

**DFG-Project**

*Constructions of North American Antiquity  
in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts*



# **Decolonizing “Prehistory”: Deep Time and Topological Knowledge in the Americas**

**Symposium**

**Schwerin, Hotel Speicher  
21-23 June, 2018**

**Abstracts and Bios**



**Annette Kolodny, University of Arizona, Tucson**

Competing Narratives of Ancestry in Donald Trump’s America: Personal DNA Testing, the “Ethno-State,” Native American Land Rights, and the Imperative for Scholarly Intervention

Two seemingly unconnected sets of competing narratives graphically illustrate the fierce tensions unleashed in the United States by the current Trump presidency. These competing narratives also illustrate the urgent need for a better popular understanding of so-called prehistory.

The first set of competing narratives pits the increasing popularity of personal DNA testing against the dangerous rise of white nationalist assertions of ethnic purity. On the one hand, a deluge of television advertisements promotes the image of individual Americans happily discovering their diverse and multiple racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds through inexpensive home DNA test kits. As one woman in an ad exclaims happily after receiving her DNA results, “I come from everywhere!” On the other hand, a politically active right-wing white nationalist movement promotes an image of the *true* American as racially white and ethnically Western and Northern European. Clearly, these are incommensurate visions. Yet they jockey for primacy in the current culture wars.

Ironically, these two competing narratives came together at a white supremacist rally in Shelbyville, Tennessee in late October 2016. Counter-protesters rejecting the white supremacists’ insistence on a pure white “ethno-state” offered to fund DNA tests for the white nationalists in order to confront them with the probable diversity in their own bloodlines. As might be expected, that offer was refused.

A second set of competing narratives emerges in the current lawsuit brought by the Penobscot Nation of Maine challenging a decision by that state’s Attorney General. At issue in the lawsuit is the ownership, control, and management of the main stem of the Penobscot River. Testimony in the case pitted a narrative of Penobscot continuity on the river against a highly questionable narrative of discontinuity. In this second narrative, an earlier and more ancient Red Paint people had been displaced and replaced by the later-arriving Penobscots. This second narrative thus implied that the Penobscots had no long-term or ancient claim to the river as part of their traditional homelands. In the end, these competing narratives did not prove crucial in the court’s decision. Instead, a two-person majority on the three-person Appeals Court found against the Penobscot Nation on the basis of a very narrow twenty-first century American-English dictionary definition of the word *land*. These two judges concluded that the word *land* did not necessarily include the presence or concept of water. In other words, the court put forward an understanding of treaty language in English wholly foreign to Native understandings of that same language. For the Penobscots, the river has always constituted an integral and inseparable part of their homelands and, in fact, knitted those homelands together. As a result, a court’s imperfect understanding of ancient Indigenous occupations along the Penobscot River was combined with a cleverly manipulated re-definition of the word *land* in order to legally empower unscrupulous state officials to wrest from the Indians environmental control over their river.

Gathered together at this impressive symposium is an assemblage of outstanding scholars who—both individually and collaboratively—possess precisely the varieties of expertise required to make important interventions into each of these sets of competing narratives. Although we work in fields uncomfortably allied with the label “prehistory,” we all know that our work is neither pre-anything nor exclusively historical. It has profound



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implications for the present. Therefore, I hope that one of the outcomes of this extraordinary gathering is a discussion of how to move our research out of the scholarly journals and into the public sphere. We need to address an audience wider than our scholarly peers. I hope to spark a conversation about the many ways in which our work can contribute to a better informed national and international discourse about history and heredity. In that process, we can address the massive confusions in the current popular terminology of race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, and identity. The general public *needs* to know our work better, and the politics of the moment demand no less.

**Annette Kolodny** is College of Humanities Professor Emerita of American Literature and Culture at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she has been teaching American Studies and Comparative Cultural and Literary Studies since 1988. Her book *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (1975) paved the ground, methodically and thematically, for a whole generation of Americanists. It was followed by *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (1984). *Failing the Future: A Dean Looks at Higher Education in the 21st Century* (1998) critically reflects on her experience as Dean of Humanities in Arizona (1988-1993). She published an annotated new edition of Joseph Nicolai's 1893 *The Life and Tradition of the Red Man* (Duke UP, 2007). Her analysis of the political uses of American antiquity are included in *In Search of First Contact. The Vikings of Vinland, the Peoples of the Dawnland, and the Anglo-American Anxiety of Discovery* (Duke UP, 2012).

While at the University of British Columbia (1970-1974), Kolodny was instrumental in creating a Women's Studies program, the first academically accredited Women's Studies program in Canada. This program became a model for both the United States and Canada.

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## Jessica Christie, East Carolina University, Greenville

### Yucatec “Maya” Historicity and Identity Constructions: The Case of Coba

My contribution will critically investigate the historicity of “Maya”-ness through ethnographic fieldwork in the small town of Coba in Quintana Roo, Mexico, which has grown next to the archaeological site of Coba in the twentieth century. Cobaneros self-identify as “Maya” because they speak Yucatec Maya, were born on the Yucatec peninsula, and own land. But are there deep time connections which would affiliate today’s Cobaneros with the Classic “Maya” people who built and lived in the archaeological zone?

