

Teaching Anti-Colonial Archaeology

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ABSTRACT

Archaeology is deeply troubled, but students are unlikely to learn about it in their ARCH 100 class. Our experience with 'World Prehistory' and 'Introductory Archaeology' courses and reviewing common textbooks charts a discipline securely anchored in the 19th century ideological harbour that is science, evolution, imperialism and progress. This includes so-called 'middle road' and 'post-colonial' approaches, which reinforce the status quo by limiting political action. In our search for an alternative, we discuss here our attempts to teach an anti-colonial archaeology rooted in critical pedagogy, political activism and anti-oppressive practice. At its core are three tenets: archaeology is personal, political and all about the present. While we are gratified by the many students who relish this opportunity for critical enquiry, we are faced with this lingering problem: most people do not want to hear the "negative reality" of archaeology.

Résumé: L'archéologie est en grande difficulté, mais il est peu probable que les étudiants l'apprennent dans leur classe ARCH 100. Notre expérience des cours de « préhistoire mondiale » et d'« introduction à l'archéologie » ainsi que l'analyse des manuels courants dessinent une discipline bien enracinée dans le champ idéologique du 19^{ème} siècle entre science, évolution, impérialisme et progrès. Même les approches dites « intermédiaire » et « postcoloniale » sont concernées, car elles renforcent le statu quo en limitant l'action politique. Dans notre recherche d'une alternative, nous exposons ici nos tentatives pour enseigner une archéologie anticoloniale nourrie de pédagogie critique, d'activisme politique et de pratique antioppression. Elle se fonde sur trois principes : l'archéologie est personnelle, politique et centrée sur le présent. Bien que nous félicitant du nombre d'étudiants qui savourent cette opportunité d'étude critique, nous sommes confrontés à un problème persistant : la majorité ne veut pas entendre la « réalité négative » de l'archéologie.

Resumen: La arqueología está profundamente preocupada, pero no es probable que los estudiantes sepan de esto en su clase ARCH 100. Nuestra experiencia con los cursos sobre "Prehistoria Mundial" e "Introducción a la Arqueología" y la revisión de los libros de texto comunes trazan una disciplina firmemente anclada en el puerto ideológico del siglo XIX que es la ciencia, la evolución, el imperialismo y el progreso. Esto incluye los enfoques denominados "moderados" o "postcoloniales", que refuerzan el statu quo limitando la acción política. En nuestra búsqueda de una alternativa, tratamos aquí nuestros intentos de enseñar una arqueología anticolonial enraizada en la pedagogía crítica, el activismo político y la práctica antiopresiva. En su núcleo encontramos tres premisas: la arqueología es personal, política y tiene que ver con el presente. Aunque nos sentimos gratificados por los muchos estudiantes que disfrutaron de esta oportunidad de indagación crítica, nos vemos enfrentados a este problema persistente: la mayoría de las personas no quieren oír hablar de la "realidad negativa" de la arqueología.

KEY WORDS

Pedagogy, Colonialism, Capitalism, Politics, Ethics

Overview

Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past. George Orwell

Pedagogy in archaeology is rarely discussed (Hamilakis 2004). In this paper, we offer our experience of introductory archaeology as it is generally presented to university undergraduates, and offer an alternative in 'anti-colonial' approaches. Using our social power as teachers, we confront the historical fusion that is colonialism and archaeology, deconstruct the authority of knowledge production and reset archaeology's anchor in the tumultuous waters of contemporary politics.¹ The results of our attempts thus far have been encouraging, yet we are disheartened by a basic truth that frustrates our attempts: put simply, many people are not interested in the 'real' story that is archaeology, for it implicates all of us.

To provide context for our foray into anti-colonial archaeology, we begin by reviewing archaeology as it is taught to undergraduates through textbooks we have used, operating from the position that archaeologists practice what they preach. Towards this, we ask: What are students (not)

being taught in their introductory classes? A critique follows our summary of dominant or mainstream perspectives presented in textbooks, demonstrating that we are not alone in our concerns. We then discuss how we are using our positions as teachers to challenge the status quo, outlining our vision of anti-colonial archaeology in the classroom. We conclude with some reflections on how effective our approach has been thus far, where we have failed, and what challenges remain.

This paper is provocative insofar as we are advocating that teachers of archaeology take an explicitly political and activist approach to the classroom. The perspective and evidence offered here are firmly situated in our own experiences, separately and together, as both students and teachers of the courses discussed. We believe that introductory courses are often the only exposure students have to archaeology, and certainly lay the baseline for students who pursue the subject. Because of this, we think it is crucially important to tackle the difficult social and political history of archaeology head-on at this early stage. This has not been our experience, and it was not until graduate school and by our own direction that we delved into the complex relationship between archaeology, capitalism and colonialism. It was this gap in our education, and that we see being repeated today, that motivates us now.

As such, what follows is a personal and reflexive account of our attempts to confront contemporary issues of social power and cultural imperialism and address what we see as core disciplinary problems—problems that have been passed down through the generations, as in any culture. In raising these timely questions (Foster 2009; Foster et al. 2010), and presenting what we feel is a passionate argument in favour of changing how archaeology is taught, we hope to encourage a renewed interest in pedagogy and shift the focus in archaeology further towards the *impacts* of archaeology—theory, method and practice—on people and society today.

Context

Colonialism is not dead. Indeed, colonialism and re-colonizing projects today manifest themselves in variegated ways. George J. Sefa Dei

‘World Prehistory’ and ‘Introductory Archaeology’ courses represent the bread and butter of archaeology programs. In our experiences, the former is usually an elective course, populated by non-anthropology students and generally covering the story of humanity linearly, moving through time from early hominins to more recent societies (empires) across the globe (see Haviland 1997:34). World Prehistory courses generally have high

enrolment (eg. 150–350 students) and are commonly referred to as “bums-on-seats” courses, referring to the income gained for the university from high enrolment. Alternatively, Introductory Archaeology courses, limited in scope to method and theory, are often pre-requisites for archaeology majors. Enrolment for this course is typically lower, in the range of 75–100 students. Both courses are commonly offered twice a year, if not year-round, and are frequently taught by sessional² or part-time instructors, post-doctoral students or new faculty. Because of high enrolment, both courses frequently have one or multiple teaching assistants (TAs) who, in some cases, also run weekly tutorial sessions.

Between the two of us, we have taught Introductory Archaeology courses seven times and “TA’d” for World Prehistory courses five times, as well as numerous other archaeology and anthropology courses and field schools. Cumulatively, we have more than 25 years of experience in the discipline of archaeology, as both students and instructors. Both our teaching and learning experiences in archaeology have taken place at medium-to-large North American universities, both in Canada and the United States. These institutions have a very diverse student body in terms of nationality, home departments and life experiences. These are also large classes, so opportunities to personally engage with students beyond superficial (bureaucratic) interactions are limited.

So, what are students being taught in these classes? One way to approach this question is by critically examining course textbooks, specifically their organization and content.³ As Lyman (2010) has recently shown, archaeology textbooks are reflections of the history of the discipline. This not only includes language, as we focus on here, but images as well.⁴ Rather than focus our paper on a broad survey of textbooks, we look at three that are commonly employed in prehistory and introductory courses that we have had personal experience with, either as lead instructor or TA, and consider their governing philosophies and how each addresses ethics and politics in archaeology.

The first textbook is paleoarchaeologist Michael Chazan’s *World Prehistory and Archaeology: Pathways Through Time* (2009. Canadian Edition. Pearson: Toronto, ON). As illustrated in Table 1, the textbook’s Table of Contents tells a story of human change from simple (Part Two) to complex (Part Four), with States and Empires as the climax of history. The philosophy of this text views “Archaeology as Science” (p. 51), while post-processual, feminist and Indigenous approaches are described under “Alternative Perspectives” (p. 55); the term ‘historical archaeology’ is not listed in the book’s exhaustive subject index.

Part One of Chazan’s text opens with a quote about time travel from science fiction writer H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine*. Then, in two, mostly bullet-pointed paragraph (pp. 3–5), Chazan addresses the subject of ethics;

Table 1 Table of contents for Michael Chazan's (2009) *World Prehistory and Archaeology: Pathways Through Time*

World Prehistory and Archaeology: Pathways Through Time

Part I. The Past is a Foreign Country: Getting from Here to There

1. Getting Started in Archaeology
2. Putting the Picture Together

Part II. Human Evolution

3. Early Hominins
4. From *Homo erectus* to Neanderthals
5. The Origin of Modern Humans
6. The Peopling of Australia and the New World

Part III. Agricultural Beginnings

7. Towers, Villages, and Longhouses
8. Mounds and Maize
9. A Feast of Diversity

Part IV: The Development of Social Complexity

10. Complexity without the State
11. The Urban State
12. Enigmatic States
13. Empires

Epilogue: Bringing it Home

the bulleted lists are the Society for American Archaeology's eight principles of archaeological ethics and Canadian Archaeological Association's three principles regarding the excavation of sacred sites. The emotional connection between archaeological sites and Indigenous communities is noted in separate paragraphs written by two guest authors. Meanwhile, "ethical" issues are dealt with in two half-page sidebars on looting and illegal antiquities, a boxed feature on evolution versus religion, and another on "repatriation", which is described as "a political issue" (p. 199), not an *ethical* issue. Despite Chazan's assertion that archaeologists are "firmly rooted in the present" (p. 2), the fact that so few of the textbook's 518 pages are devoted to ethics suggests something else.

