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Itinerant Objects

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Abstract

That the meanings and value of things can be transformed through their circulation was brought to the foreground of anthropological studies more than 30 years ago with the publication of *The Social Life of Things* (Appadurai 1986b). The last decade, however, has seen a move away from "object biographies" in favor of frameworks that better account for objects' complex entanglements. Recent work on object itineraries extends and challenges many elements of the biography approach and represents an intersection with critical interventions regarding materiality and agency, networks and circulation, and heritage discourses. This review evaluates the legacy of *The Social Life of Things* in the context of anthropological studies of the material world and suggests that thinking about itineraries rather than biographies allows us to collapse the distinctions between past and present (and future) and, thus, fully consider objects' present entanglements as central to their story.

INTRODUCTION

Since November 2016, a blockbuster traveling show simply titled *Pompeii: The Exhibition* has been touring the United States with impressive fanfare and ticket prices. Billed as "a media-rich, object-based, immersive experience," the show is just one of many traveling exhibits of artifacts from Pompeii that have been circulating around the world since at least the early 2000s, in what seems to be a concerted effort by the National Archaeological Museum of Naples and international event managers to commoditize and capitalize on the widespread fascination with the site effectively "frozen in time" by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE (Union Station 2016). Tellingly, most of these touring shows have not been installed in archaeological museums, but by for-profit exhibition companies in expo centers and event spaces that charge high ticket prices for "simulations" of the eruption alongside the "sensational" discoveries from the site (Union Station 2016), most famously the plaster-encased bodies of those trapped in the volcanic ash fall, thereby eliding the "real" and "hyperreal" (Meskell 2004; see Eco 1986).

The remains from Pompeii can thus be seen as an example *par excellence* of the kinds of biographical objects that, ever since Appadurai's influential volume *The Social Life of Things* was published more than 30 years ago (Appadurai 1986b), archaeologists have studied and problematized as having richly textured "social lives." But as with Hamilakis's treatment of the Parthenon marbles famously taken by Lord Elgin from Athens in 1801 and which became part of the British Museum's collection since 1816, the cultural biography metaphor, as formulated in Kopytoff's (1986) important contribution to *The Social Life of Things*, does not always adequately account for the ways in which the artifacts from the Parthenon, or Pompeii for that matter, may be "at the same time singularized and commoditized," seen on the one hand as unique and almost sacred and yet also "exchangeable symbolic capital" (Hamilakis 1999, p. 313). Because while it may be true that objects pass through different "regimes of value" (Appadurai 1986a) or "in and out of the commodity state" (Kopytoff 1986) over the course of their social lives, the biography metaphor has been widely critiqued for its linearity and thus its difficulty accounting for the simultaneity of different "networks and resonances" (Meskell 2004, p. 58).

The last decade has thus seen a move away from object biographies in favor of frameworks that can better account for objects' complex entanglements. Recent work on object mobilities and itineraries extends and challenges many elements of the biography approach (Hahn & Weiss 2013, Joyce & Gillespie 2015b) and represents an intersection with critical interventions regarding such topics as materiality and agency, networks and circulation, and provenience and provenance in contemporary contexts, without necessarily privileging or treating as conceptually separate one episode of an object's itinerary over others. This last point is particularly important because thinking about objects as having itineraries rather than biographies collapses the temporal distinctions between past and present (and future) and helps us to fully consider objects' present entanglements as central to their story.

This article thus has three aims. First, it reviews and reassesses the legacy of *The Social Life of Things* and its object biographies approach in archaeology. Second, it lays out and evaluates the contours of recent scholarship relevant to the study of things in motion, including the constellation of approaches inspired by the materialist turn in social theory. Third, it critically assesses what a shift to itineraries offers archaeologists for understanding how things are entangled with each other and with humans past, present, and future. I show that a shift to itineraries not only offers a way to rethink an object's resonances and temporalities, but also allows archaeologists to do archaeology that is about both the past and the present and that, as Joyce & Gillespie (2015b, p. 5) assert, "[acknowledges] that the texts we write are part of the ongoing engagement of things with humans."

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THINGS AND ITS LEGACY

How objects are entangled with each other and with humans across space and time is crucial to the archaeological project. How the meanings and value of things can be transformed through their circulation was brought to the foreground of anthropological studies more than 30 years ago with the publication of *The Social Life of Things* (Appadurai 1986b). At the time, the study of objects and their exchange, once of central importance to understanding social relations (Malinowski 1922, Mauss 1954), had largely disappeared in sociocultural anthropology, had become relegated to the arena of folklore (e.g., Glassie 1969), and made a minimal appearance only in some Marx-inspired materialist approaches (e.g., Leacock 1978).

