

Pulling the Threads Together: Issues of Theory and Practice in an Archaeology of the Modern World

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This chapter outlines an approach to an archaeology of the modern world that seeks to identify the major streams in a seemingly disparate history of the past five hundred years. Focusing on the interrelationship of the growth of capitalism, colonisation, urbanisation and industrialisation, I argue for a unified view of the history of the modern era. Drawing on both historical and archaeological studies from a variety of geographical and temporal contexts, the discussion stresses the advantages of an approach that emphasises points of convergence and commonality among the forces that have shaped global history in the modern era. Particular emphasis is placed on the manner in which individual and group materiality interfaced with ecologies of capitalism, colonialism, urbanism and industrialisation in shaping and reshaping modernity.

INTRODUCTION

In the abstract, it would seem easy to find common ground among a group of practitioners whose intellectual focus is the archaeology of the last five hundred years. Whether your interest is industry, or colonialism or the transformation of a medieval, feudal world into something distinctly post-medieval and modern, there is no denying that these events are part of a larger historical tapestry. Yet as the three days of the *Crossing Paths or Sharing Tracks?* conference and this subsequent volume have shown, differences of tradition, educational background and point of entry have produced a somewhat fractured and eclectic intellectual landscape that makes the navigation of this complex period all the more challenging. Some of these differences are intellectual and reflect contrasting interests.¹ Some are very practical, and here I am talking about differences in funding and practice. In the United States, the division between university-based archaeologists and those employed primarily in cultural resource management (CRM) has narrowed significantly over the past twenty years due in large measure to a combination of funding realities and the growing interest in heritage and memory as topics of theoretical significance.² Most archaeology carried out in the United States is CRM-based research, but the character of the work has changed. Much of the work remains compliance-related, that is, normally triggered by commercial development or large federally or state-funded projects. There has also been an expansion of heritage-

based research that is linked to tourism, development in national parks, or research funded by Tribal Nations who want to insure that their own development does not destroy their own archaeological legacies.

The same kinds of academic/CRM divisions that one sees in the United States exist in both Britain and Ireland, and so it comes as little surprise that issues of funding and identity would weave their way into our discussion of crossing paths. Unfortunately, I don't have much to add to this part of the discussion, except to say that as someone who was Boston's first City Archaeologist and who worked for years in CRM, I understand just how real these differences are and how frustrating they can be in trying to build a career in archaeology. Acknowledging this deficiency at the outset, I see my primary role as trying to identify some of the common threads that have contributed to an era of great historical significance and contemporary relevancy. It is, after all, the period responsible for the world we now inhabit, and for that reason alone it warrants serious interrogation.

My second purpose is to discuss some of the questions being asked, theories being employed and, perhaps most importantly, the practice of archaeology. One of the reasons I have such respect for the archaeology done in Britain and Ireland is that the practices of archaeology – field work, recording, analysis, interpretation – are all equally valued. I am, however, surprised that a particular form of archaeological practice, that of environmental archaeology, is conspicuously absent from most of the papers presented at the meeting. I know that others before me, such as Justine Bayley and David Crossley, have made this point previously with respect to the role of science in industrial archaeology.³ Yet I would still make the point that the biological sides of large-scale processes such as colonialism, industrialisation, urbanisation, the growth of capitalism and the construction of empire are absolutely essential if we are to understand the world we have inherited.⁴ Each of these processes, and they are obviously interlinked temporally, spatially and culturally, involved major movements of people and the reshaping of environments. Industry in particular has had such a dramatic effect on the earth's environment that it has imperilled human society to the point that its impact cannot be ignored by archaeologists interested in its evolution. This is one of the risks of celebrating technology without examining its transformative powers.

SCALES OF ANALYSIS: TECHNOLOGY AND THE MODERN WORLD

Technology and rapid technological change was obviously one of the driving forces of modernity, but industrial technology was just one of many forces that helped to shape the modern world. Military, logistical and transportation technologies enabled European powers to conquer North and South America, the Caribbean, parts of Asia, the eastern Arctic and Africa. Science also played a critical role, especially the celestial and geographical sciences, in shaping the modern world. Here I would point out the development of instruments of navigation. The organisation of military forces and their support is also a critical component of imperial conquest. European empires varied in their approach to conquest and colonisation, but each constructed landscapes that reinforced notions of a natural order. At the pinnacle of this order stood humans, and chief among these of course were Europeans, who had inherited their positions of power and dominance from the

Divine. Communicating this ideology through cultural practices and material form was part of a larger strategy to maintain order in an otherwise fractious moment in history.

