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Exchanging Gifts with the Dead: Lava Beds National Monument and Narratives of the Modoc War

Boyd Cothran, University of Minnesota

Abstract:

This article considers the 1988 dedication of a memorial to United States–Indian violence in far northeastern California to explore the possibilities of historical justice through commemoration and historical revisionism. The author explores the anthropological and sociological concept of the gift to expose the limitations of a multicultural marketplace of remembering and forgetting that suffuses moments of purported historical justice-making. Ultimately, the article forwards a critique of liberal multiculturalism’s call for inclusion by suggesting that multicultural historical revisionism often obscures power relations by offering the gift of equal inclusion within a national narrative. In the place of equivalency, the author argues for the necessity of a multivocal unequivalency that acknowledges the presence of power in narrations of the past.

[I]t is not individuals but collectivities that impose obligations of exchange and contracts upon each other what they exchange is not solely property and wealth, movable and immovable goods, things economically useful. In particular, such exchanges are acts of politeness, banquets, rituals, military services, women, children, dances, festivals, and fairs, in which economic transaction is only one element, and in which the passing on of wealth is only one feature of a much more general and enduring contract.

—Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*

At the limit, the gift as gift ought not appear as gift. either to the donee or the donor. It cannot be gift as gift except by not being present as gift.

—Jacques Derrida, *Given Time*

Since the 1954 publication of Marcel Mauss' *Essai sur le don* in English, the anthropological distinction of 'the gift', as embodying a persistent societal obligation of reciprocal exchange, has engaged the imaginations of academics across disciplines and engendered, appropriately enough, an endless series of intellectual exchanges. The role, function, true-nature and even the possibility of 'the gift' have all come under intense scrutiny, enriching, enlivening and deepening our collective understanding of the complex social dimensions of economic exchanges (i.e. Bataille 1988; Derrida 1992; Parry 1986; Taussig 1995). The applicability and transportability of Mauss' realisation, however, is not limited to the physical world of exchange goods. In recent decades, multicultural revisionism and historical reconciliation have come to exist and function within a societal marketplace of exchange, obligation, debt and reciprocity. Within the reparatory logic of liberal multiculturalism, inclusion within the historical narrative is offered as a kind of gift to the dead. These material and immaterial forms of historical justice-making purportedly exchange, wholly and fully, a previously flawed narrative of the past for an improved version of history. This idealised exchange is itself an act of power that belies any attempt by the powerful to contain historical narratives of violence wholly in the past. By offering to the dead the gift of contemporary narrative inclusion, apologists necessarily place the social obligation of a reciprocal exchange upon the living — an exchange we call forgiveness. But what happens when the living are removed from this exchange economy of historical justice? Are historical reparations possible within a liberal, progressive marketplace of remembering and forgetting in which the gift of justice is offered to the living only through the dead?

To explore the possibilities and limitations of historical justice through commemoration and revisionist historical re-narration, this article considers the 1988 dedication of a memorial to United States–Indian violence in the Klamath Basin of southern Oregon and northeastern California. National Park Service employees and local historical society members who organised this memorial ceremony conceived the memorial as bringing a new version of the past to the region's memorial landscape. Conversely, many Klamath tribal members felt that any true exchange was both unwanted and possibly harmful because the price of narrative inclusion was the obligation to forget the inequality that produced their original marginalisation. Indeed, for some, reparations through reconciliation, through the exchanging of one narrative for another, were impossible. Ultimately, I argue, if memories of US–Indian violence in the Klamath Basin are to be reconciled, it cannot be through liberal multiculturalism's promise of equality, but through an embrace of multivocality's gift of *unequivalence*. That is, by acknowledging the persistent and unequal power of the past in the present, the obligation to forgive can be lifted from the dead and offered to the living instead. This can only happen, however, if the living are offered the gift, not of simple inclusion, but of unequal multivocal participation. Unfortunately, as I explore in this article, while the designers of the 1988 memorial imagined a smooth and frictionless exchange of narratives, the refusal of certain members of the Klamath Tribes to reciprocate created a rupture in the exchange economy of historical justice-making.

