INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL ISSUE ON CO-CREATION

Co-Creation and Public Archaeology

Elizabeth Bollwerk, Robert Connolly, and Carol McDavid

This paper serves a dual purpose. First, it is an introduction that aims to frame a set of papers that describe and discuss the process of co-creation in a variety of archaeological projects (see *Advances in Archaeological Practice: A Journal of the Society for American Archaeology* 3[3]). We discuss the challenge of community engagement in public archaeology and offer co-creative practice as a method for improving our relationships with descendant communities and the general public. We begin by providing a definition of public archaeology and a brief overview of its evolution over the last few decades. Second, we discuss co-creation's origins and utilization in the museum and business sectors, where the process is applied to address challenges similar to those faced by archaeologists. We then demonstrate how co-creation fits into the public/applied archaeological framework. We argue that co-creation must be both *co* (that is, share power

ABSTRACT

This paper serves a dual purpose. First it is an introduction that aims to frame a set of papers that describe and discuss the process of co-creation in a variety of archaeological projects. We discuss the challenge of community engagement in public archaeology and offer co-creative practice as a method for improving our relationships with descendant communities and the general public. We begin by providing a definition of public archaeology and a brief overview of its evolution over the last few decades. Second, we discuss co-creation's origins and utilization in the museum and business sectors, where the process is applied to address challenges similar to those archaeologists face. We then demonstrate how co-creation fits into the public/applied archaeological framework. We argue that co-creation must be both *co* (that is, share power in some way) and *creative* (that is, not just do the same things better, but do something new). Within this framework, we discuss how co-creation aligns with and informs current trends in public archaeology practice drawing from the case studies included in this issue. We conclude that co-creation has an important place on the collaborative continuum and can help our discipline become more responsive to the needs of our many publics.

Este trabajo tiene un doble propósito. Primero, se trata de una introducción que tiene como objetivo enmarcar este conjunto de trabajos que describen y analizan el proceso de la "creación en colaboración" en una variedad de proyectos arqueológicos. Primero, discutimos el desafío de la participación comunitaria en la arqueología pública y ofrece la práctica de la creación en colaboración como un método para mejorar nuestras relaciones con las comunidades de afro descendientes y el público en general. Comenzamos por dar una definición de arqueología pública y una breve descripción de su evolución en las últimas décadas. En segundo lugar, discutimos los orígenes de la creación en colaboración y su uso en el museo y en los sectores de negocios, donde el proceso se implementa para enfrentar retos similares a los de los arqueólogos. A continuación, demostramos como la creación en colaboración se inscribe en el marco de la arqueología pública/aplicada. Debatimos que la creación en colaboración debe ser tanto en colaboración (es decir, compartir de alguna forma el poder) y creativa (es decir, no sólo hacer las mismas cosas de mejor forma, sino hacer algo nuevo). Dentro de este marco, debatimos como la creación en colaboración informa y se alinea con las tendencias actuales en la práctica de la arqueología pública a partir de los estudios de caso que se incluyen en este número. Concluimos que la creación en colaboración tiene un lugar importante en la continuidad de la colaboración y puede ayudar a nuestra disciplina a ser más receptiva a las necesidades de nuestros muchos públicos.

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in some way) and *creative* (that is, not just do the same things better, but do something *new)* (McDavid 2014). Within this framework we discuss how co-creation aligns with and informs current trends in public archaeology practice drawing from the case studies included in this issue. We conclude that co-creation has an important place on the collaborative continuum (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008) and can help our discipline become more responsive to the needs of our many publics.

PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Before explaining co-creation, we must first provide our definition of public archaeology. Public archaeology *is any endeavor in which archaeologists interact with the public and any research (practical or theoretical) that examines or analyses the public dimensions of doing archaeology* (McDavid 2012:12). Our definition is very broad and aligns with those used by the various public archaeology-focused journals, such as *Public Archaeology*, the newer *Online Journal of Public Archaeology*, and the newest *Journal of Community Archaeology* (the latter of which concerns itself with one subcategory in a much broader public archaeology discourse). Additionally, when we use the word "public," we mean any person or any group of people, not themselves professional archaeologists, who intersect with archaeology in some way.

