

Fashions in Science: Opinion Leaders and Collective Behavior in the Social Sciences, by Irwin Sperber, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 1990. xix + 303pp., index. \$14.95 (paper).

by

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The author's main point is that "the scientific community, like the domains of costume adornment and automobile design, is profoundly influenced by...the play of fashion". As a radical sociologist, he clearly has an ax to grind about the organization of his discipline. Using examples of the works of major sociologists such as Simmel, Sorokin, Merton, and Kuhn and the studies of fashion by A.L. Kroeber, he argues that major paradigms in sociology have risen, come to dominance, and the simply, "keeping in step with the times") than from the critical comparison of theory and data and replacement of paradigms that perform poorly by those that perform better.

There is much here that is of relevance to understanding the history of archaeology even if you don't buy the specifics of the author's arguments. One section of interest is the detailed critique of Kuhn's idea of paradigmatic change in science, upon which many of us were "raised". Also of particular interest to readers of this journal is the role of ahistorical thought in the fashion process. This is evidenced by the preference of the new over the old, for no reason except that it is new, and by the failure to acknowledge the historical roots of ideas. The ahistorical and even anti-historical tone of much of the New Archaeology has been noted and the filling of past and current archaeological journals with articles on supposedly "new" ideas that really aren't would be considered evidence of fashion by Sperber.

Sperber is less interested in the history of social sciences, than in their current state, but his ideas about the fashion process clearly have relevance to understanding the development of archaeology. It would not be difficult to pick out several major paradigms and numerous more specific ideas in archaeology that suggest the operation of fashion; the real work is in documenting the mechanisms of the process. Ridicule of those who stick to the "old" ways, systematic ignoring the counter-examples, award of grants or tenure to those who are proponents of "new" ideas are all suggested mechanisms of the fashion process.

Sperber considers fashion mostly from a negative viewpoint even though he occasionally admits that valid or useful ideas are spread by the same mechanism. It seems to be that the spread of ideas/paradigms/techniques in science may occur by almost the same process regardless of their validity or origin. The "almost" refers to the critical step of empirical testing which would distinguish "fashion" science from "real" science. Scientists, however, can't or don't evaluate everything on the basis of direct knowledge of a good match between data and theory, but often take up ideas or techniques because of other people's recommendations or simply because they are told to do so. Student's will take on the methods and viewpoints of their instructors without question and carry many of these ideas on once they become professionals. The negative aspects of the fashion process in a discipline are (1) when ideas are taken up and become dominate without critical examination of the discipline who are listed to and (2) when negative evidence or even attempts to gather it is stifled. Those interested in hints of the operation of the latter process in archaeology should read an article in *The Sciences* (November/December 1992) by Anna C. Roosevelt where she states that Betty Meggers and Clifford Evans ignored evidence that conflicted with their theory of prehistoric Amazonian culture and "fought to prevent investigators with opposing views from working in the Amazon."

Although polemical at times, this book has many ideas for those interested in scientific change and is worth reading to heighten one's sensitivity to the operation of the fashion process in science as well as to provide some clues on how it might be examined in historical research.

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Archaeology and the Methodology of Science, by Jane H. Kelley and Marsha P. Hanen, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, xiii + 437 pp., index, bibliography. Paper and Cloth Editions - Price unavailable.

by

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The one book very graduate student in archaeology should read to understand how archaeology can be scientific — the one book collaboratively written by an experienced, intelligent archaeologist (Kelley) and a mature, respected philosopher of science (Hanen), both authors seasoned teachers who can distance themselves from the fads and personalized controversies of their respective fields.