Archaeology is foregrounded as a "voyage of exploration" in which the "excitement of discovery plays an essential role" (p. xxix). Chazan goes so far as to consider the past to be a "Foreign Country", alluding to the cultural alienation often experienced by tourists; however, when put into its historical context, archaeologists become the past's invaders, its occupiers, *its colonizers*. *World Prehistory* ends with an obscure six paragraph Epilogue (pp. 443–445) intended to bring it all "Back Home" and humanize the past. In its focus on evolution as a story of human development from simple to complex, and its emphasis on a scientific understanding of the past over personal or culturally situated versions of history, a similar and comparable textbook to Chazan's is Chris Scarre's (2009) *The Human Past: World Prehistory and the Development of Human Societies*.

Table 2 Table of contents from Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn's (2004) *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*

Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice

Introduction: The Nature and Aims of Archaeology

Part I. The Framework of Archaeology

1. The Searchers: The History of Archaeology
2. What is Left? The Variety of the Evidence
3. Where? Survey and Excavation of Sites and Features
4. When? Dating Methods and Chronology

Part II. Discovering the Variety of Human Experience

5. How Were Societies Organized? Social Archaeology
6. What Was the Environment? Environmental Archaeology
7. What Did They Eat? Subsistence and Diet
8. How Did They Make and Use Tools? Technology
9. What Contact Did They Have? Trade and Exchange
10. What Did They Think? Cognitive Archaeology, Art, and Religion
11. Who Were They? What Were They Like? The Archaeology of People
12. Why Did Things Change? Explanation in Archaeology

Part III. The World of Archaeology

13. Archaeology in Action: Five Case Studies
 14. Whose Past? Archaeology and the Public
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The second textbook is Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn's *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice* (2004. Fourth Edition. Thames and Hudson: New York), a book we have heard referred to as "the brick", a reference to its size and density (it is 656 pages in length and highly detailed). As illustrated in Table 2, special attention is given to method and theory, focusing on the science of archaeology, the latter defined as "a subdiscipline of anthropology involving the study of the human past through its material remains" (p. 579).

Rather than organizing the book linearly through time as Chazan does, Renfrew and Bahn opt for a thematic approach organized around the discipline's "Framework" (Part I), the "Variety of Human Experiences" (part II) and the "World of Archaeology" (Part III). In this text, 31 pages (<5%) are devoted to the subject of archaeology and the public and, despite noting that archaeology is both a science *and* a humanity (p. 13), the strong scientific leanings of the discipline's practitioners overwhelm the text. Post-processual, historical, feminist and Indigenous archaeologies are addressed in 6 pages (<1%) that conclude by "recognizing the varied perspectives of different social groups, and accepting the consequent 'multivocality' of the post-modern world" (p. 49). In this manner, the authors conclude that the "epistemological debate seems over now".

Having characterized the political nature of archaeology and questions of ethics only in the final chapter ("Whose Past? Archaeology and the

Public”), Renfrew and Bahn conclude that “the ultimate value in archaeology” extends beyond such “specific and in a certain sense limited concerns” as exploitation and ethics; “World archaeology”, they suggest, “is something that we can all share” (p. 578). Cultural resource management (CRM) is addressed in three pages (<0.5%) of this same final chapter (pp. 560–563), which is surprising and significantly given that nearly all archaeology is CRM archaeology (Hutchings and La Salle 2014; La Salle and Hutchings 2012).

Our take-away lesson from this textbook is that it could quite easily promote scientism (Sorell 1994:1), wherein science is the best, if not the *only* way to access ‘the past’. It is important to note that Renfrew and Bahn specify that the book “is intended for professional archaeologists” (p. 11); its use as a first- or second-year Introductory text is thus perhaps unreasonable, although the book remains a standard in archaeology programs. In terms of its density and scientific approach to the “global archaeological resource”, Scarre’s textbook *The Human Past* is also comparable to Renfrew and Bahn’s.

The third textbook is Robert L. Kelly and David Hurst Thomas’ simply titled *Archaeology* (2010. Fifth Edition. Wadsworth: Belmont, CA). It has been thoroughly evaluated in Lyman’s (2010) textbook study, so our observations here are limited. At 483 pages, it is the shortest of the three and, unlike the previous textbooks’ “global” and “world” approaches, Kelly and Thomas emphasize (North) Americanist archaeology. This focus allows for more complete coverage of the American legal system, CRM and contemporary ethical dilemmas. Approximately 25 percent of the book is dedicated to such key issues as viewing archaeologists as people and archaeology as controversial (Ch. 1), the structure of archaeological enquiry (Ch.2), historical archaeology (Ch. 14), CRM (Ch. 15) and “Archaeology’s Future” (Ch. 16), as shown in Table 3.

For Kelly and Thomas, archaeology is “the study of the past through the systematic recovery and analysis of material remains” (p. 421). Their approach is scientific and emphasizes critical thinking; they recognize that “our experiences in the present heavily color our vision of the past” (p. 46) and highlight a variety of ethical issues. For example, their Introduction focuses attention on the “Kennewick Man” controversy and poses the questions, “Who Controls Human Remains?” and “What Does it Mean to You?” (pgs. xxxi-xxxii). Accompanying their treatment of the “Scientific Approach” is a discussion of colonial racism and a one-page box addressing the question “Does archaeology put Native Americans on trial?” (pp. 28–31). In the authors’ preface, it is stated that “no images of Native American skeletal remains appear in this book”, out of respect for a request by several Indigenous elders (p. xxix). No such statements can be

found in the other two texts, despite their numerous photographs of human remains.

Lyman (2010:16) concludes that the “scientific and materialistic and the interpretivist and humanistic are given equal time” in this textbook. Theoretically, then, Kelly and Thomas compromise to present a ‘middle road’ approach (p. 42) between mainstream and marginalized archaeologies. While in many ways preferable to a strictly scientific presentation of the discipline, this path stops short of challenging the authority of heritage production—of power over truth in the present.

Critique

All things are subject to interpretation. Whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth. Friedrich Nietzsche

In most cases, World Prehistory and Introductory Archaeology courses are the only formal exposure that non-anthropology students have to archaeology. These are typically the only opportunities to reach these students and challenge fundamental (and historically dangerous) preconceptions about society, past and present. The critical question therefore is, what are students learning? We suggest that three themes emerge from our textbook reviews and teaching experiences.

(1) World ‘prehistory’ is characterized by an evolution of human ‘progress’ from simple to complex, wherein major technological advances have enabled complex civilizations to dominate (eg. Chazan).

In its core epistemology, archaeology’s anchor has not dragged far from its age-old mooring in unilineal evolution and social Darwinism (ie. capitalism), an anchorage set long ago by the likes of Locke, Tyler, Spencer and Morgan. Rather than any significant conceptual or philosophical shift, the varying schema of Morgan’s “savagery, barbarism, civilization”, Service’s “band, tribe, chiefdom, state”, or contemporary classifications along a trajectory from simple/egalitarian to complex/hierarchical, represent no real departure from their racist origins, and instead highlight the increasing scientization of what are fundamentally social prejudices. Thus, archaeologists are still teaching cultural imperialism, knowingly or not.

This should hardly be surprising given that archaeology has always been tied to the endeavour of imperialism and capitalist expansion. McNiven and Russell (2005:49) describe this history in detail, discussing how “archaeologists and prehistorians constructed the archaeological record to scientifically vindicate the colonialist notions of savagery and staged progressivism to leave little doubt that Indigenous peoples, particularly

‘hunter-gatherers’, represented primordial man”. Such ‘proof’ of the natural, cultural or racial inferiority of Indigenous peoples served the interests of those who would justify their subjugation, assimilation and enslavement for profit. Similarly, relegating these peoples to the realm of ‘prehistory’ secures their place in the past, while ensuring they are disconnected from the present; yet as Diaz (2010:21) contests, “our history is not ‘pre’ anything!” These motivations still hold true, observed in archaeological theories reifying racist attitudes of Native Americans (Deloria 1997:81).

