Using Colono ceramics as a simple ethnic marker which equates with African Americans is an inaccurate oversimplification.

A more serious problem concerns the uncritical acceptance of a simple equation between past and present ethnic groups. A Gambian Muslim, kidnapped in Africa in the late 18th century, for example, is certainly the ancestor of a modern black family (Haley 1976). Important questions remain, however, such as: Was his experience, as an African, a Gambian, a Muslim, or as a slave in America, similar at all to the experience of a modern black American? Was this historical figure's own identity that of a black, an African, a Gambian, or a Muslim, a combination of these, or all of them in some succession? Certain broad similarities between this ancestor and his descendants may occur. The most unfortunate, perhaps, is the fact that each has experienced or will experience forms of oppression that are based in their ethnicity. Can these experiences be equated, and will each therefore have a similar ethnic identity? Archaeologists often assume that these questions have been an-

swered and seldom design studies which incorporate these preliminary issues into a greater understanding of present and past ethnicity.

Simply accepting an "ethnic group" as a fact, as a goal to be identified and reached, makes for a stagnant study and tends to belittle and reify the groups in which archaeologists are interested. Stopping inquiry at the level of identifying an ethnic group, and then assuming that this group is historically equivalent to its modern descendants, prohibits any possibility of understanding this group's history, especially its growth and change in identity through time. An important component of this change must be how groups interacted with other identifiable, historically defined ethnic groups, particularly those which were antagonistic or oppressive toward the group under study. Such groups are themselves open to such studies, oriented toward delineating their membership, their interactions, and their alliances with or antagonisms against other groups. Above all, ethnic groups must be studied as fluid entities in a constant process of *interaction* with other groups, their allies, neutrals, or antagonists.

This research focus leads to the study of racism. This virulent ideology, enacted both in the past and in the present, can be an important determinant of ethnic interaction. It functions to allow one group to dominate another for its economic or social benefit.

Racism, however, also can help to define ethnic groups. Dominant, elite, or oppressor groups are defined by their members' acceptance of the ideology of racism, the perceived benefits it affords, and their often active ignorance of its heavy social costs. Subordinate or victimized groups are, of course, never unaware of the costs they pay as a result of attempts to impose this inimical ideology upon them. This understanding may also enable them to forge a stronger group, to understand themselves as an ethnic group in active resistance to their oppressors. This almost certainly happened to the people torn from so many different African societies, cultures, and ethnic groups, who were brought to America and became African Americans as they actively resisted the severe oppression of their new status as slaves.

It must be noted, however, that this way of constructing a new ethnic identity can proceed only under certain, perhaps incomplete, forms of racist ideology. If a variety of racism proceeds to its logical conclusion and becomes genocidal as it did in the Holocaust or during the destruction of Native American groups in the 19th century, victims' groups may not have a chance to form successfully, especially if their military efforts to resist their persecutors are not successful. Arrested racism, where the interests of the dominant group require them to preserve, at some minimal level, the lives of the oppressed group, may be the only form of racism that allows the creation of an enduring ethnic group, based on the resistance this group naturally undertakes to its oppression and oppressors. An example of this process may be seen in the interaction between enslaved Africans and their European owners on southeastern plantations, and in how these people, this ethnic group, became African Americans as they resisted the racism that was imposed upon them.

Defining American Racism

As a cultural element, racism may be best defined by its cultural function. In a most basic sense, racism is an intensification of "normal" ethnocentrism (Benedict 1934:8–9; Kroeber 1963: 106). It helps to create strong and apparently inviolable categories of "self" and "other," of "own group" and "foreigner" (Epperson 1988b). The dominant group reinforces this process by forcibly ascribing subhuman status to the group or groups it victimizes, the "others." Again, for all the groups involved, this process functions to increase the identity and solidarity of the group in the minds of its members.

"Race," as an intellectual construct, is employed to ascribe subhuman status to the subordinate group. This concept begins with physical and cultural differences (Jordan 1974:4–10), but by severing human connections between individuals, it creates categories of people (Harris 1964:54–56). These categories, sections cut from the human

continuum, are then open to be exploited or benefited by the ideology of racism.

