

Knowledgeable Agents: Towards an Interpretation of a Newly Excavated Ritual Space at Veherabindayaya in the Village Galpaya of Ratnapura District

Raj Somadeva ¹

Interpretation of unfamiliarity is essentially correlates with complex philosophical insights. Familiarity is on one hand, the way that we understand the world we live and on the other hand it communicates our own judgments imposed upon the perceived world around us. As other scientists who are constantly questioning the world, archaeologists are prone to be dealt with unfamiliarity in the process of decoding the past. Generally archaeologist's interpretation of the past is based on the observations on regularities generated by the systems, both natural and cultural. Regularities shown by the material residues are tangible and therefore, the behavioral regime associated with those material entities is knowable. This general notion in the interpretative and theoretical archaeology allows 'systems' to dominate in the past whilst eclipsing the role of the individual contribution in the past. The concept of 'human agency' in the archaeological interpretation became prominent in the 1980's in order to address this theoretical caveat. This article seeks to evaluate the contribution of human agency to archaeological interpretation and attempts to search for a theoretical and methodological common ground for further applications. The discussion is based on a recently excavated archaeological feature in the hinterland of Southern Sri Lanka.

Key words: post-processual archaeology, phenomenology, cognitive archaeology, archaeological theory

¹ Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology
Email: - rajsomadeva@yahoo.co.in

RASSL 3rd Research Conference March 27th & 28th 2009