interview

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Archaeology at the edge. An archaeological dialogue with Martin Hall

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Abstract
Archaeology in South Africa has always been political and no one has articulated this relationship better than Martin Hall in a career that has spanned both the political upheavals in South Africa and the theoretical transformations in archaeology over the past four decades. In research that has traversed the Iron Age to the Internet, he has explored the multifarious ways in which material culture operates in everyday life and how power is mobilized through materiality. He is also an example of a scholar who thoroughly embodies the very modern duality of the local and the global through his work, which is both highly engaged within the context of South Africa (and Africa in general), while also clearly international in its scope and relevance.

Keywords
Historical archaeology; politics; material culture; South Africa

Martin Hall was born and grew up in the south of England. He completed both his undergraduate and postgraduate studies in archaeology at Cambridge University during the 1970s, where he was particularly influenced by David Clarke and Eric Higgs. His doctorate, gained in 1980, was on settlement patterns in the South African Iron Age, in which he took an ecological perspective. This work was to form the basis of his first major book, *The changing past. Farmers, kings and traders in southern Africa*, published in 1987, which challenged orthodox perceptions and interpretations of the development of farming communities in southern Africa and became a landmark in its field.

During his university studies Hall worked both in contract archaeology in London and on excavations in Lesotho, and between 1975 and 1980 he was Ethnoarchaeologist at the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg. His first position after receiving his doctorate was as Chief Archaeologist at the South Africa Museum in Cape Town (1980–83), until he was appointed to the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town (UCT), where he became Associate Professor in 1988 and Professor in 1991. It was at UCT that Hall first started to become interested in the archaeology of colonial settlement at the Cape, and during the late 1980s and early 1990s he effectively created the discipline of South African historical archaeology from scratch, directing postgraduate student theses and research projects. Aiding

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this process was collaboration with the University of California, Berkeley and the establishment of the Historical Archaeology Research Group (HARG) and the Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO), both based at UCT.

The 1990s saw a spate of key publications on South African historical archaeology, and Hall's personal perspective in this field culminated in his highly innovative and important book *Archaeology and the modern world*, published in 2000. Reflected in this latter publication is also Hall's passion for the role of archaeology in South Africa within a wider social and political context, a theme also explored in his earlier textbook *Archaeology Africa* (1996), which explicitly attempted to situate the particular nature of the discipline within the continent. Martin Hall is currently both Professor in Historical Archaeology at the Centre for African Studies and Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town.

The following interview was conducted by e-mail between January and July 2005.

Your earliest archaeological work was on the Iron Age in southern Africa – why did you choose to study in Cambridge and how did that influence your research and perspective on South African archaeology?
I came to Cambridge with no intention to study archaeology – in fact, I had no particular idea what the discipline was about. I wanted to qualify in sociology (like everyone else in the late 1960s), but Cambridge then required archaeology and anthropology as the first year of the Tripos. During my first year I endured lectures and practicals on hand-axe typologies but was very taken by Eric Higgs's economic archaeology – then very controversial. Robin Dennell – now at Sheffield – offered me a place on his field team to Bulgaria, then a forbidden land on the other side of the Iron Curtain. We spent the summer pursuing bemused shepherds and asking them where they kept their sheep in winter, avoiding Bulgarian army manoeuvres and eating the terrible food that was all Dennell could afford on his research grant. I was hooked, and moved over to archaeology for the rest of my degree.

I stumbled into African archaeology by accident as well. At the end of my degree, Paul Bahn and I competed for a postgraduate scholarship with Higgs's project. Higgs gave it to Bahn, which I saw as an act of betrayal, so I asked David Clarke to supervise my Ph.D. At that stage the new archaeology was indeed new, and it didn't really matter where you did your fieldwork – it was the theory that was important. So I took up an offer to help excavate a Middle/Late Stone Age rock shelter in the highlands of Lesotho – even more exotic than Bulgaria. That was when I recognized the extraordinary potential of southern African archaeology to tell us something new about the world.