This exploitation, most particularly, economic exploitation, is the goal and purpose of racism. The forms this exploitation may take are many and various, and they can react with the form of racism employed, to define different forms of racism itself. Because it enables economic exploitation, however, an ideology of racism is particularly suited to a plantation economy since the exploitation of a large number of laborers is central to this economic form. A plantation economy cannot function without a strong class division between owners and the much larger group of producers (Orser 1988c:321–325). Racism, especially when it supports a grossly unequal economic relationship such as slavery, can provide this class division.

Racism functions most effectively when it selects human characteristics that are immediately obvious and largely inescapable, in cutting out sections from the human biological continuum (Harris 1964:54–56). This is almost certainly why skin color has been fastened on so strongly by American racism; it is obvious at a distance and generally permanent, unalterable within an individual's lifetime. Like clothing or other artifacts oriented to social display, skin color can define class or ethnic groups, and it can require certain social relationships between the groups so defined (Wobst 1977).

As an ideology, racism also functions to decrease understanding of and to cover the connections between human groups which this ideology attempts to sever. This is, of course, utterly without objective support or scientific merit, as proven by numerous anthropological studies undertaken in response to now-extinct racist theories (J. Ferguson 1984; Stein 1988) and common observation, for example, the observation that all so-called human "racial" groups interbreed successfully. Racism is, therefore, one of the common ideologies that are developed by modern, capitalist societies, one that masks reality in the service of economic or social gain (Leone 1982; Handsman 1985:5; Orser 1988c:315).

Resistance to racism is the common reaction of any group victimized by this pernicious ideology. This resistance can take a number of forms, ranging from armed rebellion or revolution (Genovese 1979) to establishment of a cultural or ethnic identity based in this resistance (Ferguson 1985, n.d.). In general, people who seek dominance through employment of racist ideology will also make quite sure that they possess an effective monopoly on violence within the society they are exploiting. Thus, armed rebellion or other noticeably militant forms of resistance are very chancy and only available at great cost to the individuals who pursue them. In such cases, establishment of a culture that resists racism and all the forms of dominance imposed upon its participants, is often the most effective way for the victims of racism to survive its imposition. This quest for survival, when successful, when racism does not proceed to actual genocide, can form effective ethnic groups that nurture and sustain their members.

The South Carolina Rice Coast

The rice plantations of coastal South Carolina, southern North Carolina, and northern Georgia (Clifton 1970:391) in the late 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries provide an example of the employment of racism and its function in helping to create ethnic groups. This process began in the late 17th century when the area was first settled by Anglo-American planters from Barbados (Wood 1974: 13–34). These settlers brought with them the plantation economy, the *idea* of establishing an economy based on the exploitation of slave labor in support of their colony (Lees 1980:42–43), originally established for geopolitical and military reasons. The only real problem they faced was finding a crop suited to their geographical location, which could be grown profitably within this economy, so as to insure its success.

The plantation economy established in South Carolina in 1670 had two potential sources for supplying labor: people kidnapped from West Africa and Native Americans stolen from tribes existing on the coast and in the interior. For several reasons, Africans soon came to be preferred as slaves in South Carolina (Wood 1974:35–91). Of primary importance in this choice was that certain

groups of West Africans were quite skilled in growing rice, a crop that sustained their native subsistence economies (Wood 1974:62; Littlefield 1981:86, 93–98). The enslavement of Africans thus not only provided a skilled labor force, but also the profitable crop for which the colonists had been searching. By A.D. 1700 the economy of South Carolina had come to be based on growing rice (Lees 1980:43–63). This rice was grown by the coercion of Africans and African methods and knowledge, a classic example of cultural imperialism and the exploitation of existing cultural differences (Caulfield 1974). Of course, with Europeans having so little input into this economy beyond its management and control, they needed an ideology to mask this obvious contradiction. Racism provided this mask by promoting the idea that the Africans who ran this economy were too stupid, too subhuman to manage either the plantations or their own lives without European assistance. The racist ideology was only intensified when the American Revolution and other social changes at the end of the 18th century (Deetz 1977) created another contradiction between the developing democratic ideals of the planters and their dependence upon the plantation economy, which utterly negated these ideals (Davis 1975: 299–306; Fields 1982:159–163).