Even within archaeology, objects on the individual level at least had disappeared from most archaeological thinking. Processualism was dominant (in spite of some recent murmurings from a group of upstarts from Cambridge), and so a whole generation of archaeologists was looking past objects to deduce "the system behind both the Indian and the artifact" (Flannery 1967, p. 120). Particular artifact histories and travels were epiphenomenal. Instead, trade and exchange systems writ large had emerged among processual archaeology's main research foci, as they could be quantified, modeled, and generalized for understanding a society's broader ecosystem (Bauer & Agbe-Davies 2010).

But changes were on the horizon. Increasing archaeological and anthropological interest in material culture (Deetz 1977), issues of artifact style and representation (Sackett 1982, Weissner 1983, Hodder 1985, DeBoer 1990), and the consumption of goods (Douglas & Isherwood 1979, Bourdieu 1984, Miller 1987), as well as a renewed focus on gift exchange (e.g., Munn 1983, 1986; Strathern 1984, 1988; Tambiah 1984) and the role of commodities in economic history more broadly (Braudel 1972, Wallerstein 1974), had set the stage for a refocus on things.

Appadurai's book presented not simply a reengagement with the role of material objects in social life, however, but an exploration of how objects themselves have social lives, whose meanings and values may be situationally specific and shift over time, as they circulate and traverse different "regimes of value" (Appadurai 1986a). In his introductory chapter, Appadurai (1986a) focuses on how things become commodities and can take on new values when entering or exiting different commodity streams. Following Simmel (1978), he suggests that values of things shift as they are exchanged and move among different regimes of value that have been brought together in that moment of exchange. So an object that is seen as utilitarian in one context takes on new values and meanings when brought to a market where such things are scarce or seen as having some exotic appeal.

In what was arguably the most significant contribution to the volume, Kopytoff (1986) extends Appadurai's ideas to assert that things have their own life histories, which are both variable (in that things may continually move in and out of the commodity state, while "singular" things may resist commoditization altogether) and cumulative (in that the exchange value of an object is rarely isolated from its prior history of exchanges). Like persons, objects may be born when they are first made, live social lives as they are entangled in various relationships with humans and other objects, and then die when they are finally destroyed or abandoned or otherwise no longer have those entanglements (they may also have an afterlife when, for example, archaeologists or others rediscover such objects and put them in museums or reuse them in other ways). Telling their stories, Kopytoff argues, can provide insights into the social worlds they inhabit. This insight has subsequently inspired a generation of archaeologists and anthropologists interested in material culture to consider object biographies as a way of centering the material world as a locus of historical action (e.g., MacKenzie 1991; Skeates 1995; Holtorf 1998, 2002; Hoskins 1998; Gosden & Marshall 1999, and accompanying papers; Fontijn 2002; Knappett 2002; Meskell 2004; Marshall

2008; Joy 2009; Blanco-González 2014). Moreover, by arguing that objects have biographies, he seeks to break down the dichotomy between persons and things, powerfully illustrating the arbitrariness of such a distinction by opening his chapter with a discussion of slavery, where humans literally become commodified objects (see also Strathern 1988 and discussion in the next section).

The publication of *The Social Life of Things* was thus a watershed moment for the study of material culture and, it can be argued, set the stage for the emergence of materiality approaches in anthropology since the turn of the millennium (Knappett 2002, Hoskins 2006, Joy 2009, Harding 2016). That said, several shortcomings with the biography model may be identified that have been explicitly or implicitly addressed in the subsequent literature. The first problem is one of ontology: Although Appadurai and especially Kopytoff seek to question the divide between persons (subjects) and things (objects), they focus largely on the problem of the subject–object relation at the expense of things-in-themselves (Knappett 2002, Joyce 2015). Moreover, by arguing that objects can have social lives too, they are not transcending that dualism so much as thinking of things as human-like. The second problem is one of linearity: Even those scholars who have productively deployed the biography model have pointed out that it privileges a narrative approach that is historical and cumulative rather than relational and multinodal (Joy 2009, Hahn & Weiss 2013, Joyce & Gillespie 2015b). If social relations themselves extend in different directions in a series of disconnected engagements, however, then object relations must similarly be recognized as extending out in different directions and with different temporalities and linkages (Joy 2009, Joyce 2015). The third problem, which is closely related to the second, is one of finality: using a biography metaphor implies that objects—like people—have births, lives, and deaths, and yet it is not at all clear where objects' lives begin and end. Studies of materials sourcing and manufacturing practices (like *chaîne opératoire*) illustrate important relationships that objects may have before they are even made (Joy 2009, Blanco-González 2014, Blair 2015, Roddick 2015), whereas an object's afterlife is complicated by issues of reuse, fragmentation, taphonomy, and curation, each of which may illuminate particular relations (Schiffer 1987, Chapman 2000, Meskell 2004, Chapman & Gaydarska 2007, Joyce 2015).

