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Archaeology as a Tool of Civic Engagement



Each summary is searchable by environmental topic, and describes the focus of the evaluation, data collection methods, and key findings and recommendations.

The George Wright Society: <http://www.georgewright.org/>

The "Forum" Journal 2002, Volume 19, Number 4, *Civic Engagement at Sites of Conscience* (Guest Editor: Martin Blatt), is available here for free downloading.

Articles include

Introduction: The National Park Service and Civic Engagement (Martin Blatt).

Interpreting Slavery and Civil Rights at Fort Sumter (John Tucker).

Frankly, Scarlett, We Do Give a Damn: The Making of a New National Park (Laura Gates).

Civic Engagement with the Community at Washita Battlefield National Historic Site (Sarah Craighead).

The National Park Service: Groveling Sycophant or Social Conscience? Telling the Story of Mountains, Valley, and Barbed Wire at Manzanar National Historic Site (Frank Hays).

Activating the Past for Civic Action: the International Coalition of Historic Sites of Conscience (Liz Sevcenko).

Dialogue Between Continents: Civic Engagement and the Gulag Museum at Perm-36, Russia (Louis P. Hutchins and Gay E. Vietzke).

International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/>, accessed September 29, 2005.

This site interprets history through historic sites that stimulate dialogue on pressing social issues and promote humanitarian and democratic values. It also shares opportunities for public involvement in issues raised at the sites.

National Park Service Civic Engagement website

<http://www.nps.gov/civic/index.html>, accessed September 29, 2005.

National Park Service Community Tool Box

<http://www.nps.gov/civic/resources/toolbox.html>, accessed September 29, 2005.

Learn about working in and with communities to accomplish shared goals with the Community Tool Box developed by the Northeast Region's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program.

The Public Benefits of Archaeology (National Park Service)

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/PUBLIC/benefits/index.htm>, accessed September 29, 2005.

Highlights various publics and how they may benefit from archaeology.

Chapter 2

History, Justice, and Reconciliation

Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh

In *The Drowned and the Saved*, his last book before his suicide in 1987, Holocaust survivor Primo Levi begins by writing about the power of history. Levi tells us how the SS soldiers taunted the Lagers, concentration camp prisoners, by saying that the history of the Holocaust would be the Nazis' to tell. "However this war may end, we have won the war against you," the soldiers would say. "None of you will be left to bear witness, but even if someone were to survive, the world will not believe him. There will perhaps be suspicions, discussions, research by historians, but there will be no certainties, because we will destroy the evidence together with you" (Levi 1988:11).

When the war was going well for Germany the Nazis showed little concern about the evidence they left behind; however, toward the fall of 1944, when victory became less sure, the Nazis began destroying records, razing crematoria and gas chambers, and forcing the Lagers to dig up any buried victims and burn them on open pyres (Levi 1988:12-13). As Allied forces closed in on the German empire in 1945 and defeat became inevitable, rather than freeing the Lagers, the Nazis continued their brutal campaign of genocide unabated. The Nazis transferred prisoners, seemingly without reason, forcing them to walk hundreds of miles day and night with little food, water, clothing, or shelter. But Levi knew that a perverse logic fueled this violence. "It did not matter that

they [the Lagers] might die along the way; what really mattered was that they should not tell their story," he (1988:14) writes. The point was to erase the possibility of history.

During moments of extreme violence, much is lost as part of the assault on human life and dignity. The past itself becomes a form of propaganda, an illusion of truth, and a political tool because, as Bettina Arnold (1999:1) has written, "the past legitimates the present." How societies understand the past is thus manipulated to justify violence, the politics of appropriation, and genocide. Truth is also a victim of violence and the regimes of power that seek to bend societies to their own malevolent ends. Few, perhaps, have explained this phenomenon better than George Orwell, who described in 1984 the repercussions of a Ministry of Truth that could convince the masses that "War is Peace," "Freedom is Slavery," and "Ignorance is Strength." And of course any notion of justice is lost immediately in a genocide or massacre, which by definition is haphazard, gratuitous, and excessively cruel.