Section 1 will be a chronological overview of the pre-contact site and post-Invasion Colonial history. Settlement began during the Late Formative (c.50 B.C. – A.D.100). In the Early and Middle Classic, population growth and control over trade routes turned Coba into a powerful city-state in the cultural landscape of the northern peninsula with access to ports in the east. The site features monumental temple buildings and administrative complexes, a road system, as well as partially eroded stelae with ruler portraits and texts dated to the Late Classic (A.D.600s – 800s). After A.D.900, Coba began to decline; a new building group was erected in the Post-Classic in an Eastern coastal style. The site was abandoned around A.D.1550. The material culture excavated by archaeologists affiliates Coba with Classic cities in the southern lowlands (Peten and Chiapas) which researchers identify as *Maya*. The present town of Coba was newly settled by chicleros from nearby villages in the mid-20<sup>th</sup>. Thus there is no direct historical connection between the people living in pre-contact and present Coba.

Section 2 will mine linguistic and historical Colonial sources which present evidence that the term “Maya” began to be used in order to categorize and integrate indigenous peoples on the peninsula into the Colonial empire of the rising Spanish nation-state. Native Yucatecans used to self-identify through their town and lineage group. Today they have accepted “Maya” identity, perceiving language as the main unifying bond. Some have learnt to commodify their “Maya”-ness in interactions with outsiders for economic and personal gains. In Coba, internal heritage transmission and revival is performed by school teacher Luis May Ku in his extra-curriculum activities and artistic creations. He teaches and produces what he and others perceive as “Maya” music, writing, dance, and ceramic art to keep alive and pass on “Maya” heritage. Looking more closely at the types of glyphs transmitted and present ceramic production, one notices that they often differ from what epigraphers and archaeologists categorize as ancient or Classic “Maya” art forms. Thus in a quiet but persistent way, May Ku and colleagues re-define what is “Maya” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century on their terms and in their own vocabulary.

**Jessica Christie** is an associate professor of art history at East Carolina University. She specializes in the visual culture of the ancient and contemporary Maya and Inka as well as rock art in the Americas. Academic interests focus on three-dimensional environments framed by architecture and sculpture and the constructed performance spaces and landscapes. Phenomenology is one selected theoretical approach which allows to explore the dynamic relationships between the human body and its cultural environments. Her fields of interest have expanded from pre-contact to post-contact societies which she sees as linked and she is intrigued to explore their vibrant connections under the lenses of memory and Post-Colonialism. Dr. Christie has conducted field investigations at pre-contact Maya sites for over twenty years and observed contemporary Maya ceremonies for ten years. Since 1997,

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her field trips have focused on the Andes. She recently completed a field investigation of el-Amarna in Egypt. Dr. Christie has published about Maya stelae (Ancient Mesoamerica 2005) and edited/co-edited two volumes about Maya and ancient American palace architecture (University of Texas Press 2003, 2006). Another edited volume on Landscapes of Origin was published in 2009. She has written three articles about Inka sculpted outcrops (Anthropos 2006; The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology 2007; Journal of Anthropological Research 2008) as well as in numerous conference proceedings. Dr. Christie is currently finishing a single author book manuscript about the Inka carved rocks. Dr. Christie holds an M.A. degree in art history from the University of Nuremberg-Erlangen in Germany, a second M.A. specializing in Pre-Columbian art from the University of Texas in Austin as well as a Ph.D. degree in Latin American Studies from the same institution. Her dissertation analyzed Maya Period Ending ceremonies. Dr. Christie is an Associate Professor teaching art of the Americas in the School of Art and Design at East Carolina University.

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**Mathieu Picas, University of Barcelona**  
**Margarita Díaz-Andreu, University of Barcelona/ ICREA**

### ‘Scientific’ vs. Local Narratives About Pre-Hispanic Sites: Tulum as a Case Study

In this presentation the politics of sciences such as archaeology and anthropology will be debated taking at the basis not the distant past of the Americas, but the spectacular remains of monumental archaeological sites. Cultural heritage is a social construction that allows groups of very different character – including ethnic and national –to appropriate culturally or politically landscapes and places by attaching symbolism to them. The use by the Mexican state of archaeological remains for the construction of national identity has been marked, mainly from the late 1930s, by the management of many Pre-Hispanic archaeological sites. The official discourse of archaeological sites emphasises scientific research and promotes cultural tourism on the basis of historic and aesthetic values. This discourse contrasts with the traditional local use of the archaeological sites, a use that is underscored by social and sacred values. As a case study this presentation will focus on the Pre-Hispanic site of Tulum located in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo. In Tulum, as it happens in many other archaeological sites in the area, the local *Cruzo’ob* Maya appreciate Pre-Hispanic archaeological structures known as *múulo’ob* or *cerros* (hills) not only because of their historical or aesthetic values, but also because of their religious character. The *múulo’ob* are considered to be the dwelling places of supernatural entities such as guardians and ancestors whom are considered the owners of the land. The symbolism attached to these sites and entities is understood as crucial for the success of the agricultural and other activities and for their intimate relationship with the landscape. The Maya’s cosmology and territoriality include, therefore, a particular connection to the archaeological remains which is reflected in the communities’ social practices and oral tradition. Based on a bibliographic and ethnographic research, we will explore different ways of local communities’ interaction with deities and space appropriation in central Quintana Roo. This paper will emphasize, therefore, the contested ground of archaeological sites, paying particular attention to the alternative values that they raise in particular in the Mayan area. We will finish our paper reflecting on how in the last two decades state archaeology has been debating on how to integrate these alternative values into the management of the sites.