Rather than throw out the biography metaphor altogether, however, Joy (2009) seeks an expanded view of biography that is relational rather than historical. Taking inspiration from Strathern (1988), Joy (2009) argues that "if identity is multiple and made up of relations with other people, biography cannot be viewed as purely an historical narrative" (p. 544). Pushing back against the linearity of the biography approach, she argues that object biographies may consist of "a series of connected jumps as the object becomes alive within certain clusters of social relationships and is inactive at other points in time and space." This emphasis on movement (including stasis) and relations reflects the growing influence of materiality approaches to the object world, which nonetheless shares Appadurai and Kopytoff's concern with moving beyond the dualism of objects/persons.

OBJECT AGENCY AND RELATIONAL APPROACHES TO THINGS

The archaeological interest in object biographies at the turn of the millennium was part of a larger trend of examining how objects could be seen as active in social life (Hodder 1985, 1992; Hegmon 1992; Stark 1998). If culture was to be understood as meaningfully constituted through practice, it would thus be possible to examine objects' roles in that process. Drawing inspiration from the writings of Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984), which highlighted the recursive nature of structure and practice in daily life, archaeologists increasingly turned to theories of materiality and material agency to upend the standard subject and object roles of humans and things and examine how objects had the capacity to act back on humans to shape and constrain subsequent human

action (Dobres & Robb 2000, 2005; Dornan 2002; Joyce & Lopiparo 2005; Meskell 2005). At first, and building on the insight that technology and technological choices are themselves socially embedded (Lechtman 1977, Lemonnier 1993, Dietler & Herbich 1998, Gell 1998, Hegmon 1998, Schiffer 2001, Vandiver 2001, Bray 2013), some scholars turned to Leroi-Gourhan's (1964) model of *chaîne opératoire* to understand the technologies and goals of artifact manufacture (Lemonnier 1976, 1992; Dobres 1995, 1999, 2000). These studies sought to identify the agency of persons by identifying artifacts' specific sequences of manufacture from raw material to finished object, an approach that can be seen as a kind of object biography (Joy 2009, pp. 541–42).

Other scholars pushed back on the idea of the autonomous person as being privileged over things and argued instead that objects may be better understood as having their own motivations and agentive power within intertwined networks of humans and objects, drawing on a variety of sources from Latour (e.g., 1993) to Gell (1998) to more recent work often subsumed under the umbrella of "new materialism" (e.g., Barad 2003, 2007; Bennett 2005, 2010; Coole & Frost 2010; see also Brown 2003, 2015; Viveiros de Castro 2004). Following Strathern (1988), Gell (1998) argues that selfhood may be better understood as distributed, with material objects often acting as extensions of individual identities that persist across space and time and, as a result, can have lives, personalities, and agentive capacities of their own, even after the death of the person who may have imbued them with agency. In this view, objects do not necessarily have agency on their own, but they come to have agency because it is delegated to them by humans or as a result of their particular role in relationship with humans. Such an approach has influenced archaeologists to move away from thinking about object meanings as symbolic or aesthetic, but indexical and relational both with humans and with other objects (see e.g., Knappett 2002, 2005; Gosden 2001, 2005; Fowler 2004; Malafouris 2008; Bray 2012; Van Dyke 2015; Harrison-Buck & Hendon 2018). From this perspective, objects are able to have effects in the world seemingly of their own making.