If history and its attendant truths were without force in society, then governments would care little about their conditions. The scores of studies over the last several decades that document the manipulation of the past—for the better and worse—are persuasive evidence that the past is not inconsequential, because it is used to shape people's identities and their perceptions of others (Abu el-Haj 1998; Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Herzfeld 1991; Kammen 1991; Meskell 1998; Plumb 1970; Trigger 1984). The battle between Druids and English authorities over Stonehenge, the debate over the Enola Gay and the atomic bombing of Japan, and the struggle over the Ancient One from Kennewick are just several recent examples to show that controversies putatively about the past are in fact often about control and power in the present (Bender 1998; Linenthal and Engelhardt 1996; Thomas 2000).

Despite the best efforts of the Nazis, some physical traces of the Holocaust endure; some victims survived to tell their tale (Levi 1985; Milton 1991; Wiesel 1982). The question remains, however, after any major conflict, how the victims can receive compensation and the whole society restore a sense of equilibrium. When an episode or era of violence was extreme,

the restitution of money or objects or land may not be enough. How can we sufficiently punish someone who may have killed thousands? How can we repay someone who has been tortured, who lost her entire family, her home, her community? Instead of wanting things, people often want to reclaim the past, to re-establish the truth of what happened. When a torn society does not fully and honestly confront its past, when the truth about the past remains buried and obscured, the perpetrators of violence in a very real sense remain triumphant. When neo-Nazis deny the Holocaust, they aim to achieve the goals of history's erasure embarked upon by their nefarious predecessors (Lipstadt 1993).

In this chapter, I explore the philosophical basis of claiming history is fundamental to reconciliation, survey the role of archaeology in discerning the truth in the violent past, and argue that archaeologists should play an active role in the pursuit of justice. I contend that an essential aspect in the search for justice is the search for the past. Before communities and individuals can resolve conflict, they must first confront what has come to pass. The role of history in social justice has been widely recognized in Truth and Reconciliation Commissions created throughout the world—to uncover the past to achieve atonement and move society forward (Hayner 1994). Over the last decade, archaeology too has contributed to the process of confronting the traumas caused by violence and dislocation—unearthing mass graves in Rwanda, revealing the lives of Holocaust victims in Eastern Europe, searching for the remains of American soldiers lost in Vietnam. These investigations sometimes involve legal prosecution, but more often they are a kind of restorative justice that aspires to rehabilitate an entire society. This chapter looks at the ways in which archaeologists have been—and can become still more—civically engaged in the search for reconciliation and social justice.

A Question of Justice

The relationship between personal stories and justice can be seen most clearly in South Africa's extraordinary Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). After decades of terrible violence, the

post-apartheid government concluded that it could best heal its wounds through an open and transparent accounting of the past. The TRC's chair, Desmond Tutu (1999:20), understood that Nuremberg-like trials would be untenable for South Africans because, unlike the Allied victors after World War II, "neither side could impose victor's justice because neither side won a decisive victory." The institutionalized violence of apartheid meant that punishments could not focus on just a few individuals. Yet the victims could not forget or forgive, and a national amnesia would "in effect be to victimize the victims of apartheid a second time around" (Tutu 1999:29). The TRC instead sought to "rehabilitate and affirm the dignity and personhood of those who for so long had been silenced, and had been turned into anonymous, marginalized ones" (Tutu 1999:30).

Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (2004:27) are partly correct to say that the TRC was "a complicated political gamble in which justice is traded for truth," but they also miss the point that the truth revealed is itself a powerful form of justice. Truth *versus* justice is a false dichotomy (Rotberg and Thompson 2000). As several observers have noted, "Properly understood, a just and moral appraisal of the past is the true life-blood of reconciliation" (Asmal et al. 1997:14). Tutu suggests that with this approach justice is withheld principally if justice is conceived of as *retributive*. But this was unappealing for South Africans because then "the wronged party is really the state, something impersonal, which has little consideration for the real victims and almost none for the perpetrator" (Tutu 1999:54). The TRC instead sought a *restorative* justice that is deeply concerned with "the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator" (Tutu 1999:54). Although the proceedings of the TRC were at times uneven, it is clear from the twenty-one thousand statements from victims that the act of testifying publicly, revealing one's story, and ultimately trying to understand the truth, can lead to redemption (Krog 1998; Meredith 1999).