Most people who voluntarily undertook research in South Africa in the early 1970s felt some sort of guilt, even though there was a lot of bluster about archaeology being 'apolitical'. The apartheid state was at its strongest and the brutalities of discrimination were everywhere. I don't buy the argument (made during the later controversy about the World Archaeological Congress) that, by looking for the origins of black communities and contradicting apartheid versions of South Africa's history, we were somehow agents for change. The apartheid state was far too busy avoiding sanctions, buying up arms and

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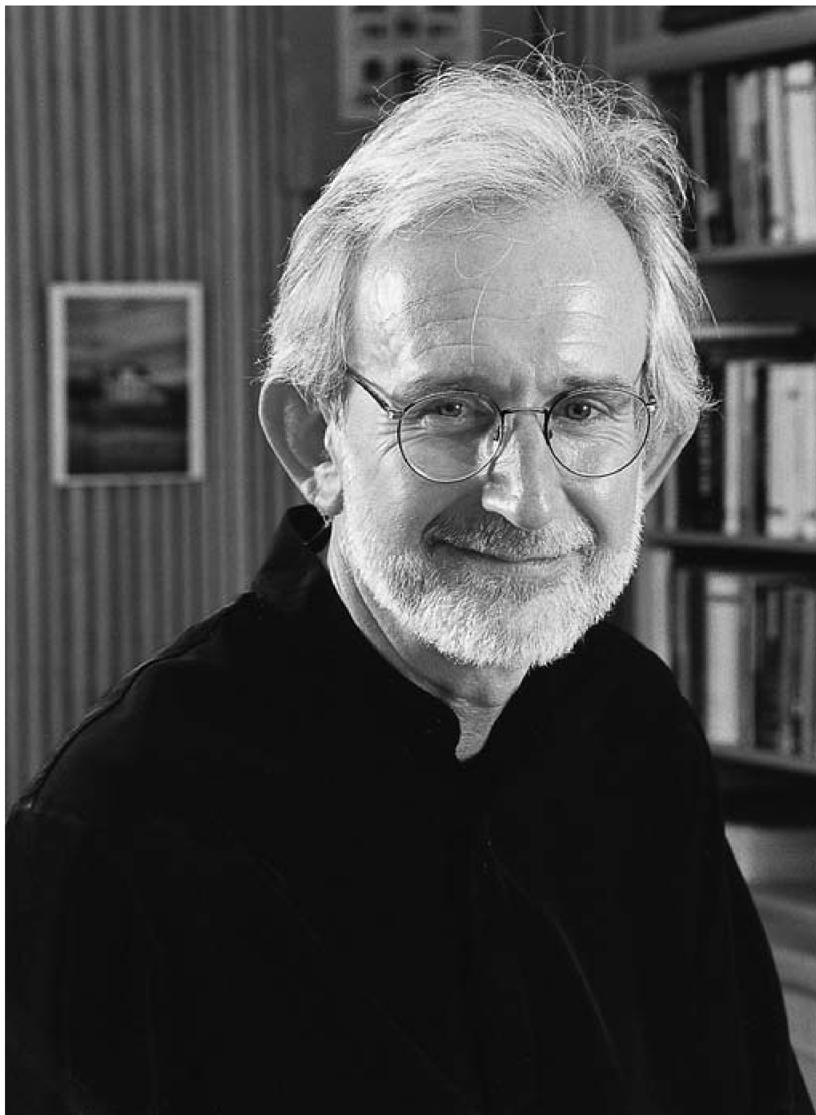

Figure 1 Martin Hall.

killing and jailing its opponents to worry about a handful of intellectuals working in an obscure discipline. If anything – and this is with hindsight – we were coopted by the apartheid state, helping provide a degree of respectability as evidence of 'scientific normality'. But working with Iron Age materials – the last 2,000 years or so of a history then largely unwritten, and the patrimony of the majority of black South Africans – did make me realize that this sort of archaeology is always – and inevitably – political in nature. This led to fairly rapid disillusionment with the new archaeology and its

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futile search for normative principles of human behaviour. It also meant that, by the time I'd finished my doctoral dissertation (*Settlement patterns in the Iron Age of Zululand. An ecological interpretation*, 1981) I was uneasy about the whole idea of the 'ecological' and 'scientific' archaeology that I'd pursued.