Actor–Networks

Relations are at the heart of actor–network theory (ANT), developed mainly by Bruno Latour, John Law, and Michel Callon in the 1980s (Callon 1986, Law 1986, Latour 1988), in which things have agency in their networked association with humans and nonhumans alike. Latour uses the classic example of a gun: While neither people nor guns on their own can shoot another person dead (despite the rhetorical sparring between the NRA and antigun activists about this question), together the citizen–gun can do so quite efficiently (Latour 1999, pp. 176–80; see also Knappett 2008, p. 140; Fowles 2010, pp. 29–30). He argues for symmetry between humans and objects, where neither is conceptually prior to or takes precedence over the other in importance or as the origin of action: "Rather, the two are mutually constituted, each being transformed by the other in their conjunction" (Knappett 2008, p. 140). In this understanding, both humans and nonhumans may act as agents, and "actors are not conceived of as fixed entities but as flows, as circulating objects undergoing trials" (Latour 1996, p. 374). Recalling Kopytoff's desire to move beyond the opposition of people and objects—since people can themselves become objects—ANT thus seeks to transcend the dichotomies of people/things, subject/object, and nature/culture by making the case that there is symmetry among all these entities and that they cannot be conceptually separated from each other, as they exist together in networked relations.

ANT has had a significant impact on how archaeologists approach material agency and how objects may themselves be understood as active agents in the world (e.g., Knappett 2002, 2008; Hicks 2004; Watts 2007, 2013; Witmore 2007; Knappett & Malafouris 2008; Olsen 2010; Alberti et al. 2011; Alberti 2016). While ANT and Latour's work in particular have inspired a number of archaeologists, the most direct engagement has been undertaken by those who have proposed

practicing a "symmetrical archaeology" (Olsen 2003, 2010; Witmore 2004, 2007; Shanks 2007; Webmoor & Witmore 2008). This approach derives its name from ANT's symmetry principle, which asserts that humans and nonhumans cannot be ontologically distinguished but rather must be understood as enmeshed in networks of relationships where the material world can act upon humans (and other nonhuman actors) on equal footing as humans. While elements of such symmetry can be found in Gell's (1998) work, in that agency may be better understood as distributed across networks of humans and things, proponents of symmetrical archaeology reject any focus on meaning as prioritizing human understanding and questions of representation, thereby maintaining nature/culture and thing/human dualisms.

Despite the recent attention being given to Latour's work and ANT in archaeology, such a symmetrical approach has not been without its critics. First, while Latour (1996, p. 370) has asserted that ANT is a "material resistance argument," there has been little consideration of the physical being, the material properties, and the manufacture of things/objects (Lemonnier 1996, Ingold 2007b) or of how to deal with their physical absence (Fowles 2010). Second, as is often the case with new theoretical approaches, there have been few in-depth case studies in which to examine what a symmetrical archaeology based on ANT would look like in practice (Preucel 2012). Third, while proponents of symmetrical archaeology argue that the division of past and present is itself a dualism that must be transcended ["past and present are thoroughly mixed ontologically" (Witmore 2007, p. 546)], and that the past is entangled with the present (something that many others have argued), there seems to be little acknowledgment of the political dimensions of archaeological practice, let alone any explicit political commitment (compare, for example, with pragmatism; see Preucel & Mrozowski 2010). Rather, the studies employing ANT seem to argue that politics and the social world are specifically human constructs secondary to actor–networks and are thus not appropriate ways of understanding things in the world. In fact, the Pasteur example so eloquently used by Latour (1988) makes a claim somewhat reminiscent of systems theory (except with the inclusion of an abstract agent in the system), which deemphasizes the insights and contributions of specific individuals as epiphenomenal: History would have unfolded in the same way regardless, even if the specific person Pasteur—or Hitler, by the same logic—had never existed. One might argue that this is the idea of object biography taken to its extreme: By moving agency away from humans and instead attributing it to webs of relations with nonhuman actors, ANT seems to absolve humans of responsibility for their actions (with apologies to Bob Marley, think instead, "I didn't shoot the sheriff, either/The gun–human network did").[1]

Affordances

One may argue that while guns do not discharge themselves, they are made to facilitate certain activities and so, essentially, are made for no other purpose than to be discharged. That is, they contain affordances that lend themselves to certain ways of acting and engaging with them. This concept, developed by ecological psychologist James Gibson (1979), has also gained a following in the study of material culture in recent years, most notably in the work of Tim Ingold (especially 1992, 1993, 2000; see also Knappett 2004, 2012; Keane 2018b).

Like other approaches to materiality discussed here, the idea of affordances seeks to move beyond the subjective–objective dichotomy and asserts that the affordances of things are simultaneously physical (in space and measurable) and mental (as having perceptible values or qualities).

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[1]This avoidance of an explicit political commitment is a feature rather than a bug of ANT and, in fact, a feature of much of the new materialist thinking. Latour (2005, p. 52) decries social theorists' "infatuation with emancipation politics," whereas other new materialists believe that political equality need not be explicitly sought because it will follow naturally from an ontology that deprivileges human experience.