What, after all, would truly constitute a retributive justice after such horrid events? This is a question that is asked after

every episode of terrifying violence, of genocide. The quick trial and hanging of Adolf Eichmann, who administered the deaths of millions during the Holocaust, could be interpreted as a charade of justice, not its realization (Arendt 2004:99 [1963]). Scholar Mona Sue Weissmark (2004:6)—whose family was killed in the Holocaust—wrote that watching Eichmann's trial as a young girl revealed retributive justice to be but fleeting: "Legal punishment gave me a brief satisfaction, but in the end my sense of justice was not fully appeased. Legal justice could not wipe away the stain of injustice as I experienced it, because more than legal or material violations were involved. The injustices of the Holocaust were of such magnitude and scale that the agencies of law seemed inadequate to address the wrongdoings." Harold Kaplan (1994:x) similarly remarked, "The accused at Nuremberg were more than slightly comic. The very size of their crimes reduced them and added a pain to memory that we hardly expected."

The TRC emphasized the importance of narratives and stories in helping victims move beyond sorrowful pasts. Torture and other modes of social violence imperil not only victims' dignity and autonomy but also their ability to articulate their sufferings. Any balancing of justice must therefore also be a restoration of language. Justice is an ongoing process and goes beyond storytelling—but giving voice to the voiceless is fundamental to reconciliation. "Justice requires a balancing (an accounting), that something taken from the victim of the injustice must be restored, be given back," Teresa Godwin Phelps (2004:123) has suggested. "The balancing that truth reports afford victims begins to put the world back in order. The victims retrieve the ability to speak and shape their own stories."

Reconciliation does not require one truth to which everyone must subscribe, nor does reconciliation, if achieved, mean that the anguished past should be forgotten. Instead, the multivocality that emerges from TRCs is a process of engaging with the past and the memories in the present that remain (Rotberg 2000:6). History in this form is a dialogue that critically approaches varying versions of the past while continually aspiring to uncover the truth. For some, the notion of multivocality in archaeological

research contradicts the notion of "the truth." It may seem that if all voices must be heard, then they must all be interpreted as equal. However, while all narratives should be given *equal consideration*, they should not necessarily all be given *equal weight*. Framed as standpoint theory, this kind of multivocality requires scientific and historical "practice to be reconstructed so that it incorporates a requirement to assess knowledge claims from a range of standpoints, to discern their silences, limitations, and partialities" (Wylie 1995:271); multivocality in this way is not subjective, but rather "imposes a higher standard of objectivity on the sciences than is embodied in the 'neutrality' scientists hope to achieve by ignoring or excluding considerations of difference and context" (Wylie 1995:271). Allowing for multiple—overlapping and entangled—narratives does not devalue the truth, but in opposite terms often gets us closer to understanding people, events, processes, and structures—the very heart of anthropological analyses. Scholars need to be deeply concerned about what has transpired in the past, the truths of history (see Arnold 2002).

As we will see, some kinds of archaeology, particularly those informed by forensics, explicitly address retributive justice. They seek scientific answers about who committed what violence, where and when. Other archaeological projects, however, have goals that cannot deal with such particulars because of the temporal distance of the events or the moral ambiguities of the violence being studied. These projects, I suggest, are more concerned with a kind of restorative justice, which in Tutu's (1999:54) terms seeks "the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator." Archaeology can work in both ways, but all such endeavors are a form of social justice. These archaeologists are not merely telling stories about the past, but are profoundly concerned about justice in the present. In the same way that environmental justice involves reckoning with the past and resource conservation today, such archaeological projects do not merely want to punish people for mistakes in the past, but also want to see healing and atonement in the here and now.