As Shanks and Tilley (1987:49) note, “The past is thereby recreated as the present which then becomes, in turn, naturalized by the past”; in this way, archaeology “can have powerful effects operating to reproduce the relationship between the dominant and the dominated in contemporary society” (1987:246). Referring to archaeologists as “stewards” who “work for the benefit of all people” (Chazan 2009:3) implies that everyone will benefit from such stewardship by one group; likewise, archaeologists “giving a voice” to the history of marginalized communities (2009:439) suggests that they do not already have their own voices or histories. This is hegemony in action, thus the harm of archaeology is not simply philosophical but also material, because these theories are drawn upon to support racism in all of its forms, from the street to the courtroom (Culhane 1998), with tangible consequences for people’s lives today.

(2) Archaeological methods and theories are fundamentally scientific, with science being the best and/or only way to access ‘the past’ (eg. Refrew and Bahn).

In *A History of Archaeological Thought*, Bruce Trigger (2006:19) describes archaeology as “an expression of the ideology of the middle classes” and a tool “to achieve their goals in particular situations. Among these goals are to enhance a group’s self-confidence by making its success appear natural, predestined, and inevitable; to inspire and justify collective action; and to disguise collective interests as altruism” (2006:20). Arguably, this is exactly what academic archaeologists themselves do daily in the classroom in the name of “science”. Indeed, Holtorf (2005a:111) points out how the claim of archaeology as a science tasked with building knowledge about the past is “self-serving since it secures the archaeologists’ social status and justifies their claim to intellectual control over the past”. This echoes Shanks and Tilley (1987:25), who assert that archaeological practice “has come to lie increasingly in the power of a professional self-appointed minority and it tends to have the effect of denying people their *active* participation in history, in the practice of making history and coming to an understanding of the present past”.

Similarly, McNiven and Russell (2005:92) demonstrate how archaeology “has little to do with the rigors of science and all to do with a colonial ideology and a ... public that wishes to find scientific support to legitimize

colonial dispossession of Aboriginal lands and to delegitimize contemporary Aboriginal claims for Native Title rights". In this sense, imperialism has been "structured into language, the economy, social relations and the cultural life of colonial societies" (Smith 1999:26), with scientific research as the tool of its realization and regulation. Nicholas and Hollowell (2007:60, citing Zimmerman 2001:169 and Galtung 1967:295–302) describe the resulting paradigm as "scientific colonialism". This emphasizes the vision of *terra nullius* that presumes archaeological heritage is a "global resource" and thus the "heritage of all humanity", open for access and exploitation by any and all who stake a claim (Hollowell and Nicholas 2009:143,146). Archaeology, then, is not only implicated in cultural imperialism but also global capitalism (Hamilakis and Duke 2007; see also Foster et al. 2010), wherein control of cultural heritage is a prerequisite for control of natural heritage or *resources* (Bodley 2008b; see also Renner 2002).

In his essay on Western hegemony in CRM, Byrne points out that the archaeological vision of a "global mosaic" can be misleading, as archaeology itself is "constituted in global politics" (Byrne 2008[1991]:228). Byrne notes that Trigger's (1984, 1989) concern with "world-oriented" or imperialist archaeology "follows logically from the equation of knowledge and power"—"Where there are world powers there will be world archaeologies" (2008[1991]:228). These connections between science, imperialism, nationalism and global capitalist exploitation are evident in archaeology textbooks as well as in popular media, both of which emphasize a North American perspective as 'universal'. A study of *National Geographic* articles about archaeology shows how the magazine "validates the exploration of exotic landscapes in the name of scientific enterprise, using tales of archaeological discovery to heighten knowledge into super-drama, entertaining a popular fascination with the remote and the spectacular while progressive inroads are made to extract the resources of foreign lands" (Gero and Root 1990:26; see also Hammond et al. 2009:153).

From its beginnings, then, right up to present-day, archaeology has been a political endeavour fuelled by particular national(ist) and class-based agendas of social, economic and political self-interest, and these are the agendas that are reified in archaeology textbooks (Pyburn 2005:3). Any claim to objectivity is therefore untenable, and instead is fundamentally a claim to power (Smith 1999:34,39).

(3) 21st century archaeology is about taking the 'middle road' between science and 'alternative' interpretations (eg. Kelly and Thomas).

The argument for a 'middle road' or compromise between competing worldviews (usually framed as Western vs. Other) has complicated motivations. In part, an interest expressed by post-processual archaeologists in meaning and agency (Hodder and Hutson 2003) prompted a shift towards multivocality and thus direct engagement with descendant communities.

However, this shift transpired only after decades of struggle by First Nations and Native Americans to gain control over research that affects them, and this struggle is by no means over. Whatever the cause, the effect of creating relationships with descendant groups has been the recognition by archaeologists of the connection between ‘the past’ and present-day peoples. As a result, there is today a growing discourse and the literature base on archaeology framed as ‘heritage’.

These are important and encouraging steps, yet doubt lingers as to how much change is ever genuine as opposed to simply dressing up old ideas in new language. The archaeological buzzword today is ‘collaboration’ and the ethic of ‘sharing power’ between archaeologists and Indigenous communities is implied in this approach (Kerber 2006:xxx; Nicholas and Hollowell 2007:59), but there remains little evidence to suggest meaningful change in the power dynamics and structure of the practice, its practitioners and its institutions (Hutchings and La Salle 2014; King 2009; La Salle 2010, 2013; La Salle and Hutchings 2012). Indeed, some scholars warn that these meeting-in-the-middle attempts toward inclusion may “end in appropriation by archaeologists” (Smith 2004:198), and some even consider collaboration to be a form of colonialist/capitalist “co-optation” (Alfred 2009:12–15; Dabulkis-Hunter 2002:177; Regan 2010:27). In theory, such middle road approaches are generally attractive because they avoid making a decision or taking a political or ethical stand on any issue; they suggest both the possibility of neutrality and of negotiating *fairly* between the needs of all parties. In practice, however, “any compromise is likely to simply rehearse the dominant value system” (Smith 2004:202), because *power is not equally distributed* between all “stakeholders”. Ultimately, as Dei (2006:1–2) asks, “How much can be accomplished if we decide to ‘negotiate’ around domination or oppression?”

Reflecting upon the history of relations between archaeologists and Indigenous peoples, Eldon Yellowhorn (2000:163) offers an analogy: “a dance I learned as a young tyke in elementary school. It was called the Cha-cha. And after all these years I can still hear Miss Sensible Shoes saying, ‘Remember children, it’s three steps forward, three steps back; three steps forward, three steps back’”.

Sure it was a boring little dance, especially for those of us who could count past three. But it was a good dance for children to learn because it was easy and once you found your rhythm you did not have to think about it anymore. The problem with dancing the Cha-cha was that once the music stopped and after all the steps were performed the fact remained we had gone nowhere. If we timed our steps just right, we would be in the same spot as when the music started. This pattern is fine for neophyte dancers, but it is one to avoid for a dialogue to be meaningful.

The danger, then, is that middle road approaches are defining archaeology as something *different* than what preceded it, something inherently more ‘ethical’; yet the epistemological underpinnings of the discipline and its ontological task of creating and organizing ‘the past’ remain the same. The rebranding of archaeology by its practitioners has therefore been self-serving in that it simply reaffirms the power to produce, authorize and ultimately control heritage. Unauthorized, unofficial, unprofessional, “alternative” or “backward” heritage, developed and maintained outside of the heritage industrial complex, remains steadfastly marginalized—and *colonized*:

Entering the ‘modern world’ ... distinctive histories quickly vanish. Swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West and by various technologically advanced socialisms, these suddenly ‘backward’ peoples no longer invent local futures. What is different about them remains tied to traditional pasts, inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it (Clifford 1988:5 in Byrne 2008:163).

Challenging the Status Quo

How do we recognize the shackles that tradition has placed upon us? For if we can recognize them, we are also able to break them. Franz Boas

Teaching is the act by which the culture of archaeology is reproduced. In the texts examined here, evolutionary ideologies combine with scientific methodologies to create a practice that is fundamentally imperialist. Despite occasional engagement with the post-modern critique, archaeology as taught through introductory courses—and as we have witnessed it—remains divorced from history and heritage, and from its social and political contexts; ethics are merely a sidebar or footnote to the ‘real’ work of archaeology that is ‘discovering the past’.