Public archaeology as a term, and a mode of practice, has been around since McGimsey used it in 1972 in reference to archaeology that was mandated by public law and sometimes funded by the public purse—today referred to as CRM, salvage, compliance, and contract archaeology. Around the late 1980s and early 1990s, largely in response to problems with widespread looting, the practice of public archaeology expanded to include archaeology education, outreach, and public interpretation. The expanded agenda was, for the most part, to persuade people that archaeological sites were worth saving, and that archaeological knowledge was worth society's time and money. Programs such as Archaeology Southwest (2015), for example, continue to actively use this approach, known as "preservation archaeology." The essence of that expanded agenda remains and is a worthwhile component of public archaeology today. However, throughout the 1990s and into this century, public archaeology has also come to mean (ideally, if not always in practice) work conducted alongside and *with* the public, and not just *for* them.

The same social and disciplinary forces that led to NAGPRA, projects like the African Burial Ground project in New York City, the creation of the World Archaeology Congress, and recent efforts to "decolonize" archaeology, fueled this evolution. In his winning response to the question "What makes #pubarch important?" in a contest sponsored by the *AP: Online Journal in Public Archaeology*, Gabriel Moshenska (cited in Sánchez 2012) succinctly sums up the thinking behind this movement. Moshenska explains:

> Public archaeology is the study of archaeology in context. This includes social, political, economic and intellectual contexts … Archaeology is produced and consumed: by studying these processes in all their dimensions public archaeologists are the conscience of the discipline. We are all public archaeologists [Moshenska cited in (Sánchez 2012:3)].

This is the perspective discussed by Merriman (2004:6), which moves public archaeology from a deficit model that "sees the public as needing education in the correct way to appreciate archaeology" and moves to the idea of a "conversation" between archaeologists and the public, rather than a "presentation" or "education" (McDavid 2004a:167). Implicit in this understanding is a constructivist approach "that people derive meaning from an encounter with archaeology by relating it to their own lives, rather than whether it corresponds to current archaeological consensus" (Merriman 2004:11). In the past 20 years, numerous edited volumes have reported on the many case studies written from the *with* not *for* perspective (e.g., Derry and Malloy 2003; Little 2002; Little and Shackel 2014; Merriman, ed. 2004; Nassaney and Levine 2009; Shackel and Chambers 2004) and have considered the empowerment of specific communities (e.g., Ashmore et al.2010; Atalay 2012; Brighton 2011; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Lambert-Pennington 2007; Warner and Baldwin 2004). One project where both sorts of approaches were explored was McDavid's research at the Levi-Jordan Plantation that sought to be reflexive, multivocal, interactive, and contextual (McDavid 2004b:42), framing the work in an explicitly post-processual framework. Not all work about, for example, community empowerment is framed as such theoretically. Most recently, an increase in such community engagement is visible in a host of projects from the United Kingdom (Duffy 2014; Sutcliffe 2014) with an archaeology from below (Rowe et al.2014:167) and in the Philippines, where community engagement is "humanized" and attempts to counter the exclusivity in the authority of colonial archaeology, subsequently resulting in increased community interest (Acabado et al. 2014:14).

Borrowing a framework suggested by Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (although they did not use it in precisely the same way) we submit that all public archaeology since the early 1970s can be seen as a range of discourses and practices, all of which lie at one place or another along a collaborative continuum. These discourses and practices have *both* distinct *and* overlapping literatures and strategies and have been referred to variously as:

- Cultural resource management (CRM)
- public education
- public outreach
- public interpretation
- consultation and archaeology
- public participation
- applied archaeology
- applied anthropology

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- civically engaged archaeology
- action archaeology
- activist archaeology
- service-learning archaeology
- covenantal archaeology
- cooperative archaeology
- collaborative archaeology
- ethnographic archaeology
- archaeological ethnography
- community archaeology
- reciprocal archaeology
- community-based participatory research (CBPR)
- participatory action research (PAR)
- And, now, added to this constellation, co-creative archaeology

While we recognize the importance of not conflating these discourses (they are *not* all the same thing), they do all represent areas of practice in which archaeology and multiple publics intersect. Also, we note that any particular strategy—outreach, for example—can be implemented in a way that is *more or less* collaborative, participatory, activist, and so on. Likewise, any archaeologist can use more than one discourse or strategy at the same time. For example, one of us (McDavid) often frames her own work as community archaeology, or activist archaeology, but also includes a great deal of "traditional" non-collaborative public outreach—site tours, displays, talks, and so on. In so doing, McDavid also deploys, in an instrumental way, a variety of *theoretical* and *philosophical* discourses—pragmatism especially, but also post processual theory, critical theory, and critical race theory. The discourse—or, put another way, the toolkit—used by any of us at any given time depends on our individual training, disciplinary background, and preference. Not all archaeologists are anthropologists, for example.

