

## COURAGE AND THOUGHTFUL SCHOLARSHIP = INDIGENOUS ARCHAEOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS

Dale R. Croes

*Robert McGhee's recent lead-in American Antiquity article entitled Aboriginalism and Problems of Indigenous archaeology seems to emphasize the pitfalls that can occur in "indigenous archaeology." Though the effort is never easy, I would emphasize an approach based on a 50/50 partnership between the archaeological scientist and the native people whose past we are attempting to study through our field and research techniques. In northwestern North America, we have found this approach important in sharing ownership of the scientist/tribal effort, and, equally important, in adding highly significant (scientifically) cultural knowledge of Tribal members through their ongoing cultural transmission—a concept basic to our explanation in the field of archaeology and anthropology. Our work with ancient basketry and other wood and fiber artifacts from waterlogged Northwest Coast sites demonstrates millennia of cultural continuity, often including regionally distinctive, highly guarded cultural styles or techniques that tribal members continue to use. A 50/50 partnership means, and allows, joint ownership that can only expand the scientific description and the cultural explanation through an Indigenous archaeology approach.*

*El artículo reciente de Robert McGhee en la revista American Antiquity, titulado: Aborigenismo y los problemas de la Arqueología Indígena, parecen enfatizar las dificultades que pueden ocurrir en la "arqueología indígena". Aunque los esfuerzos nunca son fáciles, enfatizaré un enfoque basado en una sociedad 50/50 entre el científico arqueólogo y las comunidades indígenas, cuyos antepasados tratamos de estudiar con nuestras técnicas de investigación y de campo. En el Noroeste Norteamericano, resulta de importancia este enfoque de compartir la propiedad, por una parte, de los esfuerzos de la tribu y los científicos, y por otra, igualmente importante, al añadir conocimiento cultural de alta significancia (científica) de miembros de la Tribu a través de su continua transmisión cultural—un concepto básico en nuestra explicación en el campo de la arqueología y la antropología. Nuestro trabajo en cestería antigua y otros artefactos de madera y fibra en sitios inundados de la Costa Norteamericana, demuestra milenios de continuidad cultural, muchas veces incluyendo estilos culturales distintivos y meticulosamente cuidadosos regionalmente, así como técnicas que los miembros de la tribu continúan usando. Una sociedad 50/50 significa, y permite, co-propiedad que solamente expande la descripción científica y la explicación cultural a través de un enfoque arqueológico indígena.*

McGhee and I agree on one statement in his article *Aboriginalism and the Problems of Indigenous Archaeology*, which is the last one: "Something as important as the human past deserves both courage and thoughtful scholarship on the part of those who claim to make it their study" (2008:595). His essay on the "problems" of Indigenous archaeology, using arguments linked to concepts of "Aboriginalism," "Orientalism," "exceptionalism," "essentialism," "Noble Savages," "primitive mind," and "Noble Barbarians," leads the reader to conclude that the problem (probably better termed—in a historical

context—the new "Indian problem") is derived from a misguided archaeological trend that considers Native Peoples having a special, unique, and controlling role over science, in "owning" their past. Possibly this idea is a new backlash to the "New Archeology" teachings of the 1960s and 1970s, that our discipline of *archeology* was the exclusive owner of the past, and the only field that could truly describe and explain the past. McGhee's own stereotyping of this "Indian problem" we supposedly face presents a simplistic view of many archaeologists' efforts to work with over 500 North American cultures whose heritage we explore:

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"Difficulties arise, however, when archaeologists accede to claims of Aboriginal exceptionalism and incorporate such assumptions into archaeological practice" (2008:580). He points out that he has "enjoyed the acquaintance of many Indigenous individuals—mainly Canadian First Peoples and Inuit" (2008:580). Therefore, I am certain that he realizes that these Native Peoples come from very different cultural backgrounds, and each has their own cultural practices and belief systems, and these, like the 500+ Indigenous cultures of North America, cannot be stereotyped as a whole—a point he, in fact, warns us against.

Let me describe what I believe has worked for us in the Northwest region of North America, which I feel has followed McGhee's recommendations. Our work demonstrates *courage* in countering what he perceives as an academic threat from "aboriginalism," and it provides *thoughtful and increased scholarship* through working with Tribes one on one. Since my WSU graduate school days of the 1970s, and throughout my current annual summer field schools, I have engaged in archaeological work that we define as a 50/50 partnership with Tribes, in which both are equal partners in co-managing the fieldwork and research. I have not really practiced any other approach. McGhee points out that, increasingly, archaeologists find that their permits or funding require that they do work with Tribes, sometimes several Tribes, on whose traditional territories the sites are found. My own fieldwork has included working with a number of different Native cultures, each with very different cultural perspectives, values, and beliefs.

The approach that has worked for us in each case is establishing, as best possible, a truly equal 50/50 partnership. The parties must respect equally the Western scientific approach and the Tribes' cultural approach—both respecting and facilitating each other's unique needs—without one side's needs superceding the others. We are from very different cultures and also have very different objectives, so often this approach can be described as a continual bumpy road—however, if the relationship is a true 50/50 partnership, the relationship can usually be sustained, though it seems to always involve some turmoil. And, as McGhee concludes, both sides need to agree that "something as important as the human [Tribe's] past deserves" the full cooperation of both partners.

My earlier work at the Ozette Village wet site (45CA24), the Hoko River wet site (45CA240) and Hoko rock shelter (45CA21; Croes 1977, 1995, 1999, 2005) involved informal partnership agreements with the Makah Tribal Council, whose traditional territory is on the northwest tip of the Olympic Peninsula, Washington (Wakashan language family). For example, at the Ozette Village wet site, where a whole section of an ancient Makah village was tragically engulfed and preserved by a massive mudslide, we agreed that the human remains found could be studied for scientific information (Western science needs), but that these human remains would never be shown or discussed in the public media (Makah Tribal needs). In this instance, both sides could and did reach their 50/50 objectives. In fact, the Tribe supported scientific study of the skeletal remains because they wanted to document the health and vigor of their ancestors to better gauge their own return to native food ways, including current efforts to return to whaling.

As another example, when I was a graduate student studying ancient Ozette basketry, the Tribe insisted that I needed to learn how to make Makah basketry from their Elders in the K-12 Neah Bay school program. They could not perceive how I could possibly understand their ancient basketry without this cultural knowledge. I personally did not believe I needed this training to do the scientific analysis of basketry. However, each side of the partnership needed to be respected, so I took a semester of Makah basketweaving, involving a daily hour with the elementary students and an hour with the High School students. I soon realized they were absolutely right—I probably learned more cultural knowledge through this training than *any* other graduate school experience. I also learned how basketry is a culturally guarded tradition—I had to agree before the training that I would *never* teach Makah basketry or sell what I learned to make.

These two of many Ozette project examples show how a 50/50 partnership between WSU Anthropologists and the Makah Tribal Council has benefited both groups. This Makah partnership continued after I finished my Ph.D., through 9 years of archaeological fieldwork at the Hoko River Site Complex dating to 3000 years B.P. I describe some of our joint efforts below (Croes 1995, 2005).

Current and ongoing work with the Squaxin

Island Tribe of south Puget Sound (a Salish language group) at their heritage wet site of Qwu?gwes involved a more formal collaboration. In this case, a formal Cooperative Agreement was signed by the head of state of the Tribe, the Tribal Chair, and our College President. This document outlined the specific expectations of the partnership, and has been renewed every two years since 2000 (Foster and Croes 2002, 2004; Foster et al. 2007). Many of the articles resulting from this partnership can be found on the website: <http://www.library.spscc.ctc.edu/crm/crm.htm>. Recently I have also worked on a joint U.S./Tribal/Japanese collaborative program with Chinookan language family groups who are affiliates of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Siletz, and Warm Springs Indians of Oregon, involving archaeological work at the National Historic Landmark wet site of Sunken Village (35MU4; Croes et al. 2009).

Once the co-management approach has been established—which is truly the courageous part of endeavor for both the scientists and Tribes—the established shared goals and trust leads into the real value of this kind of archaeological scholarship. More than any other approach, the partnership model opens the door to incorporating cultural knowledge and expertise, much of which is often guarded from the outside world, and it also *expands* “thoughtful scholarship on the part of those who claim to make it their [joint] study” (McGhee 2008:595).

Another article in the same issue of *American Antiquity* in which McGhee’s essay appeared describes another new direction in archaeological research: that is, *cultural transmission*. Native Peoples perpetuate their own cultural transmission, as is the case for all of us in our own distinct cultural worlds. I have worked my entire archaeological career specializing in Northwest Coast waterlogged/wet site with excellent preservation of the wood and fiber artifacts, which together typically represent up to 90 percent of the material culture recovered from a wet site. Northwest Coast Tribal members relate well to the discovered basketry, cordage, woodworking equipment, hunting, fishing, and foraging artifacts since they retain many of these cultural practices—passed along from generation to generation through cultural transmission. Therefore, our partnership augments the description and explanation of our archaeological finds.

At first I thought this preservation might be distinct to Northwest wet site archaeology. Stephen Plog, the former editor *American Antiquity*, pointed out to me that this kind of preservation is seen in many regions of North America. Sites with good preservation of wood and fiber include waterlogged preservation in Florida and other Southeastern wet sites; arid and cave sites contain wood and fiber artifacts in the Plateau, Great Basin, and Southwest; and frozen sites in Robert McGhee’s area of considerable expertise, the Arctic and Subarctic, have this level of organic preservation, even including preservation of leather artifacts. The basketry, fishing equipment (including fishing hooks, traps and nets), and woodworking tools, as well as perishable debitage, basketry waste elements, woodchips, and split wood are all archaeological materials that Northwest Native peoples, and also those in other areas, have close cultural involvement with today—the result of centuries and no doubt millennia of *cultural transmission*.

Numerous examples of how partnership between archaeological scientists and Indigenous cultural experts contribute to our science’s scholarship can be made. Simple examples have been our recovery of baskets and nets at Qwu?gwes in southern Puget Sound—everyone in the non-Indian West would recognize these finds as baskets and nets, but few could know what materials they are made from, or how they were made. In this case, these kinds of baskets and nets are made today, and the techniques are well understood by Squaxin Island Tribal members, even though now most nets are no longer made of inner bark. In addition, Tribal members can identify what they were used for. For example, the baskets are likely used as clam baskets, while the nets, made by hand with a non-slip square knot, are likely gill nets, used for smaller salmon, such as silver and chums. Furthermore, the Tribal members have contributed insightful suggestions as to how these artifacts ended up in the Qwu?gwes intertidal shell midden areas, based on their own experiences. In this case, the recovered net was full of salmon bones—a situation that might happen when the net became too full, sank, and likely got away from a fisherperson without much experience. This kind of situation might face a younger person who was getting to use an Elder’s (“grandpa’s”) net for first time, and did not listen to advise to pull it in when a certain number of net

corks go down—becoming too heavy with fish and carried off (Foster and Croes 2004; Foster et al. 2007).

