From:

Susanne Duesterberg
Popular Receptions of Archaeology
Fictional and Factual Texts
in 19th and Early 20th Century Britain

Popular archaeology is a heterogeneous phenomenon: Focusing on the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann, Egyptian mummies, and the ruin complex Great Zimbabwe in fictional and factual texts, Susanne Duesterberg analyses the popular reception of archaeology in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. She offers an interdisciplinary and comparative view on the reception of the different archaeologies, reflecting contemporary sociocultural concerns in connection with identity formation. With its focus on popular culture as well as identity and memory studies, the book appeals to both a general public and experts from various disciplines.

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Introduction

On January 5, 1867, the *Illustrated London News* informed its readers of the following devastating event:

»We regret to state that a fire broke out in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham on Sunday afternoon, which destroyed nearly all the north quarter of that magnificent structure, containing the Tropical Department; the whole of the Natural History Collection; the Assyrian, Alhambra, and Byzantine Courts; the Queen's Apartments; the Library and Printing Offices; the Indian, Architectural, Model, and Marine Galleries. But little was saved from those parts of the building which were separated by the screen of the Tropical Department from the main space of the interior. Our Illustration on the preceding page is a view taken from the garden terrace, showing the dismal aspect of the wreck of the north transept and the adjoining portions of the edifice, with the remains of the two gigantic Egyptian figures, and some ruins of the Art-Courts; […] At half-past three o'clock the end of the building gave way; the roof fell in as far as the north transept, and the flames shot up in a mass. The effect of this was so great that if the wind had not been blowing away from the central transept nothing could have saved the whole Palace from immediate destruction. The appearance of the burning end of the Palace at this moment was indescribably grand. The flames played along the red-hot girders in fantastic wreath, when suddenly the whole mass dissolved, and, sinking down, fell with a terrific crash. The main girders of the transept remained standing, and in the midst of their circling arches could be seen the colossal statues of the Egyptian Court sitting erect, with the flames leaping and playing around them.« (*Illustrated London News*, Jan 5, 1867: 22)

This report was accompanied by an illustration of the burning Crystal Palace, showing the ancient Egyptian statues surrounded by flames underneath the collapsing steel construction of the palace (cf. fig. 1) with a few lost-looking onlookers in the foreground, helplessly following the spectacle in front of them. A week later, a similar illustration was published by the paper, this time showing workmen sifting through the burnt-out ruins as the damaged Egyptian statues loomed above them (cf. fig. 2). The destruction of the Crystal Palace and the public mediation of the event through the *Illustrated London News* might be taken as symbolising the core issues of this book.

Fig. 1: »Fire at the Crystal Palace on Sunday Last: The Ruins as Seen from the Terrace«

THE FIRE AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE ON SUNDAY LAST: THE RUINS AS SEEN FROM THE TERRACE.—SEE NEXT PAGE.
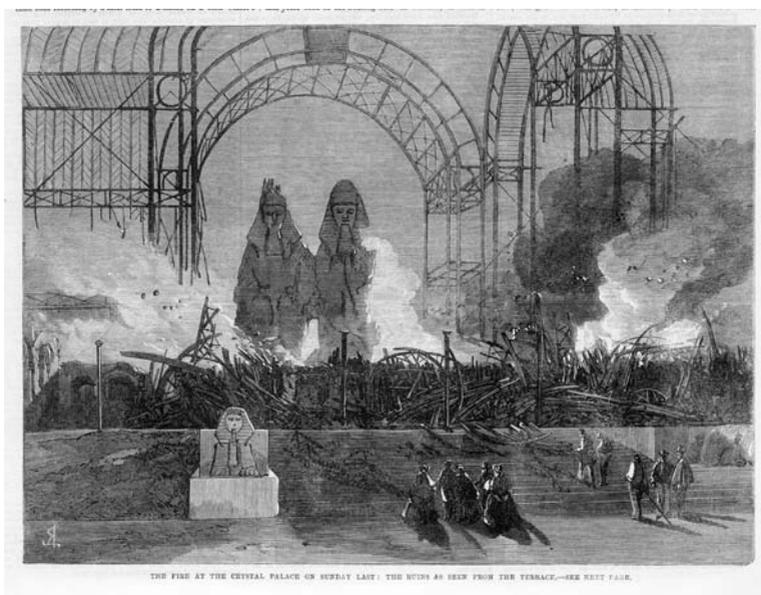
Illustrated London News, January 5, 1867: 2. Reproduced with kind permission of Frankfurt University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg.

