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Special Issue: "*Rez Diff*: Indigenous Perspectives"
Guest-edited by Ashley Lance and Tara Wells

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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Res Difficiles, the Journal (*Res Diff)* was co-founded in 2024 by Hannah Čulík-Baird (University of California, Los Angeles) and Joseph Romero (East Texas A&M).

Res Diff is currently edited by Hannah Čulík-Baird (culikbaird@humnet.ucla.edu). Project management and editorial support for *Res Diff* 2.2 was provided by Ben Davis.

Since 2020, the *Res Difficiles* conference series has been a venue for addressing inequities within the field of Classics, examining issues arising out of intersectional vectors of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, class, socio-economic status and beyond. An outgrowth of this conference series, *Res Difficiles, The Journal*—an imprint of *Ancient History Bulletin*, a Green Open Access Journal—invites submissions from individuals, pairs, or groups, addressing "difficult things" within the discipline of Classics and related fields. *Res Difficiles, The Journal* seeks to publish the "traditional" argumentative forms of inquiry standard to the discipline, but also reflections upon pedagogical concerns as well as contributions of a creative, personal, or experimental nature, including interviews. In addition to individual submissions, we welcome pitches for guest-edited special issues.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Res Difficiles, The Journal as an imprint of *AHB* adheres to the usual North American editorial policies in the submission and acceptance of articles but imposes no House Style. Authors are, however, asked to use the abbreviations of *L'Année philologique* (*APh*) for journals, and of the *Thesaurus linguae latinae* (*TLL*) for Latin authors.

Please direct submissions to Hannah Čulík-Baird: culikbaird@humnet.ucla.edu.

Submission of articles must be sent as .doc (or .docx) files in the form of email attachments. PDF files should be submitted in addition to the .doc file when the article contains Greek or other fonts; Greek text should be entered using Unicode. Authors will receive PDF offprints of their contributions. Copyright is retained by the author.

NOTES TO READERS

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Res Diff logo courtesy of Hannah Čulík-Baird

Introducing Rez Diff*: Indigenous Perspectives*

Ashley Lance and Tara Wells

'Rez Diff' is an act of reclamation.

'Rez' refers to reservations, areas of land 'reserved' for Indigenous peoples to live and (supposedly) to govern themselves, which have been negotiated with or designated by the federal government.[1] These federally designated lands are also sometimes called *rancherias* or *pueblos*. The spaces represent the negotiations and survivals of a tribe or tribes who have persisted through genocide, forced removal, or a number of other violent acts. For many Indigenous people, reservations bring conflicting feelings. If a reservation is located within traditional lands, it can be comforting to have a space where their culture, language, and collective identity is protected. Even when reservations are not located in traditional homelands, the ability to visit, commune, and govern with their own people is deeply meaningful. At the same time, however, that space is a product of the brutal, destructive effects of colonialism, imperialism, and racism—genocide, stolen land, broken treaties, cultural erasure and forced assimilation, and general discrimination, to name a few. For those of us who grew up on reservations, we hold all of these experiences all at once.

In the Americas in particular, white settlers have committed these atrocities in pursuit of advancing so-called Western civilization, a concept heavily influenced by Classical antiquity, built on colonialist idolization of ancient Greece and Rome as the roots of civilization.[2] White supremacists have long employed ancient sources as a basis for racist ideologies, establishing a Classical curriculum as the core of education, since the 17th century in North America and the Medieval period in Europe.[3] Higher education, specifically, was not originally meant to encourage exploration, personal growth, or unique contributions to scholarship, and the world beyond. Rather, formal education was a form of exclusion, designed to reinforce hierarchy and affirm elite white male superiority. People of color, women, and socio-economically disadvantaged people were not welcome in higher education—except in cases which benefited the institution, such as in the example of Harvard's Indian College, which indoctrinated Indigenous men into Christianity so as to be of service to the academy and the church by assisting with religious publications.[4] Many Native children faced similar forced assimilation through education, being sent to American Indian residential schools, where they were mistreated and required to abandon their Native cultures, languages, and values, replacing them with Western customs and ideologies.[5] Land-grant universities and colleges are another way in which colonizers have weaponized educational institutions against Indigenous peoples, not only profiting from education

[1] 'What is a federal Indian reservation?' (US Department of the Interior): https://www.bia.gov/faqs/what-federal-indian-reservation; link accessed January 15, 2026.

[2] Blouin and Akrigg 2024, Umachandran and Ward 2024.

[3] Richard 2009, Adler 2016, Dozier 2026.

[4] 'History' (Harvard University Native American Program): https://hunap.harvard.edu/history; link accessed January 15, 2026; 'Final Project: The Indian College' (Inventing Harvard): https://legacy.sites.fas.harvard.edu/~hsb41/Inventing_Harvard/indian_college.html#:~:text=Did%20you%20know%20that%20Harvard,Protestantism%20to%20local%20native%20groups; link accessed January 15, 2026.

[5] Marquez 2024.

generally, but also depleting natural resources and erasing Indigenous histories—all for the sake of the academy, Classical education, and Western civilization.[6]

The rez functions not only as a space in which Indigenous peoples are kept together, but also as a way to keep Indigenous peoples out of spaces like the academy. This refers not only to physical space for being, but intellectual space for thinking, speaking, and creating. Indigenous peoples have long been excluded from these spaces, deemed incapable of contributing to knowledge. Ironically, at the same time, our cultures, languages, and practices served as rich ground for white researchers—cementing our status as the researched.[7] Indigenous perspectives have not been welcomed in the scholarly world, especially in an area so intertwined with 'civilization' as Classical studies is. Equally, claims to who is or is not Indigenous in the past and present carry a weight that reverberates into our fields. We would like to acknowledge that through the silencing of Indigenous voices in academia, claims about Indigeneity and ties to land are distorted. In some cases, this means settler myths about who deserves to 'own' the Americas. More pressingly, it looks like denying the sovereignty and claims to land in both the past and present of Palestinian peoples to justify their genocide. It is thus necessary for Indigenous scholars to reclaim space in the academy for our perspectives to be recognized. This special journal issue does exactly that.

'Rez Diff': Indigenous Perspectives is a collection of articles and artworks created by a diverse group of Indigenous scholars whose work examines colonialist, imperialist, and racist ideologies from the ancient Mediterranean to the modern Americas, exploring the relationship between the ancient Mediterranean and modern systems of oppression which have negatively affected Indigenous peoples. Together, the contributions cover a wide range of approaches to different types of evidence, ancient and modern, highlighting Indigenous perspectives in several important ways: recovering Indigenous experiences through ancient texts; recognizing the role of Classical studies and anthropology in land dispossession and destruction; questioning definitions of 'indigeneity,' 'autochthony,' and other terms; analyzing visual and material depictions of Indigenous peoples; exploring representations of Indigenous thought in philosophical texts; interrogating connections between Indigenous and ancient philosophy.

Each contributor's work is informed by their personal experiences as Indigenous scholars, navigating systemic challenges in academia, marginalization, and generational trauma. The tribal affiliations and geographic homelands represented in this issue are far ranging, stretching from what is now known as Canada to the southwest of the US and Mexico. Our relationships to and with Indigeneity also vary: some of us grew up on a rez, some of us are 'urban' natives, and some of us are reconnecting and re-establishing our relationships to our peoples. We are proud to not merely recognize the inseparable nature of our identities from our scholarship but fully embrace this reality and celebrate the diverse and important contributions we have to offer.

While the journal issue is the first of its kind, it is not the first instance of Indigenous scholars gathering to present such work. Rather, it is the continuation of conversations which formally started as a conference panel at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Society for Classical Studies (SCS) in Chicago, entitled 'Indigenous Perspectives: Ancient and Modern.' The papers illuminated new ways of recognizing how Classical sources and ancient ideas

[6] la paperson 2017, Padilla Peralta 2025.

[7] Smith 2021.

have fueled modern perceptions of and attitudes towards Indigenous peoples of the Americas. The panel itself was the inaugural Mountaintop Coalition panel, advancing the Coalition's mission of professional development for people traditionally underrepresented in Classics and related fields, as well as fostering community. As editors of this issue, we would like to extend thanks to Mountaintop for providing the space, funding, and early seeds of this journal issue.

The process of planning, submitting, and participating in that panel brought to our attention the lack of devoted spaces for Indigenous scholars in Classics and related fields, and the need for a network to connect scholars engaging in work surrounding Classics and Indigeneity. The panel's success also made clear what can happen when such spaces open up: a larger community of Indigenous scholars in Classics, upending settler colonial traditions woven into the field itself, can shed new light on ancient material through Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing. Like the rez, the panel and this journal bring together Indigenous scholars, creating a space for cherishing our identities, honoring one another and our work, and finding a sense of empowerment and belonging.

It is impossible to completely capture, in any amount of words, our vision and hopes for this journal and the work and togetherness it may inspire. Indigeneity is not containable as something uniform and unchanging, and Indigenous people are not all the same. This reality conflicts with traditional academia, as scholarship tries to fit scholars and their work into separate, rigid boxes. *'Rez Diff': Indigenous Perspectives* challenges that status quo. We hope that this introduction makes clear the importance of this work and serves as a call to continue being in community and collaborating with each other.

We now turn to a summary of the journal contents.

'I am αυτοχθων'

We begin introducing the contents of this journal with a nod to our cover artist Evan Shannon's evocative statement 'I am αυτοχθων.' For Shannon (Dena'ina Athabascan/Sugpiaq), this phrase does not invoke a mere equivocation of the term autochthony as Indigenous. Rather, Shannon posits that the term is better understood as sharing meaning with the phrase 'time immemorial.' In Indigenous spaces, policies, and traditions, 'time immemorial' serves as a marker and reminder for our long histories and relationships to the land. Shannon's note expresses this sentiment, as well as pushing back on colonial views of space and borders: our erasure from the land, and assumptions about the relevance of Indigenous thought on the Greco-Roman antiquity. Using the Greek word autochthon in place of Indigenous, First Nations, Native American, or other terms that mark our relationship to settler colonial empires, upends preconceptions of Indigeneity and its place within the discipline of Classics.

Shannon's art serves as key framing for the articles that follow. Each article presents an argument, not for mere inclusion of Indigenous methods into Classics, but instead for critical and pertinent interventions into the underlying suppositions of the field, and its entanglement with and justification of settler colonialism. The authors highlight ways in which Indigenous peoples, cultures, and philosophies have been relegated to the past, along with colonialism itself, as if they are not present today. In unique ways, each author approaches Classicism by embracing the truth that our identities, our personal experiences and perspectives, cannot and should not be separated from our identities as scholars.

Kendall Lovely's piece clearly demonstrates these themes. Oscillating between a scholarly article on the settler colonial foundations, and a curatorial commentary on modern Indigenous art, Lovely (Diné) reminds us of a central condition for Classics—its legacy and investment in land dispossession. This reminder comes through in Lovely's curatorial notes on Jessie Weahkee/Sleepyrock's (Cochiti/Diné/Zuni/Chicana) digital artwork entitled 'WHAT IS SACRED?' An image of a Venus, re-imagined and re-clothed as a Diné figure, is foregrounded with crumbling pedestals and oil drills. For Lovely, the piece speaks to both the inherent sacred-ness of the land to Diné people and the encroaching environmental, spiritual, and cultural harms of colonialism. The question of what is sacred frames and haunts the analysis of Henry Morgan's first report for the AIA (Archaeological Institute of America). In deconstructing the report, Lovely traces the rigid racial hierarchies of *civitas* in the U.S. southwest and Morgan's dual romanticization of Indigenous peoples' 'ruined' landscapes and civilizations that occurred via his military exploits in the region. Lovely, through an Indigenous feminist practice, shows how Morgan, and his relationship to Classics and Anthropology, entangles questions of land dispossession and sovereignty into these disciplines.

Where Lovely traces land dispossession in the beginnings of the AIA, Ashton Rodgers (Mvskoke) shows how discussions of the 'dirty' c word, or colonialism, in Classics and Archeology, are divorced from the fabric and material realities of present-day forms of colonialism. Rodgers traces this apprehension in Classics and Archeology, beginning with an understanding of the 'simulacra' of the 'indian' in southern Italian archeology and intellectual history. From these static notions of the 'indian,' Rodgers offers an archive of scholars' (mis)use of the term 'indigenous' in ancient Mediterranean contexts. This archive makes visible the whiteness inherent in these discussions. The hidden racialized discussions that are inherent in making claims about Indigeneity also demonstrate how and when Indigenous people become re-inscribed into objects of study, rather than the fluid, autonomous, and sovereign peoples that they are.

Lovely and Rodgers' contributions ask what is sacred, and what is or was 'indigeneity.' Cassandra Casias (Chicana) maintains this line of questioning by asking who 'counts' as Indigenous. Through the conceptual framework of *mestizaje* ('mixture'), the article shows that what the term invokes about Indigeneity can be used to intervene in questions of identity in antiquity. Casias makes this intervention in Roman North Africa, where she applies *mestizaje* to uncover the multifaceted identities embedded within Augustine's *Africa*. This article not only engages in central questions about Indigeneity, and race making, but also extends the geographical borders that are represented in this issue. Casias' contribution serves as a testament to the breadth and depth that a concept like Indigeneity can have in understanding and/or problematizing material from the ancient world.