But unlike the approaches discussed above, this is a theory of perception, where the emphasis is placed on how things are perceived and understood by other agents in the relationship (which may or may not be human agents). The relational aspect of this approach is obvious and reminiscent of pragmatism's focus on effects. As Ingold (1993, p. 222, emphasis in original) writes, "[L]earning to perceive is not a matter of acquiring conventional schemata for ordering sensory data, but of learning to *attend* to the world in certain ways through involvement with others in everyday contexts of practical action."[2] This is a focus on "dwelling"—the relational engagement humans have with their material and environmental (sensorial) surroundings (Ingold 2000, Hutson 2010). At the same time, however, affordances are posited to reside in the thing itself being perceived. "Positive and negative affordances" Gibson (1979, p. 137, italics in original) argues, "are properties of things *taken with reference to an observer* but not properties of the *experiences of the observer.*" This notion has been the subject of some criticism, however, because "humans are effectively reduced to the role of reactive agents, merely reacting to those affordances that enable the execution of an action. What the theory of direct perception lacks is the ability to cast human agents as active, with the capacity to evaluate as well as react" (Knappett 2004, p. 47).

But even though Gibson leaves the issues of evaluation and interpretation underdeveloped (as he is clearly attempting to argue against mainstream psychological views at the time that privileged Cartesian mental templates and categorization for interpreting and navigating the world), he does not ignore their importance. Rather, in an echo of Vygotsky (1978), he makes the point that children, who have not yet built up their perceptions of things based on experiences, will experiment with things to fully understand their affordances—they may try to eat inedible things, pick up things too heavy to lift, or climb on things not suitable for climbing—and then learn from their experiences (Gibson 1979, p. 134). But neither does this view imply that objects have specific and narrowly defined constellations of affordances. Instead, they may vary across contexts and depend on the relation with specific perceiving agents. As Keane (2018b, pp. 31–32) writes, "Affordances are properties of the chair vis-à-vis a particular activity. As such they are real and exist in a world of natural causality (chairs can hold down loose papers or catch fire), but they do not induce people to respond to them in any particular way." In this way, affordances can help extend the concept of object biographies: Chairs, as with other objects, may have other purposes and lives and offer many different possibilities for relations. The question is, How do we (as humans as well as anthropologists) come to terms with this range of possibilities? The ways we deal with objects are not inevitable but may be better understood as questions of ethics, in that such engagements do not happen in a vacuum but are situated and have effects in the world on other beings (Keane 2018a, p. 46). This ethical dimension has been underdeveloped in object biography and in many discussions of materiality (Meskell 2004 is a notable exception), and so it is one arena that recent work on object mobilities and itineraries seeks to address (see below).

Entanglements

Approaches within the materialist turn share a focus on relations. Humans and nonhumans are understood to exist in a relationship (in a network) with each other. Because such networks necessarily involve multiple components, it should come as no surprise that a number of scholars have sought to consider how humans and nonhumans interact in larger relational collectivities, using such terms as "entanglements" (Barad 2003, 2007; Hodder 2011, 2012), "assemblages" [or "rhizomes"; see Deleuze & Guattari 1987 (1980); Bennett 2005, 2010], "meshworks" (Ingold 2007a,

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[2] Ingold's (1993, p. 227) subsequent reference to the work of Mead underscores the similarity of this approach to that of pragmatism, though he does not make this link himself. Knappett (2004, 2012) makes the link much more explicit.

2011), and "bundling" (Keane 2003, 2005). These approaches should not be confused with so-cial network analysis (see Mills 2017 for a recent review), which is a formal method of mapping relations among nodes in a larger network structure, though there are increasingly areas of over-lap (e.g., Knappett 2011, 2013b; Hodder & Mol 2016). Rather, these seek to conceptualize rela-tionships among people and things (or people–things, since many of these scholars seek to move beyond that dichotomy) as a way to understand the interconnectedness of agency and being.

Two of the most influential new materialist thinkers are Karen Barad and Jane Bennett, and their work has been attracting increasing interest in archaeology. Following the work of Haraway (1991) and others, Barad (2003, p. 811; 2007) proposes an "agential realist ontology as an al-ternative" to representationalism, arguing that we can best understand material phenomena as produced through "agential intra-action" with embodied performative practices. Her account is a posthumanist one, which seeks to collapse categories such as "human" and "nonhuman" and in-stead examines how such categories are stabilized or destabilized through performed enactments. Her approach is "agential" because, she argues, all material phenomena are themselves relations (Barad 2003, p. 814), continually in a process of being or "doing" (Joyce 2015, p. 23). But it is also a realist account because "what is important about causal intra-actions is the fact that marks are left on bodies. Objectivity means being accountable to marks on bodies" (Barad 2003, p. 824). In Barad's view, all phenomena are thus entanglements of causes and effects without a prior existence.