Because “*how* people learn about historical injustices is as important as learning truths about *what* happened” (Regan 2010:11), relegating ethics, politics and “alternative” perspectives to the margins of the text likewise sends the message that these viewpoints are *legitimately* marginalized, peripheral and somehow *lesser than* ‘standard’ scientific interpretations. So-called neutral, objective or apolitical knowledge production thus remains the status quo of North American archaeology; yet the very “notion of value-freedom, of objectivity, imports a whole series of usually unrecognized values into archaeology” (Shanks and Tilley 1987:46). What always

seems to be forgotten, omitted from or simply downplayed in this narrative is that which is most important: the stories of the *still-ongoing* pain, suffering, alienation and genocide of the disenfranchised—communities torn away from their history, heritage and thus their future (Regan 2010:38; see also Basso 1996; Bodley 2008b; Mapes 2009; Rubertone 2008).

Having made these realizations concerning the structure of archaeology as it is taught and learned, we began looking for alternatives. We found many overlaps in the aims of post-colonial studies and our own interests, and appreciate the emphasis by these scholars on the complexities of colonization and on discourse as not merely reflecting but creating ‘reality’ (eg. Lydon and Rizvi 2010). However, we are unable to get past the appropriation of the term ‘post-colonial’ by North American scholars to refer to research taking place in *still-colonized and colonial countries*; in this context, ‘decolonization’ is at best a metaphor, at worst a rebranding of exploitation (Tuck and Yang 2012). As anti-colonial educators Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001:308) articulate,

It appears as if postcolonialists are in the process of conducting a funeral procession for the imaginary corpse of colonialism. However, evidently they are mistaken. This funeral is for the wrong corpse. There is nothing post about colonialism; there has never been, and there will never be, as long as our social relations are marked by relations of power and domination structured along the lines of race and other forms of difference (gender, sexuality, religion, language, and class).

Further, by focusing on ‘hybridity’ and ‘colonial encounters’, and in their emphasis on agency at times to the detriment of recognizing structure, we feel that North American post-colonial archaeologists run the risk of diminishing the *ongoing* violence of colonization and depoliticizing their own work, which necessarily remains a colonial endeavour. In this sense, post-colonial philosophy only requires scholars to *comment* on the impacts of colonization, not necessarily to *act* upon them; however, as Regan (2010:23) points out, educators “cannot just theorize about decolonizing and liberatory struggle: we must experience it, beginning with ourselves as individuals”. To us, then, post-colonialism in the context of North America is simply “a neocolonialist tool of the Western academy which functions to maintain Euro-American hegemony” (Liebmann 2008:12; see also Smith 1999:24; Hamilakis 2012).

For these reasons, we situate our own efforts within the framework of *anti-colonialism*⁵, a guiding philosophy defined broadly as “the active and proactive resistance to both old and new forms of colonization” (Mahuika 2008:10). While scholars in other disciplines have been discussing this and concomitant approaches (eg. feminist, queer, activist) for some time

(eg. Smith 1999; Brown and Strega 2005; murphy 2007), in archaeology the term *anti-colonial* is conspicuous only by its absence; we have not yet seen the term in archaeological usage. In fact, one colleague recently suggested to us that the term anti-colonial seemed “antiquated” for archaeology; yet, another professor of anthropology, when asked his views about anti-colonialism, suggested that “we aren’t ready for that yet”. We find it surprising that there is such confusion about the meaning and use of a term that, when translated literally, simply means *against colonialism*.

For us, an anti-colonial approach requires taking an *explicitly political stance of resistance to all forms of colonialism*. This is the heart of it. As a guiding philosophy rather than a circumscribed theory, anti-colonialism is aligned with anarchist approaches in anthropology (Graeber 2004; see also Kintz 1998) and draws from a wide range of allied theories and methodologies including critical, feminist, anti-oppressive, anti-racist and Indigenous approaches to research. Integral to these endeavours and an anti-colonial perspective is the idea of difference-centredness, which challenges normative assumptions and essentialist categories to instead acknowledge multiplicity in position, experience and perspective (Moosa-Mitha 2005:64). In this way, the “alternative” approaches noted in mainstream texts are removed from the margins and sidebars and, instead, are foregrounded.

We thus begin by interrogating our own ‘locations’ as researchers within a still-colonial institution, a premise adopted from the anti-oppressive practices of social workers Potts and Brown (2005). Their guiding principles include challenging the status quo, recognizing that all knowledge is socially constructed and political, and confronting how research mediates power and relationships. This builds on a range of Indigenous theory and approaches (eg. Two Bears 2010:304; Watkins 2000:178–180; Yellowhorn 2002) that prioritize people, ethics, relationships and well-being above all else, foregrounding cultural knowledge and values in pursuit of sovereignty, self-determination and ‘decolonization’ in archaeology (eg., Atalay 2007; Bruchac et al. 2010; Colwell-Chathaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010; Smith and Wobst 2005). Similar tenets have been espoused by archaeologists advocating critical theory, Marxist and activist archaeology (eg., Leone et al. 1987; McGuire 2008; Shanks and Tilley 1987; Stottman 2010).

A primary concern for many of these authors is the question of power and authority: who speaks, who decides, and, in archaeology, ‘Who Owns the Past?’ An anti-colonial approach is concerned with both bringing marginalized voices to the centre to ensure that those who speak, speak for themselves, and are heard (Tomlinson 1991:18), and ensuring that there is never one but multiple voices heard at any one time (1991:19). In this sense, anti-colonial archaeology might adopt Tomlinson’s (1991:19–28) challenges to cultural imperialism, which involve a critique of 1)

archaeologists as mediators or authorities of the past, 2) national(ist) archaeology, 3) global capitalism and CRM and 4) modernity and scientific epistemology.

Dei (2006:1) suggests that “[h]istory and context are crucial for anti-colonial undertakings”, which involve “a reclamation of the past”. Archaeology is thus well-situated to challenge colonial narratives, as it is a system of memory-making (Benton 2010) and the primary way in which the ‘pre-history’ of humanity is invented (Bender 1999). We therefore take after Holtorf’s (2005a:5) suggestion that “it is not what happened in the past that needs investigating but why so many of us are so interested in the past in the first place and what role archaeology plays in relation to that interest”. As such, we align our philosophy with reflexive anthropology, viewing archaeology as a mirror in which to reflect and better understand Western society today; thus we have moved away from studying ‘Others’ to studying ourselves.

Incorporating these perspectives and personal commitments has so far produced a few basic tenets that guide our own archaeological practice and thus our teaching strategies:

1) Archaeology is present.⁶ Because archaeology is necessarily infused with the concerns, ideas and values of the present, it is fundamentally about social power, globalization and inequality—a reflection of society today (Castañeda and Matthews 2008), and of our individual subjectivities (Ortner 2005). Using ‘the past’ as a springboard, we focus on ‘the present’ of archaeology to consider how contemporary ideology both structures all interpretation of history and constrains who is asking what research questions in the first place.

2) Archaeology is personal. By emphasizing ‘the present’ of archaeology, we are able to focus on the *impact* of archaeology on people and put relationships, ethics and empathy at the fore—rather than as a sidebar, footnote or epilogue to the ‘real’ work of archaeology. This leads us to consider how archaeology interferes with peoples’ heritage and thus their sense of identity. We also move away from ‘exotic’ artifacts and places and instead foreground the local, which is, in our experience, usually the least familiar. This opens the door to a conversation about colonialism in a particular place, thereby connecting global movements with local experiences, and about CRM in North America, which largely forms the practice of archaeology today.

3) Archaeology is political. By demonstrating the personal impacts of archaeology, we stress how research is not innocent or objective, and instead is mostly about social power—specifically, who has the power to authorize, control and regulate heritage (Smith 2004, 2006). We strive to reconnect and resituate archaeology in its social, political and historical contexts, which involves asking: Why archaeology? Where did this idea

come from in the first place? Who is doing it? And, why is it still being done today?

Teaching Anti-Colonial Archaeology

What matters is not to know the world but to change it. Frantz Fanon

George J. Sefa Dei's anti-colonial framework acknowledges the role of societal/institutional structures in *producing* and *reproducing endemic inequalities* (Dei and Asgharzadeh 2001:300). One goal of an anti-colonial approach is thus to "question, interrogate, and challenge the foundations of institutionalized power and privilege, and the accompanying rationale for dominance in social relations" (2001:300). Thus, applying our three tenets in teaching represents a form of *critical pedagogy*, widely discussed elsewhere (see Breunig 2011:21–23; prominent authors include: Michael Apple, George J. Sefa Dei, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, bell hooks, Peter McLaren). While there are varied conceptions and definitions of critical pedagogy, Breunig (2009:250) suggests that "the intent of critical pedagogy is to contribute to a more socially just world... the attainment of equality in every aspect of society. It is a philosophical and ideological construct—one that examines a multiplicity of issues pertaining to egalitarianism". Numerous critical pedagogues argue that critical theory "needs to move beyond educational ideology, examining how it can be meaningfully employed in classroom practice" (Breunig 2011:2). This maps well onto an anti-colonial approach, which is at its core a philosophy of activism.