The final two articles, by Jennifer Komorowski (Oneida) and Ashley Lance (Wiyot/Yurok), offer a moment to consider the themes of this issue through philosophical and epistemic questions. The pun is too tempting not to make: if 'I am autochthon' is guiding the initial descriptions of these pieces, then the final two represent the premise that leads to the conclusion 'I think therefore.' The pun, in part, is most useful for thinking with Komorowski's piece which surveys Descartes, Plato, and Aristotle to show that, despite the fact that they are distinct in their philosophical approaches, they nevertheless coalesce in their abilities to offer frameworks for dehumanizing. The specific forms of dehumanization Komorowski focuses on center around our ability to feel as Indigenous peoples, echoing the quote from George Manuel and Michael Posluns' work, 'Does Indians have feelings?' Komorowski's approach is informed by personal experiences about her own and other

Indigenous peoples' ability to feel and process like a 'normal' person, contradicting Western philosophy which defines Indigenous peoples as unfeeling, uncivilized 'Others.'

Ashley Lance's piece offers a key follow up to Komorowski's question and (again) continues the Descartes pun, taking up a central question asked by Hamid Dabashi: 'Can we (non-Europeans) think?' This question is asked in earnest after a series of assumptions made by historians of philosophy which denounce and devalue the contributions of Indigenous people to the history of philosophy. Lance challenges these assumptions, demonstrating how Indigenous philosophy can be usefully taught in tandem with 'ancient' philosophy. The standard comparison of Indigenous philosophy with Greco-Roman philosophy is one that is based in seeing both belief systems and peoples as a function of the distant past. Lance recognizes the dangers of a strict 'temporal' understanding of the history of philosophy which creates boundaries and disconnects the history from the people and places who made it.

The series of questions these articles ask: what is sacred, what is colonization, what is Indigenous, who counts as Indigenous, can we feel, can we think? We end on a note of emphasizing how interconnected these questions and pieces are. While the function of an introduction like this is to give a sense of how the articles relate to each other, we understand that journal issues are often read in pieces rather than in full. We hope to have made an argument for taking the time to read this journal and these contributions together, as they add up to more than the sum of their parts. This issue demonstrates how crucial it is to celebrate diverse perspectives in academia, given the fruitful conversations which can arise from doing so. In accordance, we would like to end with a call for further dialogue. As has been emphasized, while this journal issue represents a huge moment for Indigenous peoples in Classics, this should be seen as only the first words in a lasting conversation on how Indigeneity, race, colonialism, and empire are embedded in discussions of the past.

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Additionally, we thank the Mountaintop Coalition for supporting the 2024 SCS panel which led to this journal, 'Indigenous Perspectives: Ancient and Modern,' as well as all of the panelists: Cassandra Casias, Kendall Lovely, Caitlin Mostoway-Parker, and respondent Dan-el Padilla Peralta.

Finally, a warm thank you to the person who introduced us to each other: Elizabeth Wueste. Both of us volunteered, in different years, at the American Excavations at Morgantina, and despite the fact we never worked with each other, Elizabeth made sure to introduce us. That introduction has sparked such a great friendship and collaboration—including this journal.

With endless gratitude,

wok-hlew,

Ashley and Tara

Dedicated to Brit,

my furry companion,

who purred on my lap while I worked on this issue.

I will love and miss you forever.

-Tara

Of the Earth and Sea:
A Study in Minoan and Tlingit Art and an Indigenous Response to Autochthony

Evan Shannon

Αυτοχθων. Image courtesy of the artist.

Αυτοχθων, literally "of the earth itself," is the closest Classical Greek term to the modern concept of "indigenous," though perhaps it is more closely related to the English phrase "time immemorial." The terms time immemorial, autochthony, and indigenous all refer to the same idea, that a people can be of a land. This art piece focuses on two groups, the Minoans of Crete and the Tlingit of southeastern Alaska, who are both earth-born, or rather, sea-born. Both the Minoans and the Tlingit are seafaring peoples whose identities and lifeways are deeply tied to the ocean. For the Tlingit, who inhabit the coastal lands of southeastern Alaska, the sea provides both subsistence and cultural symbols, with animals like the salmon holding a central place in their art and traditions.[1] The Minoans, likewise, wove the sea into their pottery through intricate depictions of marine life, blending art with the rhythms of their maritime world.[2]

Autochthony and "time immemorial" are primarily legal and political concepts, followed by any cultural or historical value they may hold. In the United States and Canada, the phrasing "time immemorial" has been used for indigenous nations and tribes to express

[1] Crawford, 1978.

[2] Betancourt, 1977.

their connection with the land on which they live (and/or once lived). Its use in this way is a product of colonization in the Americas, and it is a, frankly, lazy way of describing the history and connection between people and land that downplays the value of oral memory in indigenous communities.[3] "Time immemorial" as a phrase can be found in legal and other formal settings, as it is itself a formality that homogenizes the unique histories within individual cultural groups. Further, it seeks to distance the current inhabitants of a land from a mythologized ancient people, which, when coupled with past tense (as is often found in texts such as land acknowledgements), implies an extinction of the native people. This distanced, far-off usage of "time immemorial" is mythological in nature, which is similar to the ancient understanding of autochthony. For example, the ancient Athenians considered themselves indigenous to Attica, the region in which Athens lies. Their understanding of their indigeneity, their autochthony, was deeply mythological in nature, tied to a story of Erechtheus, a man literally born of the earth.[4] However, this understanding mirrors "time immemorial" in that it was largely a political and legal identity for Athenians, rather than a cultural identity. The term blossomed in popularity as a way to assert the Athenians as the dominant group in the area and erase any former ethnic groups that may actually be indigenous to the land.

Rather than discard the legal idea of autochthony, I have chosen to embrace it as a cultural identifier, around which I have centered this artwork. In this piece, I present two ceramic pots that embody this shared heritage. They are decorated with motifs from the Marine Style era of Minoan pottery, circa 17th-15th centuries BCE.[5] This style was marked by depictions of sea life and a free flowing style that contrasted with the earlier formulaic styles. In the center of each pot is an animal done in formline, an art style of Pacific Northwest Native American cultural groups. It is characterized by U-forms and S-forms, and often features animals such as bears, birds, and fish.[6] The first step in creating this artwork was studying both styles, and the project originated as an exercise in combining the two styles. The other artistic elements, the background and the decorations, were added once I felt happy with the vessels' designs. Though the Minoan and Tlingit peoples are separated by thousands of years and thousands of miles, they share a common home on the sea, which influenced the sea background for this piece. In this background, αυτοχθων is written in a calligraphy style, meant to mirror the flowing sea and waves.

Most of the time spent on this piece was dedicated to the two vessels in the foreground. The right vase is inspired by a Mycenaean copy of a Minoan Marine style amphora,[7] featuring a Tlingit-inspired salmon framed by Minoan marine motifs. The salmon is a particularly important symbol for Alaska Natives, as they represent a subsistence life which has been challenged by overfishing salmon. I saw the specific vase in person in the summer of 2024 at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Greece, just a few short weeks after I had been to potlatch in Alaska. I was inspired by the beautiful native work there, and seeing the Marine style vases in person left me inspired, wondering about how the sea connects us

[3] Weir, 2013.

[4] Rosivach, 1987. Please note that Rosivach, while offering a good overview of Athenian autochthony, unfortunately uses quite condescending language that I do not agree with.

[5] Betancourt, 1977.

[6] Crawford, 1978.

[7] Currently in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Greece (NAMA Π 6725).

through life and art. The left vase, modeled after the iconic Minoan octopus flask,[8] incorporates a Tlingit octopus design, fusing the organic fluidity seen in both traditions through the ocean. Though the octopus is not seen often in Alaska Native stories and myths, it is seen in Minoan marine style pottery, and I wanted to keep the motif with the Tlingit formline style. I have been enamoured with the Marine octopus flask for years, and I was really excited to get my hands on the shape and play with the motifs. Through this piece, I hoped to showcase the parallel reverence for the ocean as a source of both identity and artistry.

This piece was made as a way of indigenizing classical art. Indigenous students, like many other marginalized groups, have historically had a difficult time in traditional western academia. Indigenous epistemologies have been discredited, and students often face financial barriers, among other things. To break down these barriers and allow indigenous scholars into a historically exclusionary field, we must begin to indigenize classics by applying indigenous methods to classical knowledge. This can begin with art, and it can continue through pushing for inclusion of indigenous scholars, including indigenous teaching methods and styles, and generally creating space within the field for indigeneity. As old as the field of classics is, it is in a unique position to be enriched by new perspectives, and, by applying an indigenous perspective onto ancient views of indigeneity, new interpretations and connections can be made and we can begin to better understand ancient indigeneity. Further, this piece indigenizes classics by connecting these cultures despite their geographic or chronological distance from one another, rejecting the colonial focus on separatism over state lines and nation boundaries. This piece also nods to a history and future of inter-indigenous cultural exchange, inspired by the Tlingit gifting Alaskan spruce to Native Hawaiian communities that had lost their koa trees, so that they could revive their canoe-making heritage, a symbol of cultural connection and respect across oceans.[9] Both the Tlingit people and Native Hawaiians have been harmed as a result of American colonization, and cultural exchange and support is one way to reject colonial pressures and forge new connections.

As an indigenous scholar, I have always felt out of place within classics. I have struggled deeply with western academia's standards, expectations, politics, and bureaucracy. I have long felt that western academia focuses primarily on hierarchies, who you know, and what you can memorize. Indigenous academia, on the other hand, focuses on sharing knowledge and creating a dialogue, truly being in community with one another and the world around you. In my experience with indigenous communities, knowledge sharing is gift-giving, a distinctly different approach than in my experiences with western academia. I started this piece as a way to have fun with classics, and the opportunity to have it respected as true scholarly work is beyond exciting for me. Western academia has not been a fun space for me, and it has certainly not been a space where I feel in community. I have felt most intellectually stimulated around other native scholars and storytellers, and I simultaneously have felt the most in community with them. As an indigenous scholar, I am αυτοχθων, in that my body reflects the land and my heart carries the wisdom of the sea. My ancestors have called our lands home since time immemorial, in that we will continue to do so for as long as we can. This art, and my use of the terms *autochthon* and time immemorial, is a rejection of the

[8] Flask with octopus and seabed in the Marine Style, Heraklion Archaeological Museum (Π3383).

[9] Low, 1995.

mythologized extinction of Alaska Native culture. It is alive and well, and I hope that this piece has shown that.

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(Re)visiting (New) Mexico's Ancient Origins: Ancestral Native Kinship Beyond Classical Civitas

Kendall Lovely

Abstract: This paper focuses on the foundations and legacies of anthropology in the American Southwest, building from previous classical reception scholarship which considers the ways in which classicism interacted with colonialism in the early anthropology of Lewis Henry Morgan and his contemporaries. Due to Morgan's studies, lands in Northern New Mexico, then a recent acquisition of the United States, appeared alongside interests in classical archeology for the first annual Archaeological Institute of America report. Yet this examination seeks to revisit Morgan's conceptions of civilization and to recenter Indigenous kinship and connection to these lands. Through Indigenous feminist revisioning, this revisioning asserts the importance of methodologies in ethical care against the colonial abandonment of Indigenous peoples to static stages of antiquity.

Keywords: kinship, civilization, Critical Indigenous Studies, Southwest anthropology, curation.

Introduction

Coloniality is a key part of constituting classicism, as it defines civilization through its literal and conceptual border-making. Toward a practice in Indigenous (re)mapping, I approach this border-making through first identifying the influence of a hegemonic classicism as constructed and perpetuated alongside the development of American anthropology.[1] This early anthropology, both archeological and ethnographic, relied on both material and epistemological Indigenous dispossession. Indigenous experience is intimately defined against and tied to colonial imposition or intrusion as part of both historical and ongoing exploitation in "modern," that is, recent centuries. "Indigenous" asserts a political status (often racialized) that can only be read as a modern and ongoing condition related to this coloniality. At the same time, "Indigenous" people must be considered as people in the present who are structurally dispossessed of ancient pasts and futures within colonial projects. Recently, classicist Dan-el Padilla Peralta has posited classicism as a form of valuation, albeit contested over space and time, but most prominently built from a racial capitalism linked to settler-colonial dispossession. For Padilla-Peralta, an over-represented classicism results from this valuation—a "historical-material process," not simply ideological. Padilla-Peralta's critique posits race, empire, and settler-colonialism at the heart of this historical-material process.[2] Ultimately, my project concerns epistemic injustice, not just with concerns rooted in knowledge structures, but with material implications as well.

[1] I refer to "classics" and "classical studies" interchangeably in this essay with both referring to the professional field focused on defining canonized aspects of the Ancient Mediterranean within a constructed "Classical Tradition" or classicism in this hegemonic sense. For further critique regarding use of indigeneity and Indigenous Studies in classics, see Lovely 2025.

[2] Padilla Peralta 2025, 1-2.

My broader project traces the extraction of Indigenous knowledge and materials by classically-trained early anthropologists in New Mexico and surrounding regions.[3] In recognition of the colonial underpinnings that surrounded such extraction, I argue for a reframing of ancestral sites not as mere "ruins" or remnants of a past civilization, per the nineteenth-century conceptualizations that came from the intersecting foundations of American archeological pursuits in both domestic territories and abroad. Rather, these are *active* sites connected to still-living peoples. This reframing takes into account ways in which Native peoples map their own relationships, or kinship, to their ancient pasts, while critiquing the distancing and dispossessive aspects of anthropological categorization, including the field's constructed kinship concepts.