Similarly, Bennett (2005, 2010) focuses on how agency is distributed and composite within assemblages of humans and nonhumans. Advocating for what she calls "an enchanted materialism" (Bennett 2005, p. 447), she seeks to examine how a wide range of agents (or "actants," to use Latour's term) are entangled with each other. She explores this interconnectedness of people and things (people-made things as well as the environment) in a compelling discussion of the North American blackout of 2003, in which wires, weather, individual human behavior, and safety systems in a power grid all interacted as agents resulting in a series of actions and effects that even the system's managers could not explain (Bennett 2005). Illustrating the distributed nature of agency itself, this case showed that an agentive act is not isolated or isolatable in terms of causes and effects but interacts within an assemblage of other agents that play a role too, "like a pebble thrown into a pond, or an electrical current sent through a wire, or a neural network: it vibrates" (Bennett 2005, p. 457).

These perspectives share an emphasis on the interconnectedness or entanglement of people, things, ideas, bodies, relations, and landscapes, with agency itself distributed among them. Taking their cue from Barad, Marshall & Alberti (2014, p. 23) contend that one of the implications for archaeology is that "we can think of chevron amulets as both artefacts and *taonga* without paradox or conflict because difference is no longer essential to the object…. [I]t is produced in the ana-lytical process." Hodder's (2011, 2012, 2014) work on entanglement resonates more with Bennett because he argues that relations among things and/or humans spin out as webs that subsequently ensnare us (see also Thomas 1991).[3] A similar emphasis on webs is made by Ingold (2007a, 2008, 2011) who asserts that a spider's web is a better way to understand how objects and humans (and other nonhumans) are ontologically interlinked. Drawing on Deleuze & Guattari's (1987, p. 261) concept of *haecceity* and Heidegger's (1971) understanding of a thing "as a gathering," Ingold points out that a spider's web is not a series of relations between separate points or things, but instead a meshwork of interconnected lines that the spider actually spins and along which the spider moves

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[3]It is interesting to note that Hodder's argument about humans becoming entrapped by their own material practices is not only a development of his (Hodder 1990) argument that humans domesticated themselves, but also an echo of the famous axiom of his intellectual forbear, V. Gordon Childe [1951 (1936), p. 188]: "[T]radition makes the man, by circumscribing his behavior within certain bounds; but it is equally true that man makes the traditions. And so…man makes himself."

and lives. In this view, objects do not have agency so much as they have life: They are indeterminate and in a constant state of motion—even when they are fixed structures such as buildings, they live through new encounters, contexts, and modifications and are not the same structure they were when first built. Ingold's (2010, p. 3) emphasis is thus on growth and movement: "[A] focus on life-processes," he argues, "requires us to attend not to materiality as such but to the fluxes and flows of materials."

MOBILITIES AND ITINERARIES

Ingold's emphasis on movement and not just on relations is aimed at highlighting some of the problems with materiality and actor–network approaches. It also sets the stage for scholars to think differently about object mobilities and itineraries (Hahn & Weiss 2013, Joyce & Gillespie 2015b). For Ingold (2007b), a significant problem with many of the treatments discussed above is their focus on materiality at the expense of materials themselves, whose properties are largely ignored. Instead, Ingold entreats us to consider how the properties of things are experienced and relate to those who engage with them. To understand materials and not just materiality, we need "to tell the stories of what happens to [materials] as they flow, mix and mutate" (Ingold 2007b, p. 14). The question to be posed may thus be one of flow. If, as Ingold and even some of the new materialists such as Barad and Bennett have suggested, things (and humans equally) are in a constant state of becoming, vibrating or extending out along lines and across webs of being, then how are we (as archaeologists, as scholars of the material) to trace those movements and resonances to understand their distributed agency?