There were also economic technologies such as writing, accounting and financial instruments such as credit and currency that also played an important role in the creation of the modern world. Some scholars view these technologies as characteristics of capitalism, and this seems undeniable, but there were pre-capitalist traditions and practices that gave form to the cultural crucible that served as both arena and engine for capitalism's mercurial rise to pre-eminence.⁵ These technologies relied upon several forms of abstraction, the mathematics of commerce, or accounting most centrally, but also beneath it all was the larger process of commoditisation – the transformation of any and all forms of material reality into units that can be measured and assigned an exchange value, to use Marx's term, or a price. All empires employed some form of commodification as an instrument of imperial power, and in this sense it probably was a part of all complex societies. An institution such as slavery, which was so much a part of the ancient world, essentially involved the dehumanisation of an individual or group so that they could be exchanged.

Capitalist commoditisation is, however, different from that of the ancient world in several ways. Even if some of the institutions are similar, the scale and depth of the process under capitalism would eventually become so all-encompassing that it would alter the way many human beings perceived the world. In this sense it is the instrumentality of capitalist commoditisation that is so impressive, yet so frightening. Joined with forces such as religion and the ideologies of individualism and racism, commoditisation represents a process that in my estimation dwarfs that of industry in its impact on transforming the world from a series of interconnected environments, or natures to use Arturo Escobar's term,⁶ into a laundry list of articles for disarticulation and consumption.

DEFINING DISCIPLINES: THEORY AND PRACTICE

How, then, should we set about examining the forces that have shaped the modern world in a manner that addresses their complexity and our own limitations? Well, for starters let us acknowledge some of the challenges that we face as practitioners of the study of this particular past. To begin with, does it help to establish an overarching focus, a meta-narrative that serves as a framework for all that is done in the name of Post-Medieval, Historical and Industrial Archaeologies? From a purely historical perspective the notion of the Modern World has demonstrated some utility for historical archaeology, especially those interested in global processes.⁷ There is also the concept of modernity. Its appeal stems from its connections to the rise of secular nation states with liberal forms of government, global economies that penetrated virtually every corner of the globe, and the large imperial project of constructing and maintaining empires.⁸ Modernity as an analytical construct is not without its problems, however, not the least of which is defining its temporal and geographical boundaries. It also suffers from being overly vague, inseparable from post-modernity, and highly contested when viewed in contrast to specific historical and cultural contexts.⁹ Given the complexities and difficulties surrounding the notion of modernity and serious questions concerning its applicability outside some of the latter stages of the modern period, it seems best to leave any argument in favour of its utility for another time.

Therefore, rather than argue for an all-encompassing meta-narrative of modernity, I will instead focus on three major points: the importance of theory, the centrality of archaeological practice, and the connections between interrelated historical processes of colonialism, industrialisation, urbanisation, the rise of capitalism and the construction of empire. Mercifully, attempting to discuss each of these processes in any detail is well beyond the scope of a chapter such as this. So instead, I will try and focus on some of the connecting threads that link these processes and some of the devices I have found useful in my own work to examine these processes. I apologise at the outset for drawing so heavily upon personal experiences and hope that it will not be too tedious for the reader. In particular, I will discuss both landscape and the broader issue of space as conceptual tools for examining some of the links between large-scale historical processes such as those noted above. I will also discuss some of the benefits and limitations of postcolonial theory, especially as it pertains to the examination of colonial and postcolonial contexts.

I will begin with theory and whether it is essential, whether it adds anything, whether it clouds things, and whether it actually aids archaeological practice. In many respects, I see many of the issues that currently occupy those who attended the conference and probably those who chose not to attend as being *practice versus theory* questions. Archaeology partakes of both theory and practice, and for fields of study such as historical archaeology or industrial archaeology to reach their true potential, a combination of the two is, I believe, preferred. Theory-versus-practice debates tend to polarise the issue and ultimately are not particularly productive. Archaeologists trying to understand arguably the most complex period in human history must be able to know their data – artefact types and the technologies that produced them – as well as the abstract ideas that made them possible. I don't believe you can understand industrial technology without understanding that it is abstract theory that made it possible. You must begin with abstract ideas such as production, uniformity, standardisation and profit before you can realise them as material realities.