Another example concerns artifacts found at the 3,000-year-old Hoko River wet site. Here, we discovered over 300 wooden shanked fish hooks, and abundant remains of halibut and flatfish. Again, non-Indians could easily see the artifacts were some kind of fish hook with leaders, but the Makah Elders contributed detailed knowledge about how they were made and used, including the kind of fish intended for different hooks, and, through experimental archaeology, showed us how to bait the hooks and make kelp fishline. In this case we made kelp line long enough to reach the halibut banks off the Hoko, at slack tide, where we actually successfully fished with these hooks. The Tribe also flew in Elders and the Council Chair, as spokesperson, to help us observe and record how these hooks worked in the controlled setting of the Seattle Aquarium—again, an example of partnership between the scientists and cultural experts in action (Croes 1995, 1997, 1999).

A similar mix of ethnoarchaeology and experimental archaeology led to a better understanding of the archaeological remains at a site where a intertidal fish trap was radiocarbon dated to at least 470 years B.P. This feature consisted of over 400 10-x-10 cm square split cedar stakes across an inlet at Qwu?gwes that was well recorded and mapped by the archaeological team. The Squaxin Island Fisherpersons identified that it was intended for fall chum salmon. In this kind of fishing, people helped guide the chum by slapping their canoe paddles (for example); the chum try to escape by moving up the inlet at high tide over the trap. When the tide retreats, the fisherpersons slide planks in the double pole “door” area to keep the salmon from slipping out. The trap had to be extra strong (large split cedar posts) since chum are particularly “high spirited” and could beat through weaker structures. The chum are also well known as “dog salmon”—they bite like a dog and would try to attack people as they retrieved the stranded fish. This kind of fish was therefore commonly dispatched by striking them with cobble choppers similar to those that we found around the trap (Foster and Croes 2004; Foster et al. 2007). Again, a Western scientist would know that this was some kind fish trap, accurately map what is left, and also note the cobble chop-

pers, but the detailed cultural knowledge comes to us through cultural transmission across many generations.

The main point here is that, through a 50/50 partnership, both sides are able to work together to describe and explain “something as important as the human past” (McGhee 2008:595). In this case, yes, the Tribal side can be considered people that “possess inherent qualities and abilities, with special reference to historical matters” (2008:590) because of their position as the ongoing recipients of considerable cultural transmission from the past. They are “equal but very different” culturally (2008:586), and if equally sharing the undertaking to best understand their past, scientifically and culturally, then they do not have the same reasons to guard their culturally transmitted knowledge, since both parties own the results. Tribes that I have worked with on archaeological projects rarely would agree with Deloria’s (1995:15) statement that “much of Western science must go.” They understand that his statement may have been needed to draw attention to the Indian movement of the 1960s (resulting in a turning point for Tribal rights), and to protest how the Western archaeological scientists were at that time claiming sole ownership of their past. Deloria, in fact, had some very close associations with archaeologists (e.g., his work with David Hurst Thomas). I have rarely seen any resistance to the Western science and archaeological method and theory when working with Northwest Coast tribes; in fact, they tend to embrace the approach and contribute to its techniques and careful recording.

McGhee feels that what he calls “Indigenous archaeology” is often a “profoundly political engagement.” He uses the example of Nicholas and Andrews (1997:12), who state that “as archaeologists and anthropologists from a dominant society, we have an obligation to contribute to the well-being of First Peoples” (2008:593). I do agree with Nicholas and Andrew that our data should be applied in helping the future of the tribes we partner with. McGhee, however, implies that this obligation derives from a Western view of “Aboriginal communities that are socially and economically marginal” (2008:593). In fact, the tribes that I have worked with are the biggest employers in their regions—they are not at all “economically marginal,” and often help sponsor the work of our part-

nerships through 1 percent or 5 percent community funds derived from casino entrepreneurship.

However, the applied aspect of our work needs to be part of the process in potentially improving the quality of lives of everyone who lives in the Tribal region. For example, the site of Qwu?gwes has one of the densest shell middens on the Northwest Coast, packed full of Olympia oysters, butter clams, blue mussels, horse clams, and others. The Squaxin Island Tribe has treaty contract rights to 50 percent of the harvestable shellfish in their traditional territory (that is, the *usual and accustomed* areas, which represents approximately 4,000 square miles as recorded by the Medicine Creek Treaty with the US Government in 1854). With the State of Washington's efforts to clean up Puget Sound, our data provides some of the scientific evidence needed to gauge how the shellfish recovery effort in south Puget Sound can expand as the environment recovers. The health of these waters, with their prized Olympia oyster, affects everyone's quality of life in the region and beyond. Our partnerships not only help in monitoring recovery, but also contributes ancient and current cultural knowledge, through the Tribes' Natural Resources Department, using some of our archaeological data, such as age-of-harvest analyses and other ancient data contributing to strategies of long-term sustainable resource management.

The Squaxin Island Tribe also has its own Museum Library and Research Center, shared with the public to present an accurate history of Indians in the region, correct stereotypes, and contribute to education of both tribal members and also the general public. Here, the museum exhibits of the Qwu?gwes artifacts have both a scientific explanation next to a Tribal cultural explanation—again a 50/50 partnership.

The last point I disagree with is McGhee statement that “however, history and archaeology attest that assumptions regarding the endurance of unchanging local cultural identities are unlikely to reflect what actually happened in the past” (2008:583). I have specialized in long-term cultural evolution as recorded in stylistically sensitive ancient basketry. All my research on the Northwest Coast has shown strong, apparently tightly controlled, geographically tied continuity of culturally distinct basketry styles, persisting for millennia. Recent use of cladistic analyses of this data demon-

strate at least 3,000 years of cultural style continuity, probably indicating that this knowledge was part of guarded cultural identities, in the Puget Sound/Gulf of Georgia region (Salishan), and West Coast sites (Wakashan) (Croes et al. 2005; Croes et al. 2009).

Basketry dating to 6,000 years B.P. from the Silver Hole wet site on the Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, also suggests deep-rooted cultural continuity of distinct Tlingit/Haida basketry traditions (Croes 2001). And recent styles of basketry recovered from the Sunken Village wet site, Portland, Oregon reflect distinct Chinook styles. For example, a complex diamond-plaited over string flat bag, appears to be most closely linked to similar complex basketry bags from Spirit Cave in Nevada (dated to 9,000 years ago) through museum basketry from the Klamath of Oregon and Puget Sound of Washington. This particular basketry also has curious distinct similarities to baskets that have been found in wet sites in Japan that date to 7,000 years ago—and also to current Japanese Ainu styles of flat bag constructions (Croes et al. 2009). So, I do not think we can take lightly the potential archaeological significance of “endurance of unchanging local cultural identities” (McGhee 2008:583). Identifying and understanding cultural continuity as well as change is really what archaeology can contribute to understanding of both guarded (ethnogenesis) and widespread (phylogenesis, diffusion) cultural transmissions (Croes 2005:238–239; Croes et al. 2005). The term “unchanging” is rarely seen with archaeological data, evoking ideas of a racist aboriginalism complete with an “unchanging native” past; nevertheless, cultural continuity such as that seen in the evolution of ancient basketry is also a part of human history.

Overall, McGhee's article does outline pitfalls that *can* occur in “Indigenous archaeology,” but I must advocate that archaeologists do, and should, approach this work as a true 50/50 partnership with tribes, to the mutual benefit of both sides in the shared objectives, answering McGhee's concluding call for *courage*. In doing so, both groups must recognize the true value of equally blending the Western scientific approach with the cultural expertise resulting through *cultural transmission* within the Native community, as part of the process of thoughtful scholarship about those whose ancestors these sites represent.

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## THE VALUE AND DIVERSITY OF INDIGENOUS ARCHAEOLOGY: A RESPONSE TO MCGHEE

Stephen W. Silliman

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*Robert McGhee (2008) recently argued against the validity and viability of Indigenous archaeology based on claims that untenable "Aboriginalism" supports the entire enterprise. However, he mischaracterizes and simplifies Indigenous archaeology, despite the wealth of literature suggesting that such community approaches have had and will continue to have great value for method, theory, rigorous interpretation, and political value in archaeology.*

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*Robert McGhee (2008) se ha manifestado recientemente en contra de la validez y viabilidad de la arqueología indígena alegando que el "aboriginalismo" inalcanzable sostiene toda la empresa. Sin embargo, él malinterpreta y simplifica la arqueología indígena a pesar de que la vasta literatura sobre el tema señala el gran valor que dicho acercamiento comunitario ha tenido y continúa teniendo para el método, la teoría, la interpretación rigurosa y la importancia política de la arqueología.*

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New kinds of archaeologies should undergo careful evaluation as they mature and exert influence in the discipline, and the appearance of Indigenous archaeology over the last 10 years should not be exempt. Evaluation involves taking stock of the field and suggesting new directions for future growth, and it also involves critique and recommendations for rethinking. Both should be welcomed when they make a substantive and informed contribution. Unfortunately, McGhee's (2008) article makes neither a sufficiently informed nor a substantive contribution, opting instead to mischaracterize the burgeoning field of Indigenous archaeology. In the brief space permitted for a response, I focus on three problems that fundamentally undermine his critique: insufficient sampling of the relevant literature, caricature of Indigenous archaeology, and questionable treatment of colonialism and notions of "Aboriginalism."

Perhaps most troubling from an academic position is the poor representation of Indigenous archaeology literature in McGhee's review. To develop an acceptable critique of a body of work, one must demonstrate a satisfactory grasp of the range and

depth of the literature. Other than initial references in the first paragraph, McGhee instead focuses his attack on the work of Watkins (2000, 2003), Zimmerman (2006), and Nicholas (Nicholas and Andrews 1997) and even then with very selective sampling of their numerous publications. Although these three individuals have led Indigenous archaeology for quite some time, they do not represent all voices or projects. Where is *Indigenous Archaeologies* (Smith and Wobst 2005), or the special issue of *American Indian Quarterly* dedicated to decolonizing archaeology (Atalay 2006), or the chapters in *Collaboration in Archaeological Practice* (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2007), *Cross-Cultural Collaboration* (Kerber 2006), and *Indigenous People and Archaeology* (Peck et al. 2006)?