The Modoc War

On 28 March 1988, some 200 people gathered in Lava Beds National Monument to remember and commemorate the Modoc War, California's so-called last Indian war. The intended centrepiece of the events orchestrated by the National Park Service and local historical organisations was the unveiling and consecration of a new memorial to those who died during the Modoc War, a five-month long peace-negotiation-turned-campaign of extermination that forever changed the world of the Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin peoples, known collectively today as the Klamath Tribes. The conflict began on 29 November 1872, when soldiers of the United States Army attempted to arrest Captain Jack and a group of Modoc and return them to the Klamath Reservation in southern Oregon. The Modoc had been party to the treaty of 1864, which reserved over 1 million acres of land from their original claim of more than 20 million acres in the Klamath Basin. In exchange, they were to receive thousands of dollars in supplies over the next fifteen years and the government's protection from Euro-American settlers. When supplies failed to materialise and conditions on the cold, rocky Klamath Reservation proved unacceptable, however, Captain Jack and some 300 followers forsook the reservation and repudiated the treaty. In the fall of 1872, the federal government sent soldiers to the Lost River village complex and the Modoc resisted. In the battle that ensued, several soldiers were killed or wounded, as were at least fourteen Euro-American settlers in the surrounding countryside. Escaping with only a handful of casualties, the Modoc took shelter in a series of highly defensible caves along the south shore of *Móatakni é-ush* or Tule Lake, a traditional place of safety among the Lava Beds of far northeastern California.

The protracted conflict that followed — remembered today as the Modoc War — pitted nearly a thousand soldiers of the US Army, and between 70 and 150 Indian allies, against approximately 53 Modoc warriors and their families. Unlike many episodes of nineteenth century US–Indian violence, however, the Modoc War was characterised by intractable negotiations and intense newspaper coverage with only periodic, if nonetheless profound, incidents of violence.ⁱ At issue were the Modoc's desire to remain in the Lost River area and their refusal to return to the Klamath Reservation. For their part, the Euro-American settlers and their state and federal governments maintained that the Modoc were in violation of the treaty, which, they insisted, had extinguished the tribe's right to the land. Moreover, a grand jury in Jacksonville, Oregon had indicted several Modoc for 'murdering' the fourteen settlers during the Army's attempted arrest. Following another defeat of the Army by the Modoc in January, a peace commission was established to negotiate a settlement. For a little over two months, the commission, chaired by Alfred Meacham — the former Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon — and advised by General Edward R.S. Canby, Commander of the Department of the Columbia, met with Captain Jack and members of his tribe to discuss terms. Ostensibly under a flag of truce, the US Army nonetheless continued to build their forces and slowly surrounded the Modoc's position, moving their troops closer with each passing week.

The Modoc War became a national sensation that escalated into a campaign of state sponsored ethnic cleansing when the Modoc attacked the peace commission during negotiations on 11 April 1873, killing two of its members, General Canby and the Reverend E. Thomas, and wounding a third, Meacham. Decried by the popular press and government officials as 'murder' and 'base treachery', the attack on the peace commissioners resulted in calls for the Modoc's 'utter extermination'. On 15 April, the Army, in conjunction with a detachment of Warm Springs Indian scouts, attacked the Modoc encampment and forced them from the shores of Tule Lake — the centre of the Modoc universe where *gmok'am'c* created the world out of mud from the bottom of the lake.ⁱⁱ

The Modoc War ended six weeks later when Captain Jack and a handful of followers finally surrendered on the banks of Willow Creek east of Tule Lake. 'I am ready to die', he reportedly said, before climbing aboard an army wagon bound for nearby Fort Klamath (Riddle 1914, 150).

The trial of Captain Jack and five other Modoc for the attack on the peace commission demonstrates well how Euro-American jurisprudence and violence intersected in the making of colonialism. In an Attorney-General's opinion, George H. Williams argued the Modoc should be tried by military commission rather than by the civil authorities because their status as 'domestic dependant nations' rendered them equivalent to foreign nations. As a result of his interpretation of the law, a military commission charged the Modoc with murder and attempted murder in violation of the laws of war (Williams 1873). Whether the accused Modoc had killed Canby and Thomas is immaterial; the decision to try them by military commission only compounded an already gross miscarriage of justice. Without the aid of legal council and appearing before a commission composed of soldiers who had served under Canby and who had fought in the Modoc War, no extenuating circumstances were introduced and Captain Jack and the others were found guilty on all counts (Foster 1999). On 3 October 1873, Captain Jack, Schonchin John, Black Jim, and Boston Charley were hanged at Fort Klamath for war crimes against the United States.