From my perspective, you also have to place this kind of technology into an even larger picture in which social, religious and intellectual history are interwoven and linked to the growth of liberal ideas of government and, perhaps most importantly, the acceptance that commerce and the pursuit of profit were not the evils they had been one thousand years ago. That is one of the reasons I like the concept of Historical Archaeology because it liberates me to pursue the history of account practices in Italy between the 12th and 14th centuries as an important moment in the growth of capitalism.¹⁰ I would agree with David Cranstone concerning the semantic and intellectual challenges that face attempts to construct an historical archaeology of Europe as well as those made by Adrian Green, Audrey Horning and Matthew Johnson in favour of such an enterprise.¹¹ A global historical archaeology that would connect the ancient world to that of our own would lay bare a deeper history and therefore should be encouraged. One obvious example is focusing on the historical growth of capitalism. Matthew Johnson has demonstrated the value of such an approach in the English context, and I would suggest at the very least we need to explore capitalism's links to early accounting practices in Italy.¹² Debit/credit accounting practices and commercial mathematics provided an abstract measure of not only accountability but of credit and credibility. The development of these technologies and their acceptance were

crucial stepping stones toward the growth of notions of liberal government – that those whose lives revolved around money could be trusted as long as they demonstrated their commitment to abstract measures of their own accountability and creditability. And so I think an argument can be made for the growth of commercial and political institutions such as accounting and liberal government being inseparable from the growth of cities, industry and the modern world writ large.

Returning to the issue of practice, I would again like to draw on some personal experiences in making an argument for greater collaboration and interdisciplinary research. Few of you may know that I worked in Britain in the late 1980s with Dominic Powlesland on the West Heslerton Project.¹³ During that time, I would speak often with Dominic and Christine Haughton at West Heslerton as well as with the wonderful folks at the York Environmental Archaeology Unit, in particular Harry Kenward and Alan Hall, as well as Helen Keely, then of English Heritage, and Martin Jones, then of Durham University and now at Cambridge. One of the questions that I raised was why specialists such as Martin Jones or Harry Kenward were not invited to participate in the overall planning of archaeological projects in which they were involved. To me, the fact that specialist reports were merely placed in appendices or today as CDs was to some degree understandable, but what was not to my liking was the fact that the archaeologist in charge of such projects was in most instances the sole voice in synthesising all of the information generated by the various specialists.¹⁴

When I was fortunate enough to start my own research centre, what is today the Andrew Fiske Memorial Center for Archaeological Research, I decided to build an interdisciplinary team such as that housed at York, and to have everyone work as a team on projects from start to finish. This meant working collaboratively and giving up some of the control over projects, but ultimately it has proven to be a very productive and exciting approach to research. Not everyone in the Center shares the same theoretical approach, but this has proven to be a healthy quality because it has meant lively debate. In terms of the actual management of the Center and Center projects, consensus rules. The Center staff bring diverse skills and approaches to the work including zooarchaeology, paleoethnobotany, remote sensing and geophysical analysis, material culture analysis, geoarchaeology and archaeological conservation. Obviously, individuals with such diverse interests bring different backgrounds to the work of the Center and the result has been a dynamic and vibrant working environment.

I would suggest to you collectively that there is more to gain from collaborating than there is from the alternative. There seems little question that many of the issues that confront the various groups working on this period are identity issues, and these are understandable. As David Landon, my colleague at the Fiske Center, said to me recently, ‘industrial archaeologists don’t like it when historical archaeologists who only dig up workers’ housing call themselves industrial archaeologists’.¹⁵ Well, as someone who has done just that, I fully understand the point Landon is making, and I agree with it. I have not devoted much of my career to learning about industrial technology, although I would argue that the production of industrial space, both the factory complexes and the housing complexes, are industrial technologies. Perhaps I am wrong, but I’m not sure that many historical archaeologists I

know would have too much of a problem with Landon's basic statement. And knowing David, I know that he was saying this as someone who clearly has done both the industrial and domestic sides of industrial technology and considers himself to be both an industrial archaeologist and an historical archaeologist. In a 1999 publication, Landon presaged the purpose of the *Crossing Paths or Sharing Tracks?* conference by suggesting that 'thoughtful attempts to close the gap between interests in privy pottery and steam engine design will mark a major advance in the creation of a holistic archaeology of industrialisation'.¹⁶ He too was asking whether the outcome was to be crossed paths or separate tracks.