Perhaps better known for his impact on the field of anthropology, and cultural evolution within it, through his studies of the Iroquois Confederacy, Lewis Henry Morgan also played a formative role in colonial exploratory interests in the American Southwest. Previous scholarship by classicists has focused on the impact of classics in his *Ancient Society* (1877), his more comprehensive comparative publication, and already draws on the relationship between classicism and ideas of cultural evolution.[4] I focus for now on his later publications that bring his travels to Central America and the American Southwest into consideration alongside Greek and Roman archeology through the first report of the Archaeological Institute of America. While there are some immediate influences from classicism, I also draw attention to how his adaptation of a classical *civitas,* rendered from a Ciceronian political reception into a cultural evolutionary meaning, serves as a conceptual framework for material dispossession in the context of American colonial and imperial exploitation. I pay attention to the particular groundwork that Morgan brings to New Mexico's San Juan River Valley Basin and the greater Chaco area as an origin of ancient American civilization, which worked to establish American archeologists as inheritors of its legacy at the cost of the people who still live there.

In this case, Morgan's display of knowledge of the region derived from military surveying and bridged romantic interest in ruins and ancient pasts with scientific systemization. This collecting of information also figures into another level of mapping in line with the AIA's goal to both "quicken the interest in classical and Biblical studies, [and] to promote an acquaintance with the antiquities of our own country."[5] The AIA would first establish schools in Athens and Rome, then Jerusalem at the turn of the century. Where the AIA's first annual report joined Morgan's Southwest anthropological study with papers on the ancient Mediterranean, this was not merely a random juxtaposition. The AIA would

[3] My overarching research scope focuses on the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. However, my case study for this article centers the late nineteenth century as a starting point, when New Mexico was a US territory and not yet entering into statehood, which factors into this case study's context of colonialism.

[4] See Varto 2018; of related interest, see also Kennedy 2018 in the same volume, which delves into the also classically-influenced (and environmentally-deterministic) culture area concept that was championed through early museum display at the Smithsonian in the late nineteenth century. The culture area concept remains pervasive in the categorization of Native arts (i.e. Southwest, Plains Indian, Eastern Woodlands, etc.). This has a broader history, which I cover more in depth elsewhere (Lovely 2019), but Kennedy offers a useful starting point in tracing classical reception and impositions of racial ideas in anthropology relevant here.

[5] *First Annual Report of the Executive Committee with Accompanying Papers Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Archeological Institute of America* (1880, 8). The executive committee at the time consisted of Charles Eliot Norton (president), Martin Brimmer (vice-president), Francis Parkman, H.W. Haynes, W.R. Ware, W.W. Goodwin, Alexander Agassiz, O.W. Peabody, and E.H. Greenleaf.

further its mission regarding American antiquities and found its first American school in the United States' Southwestern territory a few decades after its first annual report, in 1907.[6]

Where Morgan draws from the prevalent nineteenth-century language of "ancient" and "ruins" when discussing still-living sites and peoples, he participates in a co-constructed discourse between classical studies and American anthropology that maps *civitas* based on settler and imperial observations. Morgan at first premises *civitas* as meaning a state-based political organization.[7] Yet, he also associates *civitas* with civilization, or the highest order of his stages of cultural evolution, which progressively advanced from savagery to barbarism to civilization.[8] *Civitas* was then a defining characteristic as opposed to more kinship-based (*societas)* social states.[9] Morgan imposed his readings of classical material in redefining social orders and kinship categories in place of Indigenous knowledge and kinship. Morgan's conception of the stages of civilization pervades ongoing and global understandings of the preservation of the past, starting with the first annual AIA report's introductory material that precedes Morgan's article. "The study of American archeology relates, indeed, to the monuments of a race that never attained to a high degree of civilization, and that has left no trustworthy records of continuous history," asserts the report's introduction.[10] The imposition of these hierarchical terms related to ruins and antiquity constitutes material colonial dispossession, but the latter part of this article will shift toward visions of Indigenous futurity that realign the ongoing presence of Indigenous people, deemed mere ancient but unknowing vestiges in the lead up to the inaugural AIA report, and their reassertions of relationships to their ancestors. Following scholarship that centers Indigenous feminist practices of (re)mapping and visiting, this paper emphasizes ethical care against the colonial abandonment of Indigenous peoples to static stages of antiquity.[11]

WHAT IS SACRED?

While I myself am Diné, I was raised in an urban setting outside of the San Juan Basin and greater Chaco Canyon region referenced in this article. However, I will start by centering the voice of a Diné relative, artist Jessie Weahkee, who does have ties to the particular lands discussed. Over the past year, I have curated a digital exhibition titled *Red Coral Stories*.[12] My digital exhibition project situates a cross-cultural borderlands and space of exchange

[6] Lewis and Hagan 2007.

[7] In this political sense, as I will explain further, Morgan perhaps derives some meaning from Cicero.

[8] Morgan quotes Horace's *Satires* at the outset of *Ancient Society*, which speaks to a notion of succession from primitive life stages as Morgan set out.

[9] Morgan 1877.

[10] *First Annual Report of the Executive Committee with Accompanying Papers Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Institute* (1880, 18).

[11] Goeman 2013; Tuck et. al. 2022. Goeman's (re)mapping is a practice of spatial justice that critically reassesses colonial frameworks while asserting Indigenous relationalities to space.

[12] *Red Coral Stories* (2023), www.redcoralstories.com; link accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

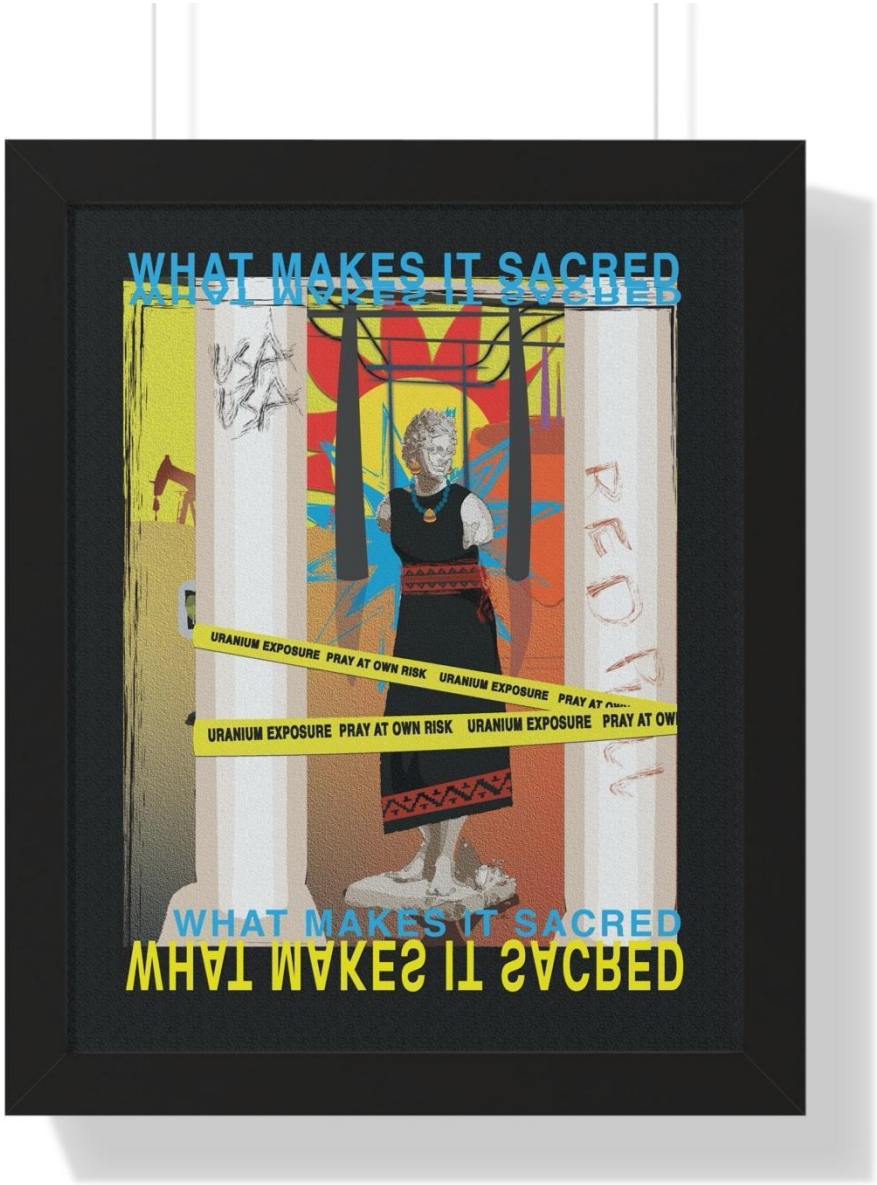

Fig. 1: "Dziłth'na'o'dithłe" (2021), Jessie Weahkee (Sleepyrock).
Image courtesy of the artist.

between the Ancient Mediterranean and Native lands of the US Southwest, which resists the unilateral imposition of Western civilization frameworks and conquest.[13] In addition to world-renowned artists such as Anna Tsouhlarakis (Greek, Navajo, Creek), I included Native creatives who are emerging and less well-known—that is, to the art world, museums, and galleries. My curatorial practice follows the work of Indigenous scholars Eve Tuck, Haliehana Stepetin, Rebecca Beaulne-Stuebing, and Jo Billows in their co-written essay, "Visiting as an Indigenous Feminist Practice" (2022) emphasizing care and ethics in research relationship building.[14] Although one may be a guest, visiting entails being responsible for a place, even if one's presence there is impermanent, and the co-authors stress that such visiting is inherently anti-capitalist and queer in practice.[15] One need not possess all intimate knowledge of a place to be invested in its futurity, but relationship building occurs through community-based care, reciprocation, and mutual respect. Since there is no monolithic voice from Native communities, *Red Coral Stories* offers a variety of perspectives of some of us Natives with ties to the lands known as the US Southwest. The featured work, "Dziłth'na'o'dithłe," (2021) by Cochiti, Diné, Zuni, and Chicana artist Jessie Weahkee, who goes by Sleepyrock as her artist name, asserts Indigenous presence on these lands. This assertion serves as a reminder that despite the surveying and subsequent collecting efforts enabled by nineteenth-century early anthropologists, Indigenous peoples have maintained continuous relationships. The continuity of these relationships complicates archeological mapping that replaces living relations with extractible resources as key features. This artwork's Indigenous perspective serves as critique of the legacy of those surveyors' documentation projects (Figure 1).

Weahkee's digital painting centers a Venus statue reimagined as the *Diné* (Navajo) ancestors, White Shell Woman and Changing Woman. She wears a *Diné biil,* or traditional woven dress, and turquoise bead with shell jewelry set. A rising sun and star pattern behind the sacred woman sit behind power lines, and a power plant and oil rig also jut into the background edges. The statue itself stands between Greek columns, which have been tagged "USA USA" on the left and "REDRUM"—"murder" backwards—on the right. The reference to murder underscores the overbearing presence of extractive industries that have come with US claims to the land and the closely connected prevalence of violence toward Native women. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women movement often seeks to highlight these connections between land and gendered body violence that have impacted Native peoples for generations.[16] Caution tape stretched between the columns and in front of the Venus statue reads, "URANIUM EXPOSURE PRAY AT OWN RISK," while the line "WHAT MAKES IT SACRED" repeats at the top and bottom of the painting.

As Weahkee explains in her artist statement:

> Dziłth'na'o'dithłe is a small community and sacred site just north of Chaco Canyon. Dziłth'na'o'dithłe is mentioned by name in our songs, ceremonies,

[13] For some discussion on how borderlands approaches have worked in reorienting American history, see Hämäläinen and Truett 2011.

[14] Tuck et. al. 2022.

[15] Ibid. This work in turn builds upon Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's land as pedagogy approach, stressing the importance of learning through the land non-extractively, rather than merely learning about or from the land. See Betasamosake Simpson 2014.

[16] For one example of advocacy which focuses on these connections, see: Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, "Land and Body Violence," https://csvanw.org/focus-areas/trainings-and-education/land-body-violence/; link accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

> and countless traditions. As a small girl, my dad imparted the sacredness of the place, which made me infuriated by the sight of cell phone towers littering the mesa, oil rigs in the distance, and nearly no indication of the preciousness of this beautiful place. Dziłth'na'o'dithłe, as well as our sacred ancestors Changing Woman and White Shell Woman, represent Diné womanhood. Aphrodite, adorned by shells as the Goddess of Sexuality, Love, and Beauty, is loved, respected, revered, and preserved by her home in the hearts of artists, admirers, curators. When creating this piece, I wanted to imagine Aphrodite treated in the same way as ours—loved and dressed carefully by our people, but with little regard or notice from the outside world.[17]

Weahkee's digital painting brings attention to the role of sacredness as embedded in land, still-living ancient sites, and materials therein. In centering Chaco Canyon, a site of colonial dispossession through archeological resource extraction as well as colonial development and the ruinations of lands caused by extractive energy industries such as fracking and uranium mining, Weahkee's work underscores how these forms of ongoing colonialism are linked and continue to degrade the sacred. At the same time, through evoking the Greek goddess Aphrodite, a symbol of objectifying male gazing, Weahkee presents a critical subversion of viewing the sacred as a commodity to be gazed upon or consumed. Through her Indigenized re-imagining of Aphrodite, Weahkee asserts another form of sacredness out of the care and protection that should be extended toward sacred womanhood and the land. Since land and body violence are entangled and gendered, a problem deeply entrenched with the extractive industries that affect the Navajo Nation and Native lands, protecting the sacred requires stewardship and care rather than the destructive forces of objectification and (dis)possession.[18]

While rooted in particular Diné cosmologies, Weahkee's artistic comment engages in a form of Indigenous feminist visiting as reflected on by Tuck et. al. (2022). Weahkee's artwork serves as a unique reflection of Diné cosmologies and relationships to place, yet her painting is not meant to serve as an ethnographic impression upon the land. Rather, her project allows for thinking through the embodied relationships which Diné community members have with those Northern New Mexico lands. Learning through the land, in this case, includes critical reflection upon the embodied violences that are lived experiences for many Diné community members while situating those communities alongside industrial developments that stem from oil, gas, uranium, and other mineral extraction industries. The intrusion of industries, with their challenges to the long-term health of community members, as well as to the health of the land, complicates the nineteenth-century notions of progress central to anthropology's "civilization" models.