Fig. 2: »Ruins of the North Transept of the Crystal Palace Destroyed by the Late Fire«
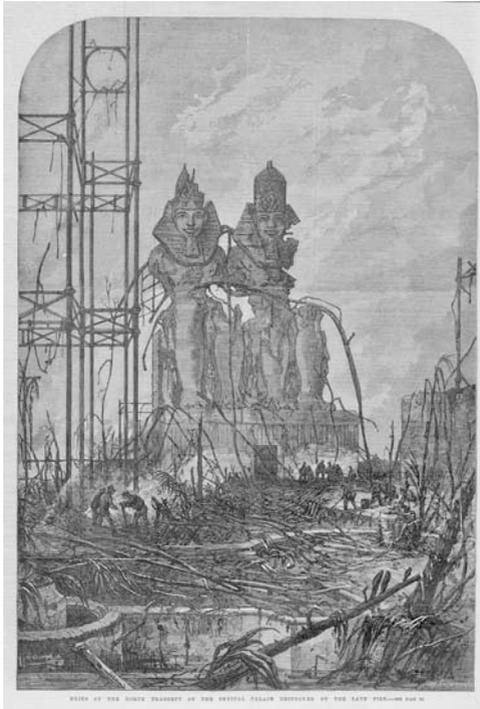
Illustrated London News, January 12, 1867: 28. Reproduced with kind permission of Frankfurt University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg.

Constructed for the Great Exhibition in 1851, the Crystal Palace was the epitome of Britain's progress and prosperity. As a modern steel and glass building exhibiting the latest technology as well as exotic goods and antiquities, it represented British industrial, imperial, and political powers.[1] At the same time, the Crystal Palace Exhibition, or Great Exhibition, was also one of the first popular spectacles of its kind, attracting thousands of people from all social classes and thus mirroring the Victorian interest in public exhibitions and entertainments. Unlike anything before it, the Crystal Pal-

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1 For a detailed discussion of the cultural meaning of the Great Exhibition, cf. Chapter 2.

ace Exhibition presented and represented modernity and antiquity, home and abroad, under one roof. The Crystal Palace Exhibition stood for Britain's belief in the present and the future but also for its concern with the past.[2] It is this seemingly paradoxical combination of a strong belief in progress on the one hand and a nostalgic occupation with the past on the other that is characteristic for the Victorian Age. In spite of Britain's economic, political, and imperial self-assurance, underlying fears of decline and degeneration had increased in the second half of the nineteenth century and climaxed towards its end.[3] Analogies between the home country and once powerful civilisations and empires of the past such as those of ancient Rome, Egypt, and Greece were frequent. So too was the allusion to their common destiny as great powers which had not been able to avoid their own demise.

Against this background, the burnt-out Crystal Palace becomes emblematic in that with the destruction of the palace, a sumptuous representation of Britain's power, the nation's innermost fears of doom and decline seem to have materialised. The choice of the *Illustrated London News* to accompany their reports about the destruction of the palace with illustrations of the Egyptian Court and its magnificent Egyptian statues is significant, since the two ancient Egyptian statues inevitably bring to mind the popular lines of Shelley's *Ozymandias* (1817):[4] »»My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: / Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!‹ / Nothing beside remains. Round the decay / Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare / The lone and level sands stretch far away.« (Shelley 1855: 95) The Egyptian statues in the midst of the ruins of what used to be the representation of Britain's all-encompassing power become symbols of the nation's mutability and vulnerability. This impression is enforced by the vivid description of the fire in the *Illustrated London News*: »The main girders of the transept remained standing, and in the midst of their circling arches

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2   The exhibition housed *inter alia* a Medieval Court, an Egyptian Court, and an Assyrian Court.