Archaeologies of Justice and Reconciliation

Archaeology—as defined by behavioralists since the 1970s—aims "to describe and explain the multifarious relationship between human behavior and material culture in all times and places" (Schiffer 1995:ix). While archaeology has long focused on objects, behavioral archaeology has significantly helped shift the discipline toward a broader temporal view (e.g., Rathje and Murphy 1992). This conception of archaeology's unique contribution to the social sciences also underlines the rise of Cultural Resource Management in the 1970s (Green 1998). No longer restricted to King Tut and Cahokia, archaeology could focus on increasingly applied problems such as resource claims, agricultural technology, and economic development (Downum and Price 1999). Strengthening the field's engagement with applied research naturally entails working with the public, the people who benefit from or pay the costs of archaeological study (Jameson 1997). This work essentially means bringing the past into the present, "making archaeology an integral part of a community's heritage" (Shackel 2004:14). An archaeology of reconciliation is an extension of these trends, an attempt to bring resolution in the present based on the study of the past.

Although forensics has been tied to anthropology since the late 1800s, the two fields were not fully synthesized until the 1970s (Crist 2001; Snow 1982). The excavation and analytical methods of forensic archaeology and anthropological archaeology are identical while the goals are clearly distinct: "Evidence is not gathered to uncover the broad patterns of human behavior, but rather to reconstruct the specifics of single events" (Connor and Scott 2001:3). Both kinds of research "seek to protect the physical and spatial integrity of potential evidence and remains" (Haglund 2001:28), but for the forensic archaeologist "the site is the crime scene; the artifacts are the evidence" (Connor and Scott 2001:4).

In 1984 the government of Argentina began to search for those who disappeared during the "dirty war," the state-sponsored illegal and violent campaign against dissident citizens between 1976 and 1983. Forensic anthropology was put to use in

this investigation, which garnered the field worldwide attention (Stover and Ryan 2001). An international group led by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, collaborating with Argentinean archaeologists, discovered important evidence through exhumations that offered physical proof of widespread murder. Following this work, other nations—Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Peru, to name a few—employed forensic science to substantiate legal claims, as in Honduras where archaeological “exhumations and identifications were essential to the initiation and advancement of trials in the Honduran court system” (Haglund 2001:30). The work is often macabre. Archaeologists recovered the remains of close to five hundred human beings in Rwanda only a year after they were murdered in the genocide of 1994 (Haglund et al. 2001). Nightmares haunt the archaeologists, as surely they haunt the survivors of such attacks (Stover and Ryan 2001:22). The work is also important. On December 11, 1981, government forces massacred the villagers of El Mozote in the Republic of El Salvador (Binford 1996). Nearly a decade later, criminal trials proceeded and the victims were exhumed. Archaeologists determined that at least 143 people were killed, 131 of them children under twelve years old; that the bullets were manufactured by the United States government; that at least twenty-four killers took part (Scott 2001). The evidence from the excavations aided the indictment of several El Salvadoran Army officers.

The archaeological study of the El Mozote victims was significant not only for its legal implications. It also revealed the truth of an event that had long been known but could not be openly discussed. The archaeological work in this way directly aided the Commission on the Truth in El Salvador, which was given its mandate in a 1992 peace agreement to investigate “serious acts of violence that have occurred since 1980 and whose impact on society urgently demands that the public should know the truth” (Scott 2001:79).

In an article by Eric Stover and Molly Ryan (2001), which discusses forensic work in Argentina, Guatemala, Iraqi Kurdistan, and the former Yugoslavia, the role of archaeology in bringing reconciliation is made clear. In Argentina, the authors note,

a 1987 law meant that only thirty to fifty top officials could be prosecuted, yet the work of exhumation continued. “With most of the dirty war’s perpetrators now effectively amnestied, why continue to dig up the disappeared?” Stover and Ryan (2001:10) ask. “From a humanitarian perspective, families would finally know the fate of their lost ones and be able to give them a proper burial. There was also the need to set the historical record straight.” In Argentina, archaeologists were able to identify the remains of a young man named Nestor Fonseca; during the exhumation, the man’s widow suddenly showed up, asking to see his body. When she saw his remains, she knelt by the grave for a time, then rose and thanked the archaeologists for their work. In Guatemala, “not just families, but entire villages would come to the exhumation sites. Before the scientists began their work, women from the surrounding villages would kneel next to the grave and pray for the deceased” (Stover and Ryan 2001:23). Explaining such powerful emotions, one of the Guatemalan archaeologists said,