Lewis Henry Morgan, kinship, and the AIA

Previous scholarship by classicists has focused on the impact of classics in Morgan's more broad-ranging comparative work, *Ancient Society* (1877), and already draws on the

[17] "Jessie Weahkee, artist statement," *Red Coral Stories* (2023). To highlight her work, I include her bio from the digital exhibition here: "Jessie Weahkee is a Pueblo, Navajo, and Chicana graphic designer and artist based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her artist name, 'Sleepyrock' pays homage to her father's clans and upbringing. Through art, Sleepyrock tries to shed light on Native life, spirituality, trials, and family."

[18] Yazzie 2018.

relationship between classicism and ideas of cultural evolution.[19] *Ancient Society* (1877) is the work in which Morgan most comprehensively lays out his stages of civilization (from savagery and barbarism to civilization with grades in between) and kinship models (which were suffused with terms derived from classical sources such as *gens* and *phratry*). His work was based on inspiration from classical Greek and, especially, Roman authors as well as contemporary classical historians, yet he diverged from the classical tradition where he asserted his own viewpoints as an American, which he believed gave him better and perhaps even corrective insights on kinship in ancient societies and across cultures.[20] In Queer and Indigenous studies scholar Mark Rifkin's reading of Morgan, kinship serves imperial and racialized mappings premised on making normative the nuclear family and private property as conditions of a liberal state. Yet, Rifkin also reads kinship through Indigenous appropriations as useful recognizing alternative political orders outside of nineteenth-century imaginaries and enactments by settler states.[21] These considerations of kinship beyond Morgan's frameworks are useful for re-visiting Morgan's assertions regarding lack of *civitas,* or a state, based on the Indigenous peoples in New Mexico.

Beyond the ideological framings of kinship within Morgan's writings, other scholars have pointed to Morgan's passions for idealized indigeneity as the basis for his deep affinity for his major subject matter, the Iroquois Confederacy or Haudenosaunee people. In other words, Greco-Roman classicism merged with a noble savage fascination with the American Indian in a formative fraternal order membership, known as the Grand Order of the Iroquois, which as Yankton Dakota historian Philip Deloria has detailed, was a form of playing Indian.[22]

Where Deloria reads Morgan's playing Indian as a form of American national claims to Indigenous inheritance, formed out of a romanticism about Native Americans' connections to nature, others have read it in the context of the Victorian nature of fraternal or men's societies, which were themselves homosocial if not homosexually-coded spaces.[23] Fieldwork, literary fantasy, and fellowship converged through Morgan's creation of the Order of the Iroquois, where he also collaborated with a young Towanda Seneca informant, Ely S. Parker. Beyond his early acquaintance with Morgan, Parker would succeed in becoming a key part of US Indian policymaking through working for Ulysses S. Grant and becoming the first Native person appointed as Commissioner of Indian Affairs during Grant's presidency. Following Rifkin's reading of Parker's fleeting presence through popular historical narrativity, Parker should be read as more than a prop in Morgan's story. Through Parker's presence, beyond US nationalist processes that presented silent Natives as temporal aberrations, Parker offers a glimpse of alternative Native histories, sovereignties, and

[19] Varto 2018 and Kennedy 2018. Even more recently, Padilla Peralta 2025 traces Morgan's impact on Marx and subsequent influence on DuBois, an ideological genealogy which created a throughline in excluding America's Native peoples into W.E.B. DuBois' critical work on nineteenth-century race.

[20] Varto 2018 has already given a more in-depth discussion of Morgan's classical lens via *Ancient Society.* I use this study as a taking off point, to consider where his later travels and data brought him into the American Southwest as a further place-based intervention.

[21] Rifkin 2024.

[22] Deloria 1998. I use "American Indian" as the term here, where it refers to the particular construction of American stereotyping, whether idealization or denigration, of Native American peoples. The term "Indian" is especially relevant toward the particular national identity formation which Americans have romanticized or sought to appropriate, as in situations of "playing Indian."

[23] Herdt 2003.

futures.[24] There also exists in Morgan's relationship to Parker and his culture what Tuck and Yang identify as "settler nativism" and "fantasizing adoption" among what they refer to as a "series of settler moves to innocence" in their influential work on decolonization.[25] These are ultimately moves toward reconciling settler futurity as well as assuaging guilt. Such moves underlie the function of kinship, genealogy and, ultimately, inheritance—key elements in the settler project.

The very concept of classicism as tradition likewise bears the burden of genealogical inheritance, though classicist Marcella Ward has cautioned against the past century's tendencies to affiliate classics with biological science. Ward's intervention is to resist those eugenicist and ableist impulses, based in the same notions of progressive cultural evolution and fitness which plague Morgan's models. She instead posits queer kinship, or crip ancestorship, as a counter. "Kinship with the Greeks and Romans, under these models of disobedient relationality, is not an accident of inheritance or biology but a networked solidarity actively sought," writes Ward.[26] This is an intriguing potential intervention, though kinship as chosen does not fully unsettle colonial dispossession, given that Morgan and his contemporaries, even prior to a twentieth century biological determinism, closely tied nineteenth-century romantic kinship with Greeks, Romans, and America's Indians alike.

And while inheritance is a construct, its construction through Western or Classical traditions carries its own genealogy. Morgan's own notions of inheritance and kinship sit at the juncture of a classicism more visibly bearing on anthropology, as the latter sought to establish itself as a science for future settler progress and as a way of systematically (dis)possessing ancient pasts. I bring into consideration Morgan's later travels and writings which, while relatively uninfluential in Southwest anthropology, were present at a seminal point in the development of a regional center for anthropological and archeological interests on the North American continent. Travel writings in the American Southwest territories evoke a longer tradition of romanticized American views of the Western continent's lands.[27] Modern Greek historian Olga Katsiardi-Hering has traced how eighteenth-century archeology fomented modern Greek nationalism's constructions of Hellenism as underpinned by antiquity. The same archeological discoveries served as the basis of European identifications through Grand Tour neoclassicism and romanticism, each of which sought to elevate Hellenic and Roman antiquity as "classical."[28] The tourism of Morgan and others in the later nineteenth century likewise sought to discover an American ancient past, and if not elevate it, create knowledges for the sake of making Americans both alike and distinct from Europeans in their national roots.

Key to settler colonial claims to antiquity, in both the epistemological and material senses, was the nineteenth-century formation of nationalist identities. Morgan's studies across Latin America and the New Mexico territory provide a multi-layered fashioning of colonial narratives which supplant Indigenous meaning and presence in mapping a linear

[24] Rifkin 2017.

[25] Tuck and Yang 2012.

[26] Ward 2023, 268.

[27] Some of this American romance exists in the imagination of Western landscapes (Huhndorf 2024), while some scholars have explicitly tied combined romanticism and nationalism that, in the process of positioning American nationalism in connection with "Old World" ancient connections, built myths of civilized past races out of Mounds sites rendered into ruins for supplanting American Indian ownership (Timmerman 2020).

[28] Katsiardi-Hering 2020.

progression toward later nations' inheritance. Classicist Marcella Ward provides a critique of classical studies' naturalization of linear time through reading Muslim studies interventions against chrononormativity. Such naturalization privileges a line of inheritance from the classical, while omitting history which is not included as part of the "West."[29] My similar critique of such strategies of naturalization, including Morgan's, comes from Indigenous studies interventions, such as Mark Rifkin's study of Native presence beyond settler orders of time. Rifkin argues for understanding multiple temporalities, such as Indigenous experience "in relation to collective experiences of people-hood, to particular territories…to the ongoing histories of their inhabitance in those spaces, and to histories of displacement from them."[30] In Morgan's 1878 "Journal of a Trip to Southwestern Colorado and New Mexico" and preceding "Seven Cities of Cibola" (1869), he asserts that New Mexico's San Juan River Valley and the greater Chaco area were the origin site for corn and particular forms of building, and thus ancient American civilization. He thereby privileges *Aztlán* and the mythological cities of Cibola, associated with with Spanish and Mexican presence, over the presence of the Apache, Diné, and Pueblo Indians of the region.

Today, *Aztlán* in the United States evokes the Chicano Movement's postcolonial resistance to racism and exclusion in the US through *indigenismo*, which simultaneously glosses and collapses Mexican indigeneity through *mestizaje* or mixture. This embrace of *indigenismo* presupposes inheritance of a monolithic and static past and boosts a narrative of an ancestral homeland north of the Mexican border, *Aztlán*, at once instilling legitimacy and also constructing an idealized "Indian" past for those without Zapotec, Maya, or other specific Indigenous identities to claim. This mythic past, however, is based on Mexican nationalist claims and relies on settler statuses.[31] At the same time, this narrative about civilization origins does not necessarily promote Mexican, US, or any specific other nation's colonial claims, but can be read as a more universalizing framework that treats any ancient origin as belonging to the "discovering" nation's empirical gaze, a framework that inserts such etiologies into a broader civilizational history.[32] In other words, it positions an ancient origin for a successive nation to claim. Archeological nationalisms stemming from the nineteenth century relied on linear narratives providing genealogical origins for nation states from ancient predecessors which entailed dispossessive claims on the part of settler-colonial nations.[33]

I will omit close readings only to point to the 1869 and 1878 writings, focused on New Mexico collectively, which both constituted portions of his Southwest trip data in the first annual AIA report. The first annual AIA report featured Morgan's essay on Indigenous societies in the Americas, contemporary and ancient, alongside essays by other scholars who

[29] Ward 2024; this study centers Muslim studies interventions against chrononormativity toward a-historicity that destabilizes this normativity. Bhalerao 2024 in the same volume exemplifies a similar intervention in a case study that asserts Islamic co-presence rather than alternative history at sites which privilege classical associations.

[30] Rifkin 2017, 3.

[31] Lourdes 2016.

[32] Díaz-Andreu García 2007 elaborates on both dimensions of Latin American nationalisms building archeological narratives, but also looks at the broader operations of nineteenth-century archaeology in support of European imperialism and colonialism globally, as both of these are forms of hegemony. Critical Ancient World Studies, notably, disparages universalism as colonial (inasmuch as it is made synonymous with Eurocentrism or the "West" in their aims (Umachandran and Ward 2024).

[33] Sommer 2017.

focused on ancient Roman and Greek studies.[34] Morgan's AIA presentation would then comprise the subject of his final book publication on *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines* (1881). With the aim of furthering the AIA's expanding interests in American antiquities, Lewis Henry Morgan contributed to the AIA's first annual report, "A Study of the Houses of the American Aborigines: With Suggestions for the Exploration of the Ruins in New Mexico, Arizona, the Valley of the San Juan, and in Yucatan and Central America, Under the Auspices of the Archeological Institute." From the title alone, these regions are delineated as spaces rich with remnants or relics, left for Americans to explore for assembling knowledge.

In the first AIA report, Morgan's comparative contribution added New Mexico "ruins" to a range of ethnographic evidence and classical knowledge that he collected earlier in life. This paper was the culmination of other pieces of writing that came from his late excursions into Central America and New Mexico territory. The information from these trips were supplemented by his correspondence as he mentored Adolph Bandelier, who would go on the AIA's sponsored New Mexico expeditions in the 1880s. Unlike Morgan, Bandelier would extensively travel the region beyond Morgan's brief tours. Yet it was Morgan who influenced Bandelier's path toward ethnographic exploration. A site within the Jemez mountains, also known as the Pajarito Plateau, is now more prominently known as Bandelier National Monument, making the explorer figure in some ways larger than the many Pueblo peoples who lived there over centuries.[35] A disruption of the relations between people and place occurs in both the labeling of the buildings there as abandoned ruins and the renaming of the place after the settler who later "rediscovered" them.[36] Yet, in addition to foregrounding the presence of many such "ruins" scattering the region, early anthropological interest imbued the northernmost parts of the Southwestern territory with origin stories and mythmaking about the North American continent's ancient past.

While Morgan does not further these assertions to the same extent in his AIA presentation, this publication gives a glimpse of what interest he may have excited in Bandelier and others affiliated with the organization as they proceeded to make the region a priority for expeditions. Such insistence about America's ancient origins is a significant feature of settler-colonial knowledge-making that went into Morgan's study. Classicism, notably through Morgan's conception of *civitas*, meaning State and also condition for civilization, functions as a metaphor that operates between discursive and material dispossession. The second section of his essay, where he treats the built structures enumerated in his study's title directly, is particularly illuminating of these dispossessive epistemological processes. Not entirely focused on "ruins," his study is both ethnographic and archeological in its breadth, yet categorizes examples of dwellings from each region according to objectifying classifications. For his AIA study, bringing each of these areas together, Morgan refers to various groups as "the Sedentary Village Indians of New Mexico, Arizona, Mexico, and Central America," flattening multiple peoples across space and time according to his perception of similarities.[37]

[34] *First Annual Report* 1880.

[35] For a more recent archeological perspective on this expansive premodern history, see Stuart 2010.

[36] However, this is not to say visibly restoring Indigenous placenames is always the solution, as some peoples prefer to keep these intimate knowledges about places to themselves. This includes where coloniality relies on both historical and legal processes to construct evidence against Indigenous safeguarding (Kolowratnik 2022).

[37] Morgan in 1880b, 43.