One incident has always stuck in my mind. When I drove north from Pietermaritzburg to carry out fieldwork in the Umfolozi Reserve, the idea that there could be evidence for farming settlement in the area was met with incredulity by the conservationists and game rangers. They knew this area like the back of their hands – it was wilderness – pristine vegetation – the habitat of the elephant and the white rhinoceros, not Bantu-speaking farmers. All the vegetation was ecological climax. They led parties of visitors through the bush to connect with the primeval experience of nature untouched by humans. Well, within two weeks we had mapped some 200 pottery scatters – sites of Iron Age villages. The area had clearly been densely settled until the late 19th century, after the impact of colonialism (as the oral traditions indeed attested). Most of the vegetation was secondary, not pristine. It wasn't difficult to find the pottery scatters – the game rangers and conservation staff couldn't see the evidence because of the strength of their conviction that this was wilderness. It was a few months after the Soweto uprising, the country was in flames, and the impoverished rural settlements of black farmers were – literally – pushing up against the high fences of the Umfolozi Reserve, then world-famous for saving the white rhino from extinction. I found it difficult to understand – and still do so – how colleagues can argue that archaeological interpretation is 'above politics'.

I quite agree – but accepting that, what difference can an archaeologist make in the world through his or her work? As you mentioned earlier, despite the political nature of your research into the South African Iron Age, you felt it was still subverted by the apartheid state. How did you – and do you – successfully articulate the politics of archaeology?

I believe that archaeologists can play a significant role in public discourse – in empowering public dialogues through providing a rich source of knowledge about the past. I particularly like Bent Flyvbjerg's take on this (2001). Flyvbjerg argues for a 'situational ethics' – for taking a position within public debates and applying the expertise of interpretation to add richness and depth to these debates. I believe that, with the rise of identity politics, this role matters more than ever. Claims to identity – and particularly contested identities – invariably involve the past – questions about who was where first, and which groups have claims to iconic aspects of material culture. Archaeologists cannot settle these contests through definitive expertise, although perhaps we dream of having such authority. But we can evoke the evidence, slow down the debate, seek to substitute reason for assertion. Sometimes the stakes are very high – Ayodhya is perhaps the definitive case. In this case, the details of the archaeological evidence – whether or not there were the traces of a Hindu temple beneath the mosque – mattered a great deal, and archaeologists had the opportunity of calming things down – of becoming pedantic and technical. A lot of people died in riots that mobilized around the

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symbolism of Ayodhya. In circumstances such as these, archaeologists carry a heavy ethical burden.

The problem with archaeology in South Africa before 1994 was that white archaeologists could not legitimately be part of a public discourse about the origins of black society because of legally enforced racial segregation. When a society is segregated in education, public facilities and residential areas there cannot be a normal public discourse. The result was that white archaeologists met other white archaeologists at conferences and talked about black history, and that white archaeologists contributed sections on the origins of black society for school textbooks that could only be used by white schoolchildren. This was largely why I switched to the archaeology of colonial settlement. I remember reading Steve Biko's *I write what I like* just before it was banned. Asked what whites in South Africa should do to contribute to change, Biko said that they should develop critiques of white society and culture, rather than write history on behalf of blacks. At that time, white colonial history was celebrated as a bucolic age of benign civilization in which slavery was nowhere to be seen. So it seemed appropriate to try and use archaeology to develop a different interpretation of the colonial past.

That rather fittingly brings me into my next question: you moved away from Iron Age studies in the late 1980s into historical archaeology, or as it was commonly termed then, the archaeology of the colonial period. How difficult did you find this transition – academically speaking?
Not difficult at all. By the mid-1980s many archaeologists were pushing for social interpretations of the past. The bloom was off the rose of the 'new archaeology' and we hoped to be able to elucidate social relations, beliefs, political formations and the like from the material record. But this inevitably meant using ethnographic analogies. For Stone Age archaeology this invariably meant turning to the contemporary ethnography of the Kalahari San – the !Kung made famous by Lee and DeVore's *Man the hunter*. For Iron Age archaeology (the archaeology of the first farming communities, spanning the last 2,000 years or so), this meant turning to the classic ethnographic accounts of 'tribes' and 'peoples' – accounts in the tradition of Evans-Pritchard's studies of the Nuer. These sort of interpretations were evidently problematic, and particularly so in southern Africa, where they had not only been constructed in a colonial context, but were used by the apartheid government (and apartheid sympathizers in universities, as well as by government ethnographic bureaux) to justify claims that 'tribes' were mutually distinct, and should always be kept so. Historical archaeology, in comparison, offered material culture and texts as parallel sources – different windows on the same past that could be played against one another to develop narrative rather than analogy.