A landscape of memory

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the legacy of the Modoc War has assumed a variety of meanings. The Modoc War was a devastatingly traumatic episode of colonial violence from the Klamath Basin Indians' point of view. A few days after the public hanging, which more than 500 Klamath Basin Indians were forced to watch, the Army marched approximately 155 'hostile' Modoc to the nearby town of Yreka, loaded them into cattle cars, and transported them thousands of miles east where they eventually struggled to establish a community on the northeastern corner of the Quapaw reservation in what is today the state of Oklahoma (Hurtado 1981; James 2008). For Klamath Basin Indians, then, the consequences of the Modoc War extended far beyond the limited field of battle.

In contrast, Euro-Americans for the most part neatly contained the violence of the Modoc War both spatially and temporarily. To be sure, the death of General Canby — the first and only US Army general to die in the Indian wars — was a moment of national trauma and, according to local historian Daniel Woodhead (personal correspondence, 25 June 2010), would have made the Modoc War the most significant event in the history of nineteenth century US–Indian violence, if it had not been overshadowed

by the death of Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer three years later. Moreover, while the Modoc War remained important to American collective memory throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century — evidenced by the preservation of its battlegrounds by President Calvin Coolidge in 1925 as Lava Beds National Monument and by the theatrical success of Alan Ladd's 1954 blockbuster *Drum Beat* featuring Charles Bronson in his first film credit as Captain Jack — by the 1970s, the conflict had assumed a decidedly second tier status among the memorable military events of the nineteenth century. Remembered locally as an event that tied the Klamath Basin into a national narrative rather than as one that shaped the contours of western settlement, by 1988 the Modoc War had come to epitomise American innocence in the Klamath Basin.



In 1882, Lt. John S. Parke, a veteran of the Modoc War, erected Canby's Cross, supposedly marking the spot where Canby died. The cenotaph soon became a popular attraction for visitors and tourist. "Trip to the Lava Beds: Ivan and Alice Applegate at Canby's Cross at Lava Beds," Ogle66-1394. Courtesy of the Klamath County Museum [0016.1966.066.1231b].

Several monuments and memorials to the Modoc War within Lava Beds National Monuments embodied this particular narrative of American innocence. For example, the region's most striking memorial to US–Indian violence, Canby's Cross, proclaimed in crude black letters: 'Gen. Canby USA was murdered here by the Modocs, April 11, 1873'. Although the current manifestation of Canby's Cross is a reproduction, local hermit Judson D. Howard (1961) fused victimisation with fetishisation when he claimed that the original cross was initially held in place by a kern of stones covered in Canby's own blood.ⁱⁱⁱ According to former Superintendent of Lava Beds National Monument Craig Dorman (personal interview, 1 July 2008), a monument to non-Indian heroism existed alongside Canby's Cross from 1926 until sometime in the 1960s. Erected by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, a California nativist sororal society, this monument featured a bronze-cast golden bear wounded by Indian arrows atop a kern of local lava rocks. Occupying an area adjacent to Canby's Cross, the monument glorified the heroism of the soldiers and settlers of the Klamath Basin in no uncertain terms:

TO COMMEMORATE THE HEROISM OF GENERAL EDWARD R. S. CANBY OTHER OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS AND PIONEER SETTLERS WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES ON THIS BATTLEFIELD DURING THE MODOC WAR THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED.

Within the memorial landscape of the Klamath Basin, then, the true victims of US–Indian violence were the officers, soldiers and settlers who were innocently killed by Modoc murderers.



Dedication of the Golden Bear Monument by the Native Daughters of the Golden West Lava Beds Monument, 13 June, 1926. Courtesy of the Klamath County Museum [2486.2009.048.0123].