3   For a detailed discussion on fears of degeneration and decline in the Victorian Age, cf. Chapter 2.

4   Percy Bysshe Shelley is said to have been inspired to write his poem by the bust of Ramesses II brought to Britain and exhibited at the British Museum by Giovanni Battista Belzoni (cf. Chapter 3.3).

could be seen the colossal statues of the Egyptian Court sitting erect, with the flames leaping and playing around them.« (*Illustrated London News*, Jan 5, 1867: 22) The fire is presented as a blazing inferno[5] in which the only thing that endures is the »*colossal* statues of the Egyptian Court« (ibid., emphasis mine) as a reminder of yet another once-powerful empire now extinct. In the light of the power of such destruction, both the spectators of the fire in the first sketch and the workmen sifting through the burnt-down remains in the second sketch appear small, lost, and helpless.[6]

This book examines more closely the relationship between the »colossal [ancient Egyptian] statues« (ibid.) and the Victorians as well as the Edwardians. More precisely, I analyse the way in which archaeology was popularly received in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and show how this popular reception of archaeology can be read as mirroring contemporary discourses regarding the formation of identity at a time characterised by an underlying feeling of alienation.[7] For this purpose, I present a

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5   The association with Dante's *Inferno* evoked here brings to mind underlying issues of guilt in connection with the British imperial behaviour, both in regard to the colonised people and their ancient relics, which is discussed in Chapter 7.

6   Interestingly, especially in the second sketch the image's foreground looks like a jungle and is reminiscent of the overgrown ancient remains of past civilisation (e.g., those of the vacant palaces of the Maya) and thus again can be seen as representing the powers of degeneration and decline, to which even the greatest empire is eventually not immune.

7   In this context, the *Illustrated London News* plays a major role inasmuch as it can be seen as indicative of the popularity of archaeology at the time. This is the case for two reasons: First of all, the newspaper was widely read and representative of contemporary concerns, as emphasised by its self-conception as the »biography of the world since 1842« (*Illustrated London News*, Special Number, May 13, 1967: n. pag.) (cf. also Christoph Hibbert (1975) The Illustrated London News' *Social History of Victorian Britain*; Virginia McKendry (1994) »*The Illustrated London News* and the Invention of Tradition«, and Peter W. Sinnema (1998) *Dynamics of the Pictured Page: Representing the Nation in* The Illustrated London News): »[I]n the midst of illiteracy and poverty – one in ten of the population were paupers – printer, bookseller, and newsagent Herbert Ingram had realised his life's ambition. At 31, he was creator of a new dimension in news gathering, architect of a revolution in journalism, and founder and

reading of popular archaeology based on interdisciplinary approaches to the topic, which situates this book within the topical study of memory research, the popularisation of knowledge, popular culture in general, and popular history with its related fields in particular.[8]

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owner of the world's first illustrated weekly newspaper, *The Illustrated London News*. It was the tombstone of pioneer reporting and the cradle of modern journalism. In the history of his idea can be read a biography of the world since 1842.« (*Illustrated London News*, Special Number, May 13, 1967: n. pag.) Second, the *Illustrated London News* reported regularly on archaeological and antiquarian activities both at home and abroad. From January 28, 1865, to August 29, 1874, the column »Archæology of the Month« informed the readership about the latest archaeological news. In addition, all the major archaeological discoveries of the time were discussed and illustrated separately, as were the reports on the many minor excavations undertaken in Britain that mainly concentrated on Roman archaeology. In all these cases, the illustrations presented in the paper can be seen as particularly productive in regard to the popularisation of the subject (cf. Fischer 2007). Apart from the *Illustrated London News*, other contemporary newspapers and magazines also widely reported on and discussed archaeology (cf. PART II). Cf. also Leonard de Vries (1979) *History as Hot News 1865-1897: The Late Nineteenth Century World as Seen Through the Eyes of* The Illustrated London News *and* The Graphic.