**Mathieu Picas** is a PhD candidate at the University of Barcelona. His research focuses on the relationship between identity and cultural heritage in the Maya regions. He is a member of Grup d’Arqueologia Pública i Patrimoni research group. Before he came to Barcelona he studied at the University of Pau (France), a BA in Foreign Languages, Literatures and Civilizations with a specialization in Latin America and an MA by research. In 2011-2012 he was assistant professor at the University of Quintana Roo (Mexico). In 2014-2015 he completed another MA in Intercultural Relations and International Cooperation at the University of Lille 3 Charles De Gaulle (France). As part of the latter program, he was awarded the Nord-Pas-de-Calais mobility scholarship to work as an intern for the United Nations Development Program in Nicaragua where he was given the responsibility to coordinate all ongoing projects related to rural development, social inclusion, capacity-building and climate change adaptation in the region of Segovia. In 2016 he was a World Heritage Volunteer for the INAH/UNESCO project, Young Guardians of Teotihuacan, at the Archeological Site of Teotihuacan (Mexico). In 2017 he was invited as an international PhD researcher at University



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of Bonn’s Abteilung für Altamerikanistik und Ethnologie (Germany) thanks to a DAAD Short Term Research Grant. His research deals with indigenous peoples and minorities self-determination claims in Central America and Mexico.

**Margarita Díaz-Andreu** is an ICREA Research Professor based at the University of Barcelona. She studied History and specialised in Prehistory at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM). She worked in Spain at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC, National Research Council) and UCM and before moving to the United Kingdom to lecture at Durham University (1996-2011), where she was Reader. Since 2012 she has worked for Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats (ICREA, Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Study), based at the University of Barcelona (UB). Her research interests include the history of archaeological heritage, archaeological tourism and the politics of heritage. Her most recent publications in these fields include a themed issue on “Ethics of Archaeological Tourism in Latin America” for the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* (2013) and articles on the impact of World Heritage listing on rock art (2015 *Proceedings of World Heritage conference at Menorca*), the history of archaeological tourism (2014, *Anales de Antropología*) and the social value of heritage looking at the relationship between migrants and archaeology (Springer 2015). She has successfully supervised seven PhD students, one on archaeological tourism in Mexico and is currently supervising another PhD candidate working on China. She has given presentations on this subject in Brazil, the Czech Republic, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom and lectures on heritage at the University of Barcelona. Díaz-Andreu co-directed the Centre for the Ethics of Cultural Heritage (CECH) (2010-2011) at Durham University. She was recently a member of the International Study Group on the Heritage Status of Aboriginal Cultural Property funded by the Quebec Funding for Research on Society and Culture (FQRSC). She was also a member of the Rock Art Research Task Group, in which rock art heritage is a central concern, and was in charge of organizing the group’s meetings at Durham (May 2009) and Barcelona (November 2012). In 2014 and 2015 she was the PI for Spain of the EU-funded Heritage Values Network project (JPI–JHEP) with funding from the Spanish government (I+D retos competition). She is the IP of the I+D+i project InterArq and is the leader of a heritage interest group, GAPP (Grup d’Arqueologia Pública i Patrimoni - Group of Public Archaeology and Heritage) based at the University of Barcelona.

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**Christen Mucher, Smith College, Northampton, MA**

“Born of the Soil”: Demography’s Roots and the Refusal of Oral Tradition

There is no shortage of recent studies revising the timeline of ancient American history, many of which regularly appear in the British scientific journal *Nature*. One 2017 report uses tools and broken mastodon bones recovered at a California construction site to backdate the continent’s human occupation over 100,000 years. A recent counter-study has refuted the validity of the mastodon evidence, claiming the marks to have been made by current-day construction equipment, not human tools. Similarly, a 2017 study based on DNA derived from two fossilized infant skeletons and “demographic modelling” seems to have confirmed the existence of a distinct “Ancient Beringian” branch of immigrants from eastern Asia, divergent from the ancestors of Indigenous North and South Americans. Questions over the identity and descent of the Ancient One/Kennewick Man, who was finally repatriated in 2017, were quieted when a complete genomic sequence showed his closest relatives as current Native communities in North America.

These debates are only the most recent installments of a centuries-old inquiry into the origins, timing, and dispersal of human populations on earth. At heart, they are all attempts to verify and quantify the very limits of human knowledge, and all look to extra-human sources for their evidence: bones, tools, uranium, mathematical models. Even recent attempts to bring together Indigenous oral tradition and Western science nonetheless seek, ultimately, to provide a timeline tailored to larger paleo-human patterns.

This paper examines theories of the early population of the Americas in light of the development of “state science”—statistics and demography—in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries. It posits that inquiries into human chronology were not only connected to the contemporary destabilization of Judeo-Christian cosmology in the wake of colonialism but were also tied to the concurrent development of technological tools to quantify and control Indigenous populations. Paying particular attention to the role of stories about mastodons and “ancient races” in the development of US Indian Policy, this paper suggests that current-day popular and scientific interest in America’s ancient past is ultimately a continued attempt to square Indigenous with Mosaic history and to defend settler land claims.

