

ARCY3011: AUSTRALIAN ARCHAEOLOGY NOTES

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Week One: Understanding 'identity' & the misuses of ethnography

Indigenous Archaeology

- This is the archaeology of aboriginal people
- It is about under culture
- This is NOT prehistory
 - Using the term prehistory cancels out black history
 - Black history does not stop and does occur simultaneously with white history
- This is a living culture and not a dead one (one of the best examples of a living culture in the world)
- Ethical requirement to partner with aboriginal people when conducting archaeological research
- Requires a post-processual approach to archaeological research
- Collaborative two-way process between indigenous communities and archaeologists
- Attempts to reconfigure the relationship between indigenous communities and scientists

Aboriginal Authenticity

- "Authentic" aboriginals live a traditional life (stone age aboriginals living in the desert)
- City/urban aboriginal people are inauthentic
- Aboriginal people are faced with the impossibility of being authentic and living within modern society

Australian Archaeology

- Processual and environmentally deterministic
- Has preferenced deep time over more recent periods
- This is a separation of indigenous and historical archaeologies

Ethnography

- = Observe cultures today to determine how the past was – this is a processual approach

Man the hunter – Women the gatherer

- Common ethnographic interpretation – this analogy is very stereotyped and restricted
- Gatherer hunters live in small groups
- Highly mobile, but not unstructured
- Modern hunter-gatherers live in marginal areas (areas that are not good for farming – marginal areas to us)

- PROBLEMS:
 - This idea is primitive
 - Follows the idea of 'noble' and 'innoble' savages
 - Idea of typology of societies of which hunter-gatherers are one category
 - There are different types of hunter-gatherer life strategies (not just the common man the hunter and woman the gatherer)