In my estimation, taking up Landon's challenge requires that the exploration of shared paths takes precedence over following different tracks. Realising the challenge must begin with practice, and here I would offer two major recommendations. First, don't let identity get in the way of intellectual cross-fertilisation. Second, break free of your own conventions that view specialists as people who are sent samples and asked for results that are then interpreted by a single voice. Replace this with a truly interdisciplinary approach. And the key difference between interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches revolves around the issue of precisely who sets the research agenda, who asks the questions. As noted earlier, all decisions at the Fiske Center are made by consensus, and this has proven liberating. Still another advantage of the collaboration is that it generates ownership because everyone is involved in the planning from the start. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, collaboration means greater production for everyone involved. With more people involved, the workload gets spread around and allows for greater scholarly production in terms of co-authored publications.

One of the reasons I feel that interdisciplinary collaboration is so essential is because it broadens the entire field of study. For example, most of my work on industrial communities has focused on the role of industrial production and industrial workers as consumers because those are the people who interest me the most. I am not saying they are more important than the mechanics that built the machines and maintained them – I am interested in them as well – but as people and less as engineers. Why? Well, because I am not an engineer, but I do understand the importance of technology so I work with folks who have that knowledge, and as a group we draw on what they do and most importantly incorporate their questions into our work. And one of the chief reasons I have chosen to work this way is because it forces me and those whom I work with not to limit our focus to the point where we lose sight of connections between processes such as industrialisation and colonialism.

Another advantage of an interdisciplinary approach is that it provides a window on to the biological dimensions of large-scale historical processes such as colonialism, industrialism and the construction of empire. This is particularly true of colonial communities that were designed in such a manner that they communicated stability and power to both the colonised and the colonial populations themselves. In some instances, the environments in question are best described as micro-environments, such as urban backyards. Examining these has allowed me to link forces such as changes in the demographic make-up of 19th-century industrial workforces to the growth of slums and declining living conditions.¹⁷ The same approach was useful in fostering research that has provided an answer to long-asked questions concerning the English settlement of Jamestown. Historians have asked why the

English who landed at Jamestown in 1607 were so ill prepared for what they encountered.¹⁸ The historian who first posed this question almost forty years ago was without the key piece of information that would have allowed him to answer that question. The answer was not contained in an archive, but it was instead to be found in the annual growth rings of the trees on Jamestown Island.¹⁹ In this instance, the information derived from the tree-ring analysis revealed that the English settlers of Jamestown landed during a period of extreme drought between 1605 and 1612 that was the worse such event in 1,200 years. Is it any wonder the English were so ill prepared? Nor is it surprising that English entreaties to the local Native populations to provide food eventually resulted in violence once the drought's impact started to lead to the failure of Native agricultural production.

LANDSCAPE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE

Trying to examine large-scale and complex historical processes such as colonialism, industrialisation or the growth of capitalism or empire is extremely difficult without some conceptual point of entry. I have found landscape and the larger construct of space to be useful in this regard. Landscape works because it provides a vehicle for examining overlapping moments in time. It also provides a means of exploring the conjuncture of cultural and physical space into the world that we see and others saw before us. In terms of practice it facilitates the collaboration of specialists who often have to reconcile what at first appears to be conflicting data, but which ultimately results in a coherent story. It is not a case of the story being imposed on the data, but rather agreeing upon a new interpretation that resolves what had been viewed as contradictory information. Ultimately, the narrative that emerges from this kind of interdisciplinary collaboration is a richer, deeper history.

My interest in landscape archaeology also developed from working in the United Kingdom with its wonderful tradition of landscape history and archaeology.²⁰ More recently, I have turned to the larger concept of space in theorising landscape. All of the forces that have shaped the modern world have a spatial dimension that archaeology is perfectly suited to explore. I have worked with the theories of space formulated by Henri Lefebvre, Sharon Zukin, David Harvey, Edward Soja and Arturo Escobar.²¹ In particular, I have found the concept of space as being multi-dimensional extremely useful in a variety of archaeological contexts including the cities of New England, the plantations of North-eastern North America and Barbados, and now Native American historic sites. Lefebvre's classic tripartite scheme of spatial representations, space as lived and representational spaces has proven its value to numerous archaeologists.²² His notion of abstract space and its representation in drawings, for example, were very useful in exploring the spatial development of planned cities such as Lowell, Massachusetts or Saltaire Village in Bradford. The excitement comes when archaeology is employed to explore the evolution of the material space, the space as lived, because often it is contested and used in a manner quite opposite from that intended by those who originally conceptualised that space in the abstract as a spatial representation.²³