That this ideology was based in logical inconsistency, even utter absurdity, did not prevent it from functioning to form and support the elite group which controlled plantation society along the rice coast. Absurdity, of course, is no barrier to belief, especially when adoption of that belief brings immediate economic and social benefits. As such, participation in this racist ideology probably provided a core belief for the rice planters, a way of defining themselves as a social class or group.

A more interesting effect, however, was the resistance that imposition of this racist ideology inspired in the group of Africans, later African Americans, who were exploited by the economy it supported. These people, of course, entirely rejected the tenets of the racist ideology. They were thus free to understand the basis of the plantation economy in which they were unwilling participants, to know that, of all its participants, they were the one group without which the economy could not function.

This knowledge gave them, perhaps more than other groups of enslaved African Americans, the ability to negotiate their position with their masters (Ferguson 1985) and to gain some relief from the oppression of slavery and racism. In this "breathing space" the slaves were able to create a vibrant, vital, and successful creole culture (Joyner 1984), which incorporated a number of elements that functioned to resist slavery and racism (Ferguson 1985). African elements in this culture—in cuisine, architecture, religion, and folklore (Joyner 1984; Ferguson 1985, n.d.)—helped to define it for its participants and to allow them to resist racist slavery. More important, however, is that in serving so vital a function for its participants, this culture created a group of African Americans, recognizable in history and archaeology, who are among the honored and successful ancestors of modern black Americans. As such, this was the culture of the demographic black majority of the rice coast (Wood 1974), and it was, most truly, the dominant culture in that area.

Observing Racism through Archaeology

An immediate problem in observing racism, or the groups it helped to define, by means of archaeology is that this observation must be indirect. With certain exceptions (Singleton 1984), explicitly racist artifacts, artifact patterns, features, or sites will not be found. In general, such inquiry into ideo-technic meaning in the archaeological record is always the most difficult level of meaning to recover (Binford 1962:219–220).

A potential solution to this dilemma is the realization that racism and specific racist ideologies provide a *context* for much of the European/other group or first world/third world (for example, European-American/African-American) interactions which have taken place since A.D. 1500 (Wolf 1982:3–23). Studies here must be oriented toward recovering mind, toward understanding the complete context behind an archaeological or historical observation (Leone 1982). The limits of archaeo-

logical inquiry—imposed by site-formation pro-
cesses, sampling designs, research foci, or fund-
ing—may mean that many studies will necessarily
be incomplete, but these studies will make contin-
ual (if slow) progress if this goal is adopted and
understood.

With regard to racism, two major components of
mind in the societies studied will be: (1) the im-
position of racism, by and for the dominant elite,
and (2) the resistance of racism, by and for the
subordinate victims. These conflicted forms of
mind may be approached by looking at artifacts,
features, and sites as conveyors of information, as
conduits for cultural processes of domination and
resistance (Hodder 1979, 1985a). A recent exam-
ple of such an approach was a study that viewed
plantation geography, the distribution of archaeo-
logical sites across it, and the characteristics and
functions of these sites as having meaning in a
contest of domination and resistance between two
planters and their slaves from A.D. 1790 to 1830
(Babson 1988). Another study establishes how
freed slaves were able to reorganize a plantation's
geography after the Civil War to help resist
changed forms of economic domination which
were developed after that conflict (Orser 1988c).
Both of these studies show cultural communication
taking place using cultural elements—in these
cases, sites—which are recoverable by archaeol-
ogy and best interpreted in the larger contexts that
contained them.

On slave or tenant plantations, a specific prob-
lem arises. Archaeological observation of these so-
cieties is most likely to be direct observation of
distinctions in economic class within the planta-
tions or the larger societies (Orser 1987), and not
directly of "racial" or ethnic distinctions. In many
cases, this will not be a problem, because enough
congruence exists between the ethnicity of slaves,
overseers, or planters and their vastly different
economic classes that these groups will be readily
distinguishable in the archaeological record (Otto
1984:15).