**Christen Mucher** is an assistant professor of American Studies at Smith College, where she teaches courses on early North America, Native and Indigenous studies, US empire, and museum studies. Her essay on the archive of the transatlantic slave trade was recently published in *Warring for America: Cultural Contests in the Era of 1812* (UNC 2017) and her co-translation and critical edition of Haiti’s first novel, *Stella* (1859), was published by NYU Press in 2015. She has an article forthcoming in the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. Christen’s current book manuscript, *Before American History: Archives, Antiquities, and Native Pasts*, addresses archaeology, historiography, and Indigenous dispossession in the United States and Mexico from the 1780s–1830s. Her work has received fellowship support from the Newberry Library, New-York Historical Society, American Antiquarian Society, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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## Melissa Gniadek, University of Toronto

### Mammoth Cave, Poe, and Speculative (Pre)Histories

Today, Kentucky’s Mammoth Cave is the largest known cave system in the world. About three-hundred and fifty miles of passageways have been explored. Hundreds more may exist. Now a national park as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an International Biosphere Reserve, the cave is one of the oldest tourist attractions in North America. Anglo-American settlers knew about Mammoth Cave for years before it became well-known as a tourist attraction, however, since the cave was mined for saltpeter (a component of gunpowder) with the use of slave labor during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Mammoth Cave became better known outside of Kentucky in 1816 when Nathum Ward published a description of the cave and of an “Indian mummy” found there in the Worcester, Massachusetts *Spy*. The article was reprinted throughout the U.S. and later appeared in newspapers in England as well, building on and fueling interest in “American antiquities”.

This talk reads Mammoth Cave as a subterranean site that makes visible intersections between settler colonialism, slave labor, and nineteenth-century preoccupations with deep pasts. It does so in part through consideration of a text by a well-known author, Edgar Allan Poe, a text that is not itself about Mammoth Cave, but that engages questions posed by such a space. Positioning the renderings of geological chasms in Poe’s one complete novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, published in 1838, alongside a pamphlet about Mammoth Cave, published a year later in 1839, I consider how emerging archaeological and geological discourses informed these text’s fictional engagements with the deep pasts of place represented in topographical terms. Showing that the pamphlet about Mammoth Cave draws on Poe’s novel as well as some of the sources that influenced Poe even as it purports to relate a true story about the popular tourist destination, this talk argues that engagement with these texts can shift our contemporary conversations about the temporal dimensions of settler colonialism, helping us to recognize different and dynamic efforts to script the multiple pasts of place.

**Melissa Gniadek** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Toronto, where she teaches early and nineteenth-century American literature and culture. Her current projects involve temporalities of settlement in US contexts and the Pacific “at home” in nineteenth-century America. Her work has appeared in journals including *American Literature* (receiving honorable mention for the Norman Foerster Prize for the best essay published in that journal in 2014), *Early American Literature* (receiving the Richard Beale Davis Prize for the best essay published in the journal in 2015), *New Global Studies*, *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, and *Lateral: The Journal of the Cultural Studies Association*.

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## Phil Deloria, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

### *Red Earth, White Lies, Sapiens*, and the Deep Politics of Knowledge.

Vine Deloria, Jr.’s 1995 *Red Earth, White Lies* was, according to many critics, poorly researched and argued, contaminated by Velikovskian catastrophism, imbued with an unacceptable indigenous creationism, and unnecessarily hostile toward a misunderstood and overgeneralized “science.” Those critiques may well be considered accurate and legitimate, but they also miss the central thrust of the book, which is the enunciation of an indigenous politics in relation to research on American antiquity, and a visceral, emotional response to the unmarked universalizing of Western epistemologies. Despite its flaws, Deloria’s book energized at least some parts of an important generation of Native American scholars.

Yuval Noah Harari’s book *Sapiens* (2011) energized Bill Gates, and it continued the tradition of large scale Deep and Big histories made famous by Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs and Steel*. Both writers made explicit—if quite different—connections between past, present, and future. Both frame, and are framed, in relation to struggles over the politics of meaning and knowledge. Placing the books in juxtaposition allows us to contemplate broader questions surrounding the narration of global—and American—antiquity: is there a way to step outside the teleology of narratives that lead inevitably to the present? Can one imagine an indigenous critique of Deep History, its narrative strategies, and its consequences? Or even a contemporary, scientifically-inflected indigenous narrative approach to deep pasts?

**Philip J. Deloria** is a Professor of History at Harvard University, where his research and teaching focus on the social, cultural and political histories of the relations among American Indian peoples and the United States, as well as the comparative and connective histories of indigenous peoples in a global context. Deloria received the Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University in 1994, taught for six years at the University of Colorado, and then at the University of Michigan from 2001 to 2017, before joining the faculty at Harvard in January 2018. At Michigan, he served as the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Director of the Program in American Culture, and of the Native American Studies Program, and held the Carroll Smith-Rosenberg Collegiate Chair. His courses have included American Indian history, Environmental history, the American West, and American Studies methods, as well as Food Studies, Songwriting, and Big History. His first book, *Playing Indian* (1998), traced the tradition of white “Indian play” from the Boston Tea Party to the New Age movement, while his 2004 book *Indians in Unexpected Places* examined the ideologies surrounding Indian people in the early twentieth century and the ways Native Americans challenged them through sports, travel, automobility, and film and musical performance. He is the co-editor of *The Blackwell Companion to American Indian History* (with Neal Salisbury) and *C.G. Jung and the Sioux Traditions* by Vine Deloria (with Jerome Bernstein). His most recent book, co-authored with Alexander Olson is *American Studies: A User’s Guide* (2017), which offers a comprehensive treatment of the historiography and methodology of the field of American Studies. He is currently completing a project on American Indian visual arts of the mid-twentieth century, and coediting (with Beth Piatote) *I Heart Nixon: Essays on the Indigenous Everyday*.