8   For an overview of the different approaches, cf.: Astrid Erll (2006) *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen*; Barbara Korte and Sylvia Paletschek (2009) »Geschichte in Populären Medien und Genres: Vom Historischen Roman Zum Computerspiel«. *History Goes Pop. Zur Repräsentation von Geschichte in populären Medien und Genres*. Eds. Barbara Korte and Sylvia Paletschek: 9-20; Hans-Joachim Gehrke and Miriam Sénécheau (2010) »Einleitung« *Geschichte, Archäologie, Öffentlichkeit. Für einen neuen Dialog zwischen Wissenschaft und Medien*. Eds. Hans-Joachim Gehrke and Miriam Sénécheau: 9-30; Andreas Daum (2002) *Wissenspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert. Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit 1848-1914*: 14-31; Angela Schwarz (1999) *Der Schlüssel zur Modernen Welt. Wissenschaftspopularisierung in Großbritannien und Deutschland im Übergang zur Moderne (ca. 1870-1914)*: 38-47 and 95-102; Carsten Kretschmann (2003) *Wissenspopularisierung. Konzepte der Wissensverbreitung im Wandel*: 7-21; DFG Research Group 875 »Historische Lebenswelten in populären Wissenskulturen

Although these approaches have been researched internationally, there have been different country-specific emphases (cf. Korte/Paletschek 2009: 11). Studies that have dealt with the reception of (popular) archaeology in Britain have focused on either a specific type of archaeology or aspect of archaeology, for example the reception of Egyptian archaeology, or a specific medium, such as the reception of archaeology in literature.[9] Other more general research on the topic concentrates on the public reception of archaeology and history in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[10] The majority of studies on popular archaeology have been undertaken by archaeologists,[11] while only a few studies have dealt with the relevance of the popular reception of archaeology in regard to Victorian and Edwardian British culture.[12] So far, there has been no extensive and comparative study of the discursive interrelation of archaeology and British literature and culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The present book aims to close this research gap by analysing the reception of different archaeologies, namely Greek, Egyptian, and Zimbabwean, on the basis of a large text corpus comprising both fictional and factual contemporary texts.

Against and embedded within the historical background and context of Victorian and Edwardian times,[13] I will analyse various popular texts and

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9   Cf., for example, Shawn Malley (1996b), (2004), and (2012), who focuses on the reception of Assyrian archaeology in the Victorian press, while John Hines (2004) offers an exemplary analysis of the reception of archaeology in Medieval, Renaissance, and Victorian literature. For a discussion of the state of research regarding Greek, Egyptian, and Zimbabwean archaeology, cf. also Chapters 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4.

10 Cf. Gehrke/Sénécheau 2010: 10.

11 Cf. Browne (1991, 1993); Wallace (2004); Day (1997); Hudson (1981); Levine (1986); Gehrke/Sénécheau (2010); Samida (2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, and 2011d).

12 Cf. Malley (1997a, 1997b, 2004, and 2012); Daly (1999a); Korte (2000a) and (2000b); cf. also Chapter 3.

13 Although I will look at the popular representation of archaeology from the beginning of the nineteenth century to 1914, the focus will be on cultural texts and practices from 1850 to 1914.

practices[14] of the time dealing with archaeology. These texts and practices include both fictional and factual works such as novels and short stories, newspaper and magazine articles, and excavation reports as well as shows, spectacles, and exhibitions. Using a New Historical approach as its major framework, this book aims to show in what way archaeological texts and practices are both products and producers of their contemporary culture. Following Stephen Greenblatt, I have chosen a text corpus including various kinds of texts, regardless of their status concerning what used to be considered ›high‹ or ›low‹ literature:[15]