Like Hamilakis (2004), we have found that pedagogy in archaeology is rarely discussed. While this *may* be changing in some corners, for example in European archaeology (Corbishley 2011), public archaeology (Skeates et al. 2012) and/or maritime archaeology (*Journal of Maritime Archaeology* 3[2], 2008), our research reveals teaching to be largely a peripheral subject. In North America, discussion of pedagogy reached a crescendo in the 1990s, a period associated with the Society for American Archaeology's (SAA) efforts to redefine archaeology's image (Bender and Smith 1998; Dongoske et al. 2000; Pyburn and Smith 2001; Swidler et al. 1997). This was in response to vocal and widely publicized Indigenous resistance to ongoing policies and practices (Echo-Hawk and Echo-Hawk 1994; Pyburn 1999). In the United States, the focal point of resistance was the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (Swidler et al. 1997). Out of this conflict was born the SAA-published *Teaching Archaeology in the Twenty-First Century* (Bender and Smith 2000), an edited volume containing more than twenty contributions on a wide range of

subjects. The book was written to offer “ideas on how to open archaeological education to more students, not just those seeking a Ph.D.” and included “suggestions for a movement to provide greater access to the field”. Since *Teaching Archaeology*, however, conversation about pedagogy in North America appears to have fallen back into the shadows (one exception is Pyburn 2005). While the subject occasionally arises (eg. Smith 2008), most conversation is relegated to teaching and learning as it pertains to ‘the field’—that is, in the context of archaeological field schools (eg. Pyburn 2003; Silliman 2008).

From all of this, then, we find ourselves generally agreeing with Hamilikis (2004:288), who concludes that “[t]he academic landscape in which the teaching of archaeology takes place today in most Western countries is bleak”. In what follows, we outline a few of the techniques we are using in the classroom to challenge the status quo. We view teaching as both a form of practice and of public archaeology, and the classroom as very much ‘the field’. Thus, the approaches and activities discussed and reflections offered in this paper may be considered ‘notes from the field’, shared in the hopes of inspiring other teachers and prompting open and honest dialogue between instructors and students on pedagogy in archaeology.

As a Teacher...

Since 2005, I (Hutchings) have been employed as a part-time or ‘sessional’ lecturer. For a few months in 2010, I travelled up to 5 h one way—including two ferry crossings, one international border crossing, plus an overnight stay—to teach my (arguably low paying) ‘Introduction to Archaeology’ course. I did it because I deeply enjoy the challenges and rewards that come with teaching—and because I have been privileged with the luxury to set my own curriculum, including textbook selection and course schedules, including meeting lengths and times. My Introduction to Archaeology course (ANTH 210), which I have now taught six times, is a five-credit-hour/quarter course that meets twice a week, with each meeting lasting 2.5 h in length. This schedule accommodates both longer in-class activities and my other ‘job’ as a PhD student. My approach to this course has changed over time to reflect my growing dissatisfaction with mainstream archaeological practice.

My course goals are kept simple and flexible to account for the many constraints common to part-time thus often new instructors (eg. limited resources; unfamiliarity with their department, institution or surrounding community) (see MacDonald 2013). I use a mainstream text, as opposed to a reading package,⁷ as a springboard to engage students in critical thinking about archaeology, heritage, and ‘the past’. My course, outlined in Table 3, uses Kelly and Thomas’ *Archaeology* as its platform but divides it

Table 3 Syllabus for Hutchings' Introduction to Archaeology Course

Introduction to Archaeology Syllabus	
Course Outline	Course Content
Part One: Context and Theory	<p>> Film: <i>Darkon</i></p> <p>1. Meet Some Real Archaeologists</p> <p>2. The Structure of Archaeological Inquiry</p> <p>> Suppl. book: <i>Breaking Ground: The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the Unearthing of Tse-whit-zen Village</i> (Mapes 2009)</p> <p>3. Doing Fieldwork: Survey</p> <p>4. Doing Fieldwork: Excavation</p> <p>> Suppl. article: 'The Ancient Maya and the Political Present' (Wilk 1985)</p> <p>15. Caring for America's Cultural Heritage</p> <p>16. Archaeology's Future</p> <p>> Film: <i>Who Owns the Past?</i></p> <p>5. Geoarchaeology and Site Formation Processes</p> <p>> Video: <i>Time Team</i> (European)</p> <p>6. Chronology Building: How to Get a Date</p> <p>7. Time, Space, and Form</p> <p>8. Taphonomy, Experimental- and Ethno-Arch.</p> <p>9. People, Plants, and Animals in the Past</p> <p>10. Bioarchaeological Approaches to the Past</p> <p>11. Reconstructing Social and Political Systems</p> <p>12. The Archaeology of the Mind</p> <p>13. Key Transitions in World Prehistory</p> <p>14. Historical Archaeology</p> <p>> Film: <i>Indian America: A Gift From the Past</i></p>
Part Two: Method and Interpretation	<p>Wk1: Introduction: Representing the Past-Archaeology and Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Wk2: Philosophy of Archaeology/Survey and Excavation</p> <p>Wk3: Who Owns the Past? Archaeological Ethics and Cultural Resource Management (Part I)</p> <p>Wk4: Who Owns the Past? Archaeological Ethics and Cultural Resource Management (Part II)</p> <p>Wk5: Introduction to Archaeological Methods</p> <p>Wk 6: Archaeological Dating: Time, Space, and Form/Applied and Contemporary Archaeologies</p> <p>Wk7: Site Formation Processes/Experimental- and Ethno-Archaeologies</p> <p>Wk8: Environmental Arch./Social and Political Archaeologies</p> <p>Wk9: Cognitive Archaeologies/Understanding 'World Prehistory'</p> <p>Wk10: Historic, Recent and Indigenous Archaeologies</p>

Left and middle columns are the course outline and weekly topics. Numbered entries in the right column are course readings from Kelly and Thomas' (2010) *Archaeology*. Bolded entries denote major course benchmarks. Arrowed (>) entries are supplemental materials

into two parts: “Context and Theory” and “Method and Interpretation”. As shown, the weaknesses or limitations of a mainstream text can be counter-balanced in part by changing the order in which chapters are to be read. In my case, Kelly and Thomas’ last two chapters on heritage stewardship and the future are moved up to support the course’s early focus on ethics and philosophy. Rather than treat these subjects as afterthoughts, which is typical of introductory textbooks and presumably the courses that use them, ethics, philosophy and cultural resource management are instead treated first and in depth.

The jumping off point for this course, which follows a short introduction to various definitions of archaeology, is the documentary *Darkon* (See-Think Films 2006). The film follows the Live Action Role Playing (LARP) community that is “Darkon”, a “full-contact medieval fantasy wargaming group”. This prompts a directed but wide-ranging conversation in class, often over an hour in length, on such subjects as: European heritage and the media (there is a strong theme developed between Mel Gibson’s *Braveheart*, as illuminated through *Darkon*, and what students perceive to be European heritage); the contemporary (it challenges ideas about how heritage and power are manifested in the present); social power (it is fundamentally about war and control of territory); and the individual (it highlights the role of individuals in controlling and abusing ‘heritage’). Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the documentary is its ability to blur the lines between fantasy and reality, the present and the past, and heritage and power. As one student responded to the film, “It made me uncomfortable”—an emotion recognized as a fundamental step towards critical enquiry (Regan 2010:52), and inherent in anthropology (Breitborde 1997:41). At this point, my five-point “baseline” for the course is set:

1. **What is archaeology?** The study of people through and in relation to their material culture.
2. **Why does archaeology matter?** It produces ‘the past’.
3. **Why does ‘the past’ matter?** It is used to construct heritage in the present.
4. **What is heritage?** It is who you are, where you come from, and who you want to be (ie. it is *personal*).
5. **Therefore:** Archaeology has a direct impact on people’s lives today (i.e., it is *political*).

Having made the class aware of some of the philosophical tensions that underlie studies of ‘the past’, I situate the course for students by providing a detailed introduction to who I am and how I got here, including an overview of my changing perspectives about archaeology. I then introduce

the mainstream foundations of archaeology while at the same time affirming its relevance to my students' lives. This is achieved first by introducing the framework of "deconstruction" to the students, which is presented in our *Archaeology* text through the work of philosopher Jacques Derrida and archaeologist Richard Wilk. Kelly and Thomas (2010:41) offer deconstruction as the effort to "expose the assumptions behind the alleged objective and systematic search for knowledge". Their archaeological example of this effort is Wilk's 1985 essay *The Ancient Maya and the Political Present*, which I also use as a supplementary required reading (Table 3). For Wilk (1985:307), "What gives power to the past, and to archaeology, is the way it is used to political and philosophical ends".