These monuments and memorials, associated with over a century of discourse — including travel literature, park brochures, artistic representations and popular and scholarly historical knowledge production — colluded over the decades to make the Lava Beds National Monument of the 1980s a collective memorial to white victimhood and American imperial innocence. For many Klamath tribal members, however, the National Monument was also a stigmatised site of national mourning (Foote 2000). After struggling for almost 30 years to re-establish the special relationship between their tribe and the federal government, the US re-recognised the Klamath people's inherent sovereignty through the *Klamath Restoration Act of 1986*. Against the backdrop of three decades of cultural decay, poverty, community disintegration and destabilisation, many tribal members viewed the Modoc War as the beginning of over a century of American assimilationist policy (Foster 1999; James 2008).

The 1988 dedication of a new Modoc War memorial, then, has to be understood within the context of a memorial landscape deeply imbued with a narrative of white victimisation and Indian treachery. Its design purported to correct the narrative landscape of Lava Beds National Monument by including alongside those of American soldiers and settler-militia the names of nineteen Indian men, women and children killed during the war. Despite careful preparations, the exact nature of the historical revisionism called for by late-twentieth century multicultural sensibilities was unclear to some participants. Read aloud during the ceremony, a letter from Republican Senator Pete Wilson expressed his expectation that the occasion would 'help to correct th[e] historical oversight, and serve to establish the conflict in its proper context' (Wilson n.d.). But what was the 'proper context' for remembering US–Indian violence in California? And how was a commemoration or a memorial supposed to correct the 'historical oversight' of previous generations?

'The proper context'

One answer to these questions was provided by National Park superintendent Doris Omundson. Standing above Gillem's Graveyard, the popular park attraction where US Army casualties were interred following the war, Omundson spoke on the 115th anniversary of the Modoc War of the cause and legacy of US–Indian violence in the region:

Those people [soldiers of the US Army] *were all just people doing their jobs* ... each one wanted the best for themselves and for their families ... we reach a stalemate and we don't know how to negotiate ... it was a time of real sorrow, and we do want to remember that. We do also want to remember the good that came out of it and also the heartbreak (Addenda 1988, 62–3; emphasis added).

As Omundson's speech suggests, the inclusion of Indian casualties was intended to serve as a reconciliatory gesture that would provide a measure of historical justice through equal inclusion within the region's narrative of victimisation. In the same vein, the federally-funded memorial declared with no apparent irony:

Many wars have occurred since the Modoc War, and many more are yet to be fought. The people involved may change, but the names we call them and the reasons we fight remain the same. *There are no true winners in war. We all pay the price* (emphasis added).

Putting aside the absurdity of a memorial to US–Indian violence declaring in a federally administered national park that there were in fact 'no true winners' in the wars of Western conquest, the reconciliatory and power-denying argument of the memorial was further reinforced by the sentiments of local historian and chairman of the event, Francis Landrum, who claimed during the dedication, 'Some ninety names on this plaque are Modoc Indians, [and] U.S. Army troops ... [but] everyone is treated the same: civilians, soldiers, Indians' (Addenda 1988, 63). Almost as an afterthought, he noted that those Modoc who died of natural causes as a result of the war or during their subsequent relocation to Oklahoma were not included.

While Landrum's assertion that in this memorial *everyone is treated the same* was specifically calculated to address the region's legacy of chauvinistic and racially biased monuments, the 1988 memorial sought to 'correct' a flawed narrative by recasting the Modoc War as an unavoidable multicultural tragedy and by providing an appropriate space for equal inclusion within the victimised landscape of Lava Beds National Monument. Moreover, by treating everyone as *the same*, the memorial offered atonement for the violence of American colonialism in exchange for a version of the past that ignored the *unequivocalness* of that violence.

The death of a soldier sent to the Klamath Basin by the US Army to kill Indians was equivalent to that of an old woman burnt to death in her home or Indians POWs pulled from the wagons transporting them to prison and slaughtered by white vigilantes. They were all *treated the same*.

Considering the gross inequality of such equivalence, it is perhaps not surprising that the 1988 memorial failed to accomplish the act of atonement that Landrum and others hoped to achieve. Indeed, several Modoc individuals used the public forum following the consecration of the memorial to bear witness to their memories of the Modoc War. Rather than participate in the narrative of reconciliation offered by the physical memorial, these speakers produced narratives of the war that acknowledged the continuing violence of the past and its lasting impact upon the Modoc people and their culture. Through a close reading of one man's speech, I dedicate the remainder of this article to listening to the stories of the living rather than simply naming the dead. By explicitly rejecting the idea that the memorial could offer a form of historical justice, individuals like Lynn Schonchin made explicit the embedded inadequacies of a conception of history and justice that offered forgiveness as a gift to the dead.