Moreover, the appropriate tools vary by situation or context. For example, Connolly has given Archaeology Month library presentations on consecutive evenings in different towns located in the Mississippi Delta. Residents of the City of Greenville interested in the general prehistory of the area attended the presentation in their city. In contrast, collectors from the rural agricultural community near the Poverty Point culture Jaketown site were the primary attendees of the presentation in Belzoni. The Greenville presentation was a PowerPoint talk to city residents who asked questions or sought out references for assigned school papers. The Belzoni attendees were interested in "trying to make decisions related to particular heritage resources" (Chambers 2004:194) and were anxious to hear about the significance of surface collections they brought to the meeting. As a result of such presentations and the work of numerous archaeologists working in the area, the collectors who attended the three consecutive years of Archaeology Month evening library meetings in 2007 opened a small museum in Belzoni composed of donated collections. The Greenville library presentation was a one-off experience. Both experiences were based on the typical Archaeology Month library presentation, yet the contexts and levels of engagement were dramatically different.

So, again, these discourses can be located on a collaborative continuum that ranges from archaeology mandated by public law to the most recent work framed as collaborative, with "true" collaboration (the quotation marks are important) taking place when the public (whether identified as descendants, communities, or other) *has some degree of control or power*. But what does this control or power mean in practice?

ARCHAEOLOGY, THE PARTICIPATORY MUSEUM, AND CO-CREATION

As can be seen from the above discussion, an applied approach and public engagement is nothing terribly new in archaeology. What is different about the set of papers in this issue? This issue builds on the idea of power sharing by incorporating the concepts of the participatory museum and co-creation that have become buzzwords over the past few years in museum studies. Interacting and working with the public is a vital part of the professional mission of museums. Nevertheless, museums, like archaeology, and anthropology more broadly, have shared the challenge of being colonialist institutions with authoritative attitudes towards their collections and the interpretation of these collections. In the last few decades, however, museums have faced a growing mandate from their communities to make themselves more accessible and engaging for the public (AAM 2002; Weil 2002).

This movement has taken many forms. As early as 1917, John Cotton Dana's *The New Museum* pushed for museums to shift their focus from collections to responding to expressed public needs. In 1971, Duncan F. Cameron posited that a museum should be both a temple and a forum—an authoritative space and place for dialogue that coexists within a museum but remains separate. Other scholars and practitioners have taken up this call, noting that museums should seek not only to disseminate information/knowledge but also to encourage knowledge sharing and creation that is reciprocal. In this context, successful engagement necessitates an exchange rather than a one-way dissemination of information with the general public and descendant communities (Adair el al. 2011; Crooke 2007; Karp et al. 1992; Phillips 2013; Satwicz and Morrissey 2011; Shirky 2012; Simon 2010; Tchen 1992; Weil 2002).

As a result of this movement, museum practitioners have created models to implement these calls into daily practice. One of the most popular models is the Participatory Museum, advanced by Nina Simon. Based on a citizen science model, Simon defines the Participatory Museum as

> a participatory cultural institution as a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content. *Create* means that visitors contribute their own ideas, objects, and creative expression to the institution and to each other. *Share* means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their

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> visit. *Connect* means that visitors socialize with other people—staff and visitors—who share their particular interests. *Around content* means that visitors' conversations and creations focus on the evidence, objects, and ideas most important to the institution in question [Simon 2010:ii-iii].

Another conceptual model, called Open Authority (Phillips 2013, 2014) emphasizes the need for museums to share Authority and open themselves to new perspectives from their visitors. Phillips calls for museums to actively engage community perspectives around collections. A large part of her argument revolves around reframing how the public interacts with museums and their collections. Drawing from the principles put forth by the Open web and Open source software community, Phillips (2013:224) argues that museums should learn from the technology sphere and see visitors as "users" and "participants," rather than as an "audience." In this way, museums can serve simultaneously as temples and forums—as curators of objects but also as places where the public can interact and learn from objects, museum staff, and each other.

In a similar manner, Macalik et al. (2015:2) have asked fellow museum professionals to consider referring to those who walk through the door as "users," in contrast to the more traditional "visitors" or "guests." Both of the latter terms imply that there is some degree of hosting or welcoming on the part of the museum, whereas the term "users" indicates that people actively *use* the museum for their interest and benefits, which can include expanding their knowledge on a particular topic. Moore (2014) has also argued for more "culturally competent language that reinforces inclusion," especially for visitors of color. She notes that using terms like "co-create" reinforces inclusion in contrast to the use of "invite," which emphasizes a perception of outsider status, despite an intent to be more inclusive.