A deeper assessment of the literature would reveal the errors in his claims that "predicting the benefits of Indigenous archaeology is a theoretical exercise, because the thorough revision of the discipline envisaged by its advocates has yet to be implemented" (McGhee 2008:592) and that "[d]ifficulties arise, however, when archaeologists accede to claims of Aboriginal exceptionalism and incorporate such assumptions into archaeological

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practice" (McGhee 2008:580). The recently published *Collaborating at the Trowel's Edge* (Silliman, ed. 2008), as well as every volume cited above or numerous other cases (e.g., Dowdall and Parrish 2002), reveal just how workable and numerous Indigenous archaeology projects are without the dangers of exceptionalism. McGhee (2008:591), himself, recognizes this by citing the influential book by Ferguson and Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2006). All of these publications show that archaeological research projects are not just "focused on mitigating the presumed negative effects of archaeological practice on the living descendants of the communities" instead of "discussing potential contributions to knowledge of the past" (McGhee 2008:579). They do both simultaneously, successfully, and rigorously without "strip[ping] archaeology of the scientific attributes that make it a particularly powerful narrator of the past" (McGhee 2008:591). These joint considerations of both past and present have made these archaeologies better on both fronts.

Contrary to McGhee's caricature, Indigenous archaeology is not an artifact of the process of rendering Indigenous people in universalized and exceptionalist ways as part of "Aboriginalism." Instead, Indigenous archaeology developed in reaction to a history of academic appropriation of Indigenous pasts, the need for decolonization, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the lack of Native people in the ranks of professional archaeology (even though the discipline in North America thrives on the pasts of their ancestors), and Indigenous communities' desires to protect, manage, and even study their own heritage (Watkins 2000; Silliman, ed. 2008). Although not available at the time of McGhee's writing, a recent encyclopedia entry distills the richness and diversity of Indigenous archaeology,

defined as any one (or more) of the following: (1) the active participation or consultation of Indigenous peoples in archaeology...; (2) a political statement concerned with issues of Aboriginal self-government, sovereignty, land rights, identity, and heritage; (3) a postcolonial enterprise designed to decolonize the discipline; (4) a manifestation of Indigenous epistemologies; (5) the basis for alternative models of cultural heritage management or stewardship; (6) the product of choices and actions

made by individual archaeologists; (7) a means of empowerment and cultural revitalization or political resistance; and (8) an extension, evaluation, critique, or application of current archaeological theory [Nicholas 2008:1660].

Because McGhee reduces Indigenous archaeology to only one (number four) of Nicholas' eight components, his critique has only limited usefulness.

It might help to remember that Indigenous archaeology frequently has been defined as archaeology with, for, and by Indigenous people (Nicholas 1997, 2008; Nicholas and Andrews 1997; Smith and Wobst 2005). This prepositional diversity captures a fundamental basis of Indigenous archaeology as *community* archaeology and does not necessarily require—although does respect—potential differences between "Western" and "Indigenous" knowledges. Archaeology *for* Indigenous people ensures that research projects attend to the troubled history of archaeology's treatment of Native Americans and First Nations. It attempts to tell useful, respectful, and peopled histories that resonate with communities' senses of themselves, their pasts and futures, and their particular needs. This need not undermine archaeology's commitments to studying parts of the past in rigorous and scientific ways, nor must it produce "proprietary histories," particularly when done collaboratively. Archaeology *with* Indigenous people develops the strong potential for healthy collaboration. It permits Native communities with ties to and ownership of the land (and the history) that archaeologists seek to study some voice in how such work takes place. Such collaboration with Indigenous people easily counters McGhee's (2008:595) assertion that archaeologists should be "getting to know Indigenous people as individual acquaintances, rather than as contemporary avatars of an ancient ideal." The foundations of this kind of community-based archaeology already hinge powerfully on those interpersonal connections; otherwise, Indigenous archaeology projects would end before they even started (see chapters in Kerber 2006; Silliman, ed. 2008). Finally, archaeology *by* Native people assures that the discipline achieves some much needed diversity. Archaeology by Indigenous people also encourages full participation, supports educational and career paths, recognizes sovereignty, foregrounds community, and makes a *critical* space for their knowledges and concerns about history.

By arguing that essentialism, Aboriginalism, and primitivism ground Indigenous archaeology, McGhee loses sight of the fact that this branch deals more with the opposites of those: postcoloniality, respectful dialogue between various stakeholders of which archaeologist are only one, and activist, multivocal histories. As a result, his argument reads more like a rear-guard action. For instance, McGhee worries about the universalization of Indigenous people, but then universalizes all of human history to diminish European colonialism: "the accumulated evidence of history demonstrates that all of our ancestors have at some point lost their homelands, taken over the homeland of others, mixed with other societies and changed beyond recognition over time" (McGhee 2008:583). In addition, McGhee also claims that "scholarly organizations, law, mass media, and government ... and scholarly etiquette" strive to avoid annoying Indigenous people (McGhee 2008:582) and that "universities, granting agencies, academic societies, museums, and other institutions still have an almost irrational fear of offending Indigenous groups" (McGhee 2008:594). Yet, many cases suggest the opposite: McGill University Chancellor Richard Pount recently stated that "Canada was a land of savages" before Europeans colonized it (Barrera 2008); U.S. soldiers use the term "Indian Country" to describe dangerous areas of military conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan (Silliman 2008); Native American scholars worry about racism and intellectual gatekeeping (Grande 2000); and professional, college, and high school sports teams actively fight to retain Native American mascots.

McGhee's position works against the postcolonial aims supported by most indigenous archaeologists who seek to interrogate, repair, and hopefully move beyond the colonial origins of the discipline and its treatment of Native people. McGhee's attempts to de-universalize Indigenous experiences, which should be welcomed, and to re-universalize (and elide) colonialism, which should be countered, miss the point that what many Indigenous people around the world do share or have shared is a colonial experience. He claims: "The official recognition by national governments, as well as by the United Nations and other international organizations, of Indigenous people as societies with common attributes, common problems, and common rights, appears to have rescued this long-discredited

concept from the anthropological rubbish heap" (McGhee 2008:584). McGhee correctly notes that Indigenous people may not have many cultural attributes in common; however, they do share some commonalities in their histories, struggles, and rights in the cauldrons of colonialism. This recognition does not essentialize or universalize worldviews, cultural practices, or histories, but rather encourages a contextual understanding of those within a political and historical reality that needs attention in the contemporary world. Indigenous archaeology—and the communities it represents, supports, historicizes, intertwines—ignites and exists for those hopes.

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## SAVING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FROM OURSELVES: SEPARATE BUT EQUAL ARCHAEOLOGY IS NOT SCIENTIFIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Michael Wilcox

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*In his recent article "Aboriginalism and the Problems of Indigenous Archaeology," Robert McGhee questions the intellectual viability of Indigenous Archaeology as well as the contributions of Indigenous Peoples within the field of archaeology. Further, the author challenges the very notion of Indigeneity and characterizes Indigenous and scientific perspectives as mutually incompatible. I argue that the author's solution of "separate but equal" domains for scientific vs. Indigenous archaeologies misrepresents both science and Indigeneity as homogenous entities, affirms these positions as inherently dichotomized and invites comparison to some of the troubling philosophical legacies of racial segregation.*

*En un reciente artículo "Aboriginalism and the Problems of Indigenous Archaeology" Robert McGhee critica tanto la viabilidad intelectual de la arqueología indígena como las contribuciones hechas por sus proponentes dentro de la disciplina. Más aún, este autor pone en cuestionamiento la noción misma de indigeneidad, caracterizando esta perspectiva como mutuamente excluyente e incompatible con aquella postulada por la ciencia. Sostengo que la propuesta de este autor, que distinguiendo una arqueología científica vs. otra indígena y planteando espacios "separados pero iguales" para ambas, incurre en una distorsión de ciencia e indigeneidad representandolas como entidades homogéneas e intrínsecamente dicotómicas lo cual invita a compararla con algunos de los legados filosóficos de segregación racial más controversiales.*

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In *Aboriginalism and the Problems of Indigenous Archaeology*, Robert McGhee gives voice to a series of assumptions, concerns, and beliefs many contemporary archaeologists have about the role of Indigenous Peoples in archaeological practice—as archaeologists, as theoreticians, and as collaborators. McGhee is to be commended for bringing these questions out of the shadows of private conversation and into an arena of intellectual and scholarly debate. Since the passage of NAGPRA in 1990, many archaeologists—trained in an era when the intellectual contributions of scientific, processual, or New Archaeology to society were thought to be self evident—have struggled to adapt to a radically transformed social and political environment of archaeological practice. Having devoted much of their professional lives and to the study and preservation of the material remains of Native Peoples, many were understandably shocked and puzzled to learn that many Native

Peoples not only had a low opinion of archaeology, but were actively taking steps to dismantle and repatriate the collective patrimony (and data) of an entire field. In fact, the author's somewhat pointed interrogation of what he terms "Aboriginalism" and "Indigenous archaeology" are completely understandable given his self-defined status as a "scientific archaeologist."

I resist the impulse to define Indigenous archaeology in relation or response to a single article written by a scholar who I feel has mischaracterized the origins, objectives, and essential contributions of this particular approach to the past. This work should be undertaken in its own context and in its own Forum. Similarly, I will address my response in reference to my own specific training as a North Americanist and my identity as a Native American. Many of the author's mischaracterizations are directly related to the nature of Indigenous archaeology as an emergent set of practices, research

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questions, and methodologies (see Atalay 2006; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Conkey 2005; Nicholas 2006; Silliman 2008; Smith and Wobst 2005; Watkins 2000). Many of its practitioners have consciously resisted the temptation to enshrine or institute Indigenous archaeology as an exclusive intellectual domain—a trend not usually supported by the intellectual territoriality of the academy. This restraint has generated a certain ambiguity about what Indigenous archaeology is and is not. Some of this hesitancy is informed by the current theoretical climate of American archaeology. Many archaeologists have expressed a certain degree of hostility toward the constraints imposed by consultation, the resultant limits placed on research questions, and the loss of control over data. Others see the involvement of Native Peoples in archaeology as largely gestural manifestations of political correctness or as Watkins has described as “legislated ethics” (Watkins 2000:23–37, 43). The Kennewick case helped illuminate many of the more extreme positions archaeologists have assumed as defenders of academic freedom and scientific objectivity (Thomas 2006:218–254).