'Historical oversights'

Following the dedication of the new memorial, the participants gathered for a series of panel discussions intended to educate the surrounding community and to supplement the day's narrative reconciliation. The discussion began with a panel of military historians and retired army personnel, who, for 45 minutes, debated the use of carbines, signatory flags, battle formation and hardtack. After this macabre discussion of the accoutrements of death and colonisation, the dispassionate, scientific and 'scholarly' tone of the discussion was transformed when a number of descendants of those whose names had just been memorialised in stone assumed the stage.

The descendants panel began with the usual introductions, each descendent stating their lineal credentials, tying themselves to a common moment more than a century before. The descendants of the

soldiers and colonists had, by and large, left the Klamath Basin generations ago, leaving the land for which their ancestors killed. Alternatively, those with roots in the Klamath and Modoc communities continued to call the land, for which their kin had died, home. The introductions were informal and brief until it came time for Lynn Schonchin, great-great grandson of Schonchin John (one of those hanged for war crimes against the US), to introduce himself. Speaking in an intense monotone as if castigating all those present and punishing them for what they had just done, he said:

The Modoc War was a big game. That's all it was. It was a big game where the culture died. And that is the sad part. I've never been to the lava beds. I will never go to the lava beds. I feel it is a cemetery for my people, my culture. And with that, you know, I am bitter (Panel discussion of the Modoc War by descendents of participants 1988, 47).

Schonchin's bitterness, however, did not prevent him from continuing. He further critiqued historical narratives of the Modoc War by rejecting the language which framed the war, thereby challenging the terms upon which it might be considered: 'I see war-like people, I see books like *Modoc Renegades*, *The Modoc and Their War*,' he said, '[But] it wasn't my people's war'. In addition, Schonchin critiqued the historical narratives of certain Euro-American scholars who identified the Klamath and Modoc people as enemies. Some 'historical treatments of the Modoc War', identified 'an incident at Modoc Point' between the Klamath and the Modoc as the starting point of the Modoc War, 'The Klamath and Modoc did not like each other, according to all of the statements and all of the textbooks written. I am here to basically refute that statement', he said.

In place of the textbook version of history, Schonchin offered the audience stories from his own family history and his own experience to challenge what he considered colonial fantasies:

How did people who lived so close together, who traded, who shared the same language, who shared the same cultural patterns, the same mythology, hate each other? Our grandmother, Lizzie, was half-Klamath, and half-Modoc ... Yet the Klamath people and Modoc people are pitted against one another in history books. These are images that I've grown up with as an Indian — as a Klamath and as a Modoc (47–8).

Ultimately, Schonchin refused to accept stories that did not, could not, account for his experience.

In disputing the widely accepted narrative of Klamath-Modoc antagonism, Schonchin also used his speech to challenge narratives of the Modoc War that presented white settlers as victims of Indian aggression, 'I question the establishment of Fort Klamath', he declared, 'Fort Klamath was established on the premise that the settlers needed protection from the Indians', but its location and timing to Schonchin suggested, 'that maybe someone was looking for a war'. He also characterised the 1864 treaty between the US and the Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin as an un-ratified treaty until 1870, 'This means the Modoc had the right to go home', he said, 'They were not bound by that treaty because it was unratified' (48). According to Schonchin, the US Army had no right to attempt to force Captain Jack back onto the Klamath Reservation, for without ratification by Congress, the Modoc were not bound by its stipulations and therefore were not to blame for the war.