A clandestine grave is not so much hidden as it is officially nonexistent. There is no possibility for the families and their communities to ritualize death, as it is done in any society. The mere existence of these mass graves . . . terrorizes and oppresses the communities which have to live with them. The official exhumation of the victims is the first step toward peace for these communities. It is then that the survivors and victims of this mechanism of terror finally become activists for their rights. (Stover and Ryan 2001:14)

Collective memories of mass murder more distant in time are no less difficult to confront. This is apparent with the Holocaust of World War II, where places such as Dachau remain stigmatized for the past they symbolize (Ryback 1999). Archaeological excavations at Holocaust sites are one way for people to confront the past and recognize the individual victims in an event often only calculated in the millions of deaths. As one archaeologist expressed it at the extermination camp of Chełmno, in Poland, “When you say that 200,000 or 300,000 people were killed here, that doesn’t really say much. . . . For me, when we find a small

toy or a shoe, that represents a living person. Through these small things we re-create the history of people who had dreams and life plans" (Golden 2006:189). Such excavations are thus a way to tell the untold stories of the victims that would otherwise remain buried. Recognizing the humanity of victims is an important goal for such endeavors. As David E. Stannard (1992: xi) suggests in studying holocausts, "We must do what we can to recapture and to try to understand, in human terms, what it was that was crushed, what it was that was butchered. It is not merely enough to acknowledge that much was lost." The excavations at Chelmno further seek to redress the imbalances that resulted from the mass murder. When the victims were killed, they were cremated and put in giant pits; their possessions were sorted through, kept as booty or buried. These remains are recovered and given special honor and respect (Golden 2006:191). Any human remains found are reinterred at a nearby cemetery. People from around the world attend the reburial ceremonies.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on the "contested past" (e.g., Bender 1993; J. Hill 1992; McGuire 2004; Pak 1999; van der Veer 1992), but archaeology also has the potential to quell conflict, to create a common ground (Dongoske et al. 2000). The recent collaboration of some Israeli and Palestinian archaeologists exemplifies the idea of using a shared historical landscape to achieve reconciliation (Scham and Adel 2003); this work exemplifies how even scholars from warring nations can collaborate through an archaeology anchored in goodwill and trust. The "working through" that ultimately transforms contested ground to common ground, Scham and Adel demonstrate, does not entail the construction of a shared and unified historical narrative, but rather a reflexive understanding of the past that embraces multivocality. Heritage in such work is the basis of a restorative justice, embodying Tutu's model of healing breaches, redressing imbalances, and restoring broken relationships.

While archaeology can bring the possibility of resolution at the community level, it can also serve to help individuals find peace. The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), created in 2003, is a joint unit of the United States military; it uses archaeological survey and excavation and forensic anthropology

to seek the recovery of 35,000 people missing from World War II, 8,100 from the Korean War, 1,800 from the Vietnam War, 120 from the Cold War, and 1 from the Gulf War (www.jpac.pacom.mil). Whatever one's political views of these wars might be, the missing soldiers are a continuing emotional strain in the lives of family and friends. From the numerous media reports about the JPAC, it is clear that the discovery and repatriation of these individuals bring a sense of resolution. As one man said about his friend who went missing in Vietnam in 1966, "Not knowing is far worse torture than a funeral" (Bulwa 2005). Similarly the daughter of a CIA pilot who died when she was three weeks old felt that having the remains of her father at last no longer meant she had to suffer as she grieved (Bolt 2005). "I'm not saying goodbye to him, because now I can visit him," she said. "Now I know where he's at forever."