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**Michael Wilcox, Stanford University**

**Reversing the Terminal Narrative: The Mythology of Conquest and Extinction on the Borders of the Spanish Empire**

This paper will challenge some of the most prevalent and persistent myths about Indigenous survival using the Pueblo Revolt of 1680- regarded as the most successful act of colonial removal in the Americas. The mythology of conquest asks questions of the present day- what does "winning" look like? How is control asserted and what are the consequences of its inevitable failures and shortcomings? What roles have scholars played in perpetuating this mythology of indigenous extinction (near or total)? How do we reverse these faulty narratives?

**Michael V. Wilcox** teaches at the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology at Stanford University. His book *The Pueblo Revolt and the Mythology of Conquest: An Indigenous Archaeology of Contact* (University of California Press, 2009) articulates the social consequences of subordination, and explores the processes of boundary maintenance at both regional and communal levels. During his graduate studies at Harvard, he was very involved in strengthening the Harvard University Native American Program and in designing and teaching award-winning courses in Native American Studies.

Other publications include: “Marketing Conquest and the Vanishing Indian: An Indigenous Response to Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Collapse*” (*Journal of Social Archaeology*, 2010); “Saving Indigenous Peoples From Ourselves: Separate but Equal Archaeology is Not Scientific Archaeology”, *American Antiquity* (2010); “NAGPRA and Indigenous Peoples: The Social Context, Controversies and the Transformation of American Archaeology” (*Voices in American Archaeology: 75th Anniversary Volume of the Society for American Archaeology*, ed. Wendy Ashmore, Dorothy Lippert, and Barbara J. Mills, 2010), and “Genes and Cultural Identity: Boundaries, Boundary Makers and the Cultural Mythology of DNA”, in *Entangled Knowledge. Scientific Discourse and Cultural Difference*, ed. Gesa Mackenthun and Klaus Hock (Waxmann, 2012).

Professor Wilcox's main research interests include Native American ethnohistory in the American Southwest; the history of Pueblo Peoples in New Mexico; Indigenous Archaeology; ethnic identity and conflict; DNA, race and cultural identity in archaeology and popular culture; and the political and historical relationships between Native Americans, anthropologists and archaeologists.

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## **Rick Budhwa, Simon Fraser University, BC**

### Witnessing Catastrophe: Correlations between Catastrophic Paleoenvironmental Events and First Nations Oral Traditions in the Pacific Northwest

The Indigenous populations of North America’s Pacific Northwest region have consistently maintained that proof of extended occupation in their traditional ethnographic territories is embedded in their oral traditions. These oral accounts are the primary methods for recording Indigenous epistemology and history. From an Indigenous perspective, historical references contained within oral traditions are considered factual. However, the Western scientific community has not been as accepting of oral traditions as actual accounts of the past. Geologists, archaeologists and physical anthropologists tend to revert to Western science when reconstructing the past.

Native groups claim that information within their oral traditions is historically accurate. Therefore, one may presume that a comparison between oral traditions and scientifically known prehistoric and historic events would lead to similar interpretations. Past catastrophic environmental events (such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, floods, etc.) with distinct, recognizable attributes may serve as benchmarks for comparison to prehistoric references contained within oral traditions. For the most part, geologists have provided us with a specific range of dates and magnitudes for such events. In addition, such events, even of considerable age, would likely have been significant enough for a lasting record to be maintained by the Indigenous population(s) in their oral traditions.

This study examines the relationships between the following three specific catastrophic paleoenvironmental events and native oral traditions that apparently refer to them: (1) the Mount Mazama climactic (or ‘caldera-forming’) eruption, 6850 b.p.; (2) the Bonneville/Cascade landslide, 900-400 b.p.; and (3) the megathrust earthquake-related tsunami, 300 b.p. The historical literature pertaining to Indigenous groups (specific to each event) was reviewed for oral traditions that may refer to the event in question. Through the use of qualitative tables, relationships between the geological and archaeological evidence and the event depicted in the oral tradition are shown to exist. Moreover, a qualitative measure is employed in a descriptive fashion, where a distinction is made between clear relationships and less obvious ones.

An evaluation of these Indigenous perspectives within a Western scientific framework serves as a foundation for further work in this area. Eventually, a combination of the two perspectives may yield a richer, more holistic view of the past.

**Rick Budhwa** is an applied anthropologist who has worked within the realm of Indigenous cultural resource management for 25 years. From his experiences, Rick envisioned Crossroads CRM to be a company which filled a need within the discipline and ensured projects went beyond typical archaeology to reflect the complexities and intangible aspects of culture for past, present and future generations. Rick attended the University of Western Ontario, where he received BA (honours) in Anthropology. Later, he completed a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Archaeology and a Master’s Degree in Anthropology/First Nations Studies/Archaeology at Simon Fraser University. Today, Rick works closely with multiple stakeholders (First Nations, industry, government, communities and academia) to identify gaps resulting from differing worldviews and to establish common ground for meaningful dialogue. He also teaches anthropology, archaeology, history, and sociology at Northwest Community College. Rick has been formally adopted into the Gitdumden Clan of the Wet’suwet’en peoples in the traditional territories where he lives with his wife and two young

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boys. He is also the publisher of *Culturally Modified: The Journal of Cultural Resource Management*.