The spatial scheme I am currently working with begins with the physical space in which people lived out their lives and which we explore as archaeologists. I fully recognise that these are two very different things and that what we see and what they experienced is not the same thing, yet there may be ways for us to begin transcending this metaphysical

divide. My notion of physical space borrows Jim Delle's term material space and combines it with the concept of space as a biophysical reality, or what Arturo Escobar calls nature.²⁴ Depending upon the historical context this material space can be very different. The space that is created in colonial encounters is, after all, very different from urban industrial space, and the environments that result are different as well. As humans shape this space they are actively engaged in the creation or production of a physical reality that often becomes the focus of our intellectual gaze. Excavation, recording and interpretation are all part of the practice of exploring this space and attaching meaning to the changes that have shaped it. One of the difficulties that face archaeologists in interpreting landscape and space in general is the multiscalar character of the forces that shape its production. In some cases, the forces are very immediate and practical, linked as they are to the physical needs of the groups involved. Enclosures, yards, work areas and the like often have to meet the needs of a particular activity. Keeping animals, growing field crops or needing a space to butcher and process animals into food requires practical considerations such as defending against predators or the maintenance of ecological boundaries. It is quite another thing to construct landscapes that seek to communicate ideologies or meet the needs of more complex human endeavours such as industry.

Trying to determine the meaning of past landscapes involves imagining a second kind of space, a social space. Every material space is also simultaneously and seamlessly part of a social space, the space that you and I move through daily. There is, I would admit, a bit of Zen involved in looking at space in this manner. Unless the context is something such as Pompeii, it is difficult to imagine archaeology revealing this seamless link between past and present. Still, envisioning space in this manner does provide a vehicle for visualising the behaviour that shaped the social past that was a reality for the actors who lived it. The Zen part is how I reconcile what could be a contradiction in seeing these spaces existing simultaneously. Beyond just conceiving of space in this manner, there also comes the challenge of using techniques such as micro-stratigraphic analysis or a combination of paleoethnobotany and soil chemistry to examine its social and biophysical development. For me, there is some irony in using this kind of science to explore something seemingly as metaphysical as past social space, but in my experience that is the only way of actually doing it.²⁵ This assumes, of course, a rich archaeological record and in some instances such a record simply doesn't exist, and therefore it may not always be possible to succeed in exploring space in this manner.

Both material and social spaces are themselves shot through with what I call cultural historical space, that world in which people lived, the context that brought meaning to their lives. In some respects, it is this space that is the ultimate goal of all archaeology, trying to reconstruct the world of the mind and the forces swirling around it that shape that mind. Religion, ideology, notions of gender and class – these all contribute to the cultural historical space that serves as context for living. In a city such as Lowell, Massachusetts where I have worked extensively, the actual production of space involved the reification of class, gender and ethnicity in addition to meeting the core needs of industry.²⁶ Industrial space in cities such as Lowell as well as that of rural industry is normally conceived as serving very practical ends. Yet often these same spaces were arenas of contestation in which

conflict was played out in such a manner as to accentuate the juxtaposition of planned purpose, most notably work, and its antithesis, refusing to work. An example of a contested space such as this comes from Lowell where mill yards designed to promote efficiency were used as arenas to protest working conditions or wages. In the process, the original purpose of the space was contrapuntally transformed into a representational space; a site of public protest and contestation.²⁷

Other examples of these kinds of contested spaces come from colonial contexts in which the colonised seek refuge from colonial forces. In my current work, this notion of space has worked quite well in interpreting the lives of 17th- and 18th-century Native Americans who sought to carve out spaces of autonomy and resistance against the creeping forces of European colonialism. As their former world collapsed, drawing ever closer, Native peoples such as the Nipmuc of Massachusetts and Connecticut created spaces that allowed them to maintain cultural practices under the guise of religious conversion. Only through detailed analysis of material culture can such practices be discerned often in the form of hybridised forms. These can include European material culture being used for very different purposes such as glass tumblers serving as cutting tools or, in one instance, the placement of quartz crystals – which have a long history of Native use for spiritual purposes – being placed in the corners of a foundation of an ‘English Style’ meeting house of a Christianised Native community.²⁸ The material space in which such activities took place, and their spatial dimensions, are simultaneously and seamlessly linked to the cultural historical realities these Native peoples were experiencing while their world collapsed around them. In this sense, what might be interpreted correctly as a form of cultural mimicry – the appropriation of the cultural trappings of one’s oppressors as a form of defiance – represents a form of civil disobedience.²⁹ The use of mimicry as a way of constructing a space of refuge and survival, what Bhabha calls ‘a third space’, involves the creation of something completely different from the cultural practices that contributed to its creation.³⁰ This third space, although new, would still be viewed by its creators as having many of the characteristics of an earlier, pre-colonial past and, as such, a space of deeper history.