Like the previously mentioned continuum of collaborative engagement for archaeology, Simon's (2010) Participatory Museum model and Phillip's (2013) Open Authority model can also be mapped as a spectrum, starting with contribution at one end, continuing to collaboration, and then culminating with co-creation. Contributory projects provide users or audiences with predetermined opportunities to participate or contribute to a project with an institutionally controlled process. One well-known example of this is crowdsourcing, in which users can tag, transcribe, and contribute data to a project but are not part of the decision-making in broader discussions about its direction or focus. The next area of the spectrum, collaborative projects, are programs in which the general public, visitors, or users are invited to serve as active partners in a project's development and have some authority in determining and refining the higher-level goals and design of the program. However, the ultimate decision-making remains with the professional organization. Finally, co-creative projects involve programs in which communities work together with institutional staff members from the beginning of the project to define the project's goals and generate the program based on community interests. The key features of co-creation are that a reciprocal relationship is created in which power is shared equally and that multiple perspectives and types of knowledge are acknowledged and integrated into a project design that addresses the expressed needs of both community members and staff members.

The papers in this thematic special issue focus on the co-creation end of the spectrum, although notably not all of the contributors to this issue are confident that they have reached that level. Simon (2010:187) writes that the purpose of co-creative community projects is "to give voice and be responsive to the needs and interests of local community members; to provide a place for community engagement and dialogue; and to help participants develop skills that will support their own individual and community goals." A group of museum planners developed a similar definition of museum co-creation as

> A mission-aligned collaborative process through which multiple stakeholders … identify a need, define the challenge, articulate congruent goals, and then generate ideas, objects, expressions or solutions that yield new or deeper benefits for the co-creators, the institution, and the public…. [A]ll participants have the tools they need to lead or to significantly shape the outcomes of the endeavor. Each feels empowered and capable to do so…. *Co-creation succeeds when the group arrives at solutions or outcomes—intended or unintended—that they did not imagine at the outset and that none of the participants could have generated on their own* [National Art Education Association 2013; emphasis added].

Although our introduction to co-creation was through museum studies, there are several substantive disciplinary threads in which the concept or process emerged. Co-creation seems to have started in business writing, in marketing in particular (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Welch 2012), and was quickly adopted in museum studies and other non-market contexts, such as psychology (Roser et al. 2009). These fields have explored, through a lens of co-creation, such approaches as "feminist community psychology" (Angelique and Mulvey 2011). Co-creation, according to one business-oriented definition, stands for "creative collaboration processes between an organisation and its customers … [and] the ways in which this collaboration takes place may vary" (Roser et al. 2009:16). Some writers suggest that any organization considering a co-creation strategy needs to consider the following questions (Roser et al. 2009:16–17):

- Who will be involved?
- What is the purpose?
- Where does the work occur?
- How much involvement is optimum?
- For how long? (very important with respect to sustainability)
- How will the work be incentivized?

Perhaps the closest alignment within archaeology to these movements within the business and museum sectors is found in Little and Shackel's *Archaeology, Heritage, and Civic Engagement: Working Toward the Public Good* (2014), in which the business understanding of "expressed needs and interests" aligns with Little and Shackel's framing of cultural heritage as "whatever matters to people today that proves some con-

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nection between past and present" (2014:39). The co-creative component of the Participatory Museum movement echoes the ways that Little and Shackel frame civic engagement and aligns as well with Chambers' (2004:194) earlier statement that "Applied anthropology (and consequently, applied archaeology) is directed toward helping people make decisions . . . [W]hat makes this work applied is not the knowledge itself, which certainly can be relevant to the interests of others, but the act of engagement with others who are trying to make decisions related to particular heritage resources." The piece that co-creation adds to the movement (again, from operating *for* to operating *with)* is the understanding that the movement is also toward a community's *expressed needs and interests.*

Little and Shackel's (2014:100) sequential phasing of civic empowerment is also closely aligned with Simon's (2010) sequence of contribution, collaboration, and co-creation. Likewise, for both Little and Shackel (2014:100) and Simon (2010), being co-creative is sympathetic with Rosenblatt's (2010) "engagement pyramid" (Figure 1), with most participants at the base and the fewest at the top, with a declining number of participants at each level, who move, in turn, from "observing," to "following," "endorsing," "contributing," "owning," and, finally, to "leading." A distinction between the two models is Little and Shackel's emphasis on civic engagement and community building as end goals. In the museum context, the goal often seems to be the survival of the cultural institution.