»In the analysis of the larger cultural field, canonical works of art are brought into relation not only with works judged as minor, but also with texts that are not by anyone's standard literary. The conjunction can produce almost surrealist wonder at the revelation of an unanticipated aesthetic dimension in objects without pretensions to the aesthetic. It can suggest hidden links between high cultural texts, apparently detached from any direct engagement with their immediate surroundings, and texts very much in and of their world, such as documents of social control or political subversion. It can weaken the primacy of classic works of art in relation to other competing or surrounding textual traces from the past. Or, alternatively, it can highlight the process by which such works achieve both prominence and a certain partial independence.« (Gallagher/Greenblatt 2000: 11)

In this context, Louis Althusser's concept of ideology as »represent[ing] the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence« (Althusser 2006: 338) is especially relevant:

»Ideology for Althusser is a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to constitute human beings as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to dominant relations of production in a society. As a term, it covers all the various political modalities of such relations,

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14 For a definition of my understanding of popular text and practices, please see below. For a discussion of popular practices at the time, including exhibitions, shows, spectacles, panoramas, and dioramas, cf. Richard D. Altick's (1978) *The Shows of London*.

15 For a discussion of ›high‹ versus ›low‹ literature and culture, also cf. below.

from an identification with the dominant power to an oppositional stance towards it.« (Eagleton 1991: 18)

Consequently, in order to critically approach a text one has to deconstruct it and read it in regard to both what is present *and* absent. Interpreting Marx, Althusser introduces what he terms a »symptomatic reading« of a text: Althusser »called this method 'symptomatic reading', because it involved reading texts in a similar way to that in which psychoanalysts read the symptoms of their patients, namely for a meaning of which the patients – or the texts' authors, in Althusser's case – are unconscious« (Ferretter 2006: 51). Althusser's disciple Pierre Macherey elaborates this approach in his book *A Theory of Literary Production* (1978) by emphasising that

»[w]e must show a sort of splitting within the work: this division is its unconscious, in so far as it possesses one – the unconscious which is history, the play of history beyond its edges, encroaching on those edges: this is why it is possible to trace the path which leads from the haunted work to that which haunts it. Once again, it is not a question of redoubling the work with an unconscious, but a question of revealing in the very gesture of expression that which is not. Then, the reverse side of what is written will be history itself.« (Macherey 1978: 94)

In order to approach a text critically it is therefore necessary to reveal what Macherey refers to as the ›unconscious of the work‹ (cf. ibid.: 92): »The task of a fully competent critical practice is not to make a whisper audible, nor to complete what the text leaves unsaid, but to produce a new knowledge of the text: one that explains the ideological necessity of its silence, its absence, its structuring incompleteness – the *staging* of that which it cannot speak.« (Storey 2006: 60) In this process it is crucial to understand »what the work is compelled to say in order to say what it wants to say« (Macherey 1978: 94). I will use Macherey's approach to show how the popular reception of archaeology in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be seen as disclosing underlying collective concerns.

Drawing on the cultural theorist Raymond Williams, who defines culture as comprising *cultural practices* and *cultural texts*,[16] I take a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of ›culture‹ as the basis of my work:

»Cultural history must be more than the sum of the particular histories, for it is with the relations between them, the particular forms of the whole organization, that it is especially concerned. I would then define the theory of culture as the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life. The analysis of culture is the attempt to discover the nature of the organization which is the complex of these relationships.« (Williams 2006: 35)

In order to do justice to this understanding of culture, I use an approach of cultural studies that is based on the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's concept of the »compromise equilibrium« (Gramsci 2006: 86). Unlike other cultural studies approaches that conceive popular culture as either imposed on the passively consuming masses by the ruling classes for means of manipulation[17] or as an authentic ›folk‹ culture originating with the ›people‹,[18] Gramscian cultural studies sees popular culture as a dynamic field characterised by the continuous underlying struggle between different forces:

»Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed – in other words, that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic corporate kind. But there is also no doubt that such sacrifices and such compromise cannot touch the essential; for though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive nucleus of economic activity.« (Ibid.: 86)

What Gramsci refers to as »hegemony« (ibid.) can thus be understood as a condition in which despite a particular dominant structure a society is still

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16 As examples of popular cultural practices, Storey names the seaside holiday, Christmas, and youth subcultures, while he refers to soap opera, pop music, and comics as examples of popular cultural texts (cf. Storey 2001: 2).