I see a point of similarity between my own notions of space and the concept of home articulated by Charles Orser in chapter 1 above. This is especially true when contrasted with its opposite, knowing when you are not home. All of us understand this full well. In my work of late, I have found the concept of well-being to be useful in this way as a state that is sought when your world is under attack. Not surprisingly, the indigenous peoples of Australia and the Torres Strait have now chosen this concept of well-being as their measuring stick, what they feel they have been denied by colonialism. Trying to make sense of such a concept for archaeology has proven challenging, but it is I think possible.³¹ And in this sense I want to counter one of the points made by Tadhg O’Keeffe in chapter 6 above. I fully understand his point concerning what at times can seem like an overwhelming barrage of artefacts from archaeological sites of the modern period. Yet for me, historical archaeology has always suffered from a lack of data, and I don’t mean things – oh things we have enough of – I mean data, real information. Without such information, in the form of artefacts, landscapes and environmental data, it would be extremely difficult to argue for the existence of spaces of resistance or the construction of material identities of

class, gender or ethnicity. There is no question that theoretical and interpretive frameworks help in the gleaning of narratives out of the artefacts, buildings and landscapes examined by archaeologists in Ireland and Britain. Yet at times, there is something as fleeting as luck involved, finding a specific artefact that helps immeasurably in constructing a narrative of industrial worker identity or the construction of Native American spaces of refuge and survival.

POSTCOLONIAL APPROACHES

Artefacts are central to what we do in that they aid our quest to understand the past as lived and just how that past is connected to the present. Theory is also obviously important, and increasingly there is a convergence between theories that serve as frameworks for interpreting the past and theory that connects that past to present. Postcolonial theory is a good example. Postcolonial approaches have proven very useful in interpreting the archaeology of Sylvester Manor, a 17th-century plantation on Shelter Island, New York that had a workforce of enslaved Africans and local Native Americans. The plantation, which was established in 1652, provided provisions for two sugar plantations on Barbados. Working both in New York and Barbados has brought me to a new understanding of what postcolonial theorists, most of whom are writing about India, Africa and the Caribbean, have to say about the experience of the colonised. This has proven useful in my collaborative research with Tribal Nations in North America as well as with descendent populations on Barbados. It has, for example, led me to appreciate the manner in which cultural mimicry may have been at work in the past. The same is true of the notion of hybridised cultural forms such as the use of European languages to serve as a vehicle in the construction and communication of anti-colonial imagery. The same is true of space and material culture. These too can serve as mediums of resistance in countering the overwhelming power of European colonisation as I have described above.

Despite its allure, postcolonial theory, like the concept of modernity, is not without its problems, not the least of which is dealing with the fact that in some instances postcolonial scholars represent a new form of colonialism. Is my own work with Native American groups, for example, just another form of exploitation? There is also the issue of defining just where colonialism ends and a postcolonial reality begins. Just because nations have gained their political independence does not mean that colonial forces have been halted. I recently heard an interview on the BBC with a woman who had interviewed Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, and she expressed some difficulty in trying to reconcile the African Mugabe with the English Mugabe. She noted, for example, that when Mugabe first came to power and had the first meeting of his cabinet ministers he wore a blue suit. Some of his cabinet ministers wore more traditional African garb, while others wore military fatigues. Supposedly, he turned to them as a group and said we may be Africans but we are going to be setting a European-style government, so from now on we will all wear blue suits. So where, then, is the line between colonial past and postcolonial reality? It will be a long time before that colonial past and some postcolonial future are easy to discern.

Another reality that has emerged as an outgrowth of confronting the issues raised by postcolonial theory has been the importance of engaging in collaborative research. In

the same manner that collaborating with my colleagues at the Fiske Center is essential in constructing a richer understanding of the past, I now find myself working with the Nipmuc Tribal Nation, since it is their history that I am pursuing. And this collaboration means working with the members of the Tribal Council to insure that the questions being pursued archaeologically are consistent with their own interests, and many of these have to do with demonstrating cultural continuity as part of legal issues surrounding Federal Tribal Recognition. For the Nipmuc, these are very serious issues, and our work is essential for them to supply scientific evidence that their people did not disappear, that in fact they participate in the same commercial and cultural arenas as their white neighbours. This kind of research also can result in having to justify your own identity as an archaeologist and trying to reconcile our own use of what I like to call Empirical Imperialism; that ability we have to abstract everything, including people, into data. Such an approach may work with the dead, although even that is not the case in North America, but when dealing with the living you must address these questions, as difficult as they may be. And this also often entails understanding the kinds of cultural baggage we each carry into our work.