So how is co-creation different from other forms of collaborative public archaeology? As stated earlier, the end goal of co-creation is that it has to be both *co* (that is, it has to share power in some way) and *creative* (that is, we cannot just do the same things better; we need to do something *new).* The business literature highlights this distinction:

> [Collaboration] is about working together, especially in a joint intellectual effort. And 'co-creation'? [It means] *Doing the above in creative manner*…. [This] demands we open ourselves up to new ideas, accept new norms, embrace new ways of seeing the world and, sometimes quite courageously, take comfort in the road less traveled. [Welch 2012; emphasis added]

Although the business application cited here clearly resonates with public archaeology, we admit to some discomfort about using a framework that is so overtly rooted in capitalist structures—even though it is clearly applicable to non-market frameworks as well. Nevertheless, while co-creation shares similarities to strategies that are being implemented, we suggest that it also provides additional benefits. The papers in this issue point to two benefits in particular that we will discuss in the next section: decentering (the "co" aspect) and unforeseen results (the "create" or "creative" aspect).

CO-CREATION AND DECENTERING

McDavid (2003:57) uses the term "decentering" archaeology to describe the process of engaging groups beyond the professional community as a means of incorporating public authority

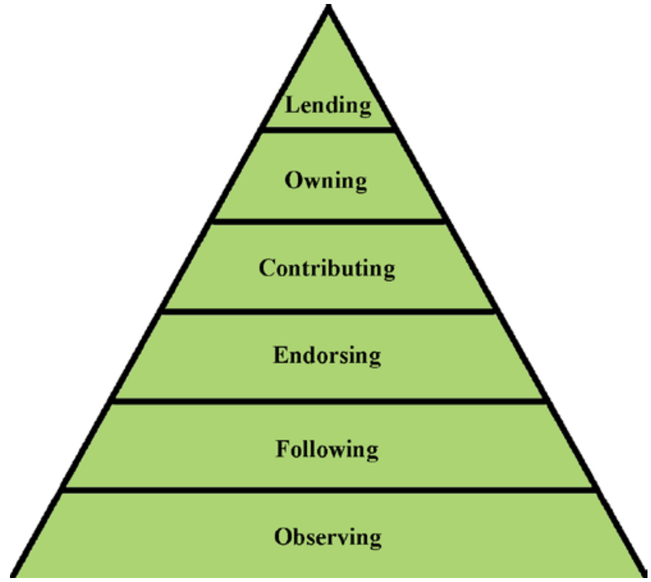

FIGURE 1. Adaption of Rosenblatt's (2010) "Engagement Pyramid."

into archaeology. Chilton (2010:147–18) uses an example of this approach in field school contexts and notes that:

> The overarching and explicit goal of the field schools that I direct is to teach and promote heritage values and management to multiple stakeholders, including: (1) students; (2) research community; (3) landowners and local residents; (4) state and other government constituencies; and (5) Native American and other descendent groups . . . While the often-cited goal of an archaeological field school is to teach archaeological field methods, we do a disservice to students of archaeology (and the community of stakeholders) if field methods are taught outside of the context of heritage values.

Much of the business writing on co-creation distinguishes between co-created *value* and co-created *knowledge*, where "dialogue, access, transparency, and understanding of risk-benefits [are] central to … *value* creation" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004). This distinction can be important for archaeologists as well. For example, those who work with communities as they negotiate choices between site preservation and community economic survival must co-create knowledge about and around archaeology before they can co-create value. Furthermore, at times, archaeologists must accept that their values do not align with the values of local or descendant communities. Such an approach challenges the assumption that archaeological knowledge and methods in fact have value, or immediate, obvious value, for a community. In this thematic issue, Bria and Cruzado's (2015) work with Santa Cruz communities in Peru and Reeves's (2015) work with metal detectorists at the historic house site of Montpelier in Virginia highlight both the importance of co-creative knowledge and the relative nature of value. Bria and Cruzado (2015) ask a key question: whether archaeologists' visions of what community members should strive for (i.e., the

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preservation of local archaeological sites) are actually more valid than the community's vision of progress. In this case, they are referring to infrastructural improvements that negatively impact cultural resources but positively impact community members' daily lives. To address this conundrum, Bria and Cruzado argue that archaeologists must seek to understand what local communities value (and why) and acknowledge those values as important. This understanding is co-created knowledge that opens up opportunities to design programs and projects that have value both to archaeologists and to community members and can positively impact communities.