The concept of object itineraries (Joyce 2012a,b, 2015) offers one way to address this question. This approach seeks to examine the nonlinear journeys of things, while simultaneously recasting Kopytoff's (1986) original formulation of the object biography concept (Hahn & Weiss 2013, Joyce & Gillespie 2015b). If things are mobile, moving across networks or along lines in meshworks of existence, as Ingold would have it, this mobility may be productively addressed by thinking of objects as having itineraries, which Joyce (2015, p. 29) defines as "the routes by which things circulate in and out of places where they come to rest or are active." And while itineraries may be like Ingold's lines along which things and people move, live, and engage with each other, they need not be linear in the sense of having a beginning or end (unlike biographies, though see Knappett 2013a, p. 37). Rather, itineraries are open-ended and multidirectional, and they include elements, fragments, transformations, and intersections with other itineraries and lines. They "extend backward to incorporate the sources from which materials came and forward to incorporate the conversion of wholes into fragments or assemblages" (Joyce 2015, p. 29). They contain knots and stoppages (see Küchler 2003, Gosden 2006) because being in motion does not require physical movement in three-dimensional space (Hahn & Weiss 2013, p. 7; Joyce & Gillespie 2015a, p. 3). An object seemingly fixed or at rest is still in motion relative to the seasons, the air, and the other things (animals, humans, objects, etc.) whose own itineraries it intersects. Each encounter is a new semiotic engagement [in a pragmatic, performative sense, see Crossland & Bauer (2017)] that, like Heraclitus's river, is continually flowing and constituting itself anew. In this way, the concept of itineraries pushes back against specific temporalities and life histories.

Studying object itineraries may include materials analysis and provenience studies that identify sources of raw materials and technologies of manufacture and how these might represent the intersection of various other itineraries, lines, and relations (Joyce 2012a, 2015; Blair 2015; Roddick 2015). Recent advances in materials science have certainly come a long way toward helping us trace the routes that objects travel from the source of their materials to their place of manufacture to their eventual destinations (e.g., Henderson 2000, Artioli 2010, Weiner 2010). Developments in

social network analysis and other techniques have facilitated mapping such routes and visualizing the structures of interaction networks (Knappett 2013b, Mills 2017). And expanded approaches to problems of human mobility and trade have also provided new ways to think about how objects and people move over long distances (Bauer & Agbe-Davies 2010, Beaudry & Parno 2013, Leary 2014).

Blair (2015) provides a useful illustration of how the concept of object itineraries can weave together materials analysis with current ideas about materiality. In a study of almost 70,000 glass bead specimens from the seventeenth-century site of Mission Santa Catalina de Guale on St. Catherines Island, Georgia, aimed at identifying material sources as well as manufacturing methods, Blair was able to distinguish specific glassmaking communities of practice in Venice, Holland, and elsewhere and to trace the beads' routes from their sources, through their trade networks, to their eventual deposition at the site and subsequent examination by him at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The construct of object itineraries helps to collapse the distinctions between pasts and presents (and futures) and to illuminate how objects move along scholarly itineraries too (the lines and taskscapes along which we each live and dwell). Indeed, Blair (2015) explicitly acknowledges that his approach to studying the beads has been "based on this previous analysis, and future researchers will have to engage with the beads within structures generated by these previous itineraries" (p. 93).

That itineraries have no clear beginning or end allows us to understand that present entanglements including scientific inquiry are another way that objects resonate (or vibrate). The apparatuses of inquiry, Barad (2003, pp. 816–17) notes, "are themselves…phenomena" and are "constituted through particular practices that are perpetually open to rearrangements, rearticulations, and other reworkings. This is part of the creativity and difficulty of doing science." Just as archaeological sites are not destroyed but rather transformed by the act of digging (Lucas 2001), objects (both human and nonhuman) do not die but persist, though they may be fragmented (Chapman 2000) or distributed (Strathern 1988, Gell 1998), grouped into assemblages (Gillespie 2015) or made absent (Bille et al. 2010, Fowles 2010) in their present and future engagements. The key point here is that

> [i]n a framework of itineraries, such potent phases of activity in the contemporary world are not separated by a sharp temporal break between a time of the past and a time of the present (Joyce 2012a). Instead, they are continuing parts of the way things work agentially in concert with other things, humans, and a variety of forces. (Joyce & Gillespie 2015a, p. 11)

RETHINKING OBJECT BIOGRAPHIES

Where does the concept of object itineraries take us? For one, shifting our focus onto traces, lines and itineraries helps bring to the foreground the ways in which both human and nonhuman objects circulate, flow, and extend their selves in relations with each other. Such a shift need not be a wholesale repudiation of the biography concept. After all, as Appadurai himself wrote (1986a, p. 5), "it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context." Rather, the concept of object itineraries allows us to understand more fully the many entanglements of being in the world and pursue research that, as Meskell (2004, p. 58) suggests, "anthropologize[s] the embedded object, understanding the thing in itself (*Ding an Sich*) and then trace the capricious terrain of meaning and significance." Such an approach helps us transcend the arbitrary separation of past from present (and future) and explore how an object's history and entanglements extend out in all directions and are ceaselessly emergent, implicating the practice of archaeology in the process.