Part of that cultural baggage is the baggage of empire, and here, I think, our work has a real role to play in trying to discern the connections between colonialism, industry, the growth of cities, capitalism and empire. When I worked in Britain on Anglo-Saxon sites I found myself in awe of the Romans. What impressed me the most was the manner in which they understood the connections between cities and colonial rule, industry – on a different scale, of course – and commercial integration into a larger whole that was empire. Many of the landscapes we encounter in our work are also expressions of empire. This is especially true of those that communicate order – the perfectly manicured pleasure gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries, industrial landscapes that extend from the factories to workers' housing and that of their managers, or sites of memorial to celebrate conquest. These landscapes all reinforce the notion that order is a product of nature, with Europeans at its apex.³² As such, landscapes such as these are also vehicles for the communication of both modernism and modernity. If the concept of modernity can be extended to encompass colonialism, as Homi Bhabha and others have suggested, then it may hold promise as an interpretive framework despite its problems. According to Bhabha, modernity has its roots in early European colonialism, and if such a connection can be explored archaeologically then it might offer some conceptual utility in searching for the origins of the modern world.³³ It might also help in the pursuit of an important set of corollary questions surrounding the end of empire. In the same manner that the construction and reinforcement of empire can be read in landscapes and other material form, is it not possible to search for evidence of its demise? It may well be that the evidence would come not in some colossal collapse that might involve the large-scale replacement of one landscape with another. Instead, it might come in more subtle form, such as defective military technology³⁴ or evidence of slums in colonial capitals such as Jamestown, as Horning has discussed.³⁵ In either case, the end of empire might come in a form that could hold lessons the neo-colonial reality of today's world.

CONCLUSION: COMING TO TERMS WITH IMPERIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LEGACIES

Celebrating empire can be a touchy business, especially when you have to confront its residue, its legacy. In Barbados, for example, the British colonial legacy is very evident in the Parish school uniforms the children still wear and which many still admire for the help they offer in maintaining discipline. And of course cricket. Here is a very good demonstration of postcolonial theory because, as you all know, the changes that Caribbean players brought to the game of cricket transformed it. Other legacies of empire are not so easy to celebrate. Many of my colleagues working in Africa or the Caribbean examine the legacies of empire, and often this involves politically sensitive issues. Yet the bounds of empire are not always so distant from the metropolitan core. Audrey Horning has discussed the use of archaeology as a way of working through political tensions, and there seems little question that this is one of the most important directions in the field's future.³⁶ The growth of Indigenous Archaeologies in places such as Australia, New Zealand and North America also represent attempts to confront the legacies of empire and colonialism as a whole.³⁷

Industry too is difficult to celebrate unless one is willing to confront some of its social and environmental legacies. In my own work, I have tried to understand the impact of industry on the health of the workers and those who managed them. I have combined this with studies of material culture to see just how notions such as 'middle class' and 'working class' were constructed materially.³⁸ In Lowell, for example, I found that the material trappings of workers, overseers and mill agent's households were not so clearly defined, despite the class-laden images contained in a century of literature obsessed with class. To read that literature would leave you with an image of dire poverty and great contrasts in wealth, but in the material record the lines are not so clear. Take a practice such as drinking. Despite the temperance movement of the mid-19th century, material evidence clearly shows that virtually everyone consumed liquor, although some were more ingenious than others in the manner in which they drank. Some would literally hide their drinking, and evidence of this was found in Lowell. There was also evidence that medicines that were laden with alcohol and narcotics, especially those prescribed for women's menstrual cramps, were being widely consumed. These medicines provided cover for those who sought to conceal their consumption behaviour from either the company hierarchy or from a spouse.

Where class differences were clearly discernible was in the way the cities and companies chose to provide their workers with access to domestic technologies such as piped-in water. In Lowell, only management received these benefits despite the order of the local boards of health to rid the company housing complexes of privies. This order was given in 1880, and yet archaeology clearly demonstrates that privies were still in use until the outbreak of the influenza epidemic in 1918.