Morgan's AIA report stresses the static state of the tribes of the Southwest US territory. To Morgan, the Southwest tribes seem as if untouched by contact, which he stresses is not the case with Eastern tribes. He finds the Southwest Natives important, but still inferior to societies in the Yucatan and Central America, who were "middle barbarous" per his stages of civilization. Those societies were not upper barbarous as he deemed the Ancient Greeks, Romans, and Germanic tribes, which he evidenced by the Central American ruins—and the "middle barbarous status existed before Spanish violences replaced those extant societies with lesser ones, according to Morgan.[38] As for *civitas* as an element of civilization, Morgan asserts:

> A palace implies a king, or a potentate of some kind, with power to enforce the labor of the people to build palaces for his exclusive use; a city implies numbers, a highly organized society, and stable subsistence, and civilization implies a high degree of culture and advancement. When America was discovered there were found two Pueblos of large size—that of Mexico and that of Cuzco in Peru—and a large number of small Pueblos, such as that at Palenque and at Uxmal; but there was no city, no palace, no civilization, and no State (*civitas*), as these terms are properly understood. The elements of civilization are gained only by immense labor, and outside of the Aryan and Semitic families it can scarcely be said at that time to have existed.[39]

Morgan's denial of particular terms related to ancient cities from Mexico to Peru undergirds his cultural evolutionary staging. According to Morgan's arguments against others studying those ruins, while these societies may have left impressive forms of architecture, they were not at the level of civilizations. For Morgan, civilizational advancement was equated with political power, including labor exploitation, forming what he recognized as a *civitas* state. This relationship to labor and power brings in a materialist or property-based dimension to what *civitas* meant to Morgan, where he viewed it as more appropriate to treat ruins in Central America as resembling New Mexican Pueblos in structure. Morgan insisted on societies without *civitas* as based on communal relations. Accordingly, he viewed these ancient palaces and temples as more likely communal houses built of communal labor, in line with his observations from living Pueblo villages or perhaps Iroquois societies within his North American studies. A level of advancement involving a state could not be recognized out of documented ruins in Morgan's rigid cultural evolutionary scheme.

My analysis is not meant to dwell long on the use of *civitas* through deeper analysis of its classical referents. I do see the use of this term as at least inspired by his studies of ancient writing, with sustained attachments to classicism through his comparative study, though his usage of such terms do not constitute consistent or sustained engagement with Cicero or any other ancient Roman or Greek author.[40] The Ciceronian *civitas,* based in governing laws, is referenced where Morgan aligns the meaning with a State.[41] At the same time, this brief

[38] These stages of civilization, as well as earlier conceptualization around *civitas*, are more famously premised in his book, *Ancient Society* (1877).

[39] Morgan 1880b, 74-75.

[40] One clue that we have for a Ciceronian *civitas* is a translation of Cicero's *De inventione* among his papers, which does make some allusion to *civitas,* for the sake of establishing rhetoric practice. See Kabelac and Trautmann 1994.

[41] Cicero describes *civitates* as *concilia coetusque hominum iure sociati*, "assemblies and gatherings of men associated through justice" (*Rep*. 6.13). Cicero thus used the term *civitas* more in line with political sovereign citizenship.

passage in the AIA report shows Morgan treating social structure formulations of labor—rendered through political power as property—as a significant factor in his discerning *civitas* from any earlier stage. Whether or not his observations were accurate, surveys of building structures were key to Morgan's arguments about social structures, compounding a materialist dimension to his concepts about cultural stages. This is not to say that anthropologists still explicitly embrace him as correct in these categorizations, especially not where these stages avoided recognizing states or empires based on labor exploitation within the Americas. What is significant nonetheless was that Morgan saw in these ancient peoples an significant earlier impression of a society that was at once stateless, but also instructive.

Morgan sees the potential in learning how a nation (that is, the US) can *inherit* or possess the knowledge to progress and advance while justifying the dispossession of that knowledge from those without recognized states. This collecting of knowledge for a comparative housing study is not neutral where epistemological dispossession overlaps with material forms of colonial dispossession. Any useful knowledge is appropriated for the state in power, while intimate relationships with materials embedded in local knowledges are obscured or erased through such data collection.[42] Where living peoples are treated as relics of past ways of life, Morgan points to Natives in New Mexico as exemplary. He states, "The Village Indians of New Mexico, alone among the Indian tribes of America, are now, as I have said, in possession of the houses occupied by their ancestors in 1540. What has survived of the ancient manner of life is now exhibited by them."[43] Peoples still in proximity to their ancestral and ongoing ways of life are rendered into vestiges of an ancient past and treated as a display or window into that past.

Also central to his consignment of these peoples to a static past is the information cited by Morgan that he derived from accounts of military expeditions as early as the Spanish conquistador Coronado's. Morgan attributes Coronado's first perception of Pueblo homes and lifeways to the customs of people whose descendants were still-living. Yet he also uses Coronado's expedition as a possible etiological piece—claiming that the "remarkable ruins" of Chaco Canyon, as documented by Lieutenant James H. Simpson's expedition, could be the mythic Seven Cities of Cibola which the Spanish party sought.[44] In addition to sourcing Spanish colonial accounts, Morgan is heavily reliant on the early US expedition surveys of Lieutenant Simpson and William Henry Jackson. Those surveys extended across the neighboring and overlapping populations of Navajo and Pueblo peoples in Northern New Mexico. Both expeditions represent military-involved expeditions to gain knowledge of the lands for the United States. Morgan, who was invested in the idea that the Pueblo peoples were sedentary only, avoided referring to Navajos, who, while they had settlements in the region, were considered at least semi-nomadic by anthropologists. Meanwhile, the collapsing of many peoples into a single "sedentary" entity across time and space oversimplifies and, in many ways, erases Indigenous people's long-term presence in these regions.

Morgan's reliance on military expedition mapping also informs his reductive approach to Indigenous peoples and their lands. In a 2011 essay, anthropologist Berenika Byszewski

[42] Hence the ongoing efforts to restore relationships and knowledges through practices of Indigenous data sovereignty (Ellenwood and Foxworth 2024).

[43] Morgan 1880b, 46.

[44] Morgan 1880b, 43-46.

notes the specific difficulty in mapping Navajoland where the "semi-nomadic" peoples there "shifted and morphed" across the spaces of maps. Lt. Simpson's Navajo expedition set out to fix this following the Mexican-American War as the US formally claimed this territory, and as Byszewski points out, this was a map of not just the ruins of Chaco, but also settler-colonial resources.[45] That the military expedition maps these ruins alongside other points of extractable resources, including the control of the land itself, was thus not a passing side interest. Simpson was enamored with the ruins, referenced as "abandoned" by its earlier inhabitants even within Byszewski's analysis, but what existed for its many Euro-American discoverers was a *terra nullius* for surveyors to inscribe with their idea of ancient pasts as well as settler futures.[46] Settler futures were mapped as places to set aside Native peoples or to otherwise set in railroads and other plans for use or disuse. In other words, these maps served to gain domination through complete knowledge of the land on the part of US interests, with military, administrative, and commercial interests in close alignment.[47] Morgan draws from and cites these maps in his AIA report; they can be seen as a continuation of the settler-colonial project. Following the military mapping of ruins as knowledge extraction for colonial resourcing, Morgan then advocated for furthering this systematic knowledge extraction beyond cartography. With the not yet delineated study of ethnography and archeology, as the AIA furthered their interests in exploring the New Mexico ruins, such studies also involved documenting people residing nearby in order to further understand the ruins. Through such documentation, the still-living people were rendered relics of the past to be discovered and documented in turn.

Morgan himself would occupy the place of vestige in the greater history of Southwest American archeology, largely through his indirect attachment to Bandelier, who was significantly more influential. A different set of AIA members, both classically influenced and also setting themselves apart as more strictly Americanist, followed in further establishing the American Southwest as an influential region for studying anthropology.[48] At the same time, such documentation was a concern for others instrumental to founding or developing American anthropology as a field, even beyond Morgan's early presence in it. Boas was not central to the Southwest developments, though he was central to the formation of American anthropology's sub-fields at this time of its early institutionalization. This close handling of archeological and ethnographical material collecting did not change overnight. Boas' ethnographic work was notably distinct from Morgan's or Lt. Simpson's romance with ruins; yet his similar mapping of geographical features as surveyor turned to a passion for mapping people, their languages and cultures. In a 2018 essay, "Why White People Love Franz Boas," Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson reflects on the so-called father of anthropology, Franz Boas,

[45] Byszewski 2012.

[46] See Brugge 1980 for an early attempt through National Park Service records to account for Navajo perspectives and centuries-long presence and stewardship in the area surrounding Chaco Canyon. While this shift still requires much more centering of Navajo residents' histories and perspectives, it's one point against dispossessive language that settles on treating the ancient materials there as merely relics from Indigenous peoples' abandonment. The counternarrative supports ongoing persistence of peoples and relationships to the space, despite displacements and ongoing challenges for Indigenous residents. For the issue of *terra nullius*, while relevant in different forms across global coloniality, Moreton-Robinson 2015 provides a useful discussion of how white British possession against Australian aboriginal claims depends on invisibilizing and nullifying Native title.

[47] Simpson and McNitt 1964, for a sense of the historiography on how this expedition is treated as significant to the development of the American West.

[48] Lewis and Hagan 2007.

in an edited volume revisiting his legacy. Simpson notes Boas as a central figure of Indigenous dispossession, arguing, "Such dispossession makes possible not only the conditions for their [i.e., settler] science, but also for *settler states*, that is, states predicated upon the active and ongoing dispossession of Indian people from land and life."[49] A grammar of (dis)possession emerges in Simpson's evaluation of Boas' elision of state formation: while work is preoccupied with the salvage of cultural loss, his anthropological imaginary does not acknowledge this loss as a loss of land (the reality of Indigenous dispossession). Morgan was an older scholar, characterized by his romanticism and nods to classicism, but his contribution sat at the juncture of studies increasingly embedded in scientific survey. Yet, at the same time, science and romance—even its classical underpinnings—were always closely interwoven within anthropology, even as it redefined itself in the twentieth century.

The Southwest was a crucial region for the development of American archeology as a field, set against European archeology schools.[50] At the time of the AIA's first annual report, founding a school in Athens to rival the French and German schools already there comprised the AIA's goal.[51] However, the AIA's establishment of the classical schools in Athens and Rome preceded their founding of archeological schools in Palestine at the turn of the century, followed by the establishment of its school in New Mexico. The global scope of such institutions for archeological research, founded under American national control, reveals the deep entanglement of these forms of dispossession as forms of colonial resource extraction. These sites in Palestine and New Mexico remain embedded in extremely violent colonial contexts to this day.[52] The US is a settler colony, but also heavily engaged in related forms of imperial domination and resource extraction overseas, which provides an important context for understanding the valorization and discursive frameworks of antiquity that surrounded the founding of these American centers for archeological research between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The early twentieth century yielded further international and imperialist dimensions, when the AIA founded its Jerusalem and Santa Fe schools in close succession. However, those American claims on antiquity have roots in nineteenth-century expeditions and exploration, notably in Northern New Mexico with extensions further South into Latin American countries.[53]

The material loss of land is reflected in ongoing resource extraction, which exists alongside settler claims of national heritage (Chaco Canyon specifically would become a national historical park in 1907).[54] Morgan's brief comparative work as it appeared in the first AIA report served as an early bridge between early archeological surveys and the fieldwork

[49] Simpson 2018, 168.

[50] For example: Fowler 2000, Snead 2001, Parezo et. al. 1993.

[51] The first annual report states, "it is greatly to be desired, for the sake of American scholarship, that a similar American school may before long enter into honorable rivalry with those already established" (25).

[52] Yazzie 2015 highlights intersecting violences, but also international solidarity, albeit reflecting situations from a decade ago.

[53] I explore these twentieth-century AIA developments in greater depth elsewhere in my project. See Irving 2024 for further consideration of how, in the parallel circumstances of Palestinian indigeneity, twentieth-century displacements and erasures following this late pre-Mandate era, and reading from imperial documentation including travelogues and archeology. Masalha 2015 traces post-1948 cartographic and toponymic forms of dispossession in Palestine, which are entangled in the establishment of biblical archeology earlier in the century. For a discussion on critical cartography which implicates both classical imagining and related violent erasures toward Palestine, see Umachandran 2024.

[54] Notably, the same year as the founding of the AIA's Santa Fe school and done following the efforts of Edgar L. Hewett and others involved in the founding of the Santa Fe school. See Chauvenet 1983.

that would be more recognizably part of the anthropological discipline, reflecting dispossessive roots through such study. Where Morgan's entry depicted ancient America in relation to ruins and civilization, his particular notion of settler-colonial kinship reframed New Mexico's sites within civilizational value. For nineteenth-century (white) Europeans and European Americans alike, there existed through travel and exploration—visitations—a constructed affinity or kinship with Greeks and Romans of an envisioned ancient past.[55] As white Americans continued to map their newly claimed or "discovered" lands, successive stages of civilization drew new lines for those settler citizens to choose to inherit as their own.