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## Gesa Mackenthun, University of Rostock

### Remembering Gi’was: Indigenous Landmark Legends and the Politics of American Antiquity

The paper investigates the sometimes manifest, sometimes latent connections between constructions of American antiquity and conflicts over territorial ownership and stewardship in the US. It rests on the assumption that the colonial discourse of settlement, which still pervades contemporary legal practice and obliquely continues in the critical approach of ‘settler colonialism’, systematically effaces other forms of land ownership (which it summarily dismisses as ‘nomadism’). Late colonial constructions of American ‘prehistory’ collude with the colonial legal construct of ‘continuous occupation’ – a concept that requires of the tribes to prove their long-term tenure of the lands in question. This unilateral imposition of ‘proof’ coincides with the frequent denunciation of indigenous oral traditions as fanciful fictions. Such stories – particularly those relating to land use, landmarks and geological events like earthquakes, floods, and volcanic eruptions – are too reluctantly used in testifying to ancient occupation – *not* (I contend) on the scientific assumption that this use would be incompatible with the logic of mythical thinking but because the evidence these stories contain is incompatible with colonial interests. I argue that late colonial narratives about antiquity and heritage are themselves powerful instruments for legitimating colonial hegemony and more often than not used to disarticulate indigenous claims. A counter discourse exists, e.g., in an archive of geomythical and geopistemological stories by the Klamath, Modoc and other tribes from the area around Crater Lake, OR, collected between 1870 and 1920. This impressive corpus of topological narratives suggests a millennia-long indigenous land tenure, a deep knowledge of the land and its products, and the memory of a cataclysmic event 7,000 years ago, thus giving support to indigenous claims and archaeological evidence of an ancient human presence. In addition to this *historical* relevance, they also (though brutally cut off by cultural contact and inevitably affected by intercultural communication) are *philosophically* valuable as they counter the rationalist binaries at the heart of colonial discourse (from settler colonialism to structuralist anthropology) with an *other* method of preserving survival knowledge in a world of danger – a relational and ‘nomadic’ hermeneutic of resilience that may be used as an antidote to the capitalist logic of appropriation and classification.

**Gesa Mackenthun** is a Professor of American Studies at the University of Rostock. Her publications include *Fictions of the Black Atlantic in American Foundational Literature* (Routledge, 2004), *Metaphors of Dispossession. American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire, 1492-1637* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), and (co-edited with Bernhard Klein) *Sea Changes. Historicizing the Ocean* (Routledge, 2004). She was the initiator and first spokesperson of the graduate school “Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship” funded by the German Research Foundation (2006-15). The resulting conference series she has edited (8 volumes so far) include *Entangled Knowledge. Scientific Discourses and Cultural Difference* (2012, with Klaus Hock), *Agents of Transculturation* (2014, with Sebastian Jobs), and *Fugitive Knowledge* (2015, with Andreas Beer). *DEcolonial Heritage: Natures, Cultures and the Asymmetries of Memory* is an upcoming volume (edited with Aníbal Arregui). Her current research deals with nineteenth-century imperial travel and archaeology and the scientific constructions of American antiquity.

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## Jeff Oliver, University of Aberdeen

### A Historiography of Indigenous Archaeology in British Columbia

Recent decades have seen a dramatic shift in the relationship between the practice of archaeology and Canada’s indigenous peoples. If archaeology in the twentieth century can be termed colonialist for its tendency to marginalize or exclude indigenous groups, in the twenty-first century it has increasingly taken on the mantra of postcolonialism in its attempt to engage and incorporate First Nations perspectives. Indeed many archaeological projects now aspire to do ‘indigenous archaeology’; that is, archaeology by, for or with indigenous peoples. While the field was once concerned with revealing the remote past – a past legitimized and controlled by academic archaeologists – contemporary archaeological discourse is permeated with a very different set of values. It is increasingly inscribed with the concerns of the present, notably the voices and authority of First Nations people. In this context, archaeological discoveries are commonly viewed as evidence of continuity between past and present, as ancestral connections, as cultural property and through the assumption that ancient identities are alive and well. For many First Nations, Indigenous archaeology is the ‘archaeology of us’.

Despite postcolonialism’s promise to challenge hegemonic discourses, wittingly or unwittingly, much indigenous archaeology seems bound up with what the sociologist Brubaker refers to as ‘identity history’. Identity history tends to interpret all forms of history through the prism of identity politics in a way that is eerily similar to certain nationalist projects – what might be termed First Nationalism. We should expect contemporary indigenous communities (or for that matter any community) to create heritage discourses that help to provide a sense of stability in the present, particularly where colonial legacies still loom large. What is perhaps more unexpected is that Canadian archaeologists are increasingly contributing to such practices.

What circumstances have contributed to the current archaeological climate and where are we headed? Is it possible to undertake a more critical indigenous archaeology? Channeling Bruce Trigger’s magisterial historiography, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (1988, 2006), this paper will attempt to critically examine the social milieu of indigenous archaeology in western Canada, with special reference to British Columbia, by placing it in wider world context. Topics to be discussed include the development of theory, the continuing legacy of colonialism, the politics of collaboration and the contribution of community archaeology.