Reeves's (2015) work at Montpelier, which connects staff archaeologists with metal detectorists from all over the United States, also demonstrates the utility of programs that seek to understand non-specialist communities by actively interacting with them. A critical component of the metal detecting program was to create a team-focused atmosphere that would provide both archaeologists and metal detectorists with opportunities to demonstrate their methods, skillsets, and how they assigned value to artifacts. Although these differing sets of values are typically viewed as irreconcilable, Reeves demonstrates in his paper that this was not the case. Instead, the archaeologists and metal detectorists were able to reach a shared understanding of the value of metal detectorists' methods and archaeological methods and information. Ultimately working together allowed these groups to build a shared understanding of the value of artifacts as vital components of research. Reeves asserts that creating an environment in which all parties' perspectives are acknowledged and respected can produce new knowledge and insights that are valuable to both archaeologists and non-specialists and can build ties that make them part of the same community.

Atalay (2012:241) notes that focusing on the needs of the community can mean that archaeologists do not serve as organizers but as supporters who provide information and research that may end up being supplemental to other forms of knowledge. Ferguson et al. (2015) make a similar observation in their contribution to this thematic issue, noting that anthropological and archaeological knowledge and methods can become secondary in a framework in which knowledge is co-created. Yet in other cases, archaeological information can serve as the primary focus for stories that have already been identified as important to a community. Kasper and Handsman's (2015) contribution provides an example of the value of archaeobotanical research to Mashantucket Pequot Survivance stories. They note that the data will be used at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center (2015) to guide new programmatic approaches focused on educating the public on the little known histories of Mashantucket families living and working in and against the modern world. Finally, as Miller (2015) describes in her contribution on the Florida Cemetery Restoration Program, archaeological methods can provide the framework to develop a program that directly addresses a need identified by a non-specialist community—such as deteriorating conditions of abandoned cemeteries—and empower the community to improve the condition of their cultural resources.

For some archaeologists, decentering archaeology has more drastic results as the projects they engage with may seem to be far outside what they prepared for during their training as professional archaeologists. For example, Bria and Cruzado's (2015) work with Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológico Regional Ancash (2015) in Peru helped build toilets and showers and sponsored a school recycling program. Moyer (2015) notes in her paper that National Park Service archaeologists may have limited experience in digital media but can produce a program that empowers urban youth to reflect on archaeological stewardship with the help of teenage digital media know-how. Finally, Popetz (2015) notes that learning to operate within the schedule constraints of high school teachers and students and determining how to navigate their communication systems were two of the most important factors that enabled the success of her project. Thus, in some projects, archaeological (or for that matter, ethnographic) fieldwork takes a back seat and is replaced with a variety of activities that may or may not be directly related to ideas and issues that archaeologists consider priorities. For others, the same fieldwork provides an opportunity to build relationships with underserved communities, even those typically ostracized by archaeologists.

This decentering process is time consuming, costly, and complicated. However, it moves toward a truly co-creative process. Regardless of the form it takes, a common thread running throughout all of the projects reported in this issue is that archaeologists are willing to understand communities and their needs, whatever those needs are. Once mutual respect is built, authority is shared and relationships form to ensure that a suite of expressed needs (both those of communities and those of archaeologists) are met. Whether primary or secondary, archaeological knowledge can serve an important role in helping communities to address their needs and to understand the deep and recent history of cultural resources and in providing evidence that helps ensure resource protection. This common ground can help build new relationships, programs, and co-creative and innovative products.

CO-CREATION AND INNOVATIVE OUTCOMES

Another benefit of co-creation is community building and the innovative programs and products that can result. Co-created knowledge helps to build *new* views of what is valuable and how value is defined. Whatever "new" means is very content specific. Ultimately, the key is that the new relates to *something that none of the organizations or individual groups could produce on their own, but simultaneously is something that all parties find valuable because it addressed their expressed needs and interests*. In this section, we explore examples of the innovative outcomes of co-created processes.