Finally, towards the end of his speech, Schonchin did more than challenge existing narratives based solely on racial bias or factual inaccuracy, he also rejected them because these narratives refused to recognise the humanity of the Modoc involved. Telling the story of his great-grandfather's execution, Schonchin said, 'I talked a little bit about images of people. If you look at all the pictures of my people, their hair is cut off, and they wear different types of clothing. They're very stoic'. But, he added:

When my great-grandfather was hung, he cried. He cried because he wondered what was going to happen to his children. Of the things we've talked about today, one is tactics, another is the terrain, type of weaponry, whether the cavalry was there, or whatever — but we've forgotten about the people. I think we need to keep that in the back of our minds. What about the people? What happened to the people? Where are the people? And where are the people going?^{iv}

Through use of his personal testimony, Schonchin rejected the work of atonement that the new memorial claimed to perform. For Schonchin, the new marker with its narrative of inclusion represented a reconciliation of the past that left out its continuing impact on the present and, thus, was insufficient.

It was a past hermetically sealed from the present. Rather than providing an inclusive narrative of the war, the memorial continued to forget certain peoples — the Modoc people. According to Schonchin, 'We have to ... think about the people,' he said, repeatedly,

the people that were involved. My people that were sent to Oklahoma and died, my people that were killed in the war, and my people that stayed here in Klamath and lived and suffered through termination and all of this. And we're still here. And we're gonna be here for any other policy that comes along (48–9).

Despite the memorial's claim to atone for a previously flawed narrative of the past, Schonchin found the memorial and its narrative of the Modoc War to be incomplete. He did not believe that in this monument, everyone was *treated the same* ...

On unequivalence

In writing about memories of US–Indian violence and the possibility of true restorative justice through historical narrative truth, anthropologist Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2007, 110) suggests that 'public memorials, museum exhibits, and history books can ... become vehicles for restorative justice' but only by 'shinning a light on the shadows of history and revealing that which has remained perversely hidden'. Through the vehicle of the descendant panel, Schonchin and others emphasised the shadows cast by the new memorial and in the process they rejected the disciplining of remembering wherein the violence of the past might be hidden, forgotten or exchanged.

In this article, I have suggested that while the 1988 memorial purported to exchange a flawed, incomplete or unjust narrative of the past for a complete, expansive and just narrative, at least one Indian man found the promise of atonement to be empty. Indeed, as is so often the case, the marketplace of remembering and forgetting is not a neat or fair exchange economy in which the living might make a gift in the present to the dead in the past. Justice, reparation, reconciliation — these are the currency with which we make deals with the dead and seek to trade their deaths for our forgetfulness. As anthropologist Alan Klima (2002, 12–13) has suggested, history is 'ultimately an economics of storytelling, the narrative economy by which the past is left behind and exchanged for the future, where each may go its separate way, as when one economic man comes together with another for a single moment of exchange, when they relinquish their values completely, and then depart with no strings attached'. The 1988 memorial sought to dictate the price of forgiveness by offering, once and for all, a story in which the sufferings of all would be *treated the same*. By offering a solution to the problem of remembering US-Indian violence in the Klamath Basin through an economy of equivalence, moments of purported historical justice-making, like the dedication of the 1988 memorial, often seek to construct reconciliatory narratives that allow for an exchange of remembrances in which the narrator, commemorator, historian, or mourner, in the words of Klima, may 'depart with no strings attached'. As with the universality of a possessive individualism, that serves as the model for rational productive selfhood, the violence of multicultural equivalence is deeply rooted in ideas of liberal progressive Americanism (Hong 2006).

Ruptures in this marketplace of remembering arise when one participant in the chain of exchanges leading to forgiveness asserts the retention of a version of the past that cannot be contained by or resembles in no way the one being offered. The gift of a new narrative, the gift of equal inclusion within the memorial landscape of Lava Beds National Monument, carries with it an immense violence, the violence of equivalence. The 1988 memorial contained the names of Indian casualties but refused to acknowledge the deaths of those who died during removal or of illness or despair; in this way, it defined, limited, legitimised and described the extent and reach of American colonialism via the casualties incurred during a delineated period of US–Indian violence. As Marita Sturken (1997, 44–84) has observed, the listing of the dead within national monuments such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial provides catharsis for the mourner while simultaneously defining who can be a legitimate mourner.^v The legitimate mourner grieves the loss of a particular individual who died within a defined battlefield during a proscribed time period of warfare. But what of those who died on the cattle cars to Oklahoma? Does the 1988 memorial atone for their deaths? Are they treated equally? And can any monument or memorial ever begin to capture the immense loss of culture that the Modoc War merely signifies as a beginning point? The destruction of a way of life? The suppression of a language? In providing a space for acknowledging death, which simultaneously defined who might be properly considered the legitimately

mourned dead, the 1988 memorial created an environment that ultimately precluded the possibility of true reconciliation and forgiveness.