**Jeff Oliver** is a Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Aberdeen. Originally from the west coast of Canada, Jeff studied archaeology and history at Simon Fraser University (BA 1998). He worked as a consulting archaeologist in coastal and interior British Columbia before relocating to Sheffield in the United Kingdom where he read towards an MA in Landscape Archaeology (2001) and a PhD in Archaeology (2006), both under Mark Edmonds. He joined the Department of Archaeology at Aberdeen, Scotland, in 2008. Jeff is a historical landscape archaeologist interested in the colonial history of western Canada and improvement-period Britain. His work addresses issues such as cultural interaction, social grouping, historiography and interdisciplinarity. He is the author of *Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast* (2010, University of Arizona Press) and co-editor (with Tim Neal) of *Wild signs: Graffiti in Archaeology and History* (2010, British Archaeological Reports).

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## Coll Thrush, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

### Prairies, Ice, and Oil: Settler Colonialism and Deep Time around the Southern Salish Sea

When we talk about deep time, we are often talking about the politics of our present, and the shallow history of settler colonialism in North America is deeply imbricated with the ways we have framed and debated accounts of long Indigenous presence in these territories. This is certainly the case around the southern Salish Sea (also known as Puget Sound, in western Washington State) where stories about ancient landscapes – like the landscapes themselves – are bound up in contestations between Indigenous and settler peoples over place, power, and belonging. Beginning with a brief consideration of the 2009-2010 naming of the Salish Sea, this paper brings together three stories in which time, landscape, and politics have intersected around the shores of this inland waterway. The first story focuses on prairies, ecosystems that once defined Indigenous life in the region but which are now highly endangered.

Anthropogenic spaces maintained by Indigenous peoples for centuries or likely millennia for their food and other resources, prairies (báq<sup>w</sup>ab in the local language) became the focus of the first settler encroachments into Coast Salish territories, and as such, were key sites of conflict, including outright warfare in the 1850s. Today, most of the intact prairie ecosystems are occupied and maintained by the US military, suggesting a *longue durée* connection between “prairie-ness” and the violences of settler colonialism. The paper’s second story focuses on Indigenous oral traditions from the Duwamish and neighbouring Coast Salish peoples, and in particular on “The Epic of the Winds,” a narrative that is widely understood to be a deep memory of the end of the Ice Age. Associated with places in and around Seattle, the epic and its tellings – from the early twentieth century, when elders shared the story with anthropologists, to the twenty-first century, when it was literally built into the landscape through commemoration and urban design practices – have always been linked to questions of Indigenous rights to land, water, resources, and history itself. Then, the third story interweaves past, present, and future by considering recent protests over fossil fuel ports on the Salish Sea. In the past, environmental movements in the Northwest have often been at odds with Indigenous rights and concerns, but during the protests of 2015, Coast Salish and other Indigenous voices were front and centre. These leaders, along with their “kayaktivist” allies, linked past, present, and future by invoking vast time scales including the geological origin of the resources under debate, the long presence (and present) of Indigenous people as caretakers of the land, and the coming generations and the future of the planet itself. As such, these protests were enactments of Indigenist temporal sovereignty in the context of the Anthropocene. Bringing together environmental, Indigenous, and other microhistories of the lands around the Salish Sea with settler colonial theory and critical Indigenous studies, the paper ends with a brief consideration of my own positionality as a settler within ancient Coast Salish landscapes, arguing for a reflexive articulation of place and past that takes into account power and privilege.

**Coll Thrush** is a Professor of History at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver in unceded Musqueam Coast Salish territory, and affiliate faculty at UBC’s Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies. He is also a visiting professor at the University of Kent in the UK. Coll is the author of *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (2007 and 2017) and co-editor with Colleen Boyd of *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American History & Culture* (2011). His most recent book is *Indigenous London: Native*

## Decolonizing “Prehistory”: Deep Time and Topological Knowledge in the Americas

Schwerin, Speicher-Hotel, 21-23 June, 2018



*Travelers at the Heart of Empire* (2016), which examines that city’s history through the experiences of Indigenous travelers – willing or otherwise – from territories that became the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Coll’s current project is entitled *SlaughterTown*, a history-memoir examining trauma, memory, silence, and landscape in Coast Salish territories and his hometown of Auburn, Washington – formerly known as Slaughter.

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Schwerin, Speicher-Hotel, 21-23 June, 2018

**Keith Carlson, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon**

Myth Making and Unmaking: Erasing and Creating the Sacred in Settler  
Colonial Strategies of Displacement

**Keith Carlson** is a Professor of History and Research Chair in Aboriginal and Community-engaged History at the University of Saskatchewan. Born and raised in Powell River on BC’s west coast, his scholarship focuses on the Salish people of British Columbia and Washington State. He was adopted as an honorary member of the Sto:lo Nation in a potlatch ceremony in 2001. He also has emerging research relationships with Cree and Metis communities in Canada’s prairie region. Another research interest remains in mid-twentieth century Philippine peasant history, and in particular in the history of the Hukbalahap. He is actively engaged in graduate supervision and considers community-engagement fundamental to both his and his students’ research. Outside academia he continues to receive ongoing education from Salish knowledge keepers and knowledge interpreters. Among his major publications are *You Are Asked To Witness: The Stó:lô In Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (1997), *A Stó:lô-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (2001), and *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (2010). His most recent book is *The Lodge We Built: A History of Freemasonry in Powell River BC* (2016), which he co-authored with Colin Osmond and Norman Hutton.