In some cases, however, such as that of wealthy
black freedmen, some of whom themselves owned
slaves (Johnson and Roark 1984a), this congru-
ence between archaeologically evident status and

ethnicity will not exist (Rosengarten et al. 1987:
161–162). The ethnicity of wealthy black freed-
men may thus become invisible to archaeology,
though probably not to history, since such people
were often able to leave their own records
(Johnson and Roark 1984b) or were anomalous
enough to be noted in the records kept by more
dominant groups (Rosengarten et al. 1987:47–92).
This is, ultimately, the problem of observing a
status which reflects an economic class whose
members, by and large, though not always, are
determined by an over-reaching ideology, in this
case, racism. It is an example of the difficulties of
indirect observation with which all archaeologists
must cope, and which can only be controlled by a
thorough understanding of the *specific* context in
which an archaeological observation is made.

One area in which such questions of context
may be pursued and the links between class and
ethnicity may be tested is where ethnic identities
changed within a particular society observed
through archaeology. One good example of this is
James Deetz's (1988) recent study of Flowerdew
Hundred in Virginia. Here, as elsewhere in the
Chesapeake area, plantation society began in the
early 17th century by exploiting the labor of white
indentured servants. These indentured servants
were perhaps somewhat different in established
ethnicity (Irish or Scots) or established social class
(poor people or criminals) from their elite Euro-
pean-American masters, but they were not differ-
ent from their masters in the soon-to-be-created
social category of "race." The few Africans
present in this early 17th-century society were
also, by and large, indentured servants (Tate 1965:
2–3; Bennet 1982:34–35), and they were not as
separated from their masters, or from the Europe-
ans who were their fellows in servitude, as they
would later be under racist slavery (Deetz 1988:
239). Later in the 17th century, this form of plan-
tation society was replaced by one based in exploi-
tation of Africans, and including the imposition of
racist ideology (Jordan 1974:54; E. Morgan 1975).
Deetz (1988) is able to trace this change through
the introduction and use of different forms of
Colono vessels, opening up a broad area for stud-
ies of shifts in ethnic and "racial" identity, the

imposition and creation of these social categories, and of archaeological or other methods to observe these changes.

Changes in the ethnic identity of plantation producers were not confined to the development of plantation societies in North America. On the sugar plantations of Louisiana, changes in the ethnicity of plantation workers occurred after the Civil War. Due to a number of strikes and other disagreements between plantation owners and the black freedmen who were then working for wages on the sugar plantations (Cook and Watson 1985: 43–60), local planters began to replace black workers with Italian, Sicilian, and in a few cases, Chinese immigrants (Williams 1974; Scarpaci 1975). In one case, a Louisiana sugar planter partially replaced his plantation's black labor force with indentured Sicilian immigrants soon after he purchased his plantation in 1889. "He met [the Sicilians] on the dock in New Orleans, and [bought their indentures] as soon as they stepped off the boat" (Nancy Mascarella-Pate 1989, pers. comm.). On this plantation, two groups of quarters—one inhabited by African-American slaves and, later, African-American freedmen (quite probably the same people) and another group inhabited by these Sicilian immigrants—have been identified through archaeology (Babson 1989). Although this study could not progress beyond the locating and documenting of these two occupations, the suggestion remains that studies of ethnic shifts among laborers even on postbellum plantations may be pursued. These studies will be useful in answering questions about ethnic identity and class and status, and will help frame new questions concerned with comparing plantations which imposed "racial" differences between owners and producers and those with "only" ethnic differences between these strongly separated social classes.

Other more specific and technical problems will be encountered by archaeologists undertaking observations of ideology through ultimate context. One of these problems is that the study of racism will often first require the establishment of ethnic identities among the groups being studied, so that elite/subordinate groups may be identified and

their divisions along these ethnic lines may be studied. The specific problem of observing social or class status, which may or may not have a link to ethnicity, has already been explored (Otto 1984; Moore 1985; Orser 1988c). Other problems would include using fragmentary or biased documents, problems of historical distance (in that an ethnic identity may not now mean what it once meant), or again, the problem of establishing ethnic identity from archaeological "markers." In some cases, these problems may be partly resolved by assuming a racist relationship among ethnic groups from previous knowledge and then looking to see whether this relationship is reflected in the archaeological or historical records (Babson 1988:ix). Such an approach cannot be used, of course, in studies designed to determine the existence of such a relationship, because this exercise becomes a useless tautology.