Chosen settler identifications with heritage were constructed out of comprehensive material and knowledge collecting that served in naturalizing visitors' romance of the land and its features. Ward's 2023 essay provides a welcome disruption of white supremacist claims to the ancient past, but the stakes are not yet clear regarding what might be a transformative rupture that is reciprocal to Indigenous futurity. I instead point to relationality as defined within Indigenous studies, which also provides an expansive view of disability that not only resists biological determinism (which Ward also critiques), but also operates through complex *experiential* kinship often situated in *specific* embodied knowledges and forms of collectivity and caretaking.[56] Indigenous ancestorship involves reclamation and community-based care, perhaps out of view of more universalized experiences, beyond individual interests or identifications. When it comes to de-naturalizing the classical tradition as a white or "Western" inheritance, it may be easy to continue to construct fictive kinships with idealized pasts over relationships with present-day peoples that would center Indigenous future well-being. Indigenous feminist visitation envisions accountability by and for Indigenous subjects, but still imparts counter-visioning against viewing lands and lives for the sake of an extractive tour. American national heritage, written at first in an early AIA report that presented American materials for study alongside Greek and Roman culture, served to re-envision and remap Indigenous lands and continuous presence into one of dispossessive kinship. Settler interests in Indigenous lands often still privileges protection through constructed national heritage and recreational visitation, while those whose lives are intimately entangled with their continued relationships to the land, beyond tourism, are given less regard.

Countermapping: Piñons to Pinyon Plains, or (Re)mapping ancestral kinship beyond ruins

A recent opinion piece by Diné columnist Cheyenne Antonio in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* speaks to the more than a century of oil and gas extraction in the San Juan Basin and advocates for cleanup as a way to protect lifeways. As Antonio writes, "Thousands of wells, many abandoned or orphaned, dot the landscape, leaking harmful emissions into the air, soil, and water. For families gathering piñons, these wells are not just unsightly relics—they are silent threats."[57] This statement echoes in many ways the sentiments of Weahkee's digital painting, while framing the imposing structures of extractive development as relics. Antonio's piece starts with the tradition of piñon, or pine nut, gathering among Diné families in Northwest New Mexico, and also points to the well-being of not just the land, but the

[55] Considering again Ward 2023's discussion of heritability and classics.

[56] Yellowhorse 2023.

[57] Antonio 2025.

people who face ill health effects due to toxic leakage. Antonio asserts this is an issue of environmental justice as well as preservation of lifeways, both cultural and economic. Antonio's advocacy also provides a useful counternarrative to what has long been characterized as a difficult entanglement with economic dependency on extractive industries for the Navajo Nation,[58] instead seeing the hope of maintaining continuous—though still threatened—threads of self-sufficiency. I point to Antonio's call to action to highlight that, despite controversies and complications in Native self-determination and protecting land, people, and lifeways in the San Juan Basin and beyond, many Native-led coalitions still work toward re-asserting what has long been held as sacred outside of the resource-mapping that anthropologists contributed to and relied upon in the nineteenth century.

In sharing her piece, Weahkee and I discussed the recent efforts by Navajo activists to stop uranium mining in the Pinyon Plains mine and the operation of a transportation route through the Western side of the Navajo Nation. Haul no!, an Indigenous-led organization has been at the forefront of these efforts, bringing together Diné, Havasupai, and Hopi activists to protect their communities and sacred sites, including the Grand Canyon, from this harmful threat.[59] The mine is in Havasupai homelands, but the route crosses through Hopi and Diné lands, bringing together peoples from each of these nations. Although this hazardous uranium route concerns the opposite side of the Navajo Nation from the San Juan Basin, it is not the only area affected by uranium mining and other harmful resource extraction. The Pinyon Plains contestation shows the extent of extractive industries across the land and also points to the breadth of the struggle against continuously destructive resource extraction, which goes beyond addressing abandoned mines and wells.[60] Ongoing struggles to prevent further contamination of lands and lifeways persist. On the Eastern side, such as within the San Juan Basin which Cheyenne Antonio writes about, protecting the sacred is also invoked by the Frack Off Greater Chaco Coalition, representing Diné, Pueblo, and allied groups. Imagery for the coalition often includes ancient petroglyphs, since the protection of ancestral pasts is deeply tied to safeguarding Indigenous futures.[61] The coalition's platform states: "The Greater Chaco Landscape expands far beyond Chaco Culture National Historic Park and immediate vicinity and holds spiritual and cultural significance to all Indigenous peoples who are rooted in Chaco culture, not limited to the Navajo Nation."[62] This statement undermines the limited mapping that treats part of Chaco Culture as safeguarded through National Park stewardship, while also allowing for the possibility of inter-tribal connectivity across space despite present-day maps which limit the ancient sites to the bounds of the Navajo Nation. Such efforts are at once geared toward self-determined futures for several Native nations regarding their sacred lands, while also challenging the static forms of colonial mapping. Colonial mapping and its divisions have often placed Native

[58] See White 1983.

[59] https://haulno.com/about/; link accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

[60] A few publications that elaborate on this entrenched issue of mines toward the treatment of the region as toxified sacrifice zone, in addition to Voyles 2015, include Eichstaedt 1994, Brugge, et. al. 2006, Pasternak 2010, and Gomez 2022. Importantly, Gomez's recent contribution brings in the effects of nuclear colonialism on Nuevo Mexicano, or detribalized/mixed, Indigenous New Mexican communities and focuses on the Pajarito Plateau (mentioned previously in this chapter as linked to Bandelier's exploration).

[61] https://www.frackoffchaco.org/; link accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

[62] https://www.frackoffchaco.org/our-coaltion; link accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

nations at odds over stewarding places, but intertribal coalitions respond in recognizing that places have long had stewardship shared by various Indigenous peoples.

What do these present-day efforts mean for approaching the ancient past of the Southwest? As emphasized in the introduction of this article, highlighting these issues affecting living peoples is not incongruous with the disruption of Western canons and understanding more global premodern worlds, as discussed by Ward and Umachandran (2024) in their Critical Ancient World Studies manifesto. Adding the Greater Chaco Culture, however, still often comes with the baggage of outdated civilization models that treat it as an ancient ruin. Adding Chaco to a compendium of ancient civilizations, including the classical ones, works toward universalizing (dispossessing) its sites from the active continuous Indigenous lifeways in the area. Public history and archeology have developed more recent approaches through resources built from partnerships committed to the traditional preservation and conservation of National Parks, while also recognizing and supporting future stewardship models that support long-term sovereign and intertribal protection and continuity through Native-led archeology and ethnology.[63] These approaches present potential models for epistemological repair, if not yet material returns.

Ruination existed both in the nineteenth-century dispossessive frameworks and the ongoing effects of fossil fuel and other resource extractive industries on the Navajo Nation, but collaborative work reveals how Diné in their territorial care resist these frameworks as "life beyond ruins."[64] Recognizing Indigenous relationality also has present and future stakes beyond the impacts of preserving ancient sites for settler enjoyment. Not only are such strides toward Indigenous futurity based on sustaining intertribal sovereign partnerships, but they also recognize ancient kinship between peoples and allow for healing and repair. Kinship is not just a set of categories for anthropological mapping, but it also defines embodied relationships within and across Native peoples. (Re)mapping also precludes making visible or consumable sacred or intimate knowledge, even as it promotes Native stewardship, as Weahkee's Venus-as-Changing Woman suggests. This is not to argue for censorship, but for privileging knowledge sharing through relationship building and care, for accountable kinship in place of extractive tourism in both the practical and epistemological senses.

Conclusion

This article aims to communicate about practices that draw from ancient materials into Indigenous futurity, not to make a spectacle of the ongoing violence of colonialism on Native lands and bodies. Taking its orientation from the artwork by Jessie Weahkee, this critical focus reiterates the question, "What is sacred?" when it comes to lands. Lands may be claimed within various forms of material extraction, including the collection of knowledges connected to ancient pasts, within colonial schemes of ownership and (dis)possession. Ownership of such knowledge persists alongside the deep and obstinate influence of nineteenth-century intellectual interests, implicating the legacy of Lewis Henry Morgan and the fields of both early anthropology and classical studies. The concept of *civitas* derives in part from both. These two co-influenced fields shaped prevalent understandings of ancient

[63] Note, the Frack off Chaco coalition mentions Native-led ethnography as a way of repair. Regarding some steps exemplified through National Parks collaboration see also Hill et. al. 2024; but consider also calls such as Treuer 2021, or more recently, Whittle 2025.

[64] Powell 2024.

pasts in the western hemisphere in developing "American antiquity" as a field and pursuit. Yet, this article serves as a starting-point for (re)mapping Indigenous lands as distinctly ancestral to Indigenous people and still actively inhabited as ancestral sites. Shifting this understanding of places and people serves to upend casual associations of Indigenous ancestral sites as "ruins" or "abandoned" prior to European or Euro-American discovery.

The imposition of these terms constitutes colonial dispossession, but my reading of a work such as Weahkee's "Dziłth'na'o'dithłe" (2023) provides a counternarrative toward visions of Indigenous futurity based in the continuous presence of Indigenous people. Early anthropologists relegated Indigenous people to static ancient or premodern pasts, and to the status of unknowing or disconnected vestiges whose pasts warranted discovery, in the lead up to the inaugural *AIA* report. Building on scholarship that centers Indigenous feminist practices of (re)mapping and visiting, this article advances a methodology of ethical care as a means of opposing the colonial abandonment of Indigenous peoples to static stages of antiquity.

Centering not just Indigenous knowledge, but kinship and stewardship, of ancestral places directly relates to future sovereign, or self-determined, survival. This may occur at the expense of knowledge systems which value a progressive, successive order of civilizational inheritance. In other words, this requires unsettling colonial claims while disassociating classicism as a standard measure of antiquity (that is, as a Western or universalized tradition). At the same time, by paying attention to the messages in Weahkee's piece, we can envision alternative values of kinship and care with the aim of safeguarding ancient pasts within continuous futures for all. Although evoking classicism, Weahkee's Diné revisioning of Aphrodite asserts instead Indigenous sacred value as embodied by respect and care. This care exists outside of hegemonic models of ancestral kinship tied to classical or colonial traditions that make invisible colonial violence while placing civilizational inheritance on its pedestal.

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Lower Case "indigenous": Indexing an Archive and Archaeology of Whiteness in Studies of Ancient Greek Colonization

Ashton Rodgers

Abstract: This paper examines the discursive and theoretical matrix deployed to conceptualize "indigenous" peoples, landscapes, and material culture within the context of the archaeology of Greek colonization in southern Italy during the Iron Age. Of particular interest is how ways of knowing as well as knowledge produced around ancient "Greek colonization" reproduce white and colonial ways of knowing contemporary Indigenous and colonized peoples and communities. This paper will suggest that "indigenous" as a category comes to represent a stalking horse for conceptual voids in approaches to archaeological studies of ancient Greek colonization. A close reading of the archive of the archaeology of Greek colonization in southern Italy positions this paper to reflect on larger questions including how invented images of the "indigenous" can become violently appropriated to settler colonial projects in classics and how the indigenization of ancient southern Italic people represents a maneuver to appropriate critical theory.

Keywords: indigeneity, whiteness, colonialism, Italy, archaeology.

Introduction[1]

In 2022, when the Indian Child Welfare Act ("ICWA") was once again challenged in *Haaland v. Brackeen*,[2] as someone whose own adoption fell subject to ICWA, I listened closely to the oral arguments that November over my headphones while walking to my morning class on Greek colonization. As I listened to the case, I considered how little classics connected its questions (e.g., the question "what is Greek 'colonization'?") to the fabric of colonization, not to the theorizing of colonization as a "studiable" object, but to how it is experienced: as if the field is atemporal, ahistorical, or disembodied.[3] This disjunction became pronounced just as it

[1] Mvto to this special edition's organizers, Tara Wells and Ashley Lance. Thank you to Derek Cebrián Ocampo and Ana Santory Rodríguez for their generous discussions and feedback, which have deeply enriched this work.

[2] Haaland v. Brackeen sought to challenge the constitutionality of Indian Child Welfare Act. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), passed in 1978, is a federal law that regulates the removal of American Indian and Alaska Native children and youth. Its purview includes child custody proceedings such as foster care placement, termination of parental rights, adoption, etc. The act purports to maintain minimum federal standards for the removal of American Indian children from their families, define the roles of State and Tribal governments in child welfare cases, prioritize placement with family and Tribal members, and provision some protections against the termination of parental rights. The law was enacted after the Federal Government was forced to recognize that American Indian children and youth were being disproportionately removed from their homes and communities.

[3] I raise this critique, but the field has already been invited to see this problem by many scholars, particularly with respect to nationalisms and classical archaeology (c.f., Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022; Hamilakis 2018). Most recently, the "manifesto" for the 2024 volume *Critical Ancient World Studies* has challenged the field to reject "positivist accounts of history, and all modes of investigation that aim at establishing a perspective that is neutral or transparent" and instead practice from a place that acknowledges "the contingency of history and historiography in a way that is alert to the injustices and epistemologies of power

became routine, as the lawyers' talking over my headphones became the soundtrack of my walk to my class. Yet, something else also became routine: the experience of utter disjunction, as I stepped into spaces so thoroughly disconnected from the fabric of what was being deliberated by the Supreme Court of the United States.[4]

As seems typical in my experience of American traditions, "colonization" is problematized as the dirty "c" word; these traditions ask what ancient Greek colonization is, *if it is*, and what colonies are, *if they are*.[5] As November and the semester passed, I realized that my primary questions and logics when engaging studies of ancient Greek colonization became more about position and context: what was I bringing into the classroom and to my research given my own experiences, and what were others bringing in as well given their own relationships to ongoing colonization? What were the stakes for each of us? What could it have meant for classics to engage with its current political contexts in its questions? How could its questions be transformed by such engagement?[6] Instead, in my experience there is a kind of silence when one brings up their lived experiences of colonization or ongoing social, political, and cultural realities, and how they relate to the questions that guide studies of Greek colonization (as if these two things are disjoined). Between the November oral arguments and the June decision, it thus became clear to me that it was important to excavate the archive of what classics scholars had to say about ancient Greek colonization in the contexts of wider and ongoing social, political, and cultural materialities.

