SHARING A SAD PLACE

BY PLEASING A HARE INTO A GROVE OF CAVES AND EXHIBITION GARDENS OLD AS THE WORLD'S GREAT CITIES, A SCIENCE-FICTION STORY OF THE FUTURE.
improve the lives of Indigenous people, archaeologists will be welcomed with open arms by Indigenous communities. Archaeologists will gain a deeper, more holistic understanding of Indigenous cultures through their commitment to the community and the broadening of their research methods. Personal rewards will come from seeing how they have helped Indigenous people to build a better present for themselves and a better future for their children.

For Indigenous peoples, the future lies with the Indigenous youth. If we are going to build for the future, we have to build for their future. Ken Isaacs challenges archaeologists to help build a shared future by giving young Indigenous people pride in their past, self-esteem in their present, and some hope for the future. Stephanie Ford believes archaeologists can do this if they are willing to invest more of themselves and their time in acting as facilitators of (cross) cultural communication and interaction on both a local and an international level.

Archaeology cannot provide all the answers, or solve all the problems. However, archaeology can be used as a tool of empowerment by Indigenous peoples as well as archaeologists. Working in long-term relationships of trust with Indigenous peoples, archaeologists can re-shape their discipline into one that will produce profound benefits for the people with whom they work. They can help Indigenous peoples and Indigenous cultures survive.

What this type of archaeology calls for is not just a change in the way archaeology is practised. While words without deeds are pointless, deeds lacking the appropriate discussion as support are equally as futile (L. Smith 1995). If Indigenous archaeology is to move forward as a discipline, it is not enough that individual archaeologists establish mutually beneficial relationships with communities. There needs to be dialogue about these changes if more widespread advances are to be accomplished.

However, these conversations need to include Indigenous voices. Otherwise, archaeologists are still continuing in a paternalistic tradition by speaking for Indigenous people:

Now scholars debate among themselves the ethics to be used in working in our communities and homes. It is as if they are organizing the feeding schedule at the zoo. We want to escape from the zoo. We want to be consulted and respected as not only human beings, at the very least, but as independent nations with the right to determine what transpires within our boundaries. We want to say who comes to our world, what they should see, hear, and take away. Most important we want to appraise, critique, and censure what they feel they have a right to say. (King 1997:117–18)

Indigenous people need to develop international alliances among themselves and with archaeologists from other countries. International discourse among Indigenous people will allow these different cultures to understand each other, strengthen their own cultures, and exchange ideas on how archaeology works and does not work in Indigenous communities around the world. Communication between Indigenous people and archaeologists from all over the world will generate discussions and, we hope, actions that will lead to a better shared future for Indigenous people and archaeologists alike.

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