The specific catalyst was provided by Mark Leone and James Deetz, both of whom taught at the University of Cape Town in the mid-1980s. Leone contributed a rich understanding of Annapolis – an exciting and persuasive way of reading a city as material culture, with obvious implications for the archaeology of a place like Cape Town, built up from a colonial Dutch grid pattern with the superimposed architecture of high British colonialism.

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Deetz brought the insights of *In small things forgotten*, showing how probate records and other documents could be read as the imprint of ordinary lives. Our first excavation was at the improbably-named 'Paradise' – an 18th-century Dutch East India Company outpost beneath Table Mountain that later served as a rural retreat for an ebullient Georgian diarist and wife of one of the first British colonial secretaries at the Cape.

The excavations at Paradise, and then others, especially within Cape Town itself such as the Castle, initiated an explosion of publications in the 1990s which helped to define the contours of a specifically South African – or at least Cape – brand of Historical Archaeology. In particular, I think your paper 'Small things and the mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire' published in the Jim Deetz Festschrift of 1992 is a seminal text, where a lot of important ideas come together. On the one hand, there is the influence of Deetz and Leone, along with more general theoretical concepts current at the time such as the relation between material culture and text; on the other, though, there is clearly a more unique perspective, partly inspired by a historian who seems to have been a major intellectual influence on your work, James Scott. Can I ask, how do you think historical archaeology has developed in South Africa since the 1990s – specifically, how is it both similar to and different from North American, or indeed other, historical archaeologies?
Historical archaeology in South Africa tends to be engaged archaeology, and in this respect Leone's 'critical archaeology' has had a more enduring influence than Deetz's structuralism. This sense of urgency is perhaps inevitable in a country in transition – as is South Africa – although there is a marked convergence with contemporary themes in Australia as well as with some new work in North America. Historical archaeologists working in South Africa today are concerned with issues of heritage and identity. There is also a porosity of boundaries with other archaeologies where texts and material culture can be used together in interpretation. For example, rock art research in Southern Africa, when it sets the rich 19th-century archive of San beliefs alongside the numerous paintings that survive today, is historical archaeology. Similarly, the archaeology of the complex societies that preceded colonization, and for which contemporary oral histories have been recorded, is historical archaeology.

So is it fair to say that you don't see historical archaeology primarily defined by a period or thematic focus – such as the 'post-1500 period', the emergence of capitalism or the development of the modern world – so much as a methodological focus on the relation between material culture and text?
This is an important issue, and one that historical archaeology – as a field – has still to come to terms with. There is of course a good argument to see historical archaeology in methodological terms – the use of verbal and non-verbal sources of information together, mutually informing one another, and in distinction to the use of historical or ethnographic sources as analogy. But then, of course, classical archaeology falls inside the definition, along with other fields, and we are back to a broad scope with little cohesion. James Deetz saw the field as the archaeology of European colonial expansion, but

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that does not work either. For instance, as Innocent Pikarayi points out, the Deetzian definition marginalizes the rich pre-colonial archaeology of Africa, where oral sources and traditions have as much potential to interpretation as have the probate records of early Virginia. On balance, I would go with a working delimitation that sees the field as the archaeology of the modern world – indeed, the last 500 years – embracing colonial expansion, resistance to expansion, and the rise of capitalism. Archaeology's particular potential is to work at both the micro scale and the macro, and to show how non-verbal evidence adds a new perspective to our understanding of the modern world.