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that have shaped the way that certain kinds of knowledge have been constructed as 'objective' within the discipline known as classics" (Umachandran and Ward 2024, 1).

[4] This story serves as a throughline for this paper, following the example set by Indigenous scholar Margaret Kovach (2018). It takes seriously the words of Cree scholar Shawn Wilson in *Research is Ceremony*: "As an Indigenous academic, without story there is no academic me" (2008). I begin by speaking from the place of adoption and ICWA because an argument from Aileen Moreton-Robinson's book *The White Possessive* resonates deeply with this research: namely, with respect to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), courts feign to operate under the nonexistence of race even as they deploy it through racial signifiers for Indigenous people (2015, xii); It is this argument, both transposed and reconfigured, that I am making. I share this insight in order to be transparent about my research story and the place that animates its agenda.

[5] Osborne 2016, 25. These qualifications seem to reflect the postcolonial critique in anglophone scholarship that focused on envisioning indigenous agency (scholars like Robin Osborne and Peter Van Dommelen) or on critical re-readings of archaic sources as Greek colonial propaganda (such as Irad Malkin). Regardless of the approach, what remains clear is that the 20th century historiography of the period of Greek settlement in south Italy during the Iron Age fixated on ethnicity: on Greek and indigenous identity. I do not think this fixation has passed (only morphed). Initially this fixation was mediated by the comparison between ancient colonizations and European colonies in the Americas (such as Dunbabin's *The Western Greeks*). Today, however, understandings of Greek colonization seek to de-essentialize "Greek" and "indigenous" identity, recognizing that identity is permeable and constructed in various colonial contexts and that indigenous communities were not passive (consider the work of Michael Dietler and Tamar Hodos). In practice, scholars now use postcolonial theory to build models to understand Greek colonization and the relationships between Greek and indigenous peoples (the most common being models of hybridity, middle ground, and entanglement).

[6] If we didn't dismember the field from a "heart-centered practice" situated in its "political, social, institutional, and emotional contexts" (Supernant et al. 2020, 7), what would our archaeologies look like? As Conkey tells us in the epilogue to *Archaeologies of the Heart*, "we have not yet deeply engaged with the ways in which our own emotions, personal situations, and perspectives figure into the choice of a research problem or project" (Supernant 2020, 272). This is especially important since we as archaeologists arguably do the "remembering" for the past, a serious duty of care that demands our "hearts" and not just our heads be involved (Supernant 2020, 274), particularly when we are speaking of colonized pasts.

This paper emerged out of my experience in the 2022 class. Consequently, it pays close attention to context, focusing on the social and material realities that affect how Greek colonization is studied. It argues that the archaeology of Greek colonization in southern Italy reflects an epistemology of whiteness which operates through whiteness' logics of the "indian." I argue that the category of "indigenous" within studies of Greek colonization is modeled on simulations of the "indian." This paper weaves together three strands to make its argument: (1) Italy's 20th century political construction of southern alterity as contoured by comparisons to American Indians, (2) the rise of an "indigenous discourse" in anglophone scholarship surrounding Greek colonization in the late 20th century, and (3) late 20th-early 21st century terminological ambiguation (via synonyms like native, local, and colonized). The paper begins with an overview of what I mean by "simulation" and by "whiteness," then proceeds to these three strands which aim to bring both of these concepts into relief against discourses of Greek colonization in southern Italy. These strands each, and altogether, first position "indigenous" as a white racial mechanistic term (something that "does the work" of racialization, in some cases vis-à-vis ethnicization), and then "indigenization" as a maneuver taken up by scholars.[7]

Modeled on simulacra of the "Indian"

"Indigenous" peoples, landscapes, and cultural material implicated in studies of Greek colonization in ancient southern Italy are wrapped up in inventions of the American Indian, a simulation of "indigenous": the simulacral indigenous, if you will. As Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor explains, the very word "indian" is a white invention that "became a bankable simulation."[8] The "indian" as a simulation is sometimes invented ethnologically or literarily and sometimes archaeologically.[9] Thus we must investigate the "ruins of indian simulations,"[10] where such an investigation, as Vizenor explains, serves as a critique to

[7] Orser 2004, 75, 111. Ethnicization attempts to shift the emphasis from race to ethnicity, minimizing (1) the potential analytic of racialized power dynamics, (2) academic disciplines' own defining relationships with racial colonial systems, and (3) the imbrications between the racial project of European modernity and the contexts in which scholars work now.

[8] Vizenor 1998, 10-11. "Bankable" seems to be a useful word to carry over, since scholars materially benefit from the production of the category "indigenous" when they excavate, research, publish, etc.

[9] Building on the work of Jean Baudrillard's theories of simulation, Vizenor claims that the word "indian" explains "who we are not" and "nothing about who we are" (Vizenor and Lee 1999, 84). Although, it is important here to recognize the capacity "we" implies to claim presence and self-definition, which ancient southern Italic people cannot do. This difference represents a key gap in how Vizenor's simulation works and how I operationalize it. Vizenor's articulation of the "indian" simulation is based on Baudrillard's work "Simulacra and Simulation" (1994), in which he writes about how contemporary simulacra ambiguates simulation and "reality." Baudrillard notes that a simulacrum does not resemble any "original" (11) and the very first example Baudrillard uses is the invention of the category "Savage" (15). Vizenor's larger theory of the simulation draws on Baudrillard's theory of simulacra to describe how whiteness' culture of "manifest manners" invented "simulations" of indigenous people. For example, in the early 19th century, Indigenous peoples were cast as "vanishing" by dominant culture (aided, in part, by salvage anthropology and archaeology). The trope of the "vanishing indian" became short hand for the erasure of Indigenous peoples (via extermination, marginalization, reservation systems, assimilative policies and practices, etc.). Importantly then, simulacra do not merely represent a non-indigenous perspective but a systemic and therefore deliberate ambiguity between the "real" and "simulated" to conceal the fabrication of identities by non-indigenous people and systems.

[10] Vizenor 1998, 15.

confront what they are and what they do.[11] The invention of the "indian" (or in this case "indigenous") as a simulacrum – a representation, imitation, a fiction of the real – acts in the world and on people as a simulation, giving shape to discourses that in turn shape material realities (or reproduce them as the case may be). The invented indian is a copy without a true original, where the archaeologically invented "indigenous" often represents the absence of real natives and relationships with real natives with the result that the "absence of natives has become a perverse presence of the other."[12] This othering (which occurs through racial logics) enables the simulation to function as an *a priori* category, where archaeology produces and stabilizes, either consciously or unconsciously, the very effects of alterity through the category "indigenous."[13] That is, through racial logics, the "West" is talking to itself, in its own language, inventing the "other": (re)creating a simulation of "indigenous" through fictive ways of being.[14]

I borrow this idea of the simulacral indigenous in order to apply it to ancient Mediterranean archaeology, but I am not operationalizing it to argue for or about or to speak to the indigeneity of ancient southern Italic peoples as Vizenor does for tribal communities. Indeed, there is heuristic value in comparing Vizenor's "indian" and ancient Greek colonization's "indigenous," which is not to suppose that they are ontologically the same or function alike in all respects.[15] Rather, I draw on the ways Vizenor particularly addresses representations of American Indian people in discourses, asserting that the (re)production of knowledge about American Indians through simulacra is a mechanism that enables ongoing colonization. I borrow this idea, suggesting that within studies of Greek colonization, ancient southern Italic peoples are in some ways modeled on invented and racialized images of the "indian" located in the present, and that these representations are embedded culturally with the result that they operate as "real." Whiteness animates these simulations. Its logics position "indigenous" as a "racial signifier" which is "presupposed as being 'known'," and used by scholars to create knowledge about those "whose bodies are deemed to be marked by this racial knowledge."[16] Considering and locating these habitual logics in studies of ancient Greek colonization can perhaps allow us to see how colonialism continues to function at a paradigmatic level, and therefore also allow us to confront dominant and colonial forms of knowledge elided by scholarship on Greek colonization. In *Fugitive Poses*, Vizenor uses the word "*indian*" in lowercase italics, rather than "Indian," as a deliberate intervention and provocation.[17] The lowercase "indigenous" in this paper thus also both visibly marks the unrealness of the simulation, engendering the lowercase word, and indexes when the word is invoking the simulation, just as the hyphenated "simulacral" aims to do. In contrast, this paper capitalizes the term "American Indian" at several points. This capitalization pays attention to the issues that lie at the intersections of citation, nomenclature, and terminological practices in the academy, specifically in relation to

[11] Ibid., 24.

[12] Ibid., 27.

[13] By *a priori* I mean, Indigenous people do not precede nor are the referents for the lower case indigenous. The lower case "indigenous," as an invention of "indigenous," precedes the category. The invention engenders the category.

[14] Spivak 1988.

[15] Putting these two categories in dialogue is intentional, although I have no intention of suggesting that these categories as developed by their respective fields share in indivisible ontology.

[16] Moreton-Robinson 2015, xii.

[17] Vizenor 1998, 15.

American Indian sovereignty. For instance, various style guides, including APA and Chicago, grapple with defining "Native American" as an ethnicity, race, or nationality, and recommend capitalization for different reasons. When "American Indian" and "Indigenous" are capitalized in this paper, it is done to affirm the distinct cultural and political relationships, as well as the lifeways, that Indigenous peoples maintain with our homelands.

Why Whiteness and What is Whiteness

At some point in the course on Greek colonization in 2022, some folks in the class started asking different kinds of questions - mostly methodological questions - based on our informal and interpersonal conversations: namely, *how* should and *can* archaeologists of ancient Greek colonization attempt to speak to the worlds of colonized communities? How do we engage with an archive, methods, and an epistemology very much tied to colonial violence? More to the point, how do we deconstruct such methodologies and epistemologies? As Michel-Rolph Trouillot's example indicates, we must first study archaeology's production itself, taking the discipline as our object of study.[18]

In many ways this work is already being undertaken, but this article aims to contribute by suggesting whiteness' role in the archive and archaeology of studies of Greek colonization. Sharing my experiences then is a story meant to call out the context in which classics systemically deals with colonialism, in particular the way "indigenous" is thought to function as a raceless category in scholarship. I have chosen the subtitle of this paper, *Indexing an Archive and Archaeology of Whiteness in Studies of Ancient Greek Colonization,* in order to call out the ways in which whiteness premises studies of ancient Greek colonization.

Today, "Greek colonization" often serves as an organizing concept in the study of the ancient Greek world. Political, social, and cultural studies of the ancient Greek world usually engage this concept. As such, "Greek colonization" has become a naturalized topic within the study of the ancient Mediterranean, although not as a monolith.[19] However, instead of being a neutral approach to studies of the ancient Greek world, it is related to its social conditions of production, which include whiteness. The colonial matrix of classical archaeology, which must be understood within the larger "disciplinary coloniality of classics," has begun to be articulated in recent decades, and conversations about race – and whiteness in particular – are coming from within the field.[20] However, they often appear as a part of wider questions about the futurity of the field or are characterized as non-traditional scholarship.[21] Following these examples, this study of whiteness is an invitation

[18] Trouillot 2015.

[19] See De Angelis 2010 for an overview. The trajectory of this modern study starts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with literary models derived from surviving ancient sources, then critical approaches to these sources in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, next the development of new models derived from a cultural history approach in the late twentieth century, and most recently followed by the development of new models based in twenty-first century critical studies of colonialism.

[20] Blouin & Akrigg 2025, 64. For examples where whiteness is being discussed in the field, see the volumes *Critical Ancient World Studies* (Umachandran & Ward 2024) and the Routledge *Handbook of Classics, Colonialism, and Postcolonial Theory* (Blouin & Akrigg 2025).

[21] This ranges, for example from works dealing with race in antiquity such as Sarah Derbew's book *Untangling Blackness in Greek Antiquity* to disciplinary critiques offered, for example, by Dan-el Padilla Peralta in the New York Times magazine article entitled, "He Wants to Save Classics From Whiteness. Can the Field Survive?" (Poser 2021).

to deconstruct this invisible category and the means through which Western ways of being and thinking "go without saying" in archaeology of Greek colonization. It acts as an invitation to unsettle disciplinary epistemological whiteness and to confront how whiteness contributes to the ways in which archaeology has been and remains a violent vehicle of Western modernity.

In this paper, whiteness refers not to White racial identity, but to an analysis of whiteness, where whiteness "as a structuring ideology, frames archaeological epistemology."[22] Articulations and theorizing of whiteness possess a long although not particularly well acknowledged history.[23] Critical theorists and the rise of critical whiteness studies, building on the work of people such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Toni Morrison, Frantz Fanon, bell hooks, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, and others, have long discussed how whiteness, as a structuring ideology, operates as an epistemology, i.e., as a "way of knowing."[24] This is true for how whiteness acts as a "way of knowing" Indigenous people. As Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson notes, "[academics] have produced knowledge about Indigenous people, but their way of knowing is never thought of by white people as being racialised despite whiteness being exercised epistemologically."[25] Whiteness prescribes "what can be known about the other through itself, disappearing beyond or behind the limits of this knowledge it creates in the other's name."[26] Whiteness creates the simulation and its referents are colonial fictions. It is thus not simply a noun but an epistemic process whereby whiteness defines "others" while remaining invisible. This paper is therefore a visible indexing of this made-to-be invisible way of knowing.[27] As a process, the important question is how does epistemic whiteness act? I argue that whiteness defines the category "indigenous" in studies of ancient Greek colonization, where "indigenous" comes to be known through modern white Euroamerican cultural discourses, systems, and structures (simulations grounded in whiteness' logics). While whiteness remains unnamed, it acts upon the category "indigenous" or even produces the simulacral indigenous.