One of the most pertinent benefits for archaeology is that co-creation can broaden the methods used to assign value to physical objects. In co-created projects, the value extends beyond the physical content because the products incorporate the stories of collective identities of the past and present (Holtorf 2010:43–44). For example, Connolly (2015) demonstrates how three boxes containing a handful of bricks, scraps of metal farm implements, nails, broken bottles, and a few pieces of crockery from a 1920s-era African-American farmstead provided the impetus for a suite of projects that helped an archaeological museum become a valued social asset in an underserved community of Southwest Memphis. In this instance, the *com-*

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munity determined the value, consistent with Little and Shackel's (2014:39) understanding that "Heritage is fluid in the 'moving target'" sense, and that "what matters can seem to some to come from nowhere when it appears to dredge up a forgotten or neglected past."

The success of the metal detectorist program at Montpelier (Reeves 2015) demonstrates that co-creative outreach programs can establish shared values that respond to the commodification of cultural heritage presented in the popular media today, whether in *American Digger* or the more refined PBS version *Antiques Roadshow*. In both, cultural heritage value is answered in three questions: "Is it real? How old is it? And how much is it worth?" However, by the end of their time in Montpelier's team-based program, metal detectorist participants are more focused on what research questions the artifacts can answer. In addition, the program resulted in an improved research and methodological design that the archaeologists could not have established without help from the metal detectorist community.

Co-creation results in other innovative outcomes as well, such as the formation of shared languages. Miller (2015) observes, in her reflections on the Florida Public Archaeology Network's Cemetery Resource Protection Training (CRPT) program, that archaeologists must learn a shared lexicon for effectively communicating with non-specialists, instead of solely training collaborators to use archaeological terms. Moyer (2015) drew a similar conclusion during her collaborations with the National Park Service and the non-profit organization Groundwork Anacostia River DC, when co-creating youth-oriented digital media programs. The creation of a shared terminology and understanding of how each organization worked was a crucial step to develop programs that addressed a need perceived by both institutions.

Technology also has a role to play in co-creation, and some of the projects discussed in this thematic issue demonstrate how the digital world can add a new level to co-creation's implementation. Bollwerk's (2015) discussion of the Mukurtu CMS, which integrates cultural protocols into software development, demonstrates that it is a provocative example of a co-creative project that empowers indigenous peoples to curate their own history and culture, while simultaneously challenging Western privileging of Open Access. Kasper and Handsman (2015) note in their contribution that the inclusion of iPads at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center will ultimately provide the Mashantucket Pequot with new ways to tell the Survivance stories that are an important part of the tribe's history. Finally, Means (2015) discusses the growing role of digital preservation in the form of 3D objects. He notes that these forms of archaeological visualization enable the broader public to dynamically and meaningfully interact with rare and fragile objects in ways that would otherwise not be possible, empowering their own contributions to interpreting, understanding, and reimagining the past. These examples demonstrate the variety of "new" outcomes that would not be possible without different communities working together in a co-creative fashion.

CONCLUSION

We suggest that co-creative experiences can lead to several desired results, if:

- The activities foster reciprocal relationships in which the needs and interests of community members, students, archaeologists, and museum professionals are equally supported and valued. Creating the noted products is not possible without the full participation of all partners. All partners' expressed needs benefit equally.
- The activities focus on real-world concerns beyond the walls of the academy or the excavation trench.
- The co-created products follow best practices for archaeological research efforts and ultimately result in outcomes that could not be achieved without employing the "co" and the "creative."

Stefan Stern, who wrote a "Co-creation Primer" in the Harvard Business Review (Stern 2011) developed some interesting do's and don'ts for co-creation, often clearly echoing what many archaeologists have concluded when practicing collaborative archaeology. One "do," in an archaeology context, would be to remember that "our" taken-for-granteds—ethically, epistemologically, and otherwise—are not necessarily the same as those held by our community co-creators. Another "do" is to be creative about recruiting possible co-creators. Reeve's (2015) contribution in this issue is particularly relevant in this regard.

Another "do" noted by Stern is the need to get top people involved—the hands-on work cannot be something done just by lower-level or hired "outreach" people. In archaeological terms, project investigators should be just as committed to co-creation as the "outreach" staff. The contributors of this issue, many of whom have advanced degrees and run programs that involve juggling multiple projects, have shown that it is possible for project leaders to be integrally involved in co-creative projects. However, it is important to avoid underestimating the amount of time this kind of work takes, both in terms of scheduling daily, weekly, and monthly agendas and in terms of the years it can take to build a truly co-creative relationship.