McGhee’s oppositional categorization of Indigenous perspectives (and peoples) as “non-scientific” or “traditional” purposefully alludes to tensions and conflicts within American society about the intrusion of religious beliefs into scientific, political, and social life. Previous statements by the SAA leadership on ancient human remains, repatriation, and what constitutes “cultural identification” in NAGPRA cases (Society For American Archaeology 1986, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008) have similarly contributed to an unnecessarily confrontational climate where the interests of “scientists” and Indigenous Peoples are portrayed as purely antagonistic. These positions distort the attitudes of both archaeologists and Native Americans and lead to the kinds of assumptions, beliefs, and conclusions voiced by the author—mainly that there is little or no common ground between Indigenous Peoples and “scientists.” Some Indigenous archaeologists (defined both ways) are troubled by an assertion voiced by the author that what we do is somehow not “real” archaeology. This belief is shared by many archaeologists—some of whom confuse ethnoarchaeology with Indigenous archaeology. Unfortunately, much of the discussion within the Society for American Archaeology about col-

laborative projects and the role of Indigenous Peoples in archaeology have appeared in the magazine *The SAA Archaeological Record*. This is an important publication, but it is not a refereed journal of the same stature as *American Antiquity*. Regardless of the reasons for this current state of affairs, the partition of Indigenous perspectives and scientific knowledge advocated by the author is in some ways already underway. In contrast to McGhee, I would argue that the desire to maintain discrete interpretational systems is itself deeply political. Much is at stake. Such a pursuit says more about the need to defend a specific interpretive paradigm (archaeology as a purely scientific discourse) than it does about the search for truth or meaning in archaeology. The insularity the author advocates can be viewed as an attempt to assert (or reclaim) the objectivity promised by the search for universal behaviors and laws within human societies.

Having been introduced to archaeology in the mid 1980s, I was somewhat surprised to learn that while archaeologists examined the material cultures of Native Peoples, there was simply no discussion (and little interest in) the more recent histories or perspectives of contemporary Native Americans. The New Archaeology was about Everyone’s past. It offered insights into human evolution, the role of culture as an adaptive mechanism, the interplay of technology, resources and the environment, the development of social complexity—all of which are inherently fascinating topics (Hegmon 2003:213–243; Redman 1991:295–307). But if I wanted to learn about Native Americans specifically, if I wanted to know more about the histories of Indigenous Peoples I had not been exposed to, those questions would have to be addressed somewhere else. If I wanted to know how Pueblo Peoples conceived of their past (and present) or if I wanted to understand the lives of contemporary Hohokam descendents (there were none apparently), I would have to study the anthropology of the early twentieth century. There was no space in archaeology for those kinds of questions. Archaeology was about *our* collective past. It was not, I learned, about my past.

McGhee lays bare the predicament of many contemporary archaeologists by raising an important set of questions: What is the place of Native Peoples in archaeology? What is the basis for Indigenous archaeology? Does it emanate from a

troubling, yet pervasive stereotype of "Native-ness"? Are ethnic identities and formal training equivalent qualifications? Are scientific practices and Indigenous perspectives (as defined by McGhee) on the past wholly incompatible? Should archaeology be partitioned into separate, yet equal systems of knowledge, interpretation, and meaning?

In the following essay, I'd like to address a few of the issues raised by McGhee from my own subject position. I am a Native American archaeologist. I was formally trained in a small cohort of Native Americans at Harvard University in the 1990s. I am an academic, employed as an Assistant Professor in the Anthropology Department at Stanford University where I teach courses in Native American Studies, Cultural Anthropology, and Archaeology. I am currently the Chair of the Society for American Archaeology's Indigenous Populations Interest Group. Along with a small group of Indigenous Peoples formally trained as archaeologists, I helped found an organization known as "the Coalition of Indigenous Archaeologists." We are devoted to improving the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and archaeologists, advancing the intellectual contributions of Indigenous scholars, and facilitating fruitful collaborative projects between interested parties. I have written a book outlining an approach to Indigenous archaeology among Pueblo Peoples that refutes the "terminal narratives" that explain the end and disappearance of Native Peoples (Wilcox 2009). Like many archaeologists, I am still interested in exploring the same questions that led me to a career in the field:

What are the connections between contemporary Native Americans and the material remains and histories of our ancestors?

Why has this relationship not been adequately explored by contemporary archaeologists?

Are the barriers theoretical? Methodological? Has the illumination of a "collective past" obscured local histories and tribal perspectives?

How had the practice of archaeology moved so far away from Native Americans?

Why was there so little interest in or time devoted to the study of contemporary peoples?

These questions turned out to be very different from the ones posed by my non-Indian colleagues. They were, I learned, specifically related to my experiences as an Indigenous person in the late

twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. They are *not* the product of my DNA, or *essence*. In fact, I would suggest that my questions are somewhat similar to those raised by McGhee, although I will propose a very different set of answers and conclusions. First, I would argue that the confusion expressed by the author over the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and archaeology are long overdue manifestations of representational critiques explored by cultural anthropologists in the late 80s and early 90s (Clifford 1988; Marcus and Fischer 1986). These questions deal explicitly with the ethical issues associated with the representation of Indigenous cultures by Western researchers and the privileged positions of ethnographers within colonial contexts. This issue, brought to the attention of archaeologists by the passage of repatriation legislation, has never been adequately addressed by many archaeologists, particularly in North America. Second, I would like to refute the author's portrayal of Indigenous identities or an Indigenous archaeology as emanating from one's racial essence. In contrast, I assert that in failing to make connections between Indigenous Peoples and the past, archaeologists have helped generate their own forms of Indigenous essentialism. McGhee's use of postcolonial theory is helpful in many other contexts, but as applied to Native Americans specifically, it misstates the roles played by dominant cultures in the construction of ethnic or Indigenous identities. It also ignores the specific historical contexts associated with Indian identities as well as the status of contemporary Native American sovereignty. I challenge his characterizations of Indigenous perspectives as either rooted in religious dogma or as inherently anti-scientific. I would instead question the intellectual viability of a science that systematically excludes new insights and sources of information (Longino 1990; Wylie 1995:255–272, 2000:166–184).

The desire to segregate Indigenous and "archaeological" interpretations of the past reflects exactly the same kinds of attitudes that led to the political intervention of NAGPRA and mistakes the preservation of representational authority with the defense of science. His proposed solution of segregated domains of knowledge amounts to a kind of "separate but equal" discipline (with all of the troubling echoes of segregation) where archaeologists preserve their authoritative voice and relegate

Indigenous Peoples to an intellectual lower class. None of these solutions address the assumptions and weaknesses exposed by McGhee's version of scientific archaeology—that the search for *universal* narratives of human cultural evolution has at times obscured historical narratives of the more recent past, that the study of this past is of limited value, and that this lack of scholarly interest has led many to believe that contemporary Native Peoples have nothing to contribute to archaeological method or theory.

### **When the DATA Speak Back, Everything Changes: The Representational Crisis and the Surrender of Authority**

For well over a century, archaeologists and anthropologists have collected, interpreted, and represented the cultural materials of Indigenous Peoples. Until very recently, this was an intellectual project in which an overwhelming majority of Euro-American archaeologists enjoyed the exclusive privilege of representing the cultures and histories of groups to which they did not belong. The passage of NAGPRA (The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) in 1990 challenged the authority of archaeologists, museums, and other institutions to excavate, interpret, curate, and possess the cultural materials and human remains of Indigenous Peoples. Initiated by Native American activists and legal scholars, this federal legislation—requiring detailed inventories of human remains and other materials, consultation with descendent communities, and the return of materials collected and curated by archaeologists—was initially opposed by many archaeologists (Trobe and Echo-Hawk 1992).

Challenges to representational authority are not unique within the social sciences. Since the decolonization movements initiated in the mid twentieth century, cultural and social anthropologists have had to acknowledge and confront the legacy of anthropology as a colonial practice—as a conceptual framework in which “Western” and “non-Western” peoples were geographically and temporally dichotomized, as a means of categorizing peoples and cultures as more or less “developed,” “civilized,” or “complex,” and as a way of thinking about “self” and “other” within these con-

texts (Trigger 1984). This dynamic has only recently been experienced by archaeologists (Blakey 1997). Some of this can be explained by the very nature of archaeological materials. Artifacts, features, and human remains do not “speak back” in the same way that ethnographic subjects do. Archaeological items can be physically alienated, controlled, and possessed as private property. Access to those materials is mediated through professional qualifications, not through dialogues with living subjects.

In contrast, ethnographic engagements are negotiated interactions. The representational authority of the ethnographer is tempered and reshaped by a process in which the interests of “stakeholders” must be recognized—both as peoples whose lives are affected by anthropological research and as potential consumers of ethnographic materials. The idea that the practice of archaeology is situated within a contemporary political system and that archaeologists have a responsibility to recognize how the work that we do affects the lives of other people were not among the basic tenets of the New Archaeology. The idea that Indigenous Peoples might be able to contribute to the interpretation of the material remains of our ancestors was abandoned in the pursuit of a “universal” or “collective” human past. In his critique of Indigenous essentialism, the author fails to address the role this kind of archaeology has played in the creation of an essentialized and static Indigenous Past.

Indians, as a collective ethnicity, lack a coherent archaeological and historical account of survival, cultural change, or continuity. It is widely accepted that we either succumbed to massive epidemics, had been eliminated through warfare, or had “lost our culture” through missionization, acculturation, or forcible assimilation (Clifton 1990:1–28). All change (referred to as “progress” in enlightened societies) is depicted as reductive or destructive in Indigenous societies. Any number of general textbooks on North American archaeology will list this tragic litany as the catastrophic fates of a marginal people (Diamond 1996, 2005). The partition of prehistory and history as separate domains of study has only contributed to this imaginary rupture. But the lack of interest in a subject (explaining continuity) does not mean that continuities and relationships do not exist. In fact such

an assertion of discontinuity has helped enshrine new versions of essentialism—where the archaeologist becomes an authority on a more “authentic” and temporally remote Indian past. If the scientific study of the past (defined by McGhee) leads to an archaeology that refuses to acknowledge (much less explain) the presence of contemporary Indigenous Peoples, then we must question the objectivity of that field—especially if that particular archaeological practice supports the marginalization of Indigenous interest in favor of its own. That version of archaeology is not a science, it is an ideology (Hodder 1986).

### Using Postcolonial Theory to Reclaim Scientific Authority

McGhee misunderstands the nature of Indigenous identities in general and Native American identities in particular. In an ironic twist, he uses postcolonial critiques developed to destabilize the dichotomies of Western and non-Western peoples to deny both the coherence of Indigenous identities, as well as the validity and intellectual vitality and contributions of its members. His argument against “aboriginalism” (a subtle play on “racism”) ignores the fact that colonization—not essentialism—is the basis for any kind of collective Indigenous identity. Indigenous Peoples, like many other minority groups, have developed a sense of collective history and generated forms of political action based upon shared experiences as colonized peoples. This is true for Native Peoples who live on reservations and are citizens of sovereign tribes and it is true for Native Peoples whose ancestors were forcibly relocated or migrated voluntarily to urban communities. The insights that Indigenous scholars have are informed by their participation in these communities, settings, and social contexts.