Historical archaeologists working in areas that traditionally were thought to be some of the worst slums imaginable have found evidence of a more complicated picture. This is especially true of the work done by Rebecca Yamin and her colleagues connected with the Five Points project in New York City.³⁹ Here once again we are confronted with mythical images that essentialise the working class in the same manner that the literature of empire portrayed the indigenous populations of much of the world.⁴⁰ Whether it is by describing

their appearance, their eating practices or their sexual proclivities, the working class and indigenous populations are depicted as something 'other' than those whose ascendancy to power, in terms of either capital or empire, were somehow preordained by God. And yet, the archaeology of both the working class and indigenous communities is painting a very different picture of the past. Poverty and oppression are evident, but there is also evidence of agency and resistance, especially in the construction of hybridised realities that all too often are forgotten or silenced. Hopefully, the archaeology of the modern period can help in the realisation of a new history in which the contributions of those whose pasts have been silenced can now be celebrated. I believe that the archaeology of the last five hundred years is arguably the most important archaeology done today because it is linked directly not just to the present, but to our future. And, therefore, I would argue that the archaeology of the Modern World must be both theoretically robust and methodologically precise. If we are to use archaeology as a means of understanding the world in which we live, can we ask any less of ourselves?

NOTES

1. See Cranstone 2004; Donnelly & Horning 2002; Horning 2006a.
2. See, for example, Saitta 2007; Shackel 2000, 2001, 2003.
3. Bayley 1998; Bayley & Crossley 2004; Bell and Dark 1998.
4. See Mrozowski 2006a.
5. See Mrozowski 1999a, 2006a.
6. See Escobar 1999.
7. See, for example, Orser 1996; Green 2006; Lawrence 2006; Paynter 2000a & b; Hall 2000; Hall & Silliman 2006.
8. See Harvey 1989; Jameson 1991; Lefebvre 1995, 168–72; Parry 2004, 148–50.
9. There are a number of problems that the concept raises, not the least of which is distinguishing modernity and modernism. The latter has a long history as part of a consciousness of what is fashionable, most up to date and new (Lefebvre 1995, 1). This stands in sharp contrast to the modernity that is a programme of critical, self-reflective thought that became popular at the end of the 19th century and dominated the intellectual scene in Europe well into the 20th century (Lefebvre 1995; see also Comaroff & Comaroff 1993, xii; Harvey 1989, 2000; Jameson 1991; Parry 2004; Said 1993, 186–90).
10. See Mrozowski 1999a, 2006b, but see Cranstone 2004 for a cogent argument against the use of the term Historical Archaeology in the European context.
11. Cranstone 2004; Green 2006; Johnson 2002, 2006a; Horning 2006.
12. Johnson 1996; Mrozowski 1999a; 2006b.
13. See Powlesland 1998, 1999.
14. See Mrozowski, Bell, Beaudry, Landon & Kelso 1989.
15. David Landon, pers. comm. May 2008.
16. Landon 1999.
17. Mrozowski 2006b; see also Beaudry & Mrozowski 2001.
18. Morgan 1971.
19. Stahle *et al* 1998.
20. Johnson 2006b.
21. Escobar 1999; Harvey 1989, 2000; Lefebvre 1991, 1995; Soja 1989, 2000; Zukin 1991; see also Kofman & Lebas 1995.
22. See Delle 1998; Johnson 1996; Mrozowski 1999, 2006; Tarlow 1999.
23. Mrozowski 1999b, 2006b.
24. Delle 1998; Escobar 1999.
25. For a recent example, see Hayes & Mrozowski 2007.
26. Mrozowski 2006b.
27. Beaudry & Mrozowski 2001; Mrozowski 2006b.
28. See Law 2008; Law, Pezzarossi & Mrozowski 2008; Mrozowski, Herbster, Brown & Priddy 2005.
29. Bhabha 1985, 163; see also Ashcroft 2001, 50–5; Parry 2004, 55–72; Rutherford 1990.
30. Bhabha 1985, 1994; Rutherford 1990.
31. Mrozowski, Franklin & Hunt 2008.
32. For a good example of memorialising empire, see Petts 2006.
33. See Rutherford 1990; Jameson 1991; Parry 2004.
34. See Gould 1983.
35. Horning 2006b.
36. Horning 2006a.
37. See Atalay 2006; Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman 2006;

- Silliman 2008; Smith and Jackson 2006. 39. Yamin 2000, 2001, 2006.
 38. Mrozowski 2006b. 40. Parry 2004.

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