With this general understanding of archaeology's political aspects, I make the discussion *political* and *local*, while tied to larger, global processes of capitalism and colonialism. This is accomplished via the course's supplementary required reading, Lynda Mapes' (2009) *Breaking Ground: The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the Unearthing of Tse-whit-zen Village*. Mapes, a *Seattle Times* journalist, presents students with an accessible, historically situated and emotionally moving account of a local Indigenous group's recent experiences with archaeology. Her very personal account provides context for and "brings home" such key themes as: seeing archaeology as fundamentally about heritage and memory (forgetting), what Mapes calls "collective amnesia"; contemplating the destructive outcomes of (commercial) archaeological practice; considering cultural resource management in light of population growth, economic development and globalization; and thinking about the place of racism and colonialism in contemporary archaeology. The Tse-whit-zen story, which unfolded between 2002 and 2008 in Port Angeles, Washington State, involved the disruption of 276 full burials and 500 partial burials, expenditures in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and ultimately the significant delay of a major state-sponsored construction project. Yet, as one individual told Mapes (2009:100), "No one said anything about Indians. Or history. Or burials. Or waterfront villages. No one".

The classic 10–12 page end-of-term research paper is not used in this course. Rather than asking students to simply 'organize facts' about the past, which in our experience often results in (rambling) tributes to the ancient technological wonders of Egypt and Rome, I use two shorter reflexive essays. The first of these draws on *Breaking Ground* and students' personal experiences with Indigenous (archaeological) heritage, the second on the relationship between traditional knowledge and science. A reflexive assignment provides the space for creative expression, encourages students to critically consider their own experiences, and makes the subject matter personal and emotional, resulting in a deeper engagement with archaeology (Hamilakis 2004). I end the term with an optional assignment for

automatic extra-credit whereby students can provide a critical review of the course, affording them the opportunity to ‘speak back’ to their instruction. These are used, along with formal course evaluations, to gauge student perspectives and reception to course material and continually improve the course.

As a Teaching Assistant...

Over the past 6 years, I (La Salle) have had the experience of acting as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for an ‘Introduction to World Archaeology’ class three times, with three different professors, using two textbooks—Scarre’s *The Human Past* and Chazan’s *World Prehistory*. Acting in this position involved attending lectures and holding weekly tutorials, wherein the class divided into smaller groups for 1-h, TA-led discussions. For two of the courses, the material covered during tutorials was left entirely up to me and the other TAs; for the other course, all topics, terms and ideas to be covered were provided by the instructor each week, at times with structured lab-based activities. Thus, the level of control I had over the material to be presented to students varied; however, the *method* of delivery and *examples* used to illustrate concepts were, for the most part, at my discretion. These tutorials offered the opportunity to delve deeper into some of the ideas presented by the instructor in lectures, but also acted as a parallel conversation whereby I was able to challenge some of those ideas and the textbook. This offered students a multivocal introduction to archaeology that reflects its reality—that no two archaeologists think the same way.

My approach to tutorials has been to use activities that both convey the concepts that students need to learn in order to pass the course, and articulate how archaeology is personal, political and all about the present. Here, I provide three examples of activities I have used in class that hold these lessons at their core.

For the first tutorial and as an introduction to archaeology, I devised an exercise that highlights the challenges of seeking ‘identity’ in material culture. In small groups, students were provided with bags containing a number of objects that I had assembled, which were presented as a fictitious person’s trash. In the first bag was a candy package, small plastic animal figurines, a marble, a glow-in-the-dark pen and a ball of clay; in the second bag, a small piece of knitting, an empty package of stomach remedy, a cough-drop wrapper, and a page out of a television guide; so on. I then asked students to think about who this garbage might have belonged to, offering that archaeologists are, at some level, always trying to understand the people behind the ‘things’. Their responses were as I had predicted and *intended*: they identified what amounted to stereotypes, for example ‘a

child', 'an elderly woman', 'a businessman', etc. Our discussion emphasized that while we *can* get a sense of people through their things, we always bring our own assumptions and experiences into all interpretation; thus, *context* is everything, because in fact all of these objects belonged to me. It was a simple but effective exercise to demonstrate that archaeology is often less about the object and more about who is looking at the object—getting at the *personal* and *present* of archaeology.

Another exercise involved a review in small groups of online news articles about archaeology, organized geographically into those dealing with Europe, Africa, North America, Australia and Asia. I asked students to review the articles and then provide the class with a summary of what topics were primarily focused on in their region, after which we discussed these trends and offered possible explanations. For example, articles about archaeology in Africa mostly dealt with the earliest humans rather than recent cultures, while in North America, nearly all articles were seeking the "First Americans". Generalized into these regional or national themes, the political motivations behind archaeological research were easier for students to recognize and articulate, and the ensuing discussions raised questions about media representation, education, and what history is taught and why, as students sought to situate current archaeological research in its contemporary *political* contexts.

It was more challenging to bring an anti-colonial ethic into my tutorials when required content was provided by the instructor. In these cases, while I did not have control over *what* I was teaching, I had control over *how* it was delivered. For example, in the week that I was covering 'Cognitive Archaeology', I was provided with a list of concepts and terms to explain, including symbolism, cosmology, ideology, religion. Rather than use the 'exotic' Peruvian case study suggested by the instructor, I instead took this opportunity to get personal and *local*. As a class, we first discussed what such terms as 'ideology' meant, and then viewed a slideshow depicting landscapes, architecture and heritage monuments. We discussed how architectural styles such as Canada's Parliament in Ottawa recall earlier state buildings like British Parliament, which in turn remind us of *church* architecture from centuries previous—all representing landscapes of power. We deconstructed the messages conveyed in formal gardens, monuments to European explorers, clock towers and flagpoles, until eventually the conversation shifted to consider the university buildings and campus features that surrounded us, highlighting the imperialism of the academy. Students were very enthusiastic about this exercise, which turned our gaze towards those things that are so taken-for-granted, normalized and naturalized that they usually do not get even a second glance, never mind a critical stare. In the end, we made the familiar seem unfamiliar, which is, as I see it, the greatest strength of anthropology and archaeology. I am confident that my

students will never look at their own university campus in quite the same way.

These exercises, among others, have provided a way for me, as a Teaching Assistant, to use my power in the classroom to challenge the ideology that students are learning, not just in World Archaeology courses, but in academia and society in general. However, the power of a TA is limited: I do not set the course agenda, write the exam questions, or design the assignments or essays—and when students ask me what definition of ‘archaeology’ they *need* to know for the exam, I am forced to set aside what I expressed to them as *my* vision and revert to the textbook or professor as ‘the authority’. Thus, while students may take away from my tutorials that there is room in archaeology for creativity, for difference of opinion and for pushing boundaries and definitions to do things ‘differently’, they also learn that, in the end, it always comes down to power and authority. My hope is that by helping students to recognize power, ideology and oppression in heritage, they will also seek out ways to resist it.

Discussion

We do not err because truth is difficult to see. It is visible at a glance. We err because this is more comfortable. Alexander Solzhenitsyn

In part resulting from our own engagement with teaching it, we now view archaeology as a heuristic device—a useful tool to reflect upon and better understand the world and ourselves. As a colonial(ist) discipline rooted in imperialism, capitalism and claims to knowledge bolstered by nation-building agendas, archaeology is all about social power (Deloria 1997; Shanks and Tilley 1987; Smith 2004; Trigger 2006); thus, we have tried to use our social power to teach a different kind of archaeology. So how successful have we been? What have been the benefits of this so far, and what challenges remain?

After teaching two terms of anti-colonial introductory archaeology, the results have been mixed. By assigning reflexive essays rather than research papers, and offering a ‘critical course assessment’ extra-credit exercise, it was possible to have direct feedback from students to assess what they are getting out of the class. One major outcome has been that many students appear to honestly reflect upon their life experiences, relating the course material to events in their own lives, and, as a result, often find fault with their formal education concerning history, colonization and Indigenous peoples. The comments “I had no idea”, “I never learned this stuff” or “I can’t believe this happened right here” were most prolific, and profound.

This was most apparent in the written assignment based on Mapes' *Breaking Ground*. Many students felt deeply troubled by this introduction to both the past impacts of colonization and its continuing presence in the form of commercial archaeology (ie. CRM), which took place at a local site unbeknownst to most of the class. As one student explained, "A lot of the students seemed to be incredibly distraught at hearing that archaeology today is more about cultural resource management to clear sites to make room for condos and skyscrapers than preserving the past". The Tse-Whit-Zen story invited a very personal engagement with the text and most students expressed shocked disbelief, outrage and empathy at ongoing "colonial amnesia", with several students asking, "What can I do to stop this?"