In his essay, McGhee makes the mistake of confusing cultural distinctions, differences in values, language, and religion with essentialism. Anyone who has visited more than one Indigenous community will soon realize that in spite of what acculturationists have written about the perpetually vanishing savage (a position that merely enhances the position of researcher as conservator), many Indigenous Peoples continue to exhibit, maintain,

and assert fundamentally different values attitudes and beliefs than our Western contemporaries. It might be useful to consider that the forays and interactions the author describes as informing his attitudes might not constitute complete knowledge of the people he has met, let alone all Indigenous Peoples. This fallacy, characteristic of many Western portrayals of Indigenous Peoples, was described by Robert Berkhofer in *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian From Columbus to the Present* as, “generalizing from one tribe's society and culture to all Indians” and “conceiving of Indians in terms of their deficiencies according to White Ideals rather than in terms of their own various cultures” (1979:25–26). The fact that Indigenous identities make little sense (or are in Berkhofer's terms “deficient”) according to his experiences and training, and should therefore be dismissed as “intellectually unviable,” seems to ignore the importance of culture as a meaningful concept.

McGhee is absolutely correct in stating that the issue of identity is troublesome from a scientific archaeological standpoint. Indigenous identities, like all ethnic identities, are generated through a dialectical process of comparison and differentiation (Barth 1969). For Indigenous Peoples, identity is deeply affected by the processes of recognition and non-recognition imposed by colonial governments. For many Indigenous groups, the assertion of group identity requires the acknowledgment of a politically dominant group. In order to be recognized as distinct communities, many Indigenous Peoples have been required to demonstrate “otherness” according to the standards and criteria imagined and imposed by colonial governments. These often reveal more about the perceived positive attributes of the dominant group (in the case of the West, progressive, dynamic, innovative vs. static, ignorant, traditional) than they do about the distinctions asserted by subordinate peoples.

Simply stating that the standards imposed upon Indigenous Peoples no longer make sense and should therefore be dismissed makes as much sense as denying the existence of “blackness” and then rejecting the insights and perspectives of African Americans. Do Kurds, Palestinians, or for that matter, Native Hawaiians exist? What is at stake for the

recognizer or the recognizee? Why are so many of the tribes written out of existence in the 1950s during the United States' Termination Period struggling to attain federal recognition? The answer lies in the relationship between self determination, self governance, and the ability to manage and maintain ones cultural and material resources. McGhee's denial of Indigeneity holds little promise for Native Peoples. If this is the latest Euro-colonial solution to Native Peoples' long list of problems (don't Western people have problems?), it seems wholly consistent with the previous five centuries of other helpful ideas.

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## THE PREMISE AND PROMISE OF INDIGENOUS ARCHAEOLOGY

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*Researchers have increasingly promoted an emerging paradigm of Indigenous archaeology, which includes an array of practices conducted by, for, and with Indigenous communities to challenge the discipline's intellectual breadth and political economy. McGhee (2008) argues that Indigenous archaeology is not viable because it depends upon the essentialist concept of "Aboriginalism." In this reply, we correct McGhee's description of Indigenous Archaeology and demonstrate why Indigenous rights are not founded on essentialist imaginings. Rather, the legacies of colonialism, sociopolitical context of scientific inquiry, and insights of traditional knowledge provide a strong foundation for collaborative and community-based archaeology projects that include Indigenous peoples.*

*En respuesta tanto a la herencia intelectual de la disciplina arqueológica como a la economía política de su praxis, diversos investigadores han promovido de manera creciente la implementación de un paradigma de Arqueología Indígena que se caracteriza por un despliegue de prácticas conducidas por, para, y con las comunidades indígenas. En contraste, McGhee (2008) sostiene que la Arqueología Indígena no resulta ser una propuesta viable pues depende del concepto esencialista de "Aboriginalidad." En la presente replica, los autores se abocan a corregir la descripción presentada por McGhee sobre aquello que constituye una Arqueología Indígena, demostrando a la par el porqué los derechos indígenas que la caracterizan no están fundamentados en imaginarios esencialistas. Por al contrario, sostienen, los legados del colonialismo, el contexto socio-político de la investigación científica, así como el valor reflexivo del conocimiento tradicional, constituyen bases sólidas para el desarrollo de una arqueología colaborativa, arraigada en proyectos comunitarios que incluyan a las poblaciones indígenas.*

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As Indigenous archaeology is still an inchoate project, Robert McGhee's (2008) article is a welcome opportunity to engage in an open dialogue about the potential and pitfalls of this emerging paradigm. Despite our serious disagreement with McGhee's logic and our strong rejection of his conclusions, there is plainly common ground for discussion. McGhee (2008:580) is right to be concerned whether an Indigenous form of Orientalism is developing (Said 1978), and with the potential negative impacts of unfettered essentialism in archaeology. Also, McGhee's (2008:580, 590-591, 595) acknowledgment that archaeologists should work in partnership with Indigenous peo-

ples and his willingness to consider multivocal methodologies that include traditional knowledge reflect our shared concern for marginalized communities.

Although there is much to argue with, and about, in McGhee's article, three central questions deserve a considered response: What is Indigenous archaeology? What does inclusion and essentialism mean for archaeology? And why do Indigenous communities have special rights to heritage? In contradiction of McGhee's (2008:579) claim that "very little effort has been expended ... in examining the intellectual viability or the social and cultural desirability" of Indigenous archaeology, our answers to

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these questions are a clear rejoinder that show many scholars are thoughtfully working to define this new approach.

### Conceiving Indigenous Archaeology

McGhee's article is replete with strawman arguments, as he never deeply engages with Indigenous archaeology's multifaceted development or its varied definitions and practices. McGhee misconstrues Indigenous archaeology, misrepresenting it as one cohesive program—a single agenda and set of values. While Vine Deloria, Jr.'s writings have inspired thinking about archaeology's relationship with Indian country (Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997; see McGhee 2008:581, 591), in fact, what we are now calling Indigenous archaeology has traveled a long and uneasy path that goes far beyond Deloria's critiques (Watkins 2003). As early as 1900, with Arthur C. Parker, Native Americans have attempted to pursue archaeology professionally (Thomas 2000a), but it was not until a handful of Native American tribes, First Nations, and Inuit communities began launching their own heritage programs in the 1970s that Indigenous peoples were able to begin at last pursuing scientific research on their own terms (Anyon et al. 2000; Klesert 1992; Rowley 2002). In the United States, legislation—such as the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the 1992 amendments to the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which established Tribal Historic Preservation Offices—further empowered tribes to control archaeological processes and objects and have a voice in historic preservation (Ferguson 2000; Killion 2008; Stapp and Burney 2002). The florescence of the broader public archaeology movement provided additional intellectual and methodological insights into community-based participation (Marshall 2002; Shackel and Chambers 2004). In the post-NAGPRA era, archaeologists and Indigenous peoples began to work together regularly and more Indigenous peoples have become professional archaeologists even though they remain a fraction of the field's professionals (Dongoske et al. 2000; Nicholas and Andrews 1997a; Nicholas 2010; Swidler et al. 1997).

From this pastiche of movements and programs, a conversation began about the possibility of an

"indigenous archaeology," an "archaeology done with, for, and by Indigenous people" (Nicholas and Andrews 1997b:3). Joe Watkins (2000) published *Indigenous Archaeology*, but significantly, this book was less a manifesto and more a dissertation on the history of science, with the aim of contextualizing the legal, political, and social milieu in which archaeology unfolds. As such, Watkins' initial formulations are not seamlessly reflected in later work, which has begun to explicitly frame Indigenous archaeology as an effort to challenge the discipline's colonialist underpinnings (e.g., Atalay 2006a; Smith and Wobst 2005). A variety of models have developed that point to what these kinds of archaeology mean in practice, including tribal, collaborative, and covenantal archaeologies (Preucel and Cipolla 2008). Since Indigenous archaeology is not one idea, process, or product, but rather a broad approach that can be applied in a range of ways—from tribal programs to CRM projects to academic field schools—it is perhaps better conceived of in the plural, *Indigenous Archaeologies* (Atalay 2008:29; Silliman 2008a:2).

Indigenous archaeology, in name, is thus a little more than a decade old, although it is rooted in many years of thinking and work; it is fundamentally about an array of archaeological practices undertaken by, for, and with Indigenous communities in ways that challenge the discipline's historical political economy and expand its intellectual breadth. This paradigm includes numerous practices and approaches (Table 1), even as a relatively comprehensive definition is now available:

Indigenous archaeology is an expression of archaeological theory and practice in which the discipline intersects with Indigenous values, knowledge, practices, ethics, and sensibilities, and through collaborative and community-originated or -directed projects, and related critical perspectives. Indigenous archaeology seeks to make archaeology more representative of, relevant for, and responsible to Indigenous communities. It is also about redressing real and perceived inequalities in the practice of archaeology and improving our understanding and interpretation of the archaeological record through the incorporation of new and different perspectives [Nicholas 2008:1660].

Table 1. In its broadest form, Indigenous archaeology may be defined as any one or more of the following (from Nicholas 2008:1660).

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- (1) The proactive participation or consultation of Indigenous peoples in archaeology
  - (2) A political statement concerned with issues of Aboriginal self-government, sovereignty, land rights, identity, and heritage
  - (3) A postcolonial enterprise designed to decolonize the discipline
  - (4) A manifestation of Indigenous epistemologies
  - (5) The basis for alternative models of cultural heritage management or stewardship
  - (6) The product of choices and actions made by individual archaeologists
  - (7) A means of empowerment and cultural revitalization or political resistance
  - (8) An extension, evaluation, critique, or application of current archaeological theory
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When Indigenous peoples express dissatisfaction with archaeology, their list of complaints often relates to the role of archaeologists as gatekeepers. Historically, through academic training and government sanction, archaeologists have exclusively controlled the flow of academic resources concerning Native American history and identity. In extracting Indigenous heritage as scientific data, archaeologists have long taken collections of artifacts and human remains to distant institutions as research findings, for processing into social capital (publications, expertise, reputation) and economic capital (careers, livelihoods, jobs). This process has involved archaeologists claiming the right of access to these collections and data as their own, and intellectual property rights over the knowledge produced (Nicholas and Bannister 2004). While Indigenous peoples have long served as laborers at archaeological sites, for more than a century they have been excluded from participating in the full choice of research activities. By maintaining a geographic and social distance between the source community and the data produced from scientific investigations, archaeologists impede the flow of information that could be of use to Indigenous communities—the very people whose ancestors are the source of scientific data.