17 This is best known from the Frankfurt School, prominently represented by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

18 Cf., e.g., Raymond Williams (1958) »Culture is Ordinary«.

characterised by a certain degree of consent. Gramscian cultural studies conceives popular culture as made by the people »from the repertoire of commodities supplied by the culture industries« (Storey 2008: 52):

»The field of popular culture is structured by the attempt of the ruling classes to win hegemony and by forms of oppositions to this endeavour. As such, it consists not simply of an imposed mass culture that is coincident with dominant ideology, nor simply of spontaneously oppositional cultures, but is rather an area of negotiation between the two within which – in different particular types of popular culture – dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural and ideological values and elements are ›mixed‹ in different permutations.« (Bennett 2006: 96)

This view thus sees the cultural field as characterised by a dynamic struggle for meaning between the different forces in which the result in the form of popular culture is continuously renegotiated. That this process is determined by the specific historical context is underlined by the diachronic change in the status of a certain culture, as pointed out by Storey:

»The process is historical (labelled popular culture one moment, and another kind of culture the next), but it is also synchronic (moving between resistance and incorporation at any given historical moment). For instance, the seaside holiday began as an aristocratic event and within 100 years it had become an example of popular culture.« (Storey 2006: 8)

Gramscian cultural studies thus underlines how what is conceived as popular culture at a certain point in time essentially varies. This is also true of the discourse of archaeology, which, as will be shown in Chapter 3, developed from a predominantly aristocratic occupation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into a popular discourse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the following analysis I want to use a Gramscian approach to popular culture insofar as I understand popular archaeology as the product of a dynamic and conflicting process between different forces at a certain point in time. Closely connected to this and on the basis of theories of the popularisation of knowledge, I further see the emergence of a popular archaeological discourse in the nineteenth century as a complex and recip-

rocal interaction between various agents,[19] as programmatically formulated by Terry Shinn and Richard Whitley in *Expository Science* (1985):

»Alternative approaches to the study of the sciences […] imply a richer and more sophisticated view of the popularisation process and its consequences for intellectual developments in different scientific fields. In this latter view, the dissemination of particular results and ideas to non-scientific publics is a more complex phenomenon, involving a variety of actors and audiences, that impinges upon the research process and cannot be totally isolated from it. Furthermore, the expansion and specialisation of scientific research in the past 200 or so years has resulted in many scientists popularising their work to other groups of scientists as well as to non-scientists – for a variety of purposes – so that the term has to be broadened beyond the simple traditional use.« (Whitley 1985: 4)[20]

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19 These may include *inter alia* professionals, laymen, and the state.

20 This approach essentially differs from earlier models of the popularisation of knowledge in which the popularisers of knowledge, the professionals, were seen as responsible for the targeted production and distribution of knowledge, while the recipients, the lay masses, only passively consumed this processed knowledge. Due to its distinct hierarchical structure, Kretschmann refers to this earlier concept as a process of hierarchical knowledge transfer (cf. Kretschmann 2003: 9), conceiving producers and recipients in terms of active and passive entities. This is underscored by the assumed knowledge gap between the producers and recipients of knowledge, in that the producers of popular knowledge are seen as having an immense head start over the recipients with regard to knowledge. Since this approach to the popularisation of knowledge essentially denied any reciprocal exchange between producer and recipient, it is also referred to as a ›top-down notion‹ of popular science (cf. Topham 1998: 261) or a ›diffusionist model‹ (cf. Daum 2002: 27). Geoffrey N. Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth (2004) introduced the so-called ›conduit model‹ as a sophisticated version of the diffusionist model in regard to the popularisation of science in periodicals: »According to this model, each periodical fashions its response to science in the light of an intended readership.« (Cantor/Shuttlewort 2004: 4) For a discussion of the different approaches to the popularisation of knowledge, see Andreas Daum (2002) *Wissenspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert. Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit 1848-1914*: 14-31; Angela Schwarz (1999) *Der Schlüssel zur Modernen Welt. Wis-*