Archaeology and the Methodology of Science does not intended to be a history of archaeology. The history it is concerned with is the history of the philosophy of science, and that only insofar as its presentation clarifies meanings and issues in contemporary understanding of the nature of science. For a reader unfamiliar with the history of science, the book will be helpful, although Guy Gibbon's 1989 *Explanation in Archaeology* is a more focused critique, and a more sophisticated (and demanding) level. What makes *Archaeology and the Methodology of Science* directly relevant to the history of archaeology is Kelley's device of illuminating Hanen's expositions of philosophy by presenting capsule cases of real archaeological work or controversies. Two chapters, "The Social Context of Archaeology," and "Some Critical Archaeological Cases," are built on these candid discussions drawn from Kelley's level-headed observation of her colleagues, and from her own work. The "interests" approach from sociology of science, that personal background and career interests make the pursuit of science a less than rational business, is clearly supported by Kelley's case studies.

No one will read *Archaeology and the Methodology of Science* for pleasure, but as one finishes it, a quiet pleasure ensues: how pleasant to read so solid, careful a presentation of how to think as a scientist should. The book contrasts with the programmatic scientism, relying on a couple of philosophers either obsolete or limited to the physical sciences, that purports to be philosophy of science in the New Archaeology. We sincerely hope that Kelley and Hanen are earning a place in the history of archaeology as the eminently qualified writers who pulled archaeology back to contemporary philosophy of science.

A Marxist Archaeology, by Randall H. McGuire, Academic Press, San Diego, 1992, xviii + 326 pp., index, bibliography, 1 table, 4 figures. No Price Listed

by

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McGuire, an archaeologist working primarily in the desert Southwest, presents a critical overview of major theoretical approaches in contemporary archaeology, comparing them to a Marxist perspective he derives principally from Bertell Ollman. (In a footnote, McGuire describes his parent's divorce catapulting him from middle-to-working-class status as a significant factor in his own search for a view of history compatible with his personal experiences.)

Intended to clarify and argue for his particular Marxist approach, McGuire's discussions on various archaeological views of history and society are more or less cursory as history of archaeology. The book does give a synopsis, and is valuable for its inclusion of the usually neglected Latin American theorists. McGuire is more radical a Marxist than Trigger, so his critiques tend to be sharper and are worth the consideration of serious students of theory in archaeology.

The last third of McGuire's book includes a case study in Hohokam archaeology, the site of La Ciudad in present-day Phoenix, Arizona. McGuire looks for evidence of social principles, ideology, and conflict, and finds an earlier, Yuman-like egalitarian ideology eventually yielding to an openly class-structured community. He is not abashed to use ethnographic analogy in reading his data.

Overall, McGuire has covered the Marxist archaeology literature reasonably well, and offers an informed rather than trendy Marxist approach, emphasizing the dialectic of social history even as it now encompasses American Indians together with archaeologists. For methodology of science, McGuire intelligently relies principally on Kelley and Hanen (1988). One lacuna is any reference to Guy Gibbon's brilliant 1989 *Explanation in Archaeology*. We should also mention careless copy-editing confusing some sentences and misspelled several names. Overall, the book is a useful, often sharp, critique.

VII. Activities of Various Academic Gatherings Related to the History of Archaeology

Carolyn Kirdahy presented her paper "Functions of Museums and the Museum of Science, Boston at a recent meeting of the New England Archivists. The paper, under the same title, has been published in the most recent issue of the *Museum Archivist* (pp. 11-14).

Alain Blain read his paper "Documenting Museums as Institutions and as Purveyors of Culture: Records, Papers, and Special Collections" during the 1992 annual meeting of the Society for American Archivists. Historians of archaeological science may find his paper interesting and useful. Included in his paper are the text and the results of museum archives surveys completed in 1983-1984 in 1991- and in the 1989 Association of Museum survey. The paper has been published in the most recent issue of the *Museum Archivist* (pp. 14-17).

The Gender and Archaeology Conference was held at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, 16-17 October 1992. Papers were given by Susan J. Bender (Skidmore) and Nancy Parezo (Arizona State Museum) "Paths Through the Profession: Women in Archaeology 1900-1960"; Mary Ann Levine (University of Massachusetts-Amherst) "Creating Their Own