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**Rebecca Tsosie, University of Arizona, Tucson**

Indigenous Peoples and the New Doctrine of ‘Discovery’: Bioarchaeology, Archaeogenomics, and the Narrative of “American Pre-History”

**Rebecca Tsosie** is a Regent’s Professor at the James E. Rogers College of Law at the University of Arizona and also serves as Special Advisor to the Provost for Diversity and Inclusion. Professor Tsosie, who is of Yaqui descent, is a faculty member for the Indigenous Peoples’ Law and Policy Program at the University of Arizona, and she is widely known for her work in the fields of Federal Indian law and indigenous peoples’ human rights. Prior to joining the U of A faculty, Professor Tsosie was a Regent’s Professor and Vice Provost for Inclusion and Community Engagement at Arizona State University. Professor Tsosie was the first faculty Executive Director for ASU’s Indian Legal Program and served in that position for 15 years. Professor Tsosie has published widely on sovereignty, self-determination, cultural pluralism, environmental policy and cultural rights. She teaches in the areas of Federal Indian Law, Property, Constitutional Law, Critical Race Theory, and Cultural Resources Law. Professor Tsosie is a member of the Arizona Bar Association and the California Bar Association. Professor Tsosie serves as a Supreme Court Justice for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and as an Associate Judge on the San Carlos Tribal Court of Appeals. She received her B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles. Among her recent publications are “Privileging Claims to the Past: Ancient Human Remains and Contemporary Cultural Values” (1999), “NAGPRA and the Problem of Culturally Unidentifiable Human Remains: The Argument for a Human Rights Framework” (2012), and “Indigenous Peoples and Epistemic Injustice: Science, Ethics, and Human Rights” (2012).

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## Discussants

### **Susanne Lachenicht, University of Bayreuth**

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Susanne Lachenicht is Professor and Chair of Early Modern History at the University of Bayreuth. Her publications include *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika. Migration und Integration in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt/Main, (as co-editor, New York 2010); *Religious Refugees in Europe, Asia and North America, 6<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Hamburg 2007); and, together with Kirsten Heinsohn, *Diaspora Identities. Exile, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Past and Present* (Frankfurt/Main, New York, Chicago, IL 2009). She is the cofounder of the Summer Academy of Atlantic History (SAAH). From 2012-2014 she was the president of the European Early American Studies Association (EEASA).

### **Hartmut Lutz, University of Greifswald**

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Hartmut Lutz taught North American Literatures and Cultures at the Universities of Greifswald, Germany, and Szczecin, Poland until his retirement in 2011. His publications include *Minority Literatures in North America* (1989), *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations With Canadian Native Authors* (1991), *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab* (2005), *Howard Adams ‘Otapaway’* (Saskatoon, 2005), *What Is Your Place?* (2007), *Canada in Grainau* (2009), and *Contemporary Achievements: Contextualizing Canadian Aboriginal Literatures* (2015). Lutz founded the OBEMA-series, which published twice a year bilingual editions of works by minority authors (1989-1998). In 2013 he received the ICCS “Certificate of Merit, in recognition of outstanding contributions to the development of Canadian Studies.”

### **John Munro, Saint Mary’s University, Halifax/University of Rostock**

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I teach US and international history in the history department at St. Mary’s University in Halifax, Canada, and I am a 2018-20 Humboldt Foundation Fellow in American Studies at the University of Rostock. My publications include *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonization*, and articles in the *Canadian Review of American Studies*, *Third World Quarterly*, *History Workshop Journal*, and in *Decolonization and the Cold War: Negotiating Independence*, edited by Leslie James and Elisabeth Leake. My full profile can be found at <https://smu-ca.academia.edu/JohnMunro>, and I am on Twitter at [@johnjamesmunro](https://twitter.com/johnjamesmunro).



Schwerin, Speicher-Hotel, 21-23 June, 2018

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Daniel Lord Smail is a Professor of History at Harvard University, where he works on deep human history and the history and anthropology of Mediterranean societies between 1100 and 1600. His current research approaches transformations in the material culture of later medieval Mediterranean Europe using household inventories and inventories of debt collection from Lucca and Marseille. Among other subjects, he has written on the practice of compulsive hoarding. His books include *Legal Plunder: Households and Debt Collection in Late Medieval Europe* (2016); with Andrew Shryock and others, *Deep History: The Architecture of Past and Present* (2011); *On Deep History and the Brain* (2008); and *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1423* (2003).

**Astrid Windus, University of Münster**

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Astrid Windus is currently a stand-in Professor for Non-European History at the University of Münster, Germany. From 2009-2016 she chaired the Emmy-Noether Junior Research Group “Text, Image, Performance: Changes and Ambivalences of Cultural Orders in Colonial Contact Zones (Provincia de Charcas and the Philippines, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)” at the Department of History at Hamburg University, Germany. Her publications include *Afroargentines and Nation: Constructions of Afroargentine Identity in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Buenos Aires* (2005), and, co-edited with Eberhard Craillsheim, *Image – Object – Performance. Medi-ality and Communication in Cultural Contact Zones of Latin America and the Philippines (16th-19th Centuries)* (2013).

**Cover Image**

Our cover image reproduces a needle art tapestry by Georgiana Brown Harbeson (1894-1980), entitled “Sacajawea” and published as the cover of *Needlecraft. The Home Arts*, a magazine for needle art, in July, 1933.