Yet, while Schonchin's speech suggests the limits and impossibility of reconciliation through gifts of inclusion to the dead, it also might offer us a window into the possibility for true reconciliation, an honest accounting with the violence of the past, not through forgetting but through remembering; not by limiting the reach of the war, but by allowing each individual to define their inclusion and to explore their previous exclusion. Just as Schonchin refused to allow the memorial, with its narrative of atonement, to stand alone, his nephew, Tom Ball, likewise would not allow his uncle's narrative to stand alone. Full of emotion, pausing often, and choking back tears, Ball added:

One point I really wanted to make was that I disagree with the whole civilization and its culture is dead and dying thing. My friend, Helen, brought with her a two or three page list of Modoc words. And she taught me how to say them. And to hear those words, I want[ed] to cry. That's me. That's my people. And to hear those words is a jogging of the memory (Panel discussion of the Modoc War by descendents of participants 1988, 49).

Thus, what had begun as a ceremony intended to construct a reconciliatory narrative of the past and thereby enable a collective forgetting, ended with a beautiful statement about the ultimate power of unequivocal multivocal remembering. Despite the wishes of many to control and tame our faculty for remembrance and foist forgiveness upon the living, the complexities and variety of functions which society asks remembering to perform obscure the fact that atoning for the violence of the past is itself often an act of violence — in this case, the terrible violence of equality. The deconstruction of the silence and violence produced by attempts at atonement, then, requires a multitude of narratives. For it is only through multivocality that we can sidestep the marketplace of remembering, stop trading stories with the dead and actually listen to the stories we are offered as gifts from the living.

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ⁱ The Modoc War has received considerable historical treatment. For a representative sample, see Keith A. Murray, *The Modocs and Their War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959); Richard H. Dillon, *Burnt-out Fires, California's Modoc Indian War* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973); R. David Edmunds, ed., *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 33-73; Rebecca Bales, "'You Will Be Bravest of All": The Modoc Nation to 1909', (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2001); Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 101-124.

ⁱⁱ The relationship between Tule Lake and the cultural hero *K'múkamtch* has come up in numerous conversations I have had with Modoc and Klamath people. For a more detailed study of Modoc and Klamath cultural affiliation with the Lava Beds area see Douglas Deur, 'Crater Lake National Park and Lava Beds National Monument: Traditional Use Study' (Tulelake, California: National Park Service, 2006), esp. 3-4, 13-15, 114-117. The idea that the Modoc culture died in the Lava Beds has often been stated, particularly during the 1980s. In recent years, many Modoc and Klamath people are beginning to moderate their views on the severity of the Modoc War and its lasting impact on their culture. Nonetheless, the idea of the Lava Beds as a cemetery has often been passed from generation to

generation. As Deur observes, 'A number of consultants noted that their parents and grandparents always said 'that place is a graveyard and not to be messed with ... We shouldn't go there', 154.

ⁱⁱⁱ Howard, in turn, bases his information on stories told to him by his good friend, Peter Schonchin, a Modoc who probably witnessed Canby's death.

^{iv} While quotes used for this article come from the transcripts of the National Park Service's 1988 Symposium on the Modoc War published in a special edition of *The Journal of the Shaw Historical Library* 3 (Fall 1988), I also consulted the videotape recordings of the symposium (stored at Lava Beds National Monument Research Library with copies in author's possession) to check the accuracy of the published transcript. In this quote, meaningful discrepancies existed between the published transcript and the recording. Therefore, I have edited slightly the published transcript.

^v In writing on the Atom Bomb Dome in Hiroshima, Japan, cultural critic Lisa Yoneyama argues for the expansive power of memorials to define the legitimately dead. Memorials to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, she concludes, create at times a sense of 'sacredness and transcendence' that transforms the detonation of an atomic bomb on a civilian population into not just a moment in Japanese history but also a catastrophe for all mankind. The power of such memorials, then, is to expand the definition of victimhood beyond those who experienced the actual violence universalising individual experience into larger historical forces: *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectic of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 71.