Recognizing the enormous gap between history 'as it happened' and history 'as it is taught', many students came to see interpretation in archaeology as more about perspective and priorities than truths or facts about the past; some defined archaeology as storytelling. In World Archaeology tutorials as well, students came to view archaeology more as the study of the relationship between 'people and their stuff' than necessarily 'of the past', and began to make connections between their contemporary landscapes, what ideas about heritage are being communicated, and why. Students of both courses commonly stated that they felt encouraged to think critically and question everything, including the material that they were presented with in the very classes we were teaching; thus, we typically saw a wide range of opinions towards science, history, knowledge and education in general.

These are all positive outcomes and we are gratified that some of our main goals of teaching anti-colonial archaeology are being met: connecting the past with present, making archaeology personal and demonstrating that heritage is political. However, serious concerns remain. Hamilakis has asked why there is "so little discussion on pedagogy in archaeology" (2004:287). Our conclusion, after the last few years of questioning, conversing, critiquing and challenging, is that the answer is simple: *most people don't want to hear the 'real' story of archaeology.*

Many students wrote in their course review essays that, instead of dealing with the philosophy and ethics of archaeology, they wanted to focus on the "good parts"—the excitement, discovery and exploration—and the 'exotic' side of archaeology (the "cool civilizations and artifacts from the past", as one student put it), not the "reality", which they consistently described as being "negative", "depressing" and "discouraging". Some students questioned why I (Hutchings) would continue to teach a subject that I was clearly critical of, and these students gave the course lower 'scores' in their evaluations. Perhaps it is, as Watkins (2000:179) suggests, "more difficult to be liked when one 'tells it like it is' than when one glosses over issues and placates the public".

While many students were receptive to challenging conventional representations of archaeology, it seemed that some students either sought or expected a Discovery Channel or even Disneyfied version of archaeology—an uncomplicated yet seductive tale of exploration, discovery, adventure and wonder (Haviland 1997:34; Holtorf 2005a:140–141; Hall 2006:203)—not a critical review of a problematic practice as it often happens. The departure from archaeology as portrayed in mass media was both welcomed and critiqued, yet some students were reluctant to engage with ideas that challenged their preconceptions, which is, in theory, one goal of a university education. One student wrote, “I took this course to find out what it all means, not to be asked why it mattered”. Indeed, anthropologist Hoodfar (1992:304) identifies one aim of critical pedagogy as being “to encourage students to develop a critical and analytical approach to the social systems of which they are a part”. However, Hoodfar also found in her classes that students were not necessarily willing or interested in developing a critical approach, which “often entails unlearning the learning methodology they have relied on throughout their schooling” (309). This can be a painful process; as one student described, “Sometimes the past is hard to face. Perhaps it is guilt that plagues me. Some of the material would haunt me long after class was over for the day. Being a human being is hard sometimes”.

Students also commented on the “political” presentation of archaeology in the course, with reception varying from those who welcomed this discussion to those who felt that “politicizing the classroom” was inappropriate. This speaks to the widespread view that academia and its employees are not only capable of objectivity, but bear a responsibility to be ‘neutral’, to simply present all the ‘facts’ and leave students to decide for themselves (Pyburn 2005:2). The claim to neutrality operates to hide governing epistemologies, and the jury has been in for some time now: there is nothing neutral about archaeology (Kohl 1998; Meskell and Pels 2005; Samuels 2008; Trigger 2006). The charge of being “political” is therefore one we freely admit to given that the goal of an anti-colonial approach is to be explicit about one’s activism. We feel it is not just appropriate but *necessary* to speak against oppression while teaching a discipline founded upon the exploitation of Indigenous heritage in a colonized country. Sometimes, the very act of drawing attention to and questioning the foundations of power can be viewed as political, and we (like Meskell 2005:123) do not view political engagement as “negatively charged”.

Inherent in this approach, therefore, is the risk of being marginalized or dismissed by our students, and by the wider archaeological community, as ‘fringe’ or ‘radical’ (Holtorf 2005b), thus losing our position to speak and be heard. Brownlee (2010:65) notes that “the only way to change the system is from inside the profession”, which ultimately motivated him to

become an Indigenous archaeologist. We feel similarly, however, we also question trying to *change* structure while *adhering* to structure, and we are perpetually plagued by this paradox. Recognizing the privilege and responsibility in our roles as teachers (Dabulkis-Hunter 2002:74), we strive and, at times, struggle to both foreground an anti-colonial critique of power and simultaneously teach the mainstream methods and theories—the philosophies and foundations of the discipline—that students will need in order to continue in archaeology. Our goal, then, is not to *limit* access to knowledge, but to increase access to a wider range of perspectives, encouraging our students to be critical of *all* of it. That said, the reflexive essays that students write are potentially offset by the conventional, multiple-choice ‘fact-based’ Scantron exams that allow a part-time sessional instructor to mark perhaps hundreds of exams in an acceptable timeframe. Indeed, such structural limitations inherently limit our ability to challenge the system.

Not surprisingly, we have encountered resistance by colleagues and professors to the (well-supported) premise that archaeology perpetuates cultural imperialism. Even when there is agreement that archaeology has *historically* been aligned with imperialist goals, there is often reluctance to consider that this might *still* be the case—that nothing has fundamentally changed in archaeology’s epistemology, ontology or endeavour. If archaeology is truly different, when did it *truly* change, and what event(s) can demonstrate that it is *truly* better? Perhaps even more importantly, how does one seek social justice in the present if injustice is presented as a thing of the past? Like Yellowhorn, we await evidence of such meaningful change; until then, “the dominant discourse in archaeology is still just that—dominant” (Smith 2004:12).

We have also been critiqued for our teaching approach by some who suggest that undergraduate students are “not ready” to learn about archaeology’s position within the imperial world or its role in producing the illusion of evolutionary progress (Bodley 2008a:31–32; Moghaddam 1997:127–144). We wholeheartedly disagree with the assertion that students are not socially or psychologically prepared to think about these ideas. In our experience, many students are frustrated with academia’s inability to be honest and, as a consequence, describe our courses and tutorials as “refreshing”, “inspiring” and “different” because we tackle these serious issues head-on. As one student said, “We need more professors that push us outside our comfort zones and make us approach topics that can be difficult to discuss”. Likewise, Hammond and colleagues (2009:164) found that students are interested in learning *why* anthropology should matter to them and “what it has to say about their own beliefs, practices, and actions”. Because introductory courses are often taken as electives by students from other disciplines, they typically represent the *only* opportunity

archaeologists get to engage with these students. There is no further chance, as has been suggested to us, to address or complicate the rather simplistic notions taught in introductory courses in later, more ‘advanced’ archaeology courses. We only get one get one shot at this.

This is especially crucial because students are *not* empty vessels; they come to us ‘pre-loaded’ with all the baggage that accompanies global capitalism (Haviland 1997:34–35; Pyburn 2005:2). It is therefore not enough to simply adopt the textbook’s ‘neutral’ presentation of deeply-rooted and intrinsic problems—often presented in a single lecture on ‘ethics’—to address the ill-effects of archaeology, and it is unlikely that these students will leave class at the end of the term ‘filled’ with a critical understanding of the discipline/institution, in all its complexities. Indeed, despite the honest reflection expressed by some students in our courses, we still received papers and exam answers that explain the development of civilization from ineffectual and intellectually challenged ‘hunter-gatherers’ into agricultural states, with Western society described as the culmination of technological and moral ‘progress’. Pyburn (2005:3) describes the same problem:

[Students] have grown up with a folk model of human history in which cultures “progress” from simple to complex, from undeveloped to developed...in the “natural” order of things. This view has everything to do with the political present and almost nothing to do with archaeological data.

These ideas are reinforced more frequently and forcefully through everyday media, and the onslaught is relentless (Tomlinson 1991). Thus, critique must come early and often, and be woven into the very fabric of a course—its beginning, middle and end. The challenge is not simply with engaging the student, but with engaging all that the student has encountered (and been socialized to) prior to arriving in our classroom. This typically includes confronting at least 18 years of mostly uninterrupted participation in the hegemonic “culture of capitalism” (Tomlinson 1991) or “culture of consumption” (Bodley 2008a).