Finally, and probably most importantly, "co-creation" means letting go of control and being prepared to be guided by the community in order to create significant change in the status quo. In a postcolonial world, this is arguably the whole point of public archaeology (of any sort)—to learn to let go of control in order to, over time, transform archaeology from a closed discipline to one that takes full account of the contexts in which we work. To return to a previous point in this paper, *power is one of these contexts.*

The papers in this special issue have demonstrated how power sharing took place to varying degrees as archaeologists worked with communities to plan, execute, analyze, interpret, and present archaeological research. As Connolly (2015) notes in his contribution to this special issue, sometimes power can be shared simply by virtue of asking community members what they want and actually listening to the answer. Other strategies discussed in the papers of this thematic issue demonstrate that power *can* be shared when recruiting and training the public to participate in research: gathering input, providing support for local agendas, providing space for community engagement, being responsive to community needs, and so on. If deployed purposefully, these *participative* activities *can lead* to mutual empowerment, co-creation, and even to the transformation of

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practices that produce final products all parties deem useful and beneficial.

But co-creative practices do not guarantee transformative results. This understanding brings a useful tension that can be productively unpacked when writing about co-creative work. Key practices are to remain critical, reflexive, and transparent about where any of our specific strategies and methods might fall on the collaborative continuum, *especially with respect to power.* By acknowledging and analyzing the limitations and possibilities of sharing real power in any given context, we can avoid making claims that any particular strategy is truly empowering, or collaborative, or co-creative, when it may not be—or, in some cases, cannot be.

A critical part of understanding whether a strategy is successful (or not) is evaluation. A number of the articles in this thematic issue demonstrate that gathering substantive feedback from all partners is an essential component of understanding whether co-creation is reaching its desired goal. Kasper and Handsman (2015) illustrate that visitor studies were an invaluable means of evaluating which aspects of the exhibits at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center were working and what could be improved. As a result, future exhibit designs can shift to be more inclusive of different perspectives and histories. Moyer (2015) and Popetz (2015) emphasize that evaluation has been crucial in determining whether co-creative programs that seek to empower youth are actually reaching this important demographic and enabling them to learn useful skills. With a focus on the digital realm, Bollwerk (2015) discusses the importance of using qualitative and quantitative assessments conducted both on- and offline to ensure that digital resources are built to meet community needs. Finally, both Connolly (2015) and Bria and Cruzado (2015) have noted that a current weakness of the co-creative approach is the lack of long-term metrics to measure the success of projects. Thus, there is always room for improvement. Nevertheless, no matter what the program or partnering community, many of the papers in this issue emphasize that gathering feedback throughout the co-creative process is critical to enabling the production of a resource that is beneficial for all parties involved.

It is also necessary to acknowledge that, even if all parties involved are doing their best to address each other's interests, natural ebbs and flows that are part of co-creative work can challenge its success. The realities of project timelines, along with the fact that a community's interest can wane if other pressing concerns emerge, can lead to relationships changing over time. Connolly (2015) explains that, at times, partnering communities do not want to engage in the ways that were previously agreed upon and that factors outside of one's control can cause a project's focus to shift. Thus, while sustained community building is key, projects can cycle through all levels of the engagement spectrum, depending on the parties involved and on competing interests. While reflecting on one of their projects that angered some local community members, Bria and Cruzado (2015:215) astutely note that co-creation is an "iterative process, [in which] community collaborations should emerge as moments within an ongoing process of revision in order to engage and serve stakeholders." Ferguson et al.'s (2015) contribution is one of the best examples of the types of long-term partnerships that can develop through this process.

Of importance, we acknowledge that what is possible in certain communities will vary drastically. For example, recently McDavid participated in an intense week-long workshop on community archaeology in Africa, exploring ideas with archaeologists working in South Africa, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Ghana (Schmidt and Pikirayi 2014). Many of them were themselves African, working in contexts in which participatory public archaeology—in any form—was new. For some, it was also dangerous, due to political and religious cleavages and the active resistance of some publics to archaeological knowledge. In some situations, even simple "outreach" is not simple at all. Her African colleagues in this workshop were, indeed, working towards co-creating a new way of doing archaeology in Africa, but what each was able to accomplish with respect to sharing real power was very context-specific.

To close, co-creation clearly has a place on the collaborative continuum of practices that take place at the intersection of archaeology and a wide range of publics. Many of the contributors to this issue explore both the *co* and the *creation* of co-creation quite deeply. That is, the papers address both power and newness. In addition, all contributors are honestly attempting to account for the contexts in which they work and to find a place on the more co-creative end of the collaborative continuum. All are travelling a road less travelled, and more power to them. Like any collaborative work, co-creation may seem simple—but it is certainly not easy (Stern 2011).

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No data are included in this article.

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