I would agree with you on this, and certainly the methodological distinction does tend to produce a less cohesive field of study. But an archaeology of the modern world presents us with a similar problem, if modernity is not to be reducible to either a eurocentrism or a simple chronological division. The ambiguities of defining the field of historical archaeology were, I think, evident in the co-edited volume you produced based on the WAC session in India, Historical archaeology. Back from the edge *(1999), despite the confidence it exuded, but in your recent book* Historical archaeology of the modern world *(2000) you offer your own perspective in a much more coherent fashion. I wonder if you could just summarize what you consider to be the chief argument you were making in that book?*
I was trying to make two primary arguments. Firstly, I was attempting to show how materiality works as a key form of non-verbal communication. Colonial cities show this particularly because – in contrast to cities that have built up as palimpsests through complex political, economic and social regimes – colonial cities were invariably founded as statements of power and possession, and have complex regimes of control in the face of the risks of domination and inequality. We could say that colonial cities are quintessentially Foucaldian. So Cape Town, for example, was laid out on a grid that positioned the Dutch East Indian garrison in relationship to the Dutch Reformed Church, and officials and citizens in relation to one another by status. This physical structure articulated public events such as processions and funerals, and formal rituals such as attending church. Sumptuary laws attempted to regulate status by clothing. In knowing where you should be, or whether a person was transgressing social position, you would not have had to write or say a word – the materiality of the city communicated the desired social order. Similarly – as we know as well from work in North America – slavery depended on complex material codes. At the Cape, slaves were not allowed to wear shoes, slept in basements or attics, had to behave in regulated ways to free people – all material signifiers of their servile status.

Secondly, I was attempting to develop the particular quality of historical archaeology that I have already mentioned – scalability. By comparing contemporary Dutch colonial settlement at the Cape with British colonial settlement in the Chesapeake, I was arguing that we can learn by looking simultaneously at the close material detail that archaeological techniques open up for us, and at the ways in which these material possessions were distributed through global networks. What historical archaeology shows is the point not often made in the context of our contemporary world: that the

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Figure 2 Historical archaeology: the past appropriated by archaeology, and reappropriated for commercial heritage. An interpretation of the 17th-century castle at the Cape of Good Hope as the heritage theme for a post-apartheid entertainment complex.

global and the local are not opposites but are rather closely interconnected. The materiality of the modern world is characterized both by local intensity and by global connectivity.

If I can pick up on both of these points in turn – first the role of materiality in non-verbal communication. This of course has been a key feature of your writings since at least the early 1990s, and I find your use of James Scott's concept of 'transcripts' very compelling, especially insofar as it shifts the whole way of thinking away from an opposition of text and object towards a more coherent sense of practice. In itself, this has significant implications for the relationship between the disciplines of history and historical archaeology, but could you elaborate on the relationship between discursivity and power, which seems to be central to the notion of transcript?

Yes, I do find Scott's work useful, for the reasons you identify. What caught my attention in his idea of 'weapons of the weak' was the way in which mundane behaviour – gestures, tardiness, facial expression – could be effective forms of 'everyday resistance'. That spoke to the particular challenges of developing an archaeology of slavery; since slaves usually have very little by way of material culture, how do you get to their history using more conventional archaeological methods? And Bill Kelso's work at Jefferson's Monticello is important here – the 'root cellars' under the slave cabins with secreted, purloined objects from the big house that suggest a form of 'domestic terrorism' used by those of limited means to carve out identity in the face of

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oppression. If we think in this way – and then look for the everyday in written transcripts, then a rich source of information opens up.

Of course, there are still challenges to interpretation. You cannot simply 'read' a transcript made up of verbal and material elements, as if it's a conventional script or narrative. Here, the device I've found most useful is the concept of 'contradiction'. Simply put, if the verbal and material sources of information are in contradiction with one another, something interesting was going on. For example, 17th-century visitors to the Cape stress that the only fish available are game fish, caught on the line and considered a delicacy; unlike in Europe, they stress, there are no other fish available. But the archaeological record shows that common shoal fish were a staple in the diet of slaves. This suggests that the verbal records are part of the mechanism of denying the presence of slaves as 'social people', which we know from the rich body of work on slavery in North America to be one of the key mechanisms of psychological control in slave systems. By reading the transcript in this way, further productive leads for research open up.