In the context of MIA repatriations, the repatriation of American Indian remains collected over the last century can be understood as a powerful social process of healing for contemporary native descendants. As Rick Hill (1994) noted early in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) debate, since the taking of human remains and sacred objects deeply wounded many communities, the return of those same remains and objects can lead towards genuine reconciliation. "It fell to the living to make it right with the dead," as David Hurst Thomas (2000:215) wrote about the reburial of victims from the infamous Sand Creek Massacre, in which dozens of Cheyenne were slaughtered and collected for museums. It is significant that only fifteen years after NAGPRA, many institutions and archaeologists have come to recognize the historical unbalanced treatment of Native Americans and their heritage and cultural property. Many museum professionals, such as those at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, have radically changed how they view and deal with native peoples, engaging with them collaboratively through new kinds of exhibits, acquisitions, internships, publications, and programs for visiting artists (Preucel et al. 2005; Preucel et al. 2006). The curators suggest that the new way forward for both anthropologists and Native Americans is much like the Native

Hawaiian concept that “out of ‘heaviness’ (*kaumaha*) must come ‘enlightenment’ (*aokanaka*)” (Preucel et al. 2006:186).

Repatriation and reburial have provided specific platforms for anthropologists to work through a kind of restorative justice. NAGPRA, like many Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, was mandated by law. However, I suggest that scholars in North America can go still further, without legal mandates, using archaeology as a form of dialogue about difficult past events. Today many archaeologists are coming to recognize the impact of colonialism on native peoples in North America—and indeed suggest that colonialism, in contrast to “culture contact,” is the proper frame by which discussions of these interactions should take place (Silliman 2005). And still, while archaeologists recognize the deleterious impacts of colonialism, little discussion unfolds about how the legacies of this history continue to be played out, how knowledge of this past might lead to Tutu’s “redressing of imbalances” (e.g., Stein 2005). This is important, as Paul Farmer (2005:129–132) reminds us, because anthropologists are uniquely positioned to not merely document violence, but also reveal the mechanisms of violence. Archaeologists are not just builders of monuments, but they construct knowledge of the past, which is “an instrument that informs our capacity to analyze the present” (Todorov 1996:259).

A handful of archaeologists are already illustrating the possibilities of such an approach. One example is the work being done at Fort Apache in central Arizona, a place marked by conflict and difficult memories (Mahaney and Welch 2002; Welch 2000; Welch et al. 2000a). Built in 1869 by the U.S. government, Fort Apache was a military base, central in the control and subjugation of Apache peoples in the late 1800s. Some Apaches participated in this colonization as scouts for the U.S. Army; other Apaches were active resisters. In the twentieth century portions of the post later became an Indian boarding school, while other parts fell into disuse. However, in the late 1990s, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, in conjunction with archaeologists and cultural preservationists, decided to restore the fort’s grounds and buildings and explicitly use the place to focus on the contentious history, to create a place of reconciliation. The community’s strategy was simple but not easy:

How can Fort Apache be returned to active duty in service to the Apache community? The first step must be to acknowledge that Fort Apache either caused or symbolizes many of the problems and challenges faced by the Apache people, including diminished territory and cultural integrity. Such an acknowledgment will make possible a stepwise reconciliation among Fort Apache’s many stakeholders and a cleansing of the personal and interpersonal wounds caused by the events and the processes of an earlier era. Once individuals and group representatives begin to focus on common ground and shared history and humanity, forgiveness and healing are within reach. (Welch et al. 2000b:5)

More than four thousand people attended the first annual Fort Apache Heritage Reunion on May 20, 2000. The event began with a procession of different tribes, followed by community leaders and government officials. There were songs, dances, and nonviolent historical reenactments. Different reconciliation programs were offered, such as “listening posts” where attendees shared their feelings and remembrances about the fort, which encouraged “Apaches and non-Apaches to confront their ambiguous, even hostile sentiments and to think about the relationship between memories, emotions, and the future” (Welch and Riley 2001:10–11). Although ambitious and hopeful, the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s project is converting “a symbol of oppression and cultural erosion into a powerful symbol of hope, power, and self-determination” (Welch and Riley 2001:10–11). It is too soon to say if this project will achieve its goals of explaining Apache heritage to outsiders, perpetuating Apache heritage for tribal members, and maintaining a forum that honors Apache survival. But whatever the fate of Fort Apache, the White Mountain Apache Tribe is showing us the possibilities of dedicating archaeology to the goals of civic engagement and social justice.