Counter to McGhee's arguments, Indigenous archaeology does not depend on a timeless, authentic "Indian." Indigenous archaeology is not simply archaeology done by Indigenous peoples, Native

Americans, or Aboriginals, but instead entails "finding ways to create counter-discourse that speaks back to the power of colonialist and imperialist interpretations of the past" (Atalay 2006b:294). As Chris Gosden (2005:149) has written, the term "Indigenous" no doubt can be fraught with definitional complications (see also Haber 2007), but the nascent field of Indigenous archaeology itself seeks to engage with rather than dismiss these issues and conversations, to establish viable points of contact between archaeologists and local communities. Gosden (2005:150) writes further that "such connections are not always harmonious and easy, but should be seen to represent a set of possibilities, rather than problems, for archaeologists and all those interested in the past." When looking at the actual research conducted by Indigenous people, for the benefit of Indigenous communities, or in collaboration with Indigenous partners, we see researchers grappling with complex questions of identity, community, and engagement (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Kerber 2006; Silliman 2008b). The concept of Indigeneity here is not anchored in an Orientalism-like Aboriginalism—eternal, pure, and noble—but rather has emerged from the real lived experiences of people who see themselves, and are seen by the world, as Native peoples (Clarke 2002). The broad brush strokes of essentialism with which McGhee paints this new paradigm in fact obscures the rich diversity of practices, discussions, and viewpoints that are developing under the banner of Indigenous archaeology.

### Inclusion and Essentialism

On a theoretical level we can say that some groups of people have similar experiences of the past and present. This will lead them to have similar identities and social relationships. The concept of "Indigenous" is a crude shorthand to try to capture shared experiences. Essentialism is not always problematic and completely avoidable because it is a generalized classification based on what appear to be key characteristics that are identifiable to a range of people. As scientists, we essentialize as hypothesis-building, "strategic" essentializing until the strategy no longer functions well. Indeed, all people essentialize, and so long as that is critically and reflexively recognized for its limits and use-

fulness, it is acceptable, even necessary. When it is assumed to be truth, however, not tested in reality, essentialism can be dangerous, no matter who is doing it. Essentialist behaviors can be powerful, no question. Do some Indigenous archaeology proponents sometimes essentialize? Certainly. Do most of them think of their categories as absolute truth? Unlikely. Indigenous archaeology is not the naïve epistemological structure McGhee describes. In name, Indigenous archaeology does carry racialist overtones that can be problematic (Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman 2006), but in practice scholars have diligently avoided an identity politics that only Indigenous people can do Indigenous archaeology (Lippert 1997, 2005, 2006, 2008a). As Sonya Atalay (2008:30) has said, unequivocally, "Indigenous archaeology approaches are not simply critique and practice carried out by Indigenous people—one need not be a Native person to follow an Indigenous archaeology paradigm. It is also not necessarily archaeology located on an Indigenous land base—it may or may not take place on Native lands. Indigenous archaeologies do not include such essentialist qualities" (see also Atalay 2007).

In exploring these questions, Matthew Liebmann (2008:73) looks at the refutation of essentialist thinking "wherein social groups or categories are presumed to possess universal features exclusive to all members." Liebmann considers how Native Americans today are often caught in-between essentialist ideals and postcolonial theory. The former insists that traditional "Indians" are fixed in time, while the latter's emphasis on cultural fluidity often undermines tribal rights by reducing traditions to inventions and identities to cultural myths. This no-win situation, however, depends on a false choice. A radical constructivist position misreads postcolonial theory and disregards an anthropological understanding of the complex process of identity construction. Liebmann (2008:82) writes, "Modern identities are neither simple continuations of past identities nor created out of thin air; rather, identities draw on history for their legitimacy, restaging the past in the creation of the present ... In other words, modern identities may not represent a straightforward, one-to-one correlation with the past, but there is a *relationship* between the past and modern groups." Lynn Meskell (2002:293) has similarly argued that "Meaning and identity must be construed as projects, sometimes grounded, other

times contingent, but always ongoing." Between unbending essentialism and radical constructivism, then, lies a "third-way" that focuses on cultural routes rather than immutable historical roots, and the importance of hybridity in the formation of cultures (Liebmann 2008:83–88). Indeed, Indigenous archaeology is perhaps uniquely positioned to creatively challenge hegemonic categories and dismantle binary frameworks such as "Indian" and "archaeologist," to recognize "the existence of different voices, different perspectives, different interests within these oppositional entities" (Bray 2003:111).

Why McGhee singles out Indigenous archaeology for the charge of unfettered essentialism is unclear. Close examination of the language and theories across contemporary archaeological practice, reveals essentialist ideas woven into the very fabric of the field, from the characterization of culture groups to the development of regional histories (see Altschul and Rankin 2008:9; Speth 1988). McGhee (2008:591) similarly ignores broader practices when he criticizes George Nicholas for arguing that "archaeology [should] be willing to accept restrictions placed by Indigenous communities on the dissemination of data, and to accept publication moratoriums that may allow the subject community time to explore ways of benefiting from the data before others do." Nicholas was referring specifically to the results of DNA studies—something that Indigenous communities have legitimate concerns about (e.g., Hernandez 2004; Hollowell and Nicholas 2009)—but even if McGhee objects to this broader practice, we are uncertain why he does not also elect to critique the scores of archaeologists who work for government agencies or private companies (see Bergman and Doershuk 2003). These archaeologists often work under contracts that may also restrict access to data. McGhee, then, strangely holds advocates of Indigenous archaeology to a higher standard than thousands of other practicing archaeologists.

More to the point, McGhee's argument is unsatisfactory because these *are* defensible practices: it is justifiable at times for CRM practitioners to control the flow of information for managing heritage sites on the behalf of their clients, just as Indigenous archaeology practitioners control the flow of information for managing heritage sites for the benefit of Indigenous communities. But McGhee is

offering us a feast of red herrings when he presents Indigenous archaeology as if this practice means that *including* Indigenous views and values necessitates *excluding* all others. Rather, Indigenous archaeology seeks to move beyond the nationalist and internationalist rationalizations of controlling heritage (Merryman 1986), to acknowledge intranationalist rights and participation (Watkins 2005a). It is unnecessary to decide, *prima facie*, that heritage must either belong to one group or to no one at all. Heritage often has nested and complexly layered values; its meanings must be negotiated on a case-by-case basis (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2009a).

In presenting his argument, McGhee ironically sanctifies the very dichotomies he professes to abhor. McGhee pits science against religion, scientists against Indians—a simplistic dualism with science as a pure objective positivist pursuit and Native peoples as ecology-spiritual subjectivists. McGhee's arguments depend on this false essentialized dichotomy, and when framed as unrestrained Aboriginalism versus impartial science, naturally the scientific community is going to be swayed to the latter. The dichotomy of scientists versus Indians is starkly belied by the increasing number of archaeologists of Indigenous ancestry who are members of the Society for American Archaeology (Lippert 2008b), as it is contradicted when we can recognize that science is a social process and social processes such as oral traditions can provide avenues for understanding history (Whiteley 2002). The divisiveness of these dichotomies is both observably untenable and practically unproductive.

Because of these problems with his analysis of inclusion and essentialism, we therefore reject McGhee's (2008:595) conclusion that Indigenous archaeology should be a branch of "Aboriginal Studies," rather than a component of the academic discipline of archaeology. Even in its incipient form, Indigenous archaeology has already made substantial contributions to the intellectual growth of our discipline (e.g., Conkey 2005; Gonzalez et al. 2006; Green et al. 2003; Martinez 2006; Nicholas 2006; Norder 2007; Smith and Jackson 2006; Two Bears 2006; Watkins 2005b; Welch and Ferguson 2007; Wilcox 2009; Zedeño and Laluk 2008), and when fully developed it holds the promise of significantly advancing an archaeolog-

ical understanding of the past. As Robert W. Preucel and Craig N. Cipolla (2008:130) concluded in their critical examination of Indigenous Archaeologies, "The inclusion of Native voices offers not only the potential to transform the discipline into a more democratic practice but also the opportunity to reconceptualize notions of time, space, and material culture."

### Indigenous Communities and Special Rights

At the core of McGhee's concerns about Indigenous archaeology seems to be the notion that it is not a government agency or an academic researcher but Native peoples who are at last given a say in the archaeological endeavor. After all: Why do Indigenous peoples get distinctive treatment? Where do they get their special rights to archaeology, heritage, and history?

McGhee is unambiguous in his belief that Indigenous peoples should not have any special rights to archaeology, despite the fact it is *their* heritage they are concerned about. Responding fully to this view is not easily done in a few sentences. There are important legal considerations, such as treaty rights and the long-established political rights of dependent sovereign nations (Castile 2008; Wilkens and Lomawaima 2002), but there are also more shapeless concerns, such as the colonial histories of war, forced acculturation, and exploitation (McGuire 1992; Thomas 2000b). Regarding the United States, McGhee's treatment of Native American concerns about archaeology confuses issues of tribal sovereignty with his vision of essentialized Aboriginalism. Federally recognized Indian tribes in the United States have political rights based in law that include unique property interests, distinctive jurisdictional principles, and a special trust relationship between Indians and the United States (Newton 2005). The same holds true in Canada, as the Crown also holds a fiduciary relationship with First Nations and Inuit peoples of broad constitutional and legal scope (Hurley 2002). The consultation with Indian tribes called for in the NHPA and NAGPRA, and the right of tribes to make certain decisions about cultural property and heritage sites discovered on Federal or tribal land, are not "ethnically based special rights" (McGhee 2008:595), but long-established legal rights derived from the unique political status Indian tribes have in the

United States formed over the centuries. In the United States and Canada, federally recognized tribes and First Nations are political bodies, not simply ethnic groups. Archaeologists need to understand and respect these legal rights.

As a starting point we can say (as an empirical observation) that there are sectors of society that are marginalized, and we can argue (as a moral contention) that in the interests of fairness marginalized communities need particular opportunities to ensure their voices are heard, their freedoms are uncompromised, and their concerns are met. A fear of the tyranny of the majority leads us to acknowledge that minorities at times need special protections (Ackerly 2008; Song 2007). A commitment to democracy is a commitment to ensuring that all citizens are given the chance to flourish. While we can philosophize that all are born equal, we can observe that powerful interests and history often conspire to conceive inequality.

This view forms the architecture of Indigenous archaeology. Contrary to McGhee's claims, the rights of Indigenous peoples are not grounded in an ageless Other, but in the time-specific historical legacies of colonialism, present-day social injustices, and the inherent politics of scientific inquiry (Little 2007; McGuire 2008; Schmidt and Patterson 1995). For more than a century, the political majority, a select group of self-appointed stewards empowered by affluence and endorsed by laws, have dominated archaeological inquiry. Indigenous archaeology is the attempt to introduce and incorporate different perspectives of the past into the study and management of heritage—to accommodate the diverse values for archaeology that exist in our pluralist democracy.