Following Carsten Kretschmann, who draws on Andreas Daum in understanding the popularisation of knowledge as a transformational process that eventually creates a new discourse (Kretschmann 2003: 15),[21] I consider the popularisation of archaeology as an emerging discourse that developed as a (collective) *reflex* to the drastic changes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, affecting the different social classes in specific ways. Accordingly, I see the popular archaeological discourse of the time developing in a transformational and creative process as the result of a hegemonic struggle in the Gramscian sense between the different classes. It is crucial to note, however, that against this background popularisation must not be understood solely as a simplification process in regard to a certain knowledge, since popularisation constantly creates new discourses by including additional material provided and stimulated by the audience and the different media used for its transportation (cf. Ruchatz 2009: 102-103).

Combining this transformative and creative concept of the popularisation of knowledge with the Gramscian understanding of popular culture, I regard the popularisation of archaeology in the period under investigation as a heterogeneous and dynamic (cf. Kretschmann 2003: 21) process that concerned society as a whole and was determined by contemporary collective needs (cf. Korte/Paletschek 2009: 14). Consequently, popular archaeology in Victorian and Edwardian times can be conceptualised as a broad phenomenon. Within this broad reception of archaeology I understand the popular archaeological discourse as constituted by many different popular receptions of archaeology, that is, different archaeologies that can eventually be traced back to distinct underlying collective social concerns. Draw-

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senschaftspopularisierung in Großbritannien und Deutschland im Übergang zur Moderne (ca. 1870-1914): 38-47 and 95-102; Carsten Kretschmann (2003) *Wissenspopularisierung. Konzepte der Wissensverbreitung im Wandel*: 7-21; Geoffrey N. Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth (2004) *Science Serialized: Representation of the Sciences in Nineteenth-century Periodicals*: 1-16.

21 Cf. also Korte and Paletschek: »In the various formats provided by the media, knowledge is not only conveyed and circulated but also always construed in a certain way. They are hence not only means of representation but also of knowledge production. Enquiry into the means and possibilities of representation of various media and genres thus proves to be essential for the study of historical culture(s).« (Korte/Paletschek 2009: 15, translation mine)

ing on a postmodern approach to cultural studies, which assumes that a differentiation between ›high‹ and ›low‹ culture is no longer possible, I read popular archaeology as an inclusive culture in which concepts of ›high‹ and ›low‹ culture are redundant due to their overlappings and their blurring of boundaries. Thus, my definition of popular archaeology is that of an inclusive and heterogeneous cultural field characterised by the Gramscian struggle for a »compromise equilibrium« (Gramsci 2006: 86).

On the basis of these theoretical assumptions, I argue that in its emergence as a discourse of the spatial and temporal ›other‹ popular archaeology functioned as an initially more or less undescribed parallel discourse to Victorian and Edwardian society and essentially lacked any structural predeterminations. This mirrors the character of archaeological fragments, which due to their decontextualisation are essentially ambivalent, indefinite, and arbitrarily arrangeable. From a structuralist point of view, this lack of structure necessarily entailed the absence of meaning. In order to create meaning, it was necessary to construct structure within this apparently blank archaeological space[22] by defining concepts in relation to each other through a series of articulatory practices. In this process of creating structure, however, meaning remained essentially ambivalent and indistinct. This is reflected in the unstable and floating relations and functions assumed and formed by concepts such as the familiar versus the unfamiliar, materiality versus spirituality, fact versus fiction, and madness versus sanity. By analysing the different representations of archaeology, I show how dominant Victorian and Edwardian concepts and assumptions were being deconstructed, challenged, and rearticulated in the formation of a popular archaeological discourse, which revealed in turn the social construction of reality in general (Berger/Luckmann 1966) and furthermore of concepts such as past/memory (Halbwachs 1950; Jan Assmann 1992; Aleida Assmann 1999), identity/alterity (Fludernik/Gehrke 1999; Storey 2003), gender/sex (Butler 1990), and race (Said 1978) in particular. At the same time, the unstable and floating character of identities within that archaeological space further emphasise the dependence of individual memory/identity on collective social frames of reference (Halbwachs 1925;

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22 In the following I use the term ›archaeological space‹ synonymously with the archaeological discourse, which I define as including everything that has ever been thought, said and done in connection with archaeology.