Some Conclusions: The Justice of Things

The study of past violence is closely connected to the pursuit of justice, although few archaeologists often explicitly write about

their labors in this regard. Archaeology, however, cannot contribute equally to all forms of justice.

Political philosophers have largely expressed skepticism about the role of history in distributive justice, which involves questions about how to resolve *present* inequalities, such as the unbalanced distribution of wealth, education, and health care in society. Jeremy Waldron (1992) is one prominent philosopher who contends that historical injustices cannot be fully compensated in the present (see also Lyons 1977; Sher 1980). To begin with, Waldron posits, is the consideration that when we offer recompense to the descendants of people who were wronged long ago, we engage in “counterfactual reasoning,” which involves speculating on what might have happened if certain events had not occurred. That is, to ascertain how to distribute goods today while taking into consideration historical injustices, we would have to somehow calculate what losses people have suffered because of particular wrongs. However, Waldron argues that this line of thinking is fraught with difficulties because it is all but impossible to gauge what *might* have been at any given moment, much less over centuries. Waldron also discusses how modern circumstances may supersede past injustices. Imagine that a well located on a family’s homestead plot was dishonestly appropriated. It seems right to try to return the family’s well as long as there is enough water for everyone. But then, suppose a catastrophic drought comes. It now seems right that everyone must share the well the family formerly held—irrespective of the fact that it was unjustly taken—because otherwise many people will die of thirst. In other words, entitlements to resources shift over time because of changing circumstances and depend on the contexts of their use. Waldron (1992:27) recognizes the importance of symbolic gestures of reparation and that history may spur us to pursue justice in the present, but he writes that “it is the impulse to justice now that should lead the way in this process, not the reparation of something whose wrongness is understood primarily in relation to conditions that no longer obtain.”

Historical considerations have a clearer and stronger role in questions of reparative justice. Within this category are two others, which as discussed throughout this chapter, archaeology

can and should contribute to: retributive justice and restorative justice. Retributive justice involves applying punishment to those who have behaved wrongly. When archaeology is used as a forensic science, it can help uncover who committed what crimes, when, and where. This is the important work that has been done in Argentina, Honduras, Rwanda, El Salvador, and elsewhere to uncover the violence and to gather evidence that can be used in prosecutions. Other archaeological research, such as that used in land and water claims litigation, also falls into this category (e.g., Lilley 2000; Ross 1973). The uncovering of past thefts and violence often has a dual role, however, in part because crimes of such magnitude can never be fully prosecuted in courts. The eye-for-an-eye logic may work for a single murder but turns into a farce of justice when used to prosecute those who commit genocide.

Restorative justice is thus an important form of justice, a way for individuals and communities to seek healing when violence has suffused an entire society, when the magnitude of violence reaches a vast scale. Archaeology here too has played an important role to date, particularly in formal programs such as TRCs and legally mandated programs such as NAGPRA. I want to suggest, however, that archaeologists and historians can play a still greater role in developing projects like those at Fort Apache—projects that explicitly seek to engage in forms of *informal* restorative justice, projects without government sanction or coercive power. One of the key mechanisms of a program of informal restorative justice, I believe, is to realize the truth. The concept of “truth” here is by no means simple. Indeed, the very complexity of past events, their causes and consequences, is vital to address in this mode, as too often regimes of power seek to falsely reduce the truth to neat boundaries of good versus evil, us versus them. But restorative justice, whatever its methods, needs a clear commitment to the ideal of truth—that the past, however messy and complex, really happened and really can be understood. A restorative justice that obscures the truth performs the opposite of its express goal, to foster reconciliation by bringing to light what was previously and perversely hidden in the shadows of people’s lives.