As democracy is enriched by diversity, so too is archaeology. This does not mean the simple opening up of the field to all, but rather should encourage us to pursue common ground by investigating how diverse standpoints work to enlarge the discipline's philosophical commitments and methodological practices. McGhee (2008:580) claims to adhere to a kind of "modest realism," as proposed by Alison Wylie (2005), but Wylie herself has recently argued that diversity of the kind provided by Indigenous communities is critical for an epistemically vigorous scientific discourse (see also Longino 2002; Wylie 2003). "The principle I propose," Wylie (2008) contends, "is that, if well func-

tioning epistemic communities are to counteract the risks of insularity—of epistemic blindness and social entrenchment—they must seek out critical, collaborative engagement with those communities that are most likely to have the resources necessary, not only to complement and correct specific lacunae, but to generate a critical standpoint on their own knowledge making practices." Wylie concludes that, "the rationale for collaboration arises not only from moral obligations to descendant and affected communities, but also from an epistemic obligation that is rooted in norms of critical engagement that are constitutive of scientific inquiry." Intellectual inclusiveness is thus not a repudiation of scientific principles, but an acknowledged feature of them. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our work provides broad intellectual benefits for the discipline.

An admirable goal for archaeology—which McGhee (2008:591) seems to acknowledge too—is thus forming a practice of critical multivocality in which multiple perspectives and values are brought together to expand shared historical understandings (see also Habu et al. 2008). Yet McGhee (2008:591) is concerned that "sharing theoretical authority" strips archaeology of "the scientific attributes that make it a particularly powerful narrator of the past" and therefore relegates it to "at most equal weight relative to Indigenous oral tradition and religious discourse." This simplistically assumes that Indigenous views somehow change science's attributes and that everyone wants to have an omnipotent historical narrator. Sharing authority does not call for any changes to "scientific attributes" but merely to the underlying assumptions of scientific ownership of the past free and clear of the social and political contexts that surround archaeology. Sharing authority merely asks people to recognize the impact that the practice of archaeology has had on descendant groups and the implications of perceiving Western science as the only "real" way to explain things. Giving *equal consideration* is categorically different from giving *equal weight* to Indigenous views, concerns, and needs.

Where traditional knowledge is provided and used to explicate our understandings of the material world, it is because Indigenous traditional leaders, elders, and community members have resonant connections to specific places and histories. Participation is not based on biology, an inborn Aboriginal mindset, but because we know that a

boundless amount of cultural and historical information is infused in Indigenous people's oral histories, songs, poetry, dances, rituals, pilgrimages, and prayers (e.g., Anyon et al. 1997; Bahr et al. 1994; Bernardini 2005; Echo-Hawk 2000; Ferguson et al. 2000; Kuwanwisiwma 2002; Naranjo 2008; Scott 2003; Swentzell 2004; Thompson 2002; Whitley 2007; Wigen 1982, 1995; but see Mason 2006). McGhee (2008:592) is critical of Larry J. Zimmerman for suggesting that the loss of scientific credibility might be worth the cost due to increased access to Indigenous knowledge. But Zimmerman's statement was intended as an optimistic vision of what Indigenous participation can offer, and it is striking that McGhee ignores Zimmerman's (1997, 2008a, 2008b) work on an "ethnocritical archaeology," which spells out how interpretive disagreements between communities can be mediated.

Any viable archaeology—Indigenous, feminist, Marxist, processual, post-processual, processual-plus, or otherwise—must commit itself to an honest and lucid exploration of the past. Through close scrutiny of data, unguarded conversation, and a commitment to look below the surface of difference, historical explanations and new hypotheses are possible, which do not either wholly dismiss traditional histories or flatly discount physical evidence. It is not always feasible to come to tidy conclusions, but the underlying process of inclusion—a commitment to honest discussion, working together, and mutual respect—can lead us to a more productive, insightful, and accurate pursuit of the past.

McGhee argues that Indigenous communities should not be afforded special rights to archaeology, but we question in turn whether archaeologists should be afforded *carte blanche*. McGhee (2008:594) notes that "many archaeologists are also concerned regarding access to the Indigenous archaeological resource," and that "continued access to archaeological materials is the subtext of many publications proposing the development of Indigenous archaeology." Perhaps this statement more than any other reflects McGhee's true concerns with Indigenous archaeology: access to artifacts and resources. In many ways, this appears to present the crux of McGhee's unjustified concerns: that archaeologists should have the unreserved right to practice archaeology free from outside influence and free to research the histories they "discover."

### Indigenous Peoples and Perspectives

The first Native American to become a professional archaeologist was Arthur C. Parker. Beginning his career in early 1900s, under the tutelage of Frederic W. Putnam, Parker overcame the racism of the age to become a leading museologist and archaeologist in a career that spanned a half-century (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2009b). Parker expressly became an archaeologist to honor his Seneca heritage, and yet he adopted the very practices of archaeology that disempowered Indigenous communities. He furtively purchased sacred objects; most of his excavations focused on burials in spite of Iroquois protests; and when Iroquois leaders and government agents would not allow him to dig on New York's Indian reservations he readily turned to sites on private land where he could spurn Native concerns.

Parker's conflicted legacy illustrates why Indigenous archaeology is not merely about inducting more Indigenous peoples into the discipline. Despite his personal sympathies and Seneca heritage, Parker was unable to conduct archaeology in concert with Indigenous values and viewpoints because at that time there simply was no alternative paradigm that allowed him to develop a robust and full collaboration with his own community. Building on the theories and practices of feminist, Marxist, and post-processual research, Indigenous archaeology is fundamentally about altering the field's political economy and intellectual breadth so that Indigenous values, ideas, expressions, and experiences can be productively incorporated into the discipline. The next generation of scholars should not have to choose, as Parker was forced to, between pursuing archaeological science and respecting Indigenous communities.

In the end, what does Indigenous archaeology really look like? In practice, it looks much like any other archaeology. People conduct rigorous scientific studies, utilize sophisticated theories to explain the evidence, draft publications for the discipline's benefit, and seek outreach opportunities. The main difference is that this is all done in a spirit of respect for the differing rights and perspectives of archaeology's many stakeholders. There is an acknowledgement that Indigenous people are bound by responsibilities to their ancestors and that a responsible archaeologist does not ignore or belittle these.

Indigenous archaeology looks like Australian archaeologists conducting research into ancient human remains at the request of the traditional owners and under their supervision of each step of the process (Claire Smith, pers. comm. 2009). It looks like a Choctaw archaeologist working with Choctaw artisans to replicate and scientifically analyze archaeological materials from a Choctaw site (Thompson 2008). It looks like California Department of Transportation archaeologists collaborating with the Kashaya Pomo to develop local methods and results that are inclusive, reciprocal, and mutually respectful (Dowdall and Parrish 2003). Indigenous archaeology looks like non-Indigenous archaeologists partnering with Cayuga people in the anthropological exploration of a Haudenosaunee site in New York (Rossen and Hansen 2007). It looks like Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous archaeologists according each other equal respect in our interests, rights, and responsibilities.

Much more could be said about McGhee's provocative article. As a reply to McGhee, unfortunately, we have room neither to fully address all of his arguments nor to provide a positive accounting of Indigenous archaeology. Instead we have chosen to respond to McGhee's arguments about Indigenous archaeology's goals and definition, as well as the importance of including Indigenous viewpoints and acknowledging Indigenous rights. These concepts and ideas, after all, lay the foundation for future archaeology projects that can equitably and productively include Indigenous peoples and their perspectives.

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## OF STRAWMEN, HERRINGS, AND FRUSTRATED EXPECTATIONS

Robert McGhee

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*The author argues that these critiques are based primarily on mistaken readings of his original article. He contends that Indigenous archaeology is a social project without a demonstrated intellectual foundation.*

*El autor mantiene que estas evaluaciones están basadas en lecturas equivocadas del artículo original. Él afirma que la arqueología indígena es un proyecto social sin una fundación intelectual demostrada.*

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I thank the individuals who have devoted time and thought to the comments published in the previous pages. The critiques of Croes, Silliman and Wilcox focus on specific topics, to which I will respond individually. I should begin, however, by addressing the broad and negative appraisal assembled by a group of leaders (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al.) in the field of Indigenous archaeology, which for convenience I will refer to as the communal critique (CC).

This worthy consortium accuses me of misunderstanding the Indigenous archaeology project, of ignoring the great variety of work to which the name has been applied, and of condemning all such work. Perhaps I should have been more lucid in stating my views (p. 580) that I consider the involvement of Indigenous people to have been beneficial to the growth of historical knowledge; that expansion of Indigenous sovereignty over lands containing archaeological remains has enhanced the preservation and use of those remains; and that the specific interests brought to the field by Indigenous scholars has helped to bury the more sterile aspects of the New Archaeology. The critics seem also to have missed my statement (p. 580) that the many sensible and useful forms of collaboration between archaeologists and Indigenous people were not the subject of my criticism, and that the paper would deal only with those forms of collaboration that accept or incorporate assumptions of aboriginal exceptionalism. The strawmen and red herrings

conjured by the CC and other critics disappear once these statements are understood. My paper is clearly not the diatribe that the critics seem to have expected—an expectation that may have conditioned their reading—endorsing the preservation of Americanist archaeology as an exclusive club of old-school elitists, and denigrating any attempts to involve Indigenous people in the study and interpretation of their own pasts.

I maintain that use of the term “Indigenous archaeology” to reference the diversity of collaborative activities that are mentioned by the CC group and other critics remains problematic. Most of these examples are simply good archaeological practice that happens to involve Indigenous rather than non-Indigenous communities. The term Indigenous archaeology carries the implication that the archaeology of Indigenous cultural traditions requires a different form of practice than that which is appropriate for the rest of the world. The terminological segregation of such work, and of Indigenous Archaeologists who undertake it, has no obvious benefit. It does, however, carry significant drawbacks in potentially limiting communication with the larger archaeological community, with consequences for access to resources and respect. Wilcox mistakenly charges me with promoting such segregation, and I agree with his arguments against maintaining a separate stream of archaeological practice.

I am pleased to see that most of my critics have

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recently realized that the need for an Indigenous archaeology cannot be conceived as a response to a common and distinctive Indigenous worldview deriving from access to ancient cultural traditions. The critics' current interpretation of a universal Indigenous condition deriving from common experiences of colonialism is more theoretically sound, but less convincing given the vast diversity of such experiences. I maintain my view (p. 593) that the marginalized social and economic position of many Aboriginal people has supplied an excellent motive for the development of Indigenous archaeology as a social project. However, I doubt that most of the collaborative efforts between Natives and archaeologists are based on a common understanding that Indigenous worldviews are of archaeological relevance and authority only through having been exposed to the colonialist experience. Croes cites his excellent work on organic materials from West Coast sites as a counter to my argument that Indigenous cultures in general are not the products of long and unchanging cultural traditions tied to particular geographical locales. Archaeological information is a welcome intrusion into these arguments, and I suspect that this project with its interest in "guarded cultural identities" and "deep rooted cultural continuity" extending over several millennia is consistent with the general interests of many Indigenous archaeology programs.