Problems more directly accessible by archaeology involve middle-range theory (Raab and Goodyear 1984). Approaches to addressing these problems start with purely technical questions such as: What is the level of excavation minimally necessary on a site to allow studies of context, including racism? Should block excavations be used, or is testing and small-unit sampling adequate? What probabilistic sampling strategies are appropriate; which ones will produce sufficient and significant data? Are studies confined to single sites sufficient, or must a broader scope be employed? As historical sites are by definition complex and bountiful in their production of artifacts (Deetz 1978: 48–49), historical archaeologists must design studies aimed at deciding what amount of inquiry will be necessary to allow study of ideo-technic, contextual, and other over-arching topics, beyond the usual "more is better" rule. This caveat is especially important as these vital elements of research design are almost always largely determined by funding, time, or other nonarchaeological constraints, particularly in the cultural resources management studies that now produce most archaeological data (Orser 1984:7–8).

At the level beyond the individual site, historical archaeologists must address questions about data consistency and comparability. These questions in-

clude: What standards are necessary to compare data between sites? Must all sites compared have been excavated in the same way, to the same level of inquiry? Can a completely excavated site be compared to one only sampled, particularly by methods such as artifact pattern analysis (South 1977:82–139) that may tend to smooth over and obscure differences between artifact collections made according to different excavation strategies? The problem is that sampling differences, between sites and, therefore, their artifact collections, may cause differences in representation of the sites, and thus affect one's ability to determine and compare their cultures, contexts, and ideologies.

Analysis of artifacts can pose further difficulties. In historical archaeology, and particularly in cultural resources management, artifact analysis tends to proceed with reference to established typologies (e.g., Noël Hume 1969a; South 1977: 210–212), even though this approach is now sometimes questioned (Majewski and O'Brien 1987). Is it possible that conformity to these typologies can obscure the ideological context of artifacts, especially when the researcher's goal is the quick, mass identification of large numbers of artifacts? Again, the example of Colono ceramics— first regarded as Colono-*Indian* (Noël Hume 1962a), then Colono-*African* (Ferguson 1980), and now Colono-*creole* (Ferguson n.d.)—is instructive. Flexible work is needed here. As in the Colono ceramics example, much greater understanding, including sometimes that of cultural context, is derived by making mistakes, the correction of which demands revision of accepted, standard typologies.

As an example, one recent study points out how the above questions may be addressed. This study took place on the Levi Jordan Plantation, a sugar and cotton plantation on the gulf coast of Texas (Brown and Cooper 1989; Brown and Cooper, this volume). Thorough and complete, this project has yielded important information about an African-American community making the transition from slavery to tenancy, a transition between two different varieties of oppression. Also, this project has documented, from archaeology and perhaps for the first time ever, the definite presence of a

traditional African healer in the community studied, an individual whose function within that community may have been to maintain traditions and to resist the racism that was imposed by and through the economic position of the community (Ferguson 1985). Further, this study has produced important insights into methods of inquiry (Brown and Cooper 1989:1–5). It demonstrates how established artifact typologies, oriented toward cultural function within the European-American societies from which the typologies were derived, can mask the very different functions these artifacts had in the African-American society being studied.