The concerns we have about introductory archaeology courses thus reflect a much larger problem in North American society. After failing to relate a “critical” archaeology of Annapolis to the public, Leone (2005:184) reflected that, in part, this was because his audience was comprised of “members of the middle class, who were largely uninterested in serious social change”. This may simply be because “radical change” is not in the interests of “the dominant majority”, which instead “is apt to reinforce benevolent imperialism and colonial attitudes, often unconsciously” (Regan 2010:23; see also Kahan et al. 2011). In other words, there is little interest in the “negative reality” if it upsets the comfortable lives of the majority; the same is true within archaeology and without. Teaching is hard work,

and teaching something *different* can be a soul-wearing endeavour, especially when every other aspect of North American society propagates colonial values—a staunch and potent ideological concoction of growth, development and progress, the hallmarks of today's global 'civilization'.

Bearing all of this in mind, should the take-away message of these introductory courses be that archaeological science uncovers the 'true' past? That humans have 'progressed' technologically, socially and politically through time? And that a 'middle road' compromise truly balances all (or even most) perspectives of the past? Or, should students leave class equipped with an understanding of how power and ideology operate to perpetuate oppression? Armed with the tools to critically examine not just archaeology but all knowledge in its personal, political and present contexts? And inspired to be active, engaged and empowered in the ongoing struggle for social justice?

Conclusion

I am a teacher full of the spirit of hope, in spite of all signs to the contrary.
Paulo Freire

We have shown in this paper how archaeology, as we have seen it taught in university, perpetuates cultural imperialism and scientific colonialism and reifies the values of a dominant and dominating society. If archaeologists practice what they teach, then archaeology remains firmly a colonial project. In line with many scholars of critical pedagogy and anti-oppressive research, we advocate a shift to anti-colonialism in the classroom, wherein the central endeavour ceases to be celebrating the wonders of antiquity and instead becomes one of disrupting the status quo. We are trying to do this and have met with some success, but remain frustrated and, at times, exhausted from battling on all fronts. After all, it has been said that globalization is the new imperialism (Dei 2006:1). Thus, it is not just some of our students, professors and peers who may disagree with us, but our own society, a culture built upon the very foundations we are trying to shake.

As such, an anti-colonial archaeology cannot exist in isolation but instead must be tied to strategies of similar resistance taking place on all fronts.⁸ We have found some allies in archaeology (eg. Kehoe 1998; Yellowhorn 2002; Smith 2004; Holtorf 2005a; Leone 2005; Hamilakis 2007; Pyburn 2007; McGuire 2008; Mullins 2008; Skeates et al. 2012; Graves-Brown et al. 2013), and are grateful for and find comfort in their words, experiences and ideas. In general, however, archaeologists are notoriously

conservative and, more often than not, still describe their work as scientific, objective, impartial, neutral and/or apolitical (Meskell 2002:280). We have thus been prompted to seek a ‘community’ outside of North American archaeology, and even outside of archaeology. We are turning to disciplines like social work, where people are actively engaging with these issues (Alexander 2008; Bell 2010; Brown and Strega 2005; Coates 2003), and placing our own form of archaeology under the umbrella that is critical heritage studies (Harrison 2013; Holtorf 2005a, 2007; Smith 2004, 2006; Smith and Waterton 2009; see also Benton 2010; Harrison 2010; West 2010).

This has provided clarity, context and inspiration, and reassured us that we are not mad, we are not making this up and we are not alone in striving to tell stories that counter the meta-narrative. We are charting a new course for change—but it is change that must take place both within the archaeological community and without. Whether this may be achieved remains to be seen; yet we remain ever hopeful, and determined, to make it so.

Postscript

In writing this paper, we sought to specifically address “our” community: instructors of archaeology in colonial contexts. In particular, we aimed to reach archaeologists teaching in northern North America because this is where we both have learned and taught the archaeology that we critiqued at the outset of this paper. However, in so doing one reviewer of this paper suggested that we reproduce a colonial structure by ignoring the geopolitics of knowledge production, assuming a metropolitan baseline for language use, and referencing only Anglo authors and scholars. In hindsight, we agree that, situated in an international journal with global readership, this paper is exclusionary and risks presenting our version of archaeology as normative or universal.

As we alluded to in the text, we also agree with Nicholas and Hollowell (2007) in that all academic knowledge production is by, for and about ‘the core’. Universities are inherently imperial centres; they are bastions of colonialism. While we are writing from the global north, the same paradigm exists in all core-periphery geopolitical relationships. This suggests that an anti-colonial archaeology may never truly be possible, for it may instead represent the resistance that is necessary to both stave off and, paradoxically, sustain colonial domination. We are left with a lingering discomfort as to the very real possibility that an anti-colonial archaeology may be just another form of hegemony. It is our hope that by honestly and sometimes painfully engaging with these critiques, we may at least begin to understand how insidious colonialism is, and how elusive an anti-colonial ethic may truly be.

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Notes

1. This essay represents the convergence of two papers presented at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Seattle, Washington, March 29–April 2, 2011 (Hutchings 2011; La Salle 2011). For a discussion of how “responsible archaeology is applied anthropology”, see Pyburn and Wilk (2000); see also Shackel and Chamber (2004) and Stapp (2012).
2. Part-time lecturers are labelled ‘sessionals’ in Canada and ‘adjuncts’ in the United States. About half of all North American faculty are sessionals (Cumó 2012), and around three-quarters of all faculty are ‘contingent’, which includes part-timers, non-tenure track full-timers and graduate assistants (Bradbury 2013). Terms commonly used to describe this situation include “alarming”, “increase” and “insecurity” (MacDonald 2013).
3. It has been suggested to us that instructors rarely teach the textbook directly and instead use it as a foil, drawing on some sections to critique. This has not been our experience as students or teaching assistants of introductory courses using these textbooks. Further, this does not negate but instead supports our conclusions about the apolitical stance of textbooks that are commonly employed. In addition, this reinforces our point that there is something fundamentally wrong with mainstream archaeology texts.
4. Our focus on “relative points of view” brings about awareness of the central place of language within identity and culture. As Stroińska (2001:1) observes, “Language is more than just an innocent tool used for communication. It is a powerful instrument, which may be used to enable exchange of thoughts and expression of feelings. However, it can also be used as a weapon for destruction, alienation, exclusion or thought manipulation”. How archaeologists communicate, therefore, is of critical importance (Holtorf 2007). This extends to textbook imagery. To paraphrase Hammond et al. (2009:150), imagery in an assigned text is often the first message North American students receive about archaeology.

5. A useful and relevant comparison for the post- vs. anti-colonial debate can be found in environmental discourse, specifically the philosophical imbroglio that is “light green” vs. “dark green”. Following Dobson (1990:13, as presented in Chase 1991:7), “conventional environmentalism” represents an imperial approach to nature that argues that our environmental problems “can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption”. Alternatively, “radical ecologism” raises the ethical ideal, arguing that environmental stewardship “presupposes radical changes in our relationship with it, and in our mode of social and political life”. A useful point of entry into this debate in North American archaeology and heritage studies emerges from Thomas King’s (2009:7) observation that “we now have bureaucracies overseeing environmental impact assessment (EIA) and cultural resource management (CRM), and we have well-heeled private companies doing EIA and CRM work under contract. What we do not have is an orderly system for actually, honestly considering and trying to reduce impacts on our natural and cultural heritage. It’s all pretty much a sham”.
6. One reviewer suggested that by taking a “presentist” approach—which we freely admit to doing (we are self-identified constructivists)—we are denying thus devaluing ‘the past’. We disagree with this critique. Rather, we follow Holtorf (2005a:158–160) in this regard: “Claiming that the past is of the present makes the past no less significant today. It paves the way for the assertion that the significance of the past is defined by all of us, rather than by the few who assume position of intellectual authority from which they state how archaeological sites and artifacts are properly appreciated and ultimately what they really mean for us”. What gives heritage meaning are people (actors) experiencing (acting) in the present, the *living people* who actively (re)new, (re)produce, (re)construct, (re)shape, (re)read, (re)experience, (re)celebrate and ultimately re-member ‘the past’ (see Benton 2010).
7. Reading packages are an excellent and cost-effective alternative to textbooks, however, they require much work to assemble and years of tinkering to perfect, neither of which limited-term instructors are able to offer. Also, while locally produced alternative textbooks may be available to some (in our case, Muckle 2006, 2008), such works likely lack the supporting materials typical of mainstream texts (eg. prepared exam questions, websites), thus significant time is needed to fully develop these into a course for hundreds of students, again something that limited-term teachers are typically unable (or unwilling) to offer. In addition, these may be limited in geographic scope,

thus unsuitable for the global expectations/requirements of a ‘world’ or ‘introductory’ course.

8. See, for example: Alexander 2008; Alfred 2009; Andrews 2006; Biro 2011; Foster et al. 2010; Hall and Fenelon 2009; Heinberg 2003; Homer-Dixon 2006; Jaimes 1992; Plant and Plant 1992; Ritzer 1993; Stapp 2012; Williams 2012.

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