I agree with my critics in denying a simple dichotomy between Indigenous and scientific approaches to the past. My experience indicates that there is little difference between my own perspective on the past and that of many Aboriginal individuals. However, there is a major difference between the range of perspectives represented in the real world, and the much narrower range expressed in the world of Indigenous rhetoric to which archaeologists are most directly exposed. A perusal of the Indigenous archaeology literature finds it replete with statements regarding the uniqueness of Indigenous cultural traditions and worldviews. It is disingenuous to argue that this rhetoric of distinctiveness has nothing to do with the motivation of many Indigenous archaeology projects, and that aboriginal exceptionalism is irrelevant to the basic orientation of the field.

As noted above, the central point of my paper argued against those forms of Indigenous archaeology that accept or incorporate assumptions of

aboriginal exceptionalism. More specifically, I dispute projects that claim to share theoretical authority between "scientific archaeology" and collaborators whose beliefs about the past are based on forms of evidence that are generally rejected by the scientific tradition. My argument is not a rejection of Aboriginal or any other perspectives and interpretations of the past. As stated at the outset of the paper (p. 580) I recognize that archaeology is only one among several means of talking about the past; that the past is a universe that is open to all; and that archaeologists should have no part in denying others the right to deal with the past in their own way. I argue only that these different means—religious traditions, historical narratives, imaginative reconstructions—must be treated by archaeologists with the same rigor that they apply to other forms of evidence. I am sure that many collaborations between archaeologists and Indigenous communities—such as the one described by Croes—respect this point of view.

However, as I understand the argument presented by the CC authors and other critics, such procedures would be labeled "intellectual exclusiveness" and would not achieve the aim of "incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our work." As I have argued previously, the uncritical incorporation of non-scientific perspectives as the basis for archaeological interpretation can only detract from the discipline of archaeology as an endeavor to learn of the past by practices and standards that are recognized across all subfields. This may not be of significant concern, however, if we are to take into account the assertion by the CC group that "Giving *equal consideration* is categorically different from giving *equal weight* to Indigenous views, concerns, and needs" (p. 233, this issue). I find this statement curious, given the repeated emphasis throughout these critiques on collaboration as intellectual equals, 50/50 partnership, and the basic importance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives in archaeological work. Does this assertion suggest a practice of subverting such claims by insisting on the primacy of evidence and means of interpretation that are consistent with the Western scientific tradition?

Another means of dealing with incongruous perspectives is suggested by the CC group, when they report the goal of discovering "historical explanations and new hypotheses ... which do not either

wholly dismiss traditional histories or flatly discount physical evidence" (p. 234, this issue). I am pleased to hear my critics arguing that physical evidence is not to be flatly discounted. But the search for explanations that merely cannot be discounted by physical evidence is not an ambition that is worthy of any intellectual discipline, much less one that claims a scientific rationale. This is rather the goal of the scrupulous writer of historical fiction, or of the scholar whose interpretations must be consciously molded by political consequences. My own experience provides an excellent example of such a process (McGhee 1997). A decade ago the Canadian Museum of Civilization assembled a committee composed of scientifically trained curators and Indigenous scholars assembled from across the country, in order to develop a new First Peoples' Hall exhibiting the history and culture of the Indigenous peoples of northern North America. A potentially serious problem developed when archaeological curators indicated their wish to state that the ancestors of most or all Indigenous Americans originated in Asia and most probably reached the western hemisphere by way of land links or sea crossings from northeastern Asia to northwestern North America. Many of the Indigenous scholars also believed this to be true, but as a group they did not wish to be seen as endorsing a view that denied various traditions regarding *in situ* origins in North America. Eventually a compromise was forced, in the statement that "Indigenous peoples have occupied Canada since before the world took its present form." This was felt to be compatible with most traditional origin narratives, and the archaeologists consoled themselves by arguing that "the world took its present form" at the end of the Pleistocene with the disappearance from the mid-latitudes of ice sheets and with the onset of Holocene climatic conditions. The intellectual inadequacy of this statement is very clear, yet it achieves the CC goal in that it does not "either wholly dismiss traditional histories or flatly discount physical evidence." A similar process is seen in the paper by Welch and Ferguson (2007) recommended by the CC group, in which the historical views of three local Indigenous groups are reported but no attempt is made to analyze or compare these contradictory narratives or to discuss their compatibility with archaeological information.

A series of diverse charges by the CC group can

be dealt with quickly. They consider my criticism of restrictions placed by Indigenous communities on the dissemination of data to be unfair, as this is a practice that is also acceded to by "the scores of archaeologists who work for government agencies or private companies." I consider these archaeologists to be just as culpable and the practice to be equally reprehensible, no matter who or what attempts to impede the dissemination of historical information, but that must be the topic of another paper.

I agree with my critics' charge that "McGhee is unambiguous in his belief that Indigenous peoples should not have any special rights to archaeology, despite the fact it is their heritage they are concerned about." However, I would note that I am far from alone in this view. For example, Holtorf (2009) has recently and persuasively argued against inherent or ethnic privilege regarding archaeological heritage, whether based on historical precedence, past injustice, or long association with local cultural traditions. As I noted earlier, as well as in the original paper, every community has a right to deal with its own history and heritage. It is the discipline of archaeology that I would restrict to those who wish to play by the accepted rules of the game. If anyone, Indigenous or non-academic, wants to accept and abide by the general practices of the discipline, I would welcome their participation—in an era of general underfunding, archaeology needs all the help that it can get. And in this sense, of course, nobody has special rights to the archaeology of specific regions or cultural traditions. In this connection, I remain puzzled by the CC group's statement that "It is unnecessary to decide, *prima facie*, that heritage must either belong to one group or no one at all."

Neither do I understand the charge that my "treatment of Native American concerns about archaeology confuses issues of tribal sovereignty with [my] vision of essentialized Aboriginalism." Nothing in my paper questions the legal and political rights of Indigenous peoples, rights that I in fact stated as generally beneficial to the preservation and development of archaeological resources.

The critics have firmer grounds in accusing me of ignorance, and I freely confess to being unaware of the entire canon of Indigenous Archaeological writing. In my defense I would point out that most of the publications that are recommended to me in

these critiques appeared during the past two years and were unavailable at the time that the article was written. Ignorance also cuts both ways, and I feel myself as culpable for not having seen publications such as Mason's (2006) invaluable analysis of Native American historical narratives, or Hames' (2007) useful review of the debate surrounding Indigenous people as natural conservationists.

Turning from the critique of the CC group to those of the other commentators, I have already discussed Croes happy insertion of actual archaeological information into this discussion. I would point out that his term "the new Indian problem" did not derive from my work, nor do I see my concerns in that light. I am heartened by his description of the excellent collaboration that he has developed around the study of ancient preserved organic materials. It only remains to note my agreement with his concluding paragraph, and especially with his recognition of the true value of blending the Western scientific approach with the cultural expertise of Native communities.

Most of Silliman's heated critique repeats the charges of the CC group, and is based on the same misreadings to which I responded earlier. However, I must counter one of his more idiosyncratic claims. Quoting a statement from my argument (p. 583) regarding the fact that long and unchanging local cultural traditions have not been characteristic of most human history, he accuses me of universalizing "all of human history to diminish European colonialism," and again of attempting to "re-universalize (and elide) colonialism." The charge is preposterous, and to disagree with the original statement would require blindness to much of what we have learned from world history and archaeology.

On another topic, Silliman might be amused to know that McGill University chancellor Richard Pound is not an academic but a jock, a prominent member of the International Olympic Committee and one of those public figures that universities unaccountably promote to honorary positions. Nor did Pound state that three centuries ago Canada was "a land of savages." His statement was made in French and the phrase used was "un pays de sauvages" which is more accurately translated (by a non-irate translator) as "a land of Indigenous peoples".

Turning to the essay presented by Wilcox, I find myself in agreement with most of the points that he makes, despite his tone of rhetorical opposition to everything that I stand for. I am presented here as an unreconstructed "New Archaeologist" pining for the days when I could build pristine models of the past without being troubled by the messiness of history. Yet for decades I have argued the primacy of history as an archeological goal, and have derided the futility of searching in the dirt and muddle for universal patterns. In fact, several years ago (McGhee 2004:19) I noted that the New Archaeologists' "picture of a pre-Columbian continent populated by groups adapting to their environment and to one another through smoothly running explanatory processes, immune from random occurrences of disease, warfare, and environmental disaster, is in peculiar harmony with the nostalgic view of the past as seen through the eyes of homogenized Native tradition." I stopped short, however, of Wilcox's plausible argument of a causative relationship between the two. I also support Wilcox's views against the division of history and prehistory. In fact, I would encourage archaeologists to drop the latter term from their vocabularies, as I have done over the past several years since a publisher convinced me that to the general public "prehistory" means nothing more than dinosaurs, volcanoes, and the Flintstones. I am also impressed by Wilcox's argument that Indigenous "otherness" arises from the need for recognition "according to the standards and criteria imagined and imposed by colonial governments." This creates a causative argument lacking from my discussion of "readback" and of Simard's "Owner's Manual for being Indian" cited in the original text (p. 589). Finally, I do not understand his rhetorical final paragraph, and suggest that it relates to a very different paper than the one that I wrote.

I am pleased to note that none of the respondents have argued against my call (p. 583) to remove discussions of Indigenous archaeology from a framework of the "ethics" of archaeological practice. I hope that their silence on this matter indicates agreement that the questions discussed here can be more usefully framed as intellectual and political, rather than providing a means of comparing the relative ethical attainments of those participating in the dialogue.

In closing, I repeat that archaeologists should have no part in denying others the use of the past, based on evidence and means of interpretation that they find compatible with their needs and perspectives. I would hope that the archaeological view of the past could be considered an equally valid mode of interpretation, one that individuals and communities can make use of or ignore as they wish, but will not attempt to dismantle.

If an Indigenous archaeology that insists on the sharing of theoretical authority between scientific and non-scientific methods of interpretation wishes to be considered as anything other than a social project, it will have to demonstrate that it is based on a valid intellectual foundation. Perhaps its proponents should be content with the fact that Indigenous archaeology is entirely a social project, and not seek an intellectual foundation that seems impossible to construct.

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