The Jordan Plantation project illustrates the overriding value of a thorough, relatively well-funded and well-organized study proceeding over several years' time. This last consideration is particularly important in that the evolution of the project through time has allowed reconsideration and refinement of research questions, producing greater understanding of the African-American community on that plantation. No less important, the project also benefited greatly from unusual site-formation processes within the slaves' and workers' quarters at Jordan Plantation, especially the abrupt and forced abandonment of the quarters and their contents in A.D. 1890 or 1891 (Brown and Cooper 1989:9–10). In this case an act of oppression, surely inspired at least in part by racism and representing a violent incident of ethnic interaction, led directly to the formation of an extraordinary archaeological record. Archaeologists would, no doubt, all be very happy if the time and funds were available to investigate each and every site as thoroughly as the Jordan Plantation site has been investigated. It would be foolish, however, to expect the extraordinary site-formation processes—an "African-American Pompeii"—which also aided studies there, on any but a very few sites. The challenge will come, then, in applying the directions and methods pointed out by Brown and Cooper at the Jordan Plantation to the "more usual" studies which will not be as well funded, which will not proceed over several years, and which will deal with ordinary, not extraordinary, plantation sites.

Finally, addressing the problem of the coinci-

dence of social status, class, and ethnicity will also depend, in part, on the development of middle-range theory. With regard to plantation societies, a start has been made by developing methods to measure status within these societies (e.g., Otto 1984; Moore 1985; Garrow 1987). From this base, studies may be undertaken to test these archaeologically perceived statuses against those from other records, such as written or oral histories. Such studies should have particular utility in tackling the knotty problem of how statuses are determined within ethnic, status, or class groups. Many of the status distinctions used by archaeologists are derived from the recorded preferences of elite groups, and they may have had little or no meaning to the members of subordinate groups.

Middle-range theory is generally developed as a body of practice out of repeated experiences from a number of archaeological investigations (Raab and Goodyear 1984:265). Thus, no solutions or easy answers can be readily offered at this time. The goals noted above, however, should lend a direction to future work which in time will lead to the development and practice of this body of theory.

Conclusion

This essay began with a conundrum that archaeological studies of ethnicity in and of themselves are not sufficient to study the development of past ethnic groups. Studies oriented towards merely identifying or establishing a certain ethnic group in the past are like typologizing artifacts; they categorize much, describe more, and explain nothing. Studies of ethnic interaction are more useful in that they recognize that no ethnic group, past or present, existed in a vacuum, but that all such groups have always interacted with one another. Indeed, such interaction is a major hallmark of human culture.

Racism is here viewed as a variety of this ethnic interaction. It has particular relevance to historical archaeology because racism developed and became violently important during the period of European and capitalist expansion, from A.D. 1500

to the present, which is often viewed as the particular realm of study for American historical archaeology (Orser 1988c:315). Racism is especially important in studies focusing on southeastern plantations, as a particularly vicious and virulent form of racism was employed here to exploit the culture, knowledge, skills, and labor of enslaved Africans and their African-American descendants. Understanding the development and employment of racism is thus important in understanding how the African-American ethnic group developed and made its vital contributions to the nation's history.

In other situations, studying racism as an ideology, as a context for archaeological observation, should also have a role to play. For some immigrant groups—Irish, Italians, Sicilians, Greeks, Eastern Europeans, and Jews—ideologies approaching racism were sometimes employed, but the experience of these groups in the United States was not as severe; their oppression generally was not as great as it was for enslaved Africans. Asians, especially the Overseas Chinese, encountered a form of racism that functioned to exclude them almost completely from American society until recent events, such as the persecution of the Nisei during World War II and the Vietnamese immigration following the Vietnam War, began to break down strong stereotypes. Hispanics have also suffered from ideas approaching racism, especially from discrimination based in cultural and linguistic differences between the traditions of this group and what is often erroneously proposed as a North American cultural norm or standard. Native Americans suffered the most severe form of racism because, in many cases, this racism proceeded as far as genocide. This genocide was incomplete, and modern Native Americans are now using both their ancestral traditions and their understanding of their oppression to forge a new ethnic identity, to create, from their historical nations, an inclusive ethnic group of Native Americans. Archaeological and historical studies can be organized around all these general trends in ethnic interaction, these degrees and varieties of racism. Middle-range theory—or, better, theories—must be developed for each individual case and example.

In describing a line of inquiry that is at present

barely under way, much remains tentative and not yet known. As a preliminary measure, some problems in and directions for studies of ethnic interaction are identified. These directions, if somewhat arduous and challenging, will also be useful, illuminating, and fruitful. As always in archaeology, the future promises a better, more complete understanding of the past.