Thus, a second key contribution of the object itineraries concept is that it attends to political and ethical issues largely left out of materiality thinking (Sørensen 2013, Hollin et al. 2017). At

least since the turn of the millennium, archaeologists have been increasingly mindful of the ways in which both archaeological objects and the field as a whole are implicated in contemporary political and social movements and struggles, from the founding and expansion of the World Archaeological Congress (Ucko 1987, Funari 2006), to the development of "community archaeology" (Marshall 2002, Little & Shackel 2007), to considerations of postcolonialist perspectives (Lydon & Rizvi 2010) and heritage-making (Smith 2006). Considerations of the contexts of archaeology are by now so fully integrated with the discipline that the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other funding agencies routinely require "broader impacts" in their evaluations of proposals. But the past and present, while intertwined, are still often seen as separate arenas of inquiry, to be transcended [as in Shanks & Tilley's (1987) "fourfold hermeneutic"], or simply more or less to be incorporated into one's research design for funding or permit requirements (see, e.g., discussion in Pyburn 2003).

In opposition to this past–present construct is the realization that what is considered important about the past not only varies among communities but also may shift over time (e.g., as recognized in the International Council on Monuments and Sites Burra Charter of 1999) and that with new technologies and perspectives what is considered archaeological data itself changes (Lucas 2012). While we might be tempted to invoke Faulkner's (1951) famous line from *Requiem for a Nun*, "[t]he past is never dead. It's not even past," and call it a day, it is not so much that there is no past but that the past rises up into its own future (sensu Benjamin 1968) in changing and unanticipated ways. This inseverability between the past, present, and future makes it impossible to maintain their division in archaeological analysis and interpretation (Meskell 2004). This does not mean that we cannot choose to focus on one (or several) segments of an object's itinerary and set aside others for the sake of a particular research problem or agenda (as Barad 2003 notes) but does mean that we cannot simply privilege one segment as the primary or "authentic" one (Handler 2003).

The itineraries model thus calls to mind Binford's (1981) critique of just such a privileging of one segment of an object's (or site's) biography as adopting a "Pompeii premise" [which he saw in Schiffer's (1976) behavioral approach], which held that the ultimate goal of archaeology should be to recover the primary or original context/meaning/use of an object, and that later transformations were effectively "noise" occluding the original context and, if properly accounted for, could be removed from consideration. Although most archaeologists do not actually pursue such an approach (and, arguably, neither did Schiffer), we might draw a lesson from Pompeii itself and its remains, which continue to loom large in the popular imagination of archaeology and to serve as a locus of global touristic consumption, as illustrated by the exhibit discussed at the opening of this article. This lesson may be termed Pompeii's presence: the recognition that past artifacts and sites, such as Pompeii, are just as much present as past places. The line between past and present is increasingly blurred, and objects can no longer be simply examined for providing insights about the past as separated and separable from the present. And while we might focus on one or more episodes or stoppages (Küchler 2003) for specific research questions or agendas, we have to recognize that objects, places, and beings exist in multiple relations and temporalities. Present meanings as heritage objects, as items of political struggle or sovereignty, or as "contact zones" (Clifford 1997) are now recognized as fully intertwined with how we understand an object's past meanings, since arguments about the past are still and unavoidably made in the present.

This question of ethics represents a key point of divergence between the itineraries model and those of materialist and symmetrical archaeology. While new materialists such as Latour, Barad, Bennett, and others claim that their approaches inherently correct for political biases so that explicit political commitments should be avoided, the object itineraries approach demands that archaeologists not only reckon with their interpretive biases (an idea introduced by the postprocessual critique, see Hodder 1989) but also explicitly consider the role of present entanglements

in the interpretation and sociopolitics of the objects' present and future dispositions. Thus, rather than focus exclusively on past "truth" (as the domain of proper archaeology, published in places such as *American Antiquity*) or on present heritage politics (such as in journals on heritage), archaeological reports and analyses would do both. Such a shift is already taking place not just in the NSF requirements already mentioned, but also in the scope of newer journals such as the *Journal of Social Archaeology*, the World Archaeological Congress's *Archaeologies*, the *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies*, and even the Society for American Archaeology's new *Advances in Archaeological Practice*. Taking object itineraries seriously means examining what has brought us (objects and people alike) to intersect at this place and considering where we might be heading next.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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