The work of anthropologists can play a particularly important role in addressing one of the shortcomings of formal TRCs,

which involves linking macrolevel and microlevel events, experiences, processes, and structures (Chapman and Ball 2001:7). Researchers can provide insight for such an approach through anthropological methods to reveal hidden truths, but also to show how history itself is constructed and used as a cultural strategy in particular political settings. As Paul Farmer (2005) has written, it is essential to understand the relationship between individuals and the structural violence that surrounds them. He suggests that one of the best ways to demystify organized violence is to start with individual stories, for it is through personal stories that some may “learn to see the connections between personal experience, psychological experience, cognition, and affect on the one hand, and the political economy of brutality on the other” (Farmer 2005:133).

In this approach scholars are neither heroes nor saviors, but only participants who can offer insights given their particular disciplinary training while encouraging the larger community to engage in positive dialogue. Importantly, every culture has its own way of dealing with painful pasts, and restorative justice should not supplant local remedies (Kelsall 2005). However, because violence on the scale of massacres and genocides is so often intercultural, restorative justice approaches reconciliation through dialogue that fosters cross-cultural conversation and understanding. Whether by way of a museum exhibit on American Indian boarding schools or a book on a massacre of American Indians, the study of the traumatic past can be a vital means to pursue informal restorative justice (e.g., Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2007; Hoerig 2002). These public artifacts—museum exhibits or books—are a kind of collective “working through,” a critical historiography that seeks to build or rebuild a sense of community (LaCapra 2001:65).

Projects built around the idea of restorative justice share at least three common features. One feature is that they are *multivocal* without eschewing the truth. More exactly, by incorporating many voices and perspectives, these projects approach the truth from multiple standpoints, instead of one privileged position such as that of the state or ivory tower. In this way history should be constructed not through a celebratory multivocality, but rather

through a critical multivocality in which the truth is constantly being questioned, debated, and desired. Another prominent feature is the way such work is *dialogical*, geared toward cultivating an exchange of knowledge, experiences, and opinions. As noted, dialogue seems the most obvious way to create affirmative interaction among disparate peoples. Because of this too, these conversations need to be democratic—evenhanded, open, and inclusive. A final feature is that they are deeply *historical*, meaning that they are genuinely diachronic, examining change through time from the distant past to the social and political present. This approach requires linking individual stories to structures of power, linking microtruths to macrotruths.

In this chapter I have argued that archaeologists should play an active role in the search for justice, whether participating in the identification of massacre victims, telling the stories of those whose past was erased, or bringing resolution among different people still in conflict. Forensic archaeology is ideally suited to such endeavors, but other kinds of archaeology can become engaged in dealing with a difficult past. I do not suggest that every project must take this approach, but rather I would encourage those who do study a contentious past to consider how their efforts can be used to address and overcome the injustices of the past. In this way Tutu’s notion of restorative justice can be applied most fruitfully to the discipline, a dialogic approach that does not imply scholars must have all the answers. As many have observed, archaeology is inherently a social endeavor and so will be used, sometimes abused, by the people who are affected by the subjects of our studies, our roles as social actors. It is thus not a question of *whether* the material past will be used by society but *how* it will be used—a means to what end.

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Chapter 3

Civic Engagement at Werowocomoco: Reasserting Native Narratives from a Powhatan Place of Power

Martin D. Gallivan and Danielle Moretti-Langholtz

With its historic sites, house museums, and heritage parks presenting the early colonial era through the Civil War, Tidewater Virginia and the broader Chesapeake region are home to a number of places where the public may encounter historical recreations and interpretations of the American past. Every summer tourists flock to Jamestown, Colonial Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, Monticello, Yorktown, and the Civil War battlefields of northern Virginia. In recent years, interpreters at several of these sites have begun to expand their presentations to include discussions of difficult and complex histories. Incorporating such histories can be challenging and often requires a reworking of broader historical narratives.¹

Despite these efforts to reach the public with more inclusive presentations of the past, discussions of the complex and at times discomfiting history of American Indians in the Chesapeake region are generally quite limited. Where this history is included at heritage locations, it is often subsumed within an overarching national narrative of progress toward a pluralistic, democratic American present. This is partly the legacy of a heritage infrastructure built in earlier centuries around the public ownership, preservation, and celebration of houses and landscapes viewed as illustrative of a history in which Native societies presumably disappeared quite early (Thomas 2000).