Jan Assmann 1992; Aleida Assmann 1999). Without these social frames of reference, individual identity becomes essentially ambivalent and indefinite. Drawing on a model of the formation and performance of cultural identity through a complex interaction of memory, desire, and consumption presented by the cultural theorist John Storey (2003), I demonstrate how the contemporary popular discourse of archaeology in the Victorian and Edwardian Age reflected and (re)negotiated issues of individual and collective identity. I argue that the process of developing a popular archaeology as a space initially determined by ambivalence and indefiniteness was both fascinating and disturbing for contemporaries, since it essentially involved the continuous (re)creation and (re)definition of identit(y)(ies). At a time of profound sociocultural changes, which were essentially experienced as an alienation of the individual from a former more organic and holistic self, this parallel discourse of popular archaeology thus functioned as a space in which concepts of identity could be playfully (re)discovered, (re)negotiated, and (re)invented.

This further means that to a certain extent popular archaeology also always functioned as a projection surface for contemporary sociocultural concerns that were imported, transformed, and at times abandoned within the context of the parallel archaeological discourse. On this basis, and in analogy to major archetypical Victorian myths, I identify four dominant discursive threads in regard to the popular reception of archaeology, which I refer to in the following as (1) the *Frankenstein Discourse*, (2) the *Dracula Discourse*, (3) the *Jekyll and Hyde Discourse*, and (4) the *Sherlock Holmes Discourse*. Although manifested differently in cultural texts and practices dealing with the individual archaeologies, these four discourses can be seen as underlying the archaeological space in general with their prime occupation of negotiating different notions of identity and alterity. In particular, the major themes of the four discourses are the following: (1) *Frankenstein Discourse*: creation, origin, and belonging; (2) *Dracula Discourse*: invasion and inversion/subversion of identity, in particular in regard to gender roles; (3) *Jekyll and Hyde Discourse*: ambivalence and subversion of identity, double identities, and double standards; (4) *Sherlock Holmes Discourse*: (re)creation, invention, and narration of past identity. Characteristically, the ›protagonists‹ of these four discourses are all to a certain extent outcasts of society who commute between (the) inner and outer sphere(s) of the latter. Through their amorphous and floating iden-

tities, Victor Frankenstein and his creature, Count Dracula, Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde, and Sherlock Holmes[23] reflect the ambivalence of the archaeological space, thus underlining the constructiveness and instability of concepts of identity/alterity and what Hans-Joachim Gehrke describes as follows:

»As hard as societies, governments, associations, and other groups tried to achieve a ›clean‹ separation of identities and alterities and however many methods they applied to this endeavour, in pure and structural violence, in the ›production‹ of pasts and worlds of images – in the end they did not succeed. Oftentimes, it was art and literature that held things open at least in the *imaginaire* and made the other visible, also in the self.« (Gehrke 2004: 18, translation mine)

At the same time, the four discourses underscore the omnipresent feeling of alienation and insecurity characteristic of the time. It is for this reason that the four discourses prove so productive in regard to the study of popular archaeology in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. By analysing the popular reception of archaeology in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain, I show how, at a time of profound and multiple changes, any sense of (collective) identity as such was deeply disturbed and needed to be renegotiated and re-established.

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23 Although both Sherlock Holmes and Victor Frankenstein at first do not seem to fulfil the function of the outcast as much as Frankenstein's creature, Count Dracula, and Mr Hyde, their occupation turns them into eccentrics that commute between different spheres (within society and beyond), which is also reflected in their identities.