This emphasis on contradiction within transcripts is also important because it recognizes the significance of agency (especially of the oppressed or subaltern) – the absence of which has been the target of your critique of archaeological structuralism, specifically Deetz's Georgian world view. In your work, agency is always inflected by power, as your examples have just illustrated; do you think it is easier to explore the operation of power when you have this tension between discourse and materiality, as in historical archaeology (but unlike prehistory)?
Yes – I do think there are special opportunities open to historical archaeology. In my view, a major problem for 'prehistory' is the absence of a coterminous verbal record – by definition, of course. This does not mean that the people who left these material traces are without history, and the concept 'pre-history' is unfortunate in its connotations, a left-over from the social evolutionism of the 19th century that still continues to be used remarkably uncritically. But it does mean that we do not have their words directly available to us. One way or another, archaeologists working in this area of the past have to depend on argument by analogy, either by the extension of other 'verbal circumstances' that are believed to be appropriate, or using their own intuition (another form of analogy). Historical archaeologists, in contrast, have texts – contemporary accounts, diaries, records, probate records and other forms of words. These sources, combined with the material record, give us a window onto agency. My argument with Deetz – and with structuralism in general – is that it discards this opportunity by assuming the existence of generalized – given – cognitive structures and systems. In a way, structuralist approaches try and turn texts into material culture, and in doing so create another form of 'pre-history', one that wastes the special advantage of the rich record of the past.

To move on to the second of your points: scalability. As you suggested in your book, what links the elites of Chesapeake and the Cape is not some structuralist cognitive system but the connectivity created through the circulation

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of people and material goods. Historical archaeologists have become very adept at exploring 'local intensity', but perhaps less so at this issue of 'global connectivity' and generally, as you suggest, the relation between the global and local. In the book you refer to Wallerstein's World Systems Theory and talk about shared 'economic imperatives' – do you think archaeologists should be readdressing the nature of the 'economic' and if so, how?
Yes, I think this is indeed an area of current weakness, and one that would repay more work. What I was trying to show in looking at the Cape and the Chesapeake is that we cannot understand this period properly unless we appreciate that individual agency operated locally and globally at one and the same time. There is no need to mystify this. When the founders of colonial settlements such as the early Cape laid out streets and built their houses, they had in mind both local conditions (building materials, appropriate status signals, local climate and the like) and the 'proper' way to set out a settlement and mark the frontiers of civilization. Valerie Fraser shows this in her *The architecture of conquest. Building in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1535–1635* (1990), which is certainly an excellent work of historical archaeology, although its author might be surprised to learn so. Fraser shows how the first Spanish colonizers of Latin America carried with them a clear model of how a town should be laid out, well before this was formally codified by the crown. They then adapted this to local conditions. We need to develop an 'economics of materiality' that theorizes how these material world systems are set up and operate – a combination of the economics of the distribution of goods (well understood, of course) and the symbolics of material representation – sumptuary applications and the like. Appadurai's work will of course be important here, as well as that of historians with a consciousness of materiality – Schama's *The embarrassment of riches* (1988), and Israel's *Dutch primacy in world trade* (1989).

And how is this combination of the economic and symbolic articulated? For example, any aspect of the material world – from an artefact to a town plan – incorporates within the same body both economic and symbolic relations. Generally, historical archaeologists (and others) have focused on one or the other, but it is very rare to find interpretations that weave the two together.
I don't agree that the articulation of the economic and symbolic in historical archaeology is that rare – it's rather that we do not make enough of its potential to demonstrate the particular qualities of our discipline. A good example is work on slave houses on Mulberry Row, at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, widely known from Kelso's work (1986) almost 20 years ago. Cellars beneath the houses reveal the economics of slave life through food remains and personal possessions. But they also indicate the symbolics of resistance – the everyday ways in which people constructed a common sense of identity. Or take sumptuary laws. These regulations were a key element of economic control in a 'pre-consumer' mercantile system, but also constituted the symbolics of identity. At the level of the town plan, Mark Leone's work on Annapolis serves as an excellent example. Leone and his co-workers have looked at Annapolis from the economic perspective of the east-coast colonial

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economy, but also in terms of the symbolics of power, and the ways in which the layout of capitol and streets served to mark out the claims to power made by the Maryland gentry. These are all good examples – at different scales – of the ways in which materiality articulates both economy and the power of the symbolic. And this is the particular contribution that archaeology can make to the wider project of writing history when texts and things exist in contemporary time and space.

A recurrent but implicit thread in many of the previous issues discussed is the influence of Marxist thought in historical archaeology. It is of course explicit in Leone's 'critical archaeology' and was a major influence on South African historical studies in the 1970s and 1980s (as indeed it was in Britain). But to what extent is Marxism an important element of your work?
Most people who began to read theory before the rise of postmodernism were directly or indirectly influenced by Marxism. Of course, there was always the theoretical tradition of Gordon Childe. But the main influence came from the neo-Marxist intellectual traditions of Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, and particularly the work of Althusser. The growth of the trade unions in South Africa in the early 1970s, followed by the Soweto uprising in 1976, prompted a fervour of debate in left-wing intellectual circles at the 'liberal' universities in South Africa, although only a few archaeologists were actively involved – the main drive came from historians. Then, of course, Leone was a major influence, showing how concepts of ideology could be directly applied to archaeological interpretation. The neo-Marxist literature of the 1960s and 1970s was important for me in showing the interconnection of the economic, cultural and ideological – the organizing idea of the mode of production – and Althusser, in particular, allowed an approach to ideology that took us way beyond the simple base–superstructure models of Gordon Childe and contemporary Soviet archaeologies. But, in general terms, I've found Foucault more formative and informative – his concepts of power and discourse – which is an indirect way of getting to Marx.

Your work to date has clearly covered a wide range of themes, from the Iron Age to the Internet. So what, if I may ask, are you currently working on and do you have a longer-term vision or goal for archaeology in South Africa – and indeed internationally?
I'm still working across the range of these interests; there is a book for young adults on Great Zimbabwe about to come out, Steve Silliman and I are editing a collection on global historical archaeology for Blackwell, a piece on heritage destinations is just out in *Social archaeology*. I think it would be presumptuous to frame a vision for future archaeologies – this rests in the new and rising generations of scholars who will, without doubt, take the discipline to new places. But I'm fascinated by the way that current and emerging directions engage with the new dynamics of identity, and with new communication technologies. I think that this will lead to a revalidation of the material – with a new concern with authenticity.

To expand on what I mean here, we can go back to Walter Benjamin's seminal essay *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*, written

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in 1936. Benjamin was fascinated by the consequences of reproduction and, particularly, by the implications of photography. He saw the years around 1900 as millennial in their consequences for art – as a time when advances in technology allowed all forms of art to be reproduced, and therefore made widely available. As a consequence, art was increasingly available to all, rather than being restricted to a small group of connoisseurs who had access to private collections, galleries and select performances. This phenomenon directed Benjamin's attention to the status of the original, to its particular qualities – its 'aura'.

Seventy years later, we've turned full circle – the 'age of mechanical reproduction' is everywhere, and taken for granted. But there is an emerging anxiety about the original – about the authenticity of the unique object. We could illustrate this in a range of ways, but for the sake of argument here, let's imagine an unlikely scenario: Walter Benjamin transported to the Animal Kingdom Lodge in Walt Disney's Florida resort of the same name.

Here – in the midst of the most sophisticated assemblage of simulations, which aspires to bring the African savanna to the subtropical swamps – we find a classic ethnographic museum display of originals, with pride of place given to a huge Igbo Ijele mask, 'the only Ijele known to exist outside of Africa': 'the Ijele, the largest and one of the most respected masks of sub-Saharan Africa, usually appears every 10 to 25 years among the Igbo people of Nigeria for celebrations and important events . . . this rarity is regarded as an attribute of greatness'.

We can understand the importance of originality and material presence as the key to the Animal Lodge's claim to distinction in a world where almost anything can be copied. If archaeology is the study of materiality and its changing role through time then – to answer your question – the future of archaeology surely lies in the critical analysis of how material objects gain 'aura' – meaning – in a world of simulation.

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