[22] Reilly 2022, 55.

[23] For example, see the theorization of "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" by bell hooks (1992) or whiteness as a de facto and de jure possession (Moreton-Robinson 2015).

[24] Moreton-Robinson 2004, 75.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] While sociologist Karen Fields and historian Barbara Fields (2012) speak in terms of the "invisible ontology" of "racecraft," I speak in terms of an epistemological knowledge system. Yet, I want to think alongside how they develop the neologism "racecraft" precisely because these two ways of seeing are not oppositional. Fields and Fields outline how social practices of racism, "something an aggressor does," are transformed into race, "something the target is" (17), yet it is racecraft that "transforms racism into race" (248). Race thus seems real as a result of the processes of racecraft, the "fingerprint evidence that racism has been on the scene" (19). The "craft" in racecraft makes visible the active crafting or the "socially ratified making or doing" by which racism makes race appear as a fact (192). Indeed, in what follows I draw upon epistemological critiques raised by Indigenous scholars, acknowledging that understandings of epistemological knowledge systems are already well discussed across Critical Indigenous Theory. This critique about whiteness' epistemology, however, has its correlatives in Fields and Fields' work (2012): for example, they both draw attention to the active processes of fiction (not lie) making ("race" and "indigenous," for instance, as fictions). They both posit that such fictions act in the world as "real." In analyzing whiteness through these lenses, I am not attempting to unseat Fields and Fields' contributions, but rather center a different language proceeding from my own experience.

I have now used the term "logics" several times and in particular alluded to "logics of whiteness" as an analytic with which to examine the body of scholarship that deals with ancient Greek colonization. In this case whiteness is revealed in and through certain logics of the "native" which animate simulation of "indigenous," namely the logic of fossilization, the logic of primitivism, and the logic of disappearance.[28] These are logics that shape, maintain, and reflect racialized reality in the U.S., and thus reveal practices and pathologies that reflect socially constructed and historical beliefs about Indigenous people which have given shape to the study of Greek colonization and the meaning we produce around this topic. Critically, naming whiteness as the producer of this category offers a problematization of whiteness rather than the racialized "other" (the native, the local, the indigenous, or the colonized in Greek colonization) as is so often the case in critiques of theories of ancient colonization.[29] Locating the problem in whiteness reveals the ways in which the conceptual matrix around Greek colonization pathologically turns to the "subaltern" (or creates it) to resolve scholarly crises of modernity (be they theoretical or terminological issues located in postcolonialism, decolonial theory, archaeology, or anthropology, and so on). This new locus allows us not just to see that such crises represent theoretical voids, but also to reveal the ways in which critical discourses and theorizing represent the "last frontier" to be conquered by modern Western scholars.[30] What kinds of new conversations could we then have if instead of asking "what should we say instead" or "what is the solution," we asked "how can we confront the kinds of epistemic and ontological violence that the field's past and present ways of knowing are (re)producing?" These initial questions often work to conceal or reflect claims to neutrality that guise the power to "define what matters, who matters, what pasts are alive and when they die."[31]

Parameters of the Argument

First and foremost, this paper is not an answer to the question Alejandro Haber highlights in *Indigenous Archaeologies*: "Who is indigenous?" As Haber notes, however, "Archaeology had

[28] It would of course be an oversimplification to view these logics with strict boundaries in mind or as completely unconnected.

[29] Here I also follow Trouillot's example when he shifts the "focus from the problem of the Other" in, for example, anthropology, which asks, "can the Other be represented? how and by whom?" to the "problem of the asker of such questions" (Bonilla, Beckett, & Fernando 2021, 31). My argument about "indigenous" representing an *a priori* category then not only follows Moreton-Robinson (2015) but also Trouillot's work which states that "[t]he question of otherness, of alterity, as posed by the West, takes for granted the very alterity it seeks to interrogate, positing otherness as a foil against which the West can speak endlessly about itself" (Bonilla, Beckett, & Fernando 2021, 31). This can be traced back to "anthropology's relationship to the Savage" where the "Savage" is seen "not as metaphor but as historical actor" or a category that acts as "real" giving shape to the world (Bonilla, Beckett, & Fernando 2021, 31).

[30] Mendoza 2018, 111.

[31] Simpson 2017, 21. These stakes suggest that we can look to other disciplines and thinkers to formulate responses to the questions "what should we say instead" or "what is the solution," viewing their analytics as generative pathways. While epistemic whiteness and settler colonialism are shapeshifters, analyzing them is not a detached or despairing practice. It is hopeful, an invitation that doesn't claim to have the answers but instead repositions ancient Mediterranean colonization studies within ongoing dialogues from critical whiteness studies and Native American studies. These dialogues center thinkers who wrestle with the academy, directing readers to Indigenous thinkers who have long been exposing and refusing settler colonial racial projects. Yet, it is also for those concerned with the "genealogy of theory," for whom, as la paperson reminds us, it is possible to refuse "to be claimed into a Eurocentric lineage. Rather, the genealogy of (y)our theory lies in the breaks as theorized by Black and Indigenous intellectuals" (la paperson 2017, 19).

the huge task of transforming how the verbal tense 'to be Indigenous' was phrased. The goal of archaeology was (and still is) to answer in past perfect the question 'Who is Indigenous?' Putting the Indigenous in the past." [32] So this paper is concerned with archaeology's relationships to the simulacral indigenous and how it recreates peoples as objects of study, particularly how ancient Mediterranean archaeology continues to operate to sustain inventions of indigenous people. There is no doubt that ancient Mediterranean archaeologists have historically contributed to this "tensing," yet, Haber writes, despite the power of this "tensing," that archaeology cannot and does not answer the question "Who is Indigenous?" Moreover, I do not think that ancient Mediterranean archaeologists working, for example, with ancient populations "indigenous" to southern Italy are trying to answer this question. Not because they are engaging with questions in their own contexts of modern Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, but rather because they are failing to seriously grapple with questions about indigeneity.[33]

Although this paper is not about claims to indigeneity, it is concerned with terminology. While it is obvious that both the Italian "*indigeni*" and the ancient terms that could be approximated with the term indigenous (e.g., *indigenus* and *indigena)* influenced scholarly traditions, there is more to the term "indigenous" than simple transliteration. As Jeremy LaBuff has pointed out in "Prolegomena to Any Future Indigenous History of the Ancient World," in anglophone literature, attempts to depoliticize the field's terminology (moving away from "barbarian," for instance) seem to find root in the 1960s, with the transition towards the term "indigenous" in ancient Mediterranean scholarship as a shorthand for non-Greek. [34] This paper understands "indigenous" as a shorthand, not exclusively, but particularly for ancient southern Italic peoples. It focuses on so-called Greek colonization from the eighth through the sixth centuries BCE precisely because this is one of the three most common colonial contexts that invoke "indigenous" discourses among scholars. Further, it looks to southern Italy in particular because, in spite of the shift away from thinking about the eighth through sixth century BCE Greek migrations to and settlement of southern Italy in terms of "colonization," scholars still use the term "indigenous" disproportionately to the other two contexts in which it appears, namely Roman imperialism and Hellenistic empires.[35] While much of the literature surveyed in this paper includes Sicily, I am de-emphasizing Sicily in my argument both to narrow the scope of this work and because Sicily, even today, possesses its own parallel yet equally complicated racialized discourses. Nonetheless, as in many other ancient Mediterranean colonial contexts, I would invite a comparative reading of the archive.

[32] Haber 2007, 220.

[33] With the exception of LaBuff 2023, who defines it based on three criteria informed by the critiques offered by several Indigenous scholars: "first, a self-articulated relationship to particular ancestral place(s) and/or landscapes; second, a self-determined and self-constituting sense of shared kinship (i.e., ethnicity); and, finally, a relationship to the dominant sector of society defined by both 'colonial power' in tension with subaltern knowledge and agency within the constraints of that power, leading to a process of constant (and mutual) transformation" (1082).

[34] LaBuff 2023, 1077, although he does not contextualize this trend within the Indigenous student activism and American Indian Movements of the 1960s.

[35] LaBuff 2023, 1078-1084.

Inventing Southern Alterity

The title of this subsection does not aim to suggest the existence of a "South" in Italy. Rather, it aims to make visible the colonial model that animates archaeologies of ancient southern Italy. The emergence of southern Italy in anglophone scholarship as a locus for modeling Greek colonization is historico-contextually unsurprising. The periods of Italian 20th century political life offer ways of understanding how discourses of Greek colonization are contoured by the simulacral indigenous. There are two mutually constituting threads this subsection must make visible; namely, the logics of whiteness (logics of fossilization, primitivism, and disappearance) and the "othering" of south Italy. It is through these logics that south Italy comes to be positioned as an alterity.

The first quarter of the 20th century sees the development of analogies between prehistoric Italic peoples and modern Indigenous peoples at the same time as Italy is undertaking colonial expansion. Scholars used what is referred to as the "southern question" to develop theories of Italy's ancient southern Italic communities.[36] One such scholar was Luigi Pigorini (1842–1925), a scholar of Italian prehistory and founder of the National Museum of Prehistory, the partial foundations of which were some two thousand archaeological objects from indigenous North America as well as more than one hundred photographs of American Indians, like the Giglioli collection.[37] Pigorini relied on this southern discourse as contoured by comparisons to Indigenous peoples.[38] For instance, it is no coincidence that early in the museum's history "[t]he prehistoric collections were complemented with ethnographic ones near a Cabinet of Classical Archaeology."[39] In other words, the prehistoric southern Italic collections were placed in conversation with Indigenous collections. Additionally, from Luigi Pigorini's personal correspondences with a missionary named Rosendo Salvado, it is clear that he used the museum's Indigenous collections to teach "how the ancestors of the Italians had lived."[40] In other words, European perceptions of what "indigenous" is and means (i.e., simulacral indigenous) were the basis from which discussion proceeded around how the prehistoric ancestors of Italians lived.[41] This was predicated on a discussion of the difference between Italy's north and south, given that the "history of the museum and museum narrative reflects the tensions in different areas of the kingdom, [where] it was possible to observe the survival of primitive ways of life, providing comparative material, focused on arts and traditions among the populations living in Italy."[42] Importantly, this comparison, which had as its premise the then influential theory of Bronze Age and early Iron Age migration developed by Pigorini, positioned the south as less "civilized" or the place where "primitive ways of life" survived. Comparing the ancient peoples of southern Italy with modern "barbarians" made this argument self-evident to the colonist paradigm of the period because it relied on the invention of modern Indigenous

[36] In Italian history, the so-called "southern question" refers to a political issue, emerging out of the unification of the north and south of Italy, that casts southern Italians and southern Italy as backwards and primitive (especially culturally and socioeconomically) compared to the North.

[37] Giordano 1994, 90.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Lerario 2012, 57.

[40] Kinder & Davidson 2016, 70.

[41] Falcucci 2022, 131.

[42] Lerario 2012, 50. Here "areas of the kingdom" refer to Italy's history of northern and southern kingdoms and the "difference" can be read to mean that the southern area is perceived of as more "primitive."

peoples as "living fossils."[43] This traces back to the fossilization of American Indians which is rooted in the simulacral indigenous created by white logics. That is, this valence of the simulacrum relies on a logic that freezes Indigenous people in time. This is based in the U.S. racial system whereby whiteness ensures that U.S. and Indigenous political relations are grounded in the assumption that Indigenous people are situated in a so-called premodern American political time (colonial time) and are thus situated incapably in American political worlding (just like the southern Italians). In the 1930s this took on new depth when Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci began to dialogue with the idea of the subaltern in relation to northern and southern Italy's divide, to tackle the ways in which Italian political life "linked racial inferiority to southern Italian culture."[44] Thus, through this analogizing fossilization, southern Italians and by extension ancient south Italic peoples were positioned as a racialized alterity. Indeed, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak would go on to borrow this term from Gramsci in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Pignorini's theory of Bronze Age and early Iron Age migration and political ideology became so pervasive that in the following period the pro-fascist Emanuele Ciaceri (1869–1944), an Italian ancient historian, was clearly reacting to it. Because of earlier scholarship, he had to, for instance, actively avoid comparing ancient "native" southern Italians to so-called "redskins" of North America in the question of Greek colonization. Ciaceri wrote in his preface to the book *Storia della Magna Grecia: La fondazione delle colonie greche e l'ellenizzamento di città nell'Italia antica*, "chè non eran le coste del golfo di Taranto o della Campania le lande delle pellirosse dell'America scoperta nell'età nostra..." or "the coasts of the gulf of Taranto or Campania were not like the land of the redskins (sic) of America discovered in our time."[45] Although fascist colonialism and scholars were less focused on studying the relationship between Italian antiquity and colonial ethnology, decentering Pigorini's model, they still took the backwardness of colonial subject populations as obvious.[46] The invention of the primitive indian in prehistory was then still at work, as an enabling myth for both colonialism and fascism. This myth is founded on inherited American racial logic: where racialist ideologies about "primitive" people were invoked to deny Indigenous people any Western right to land, sovereignty, and self-determination.

Anthropology and archaeology actively took up this comparison again in relation to southern Italy – casting it as primitive, backwards, uncivilized, and undeveloped. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the perceived "otherness" or alterity of Italy's "south" once again became a prominent feature of Italian political, cultural, historical, intellectual, and anthropological ideology. Regions like Basilicata and Calabria became again referentially understood through inventions of the "American Indian" and anthropology began to study south Italy as a place and culture threatened by disappearance. Anthropological research, in part, did the work of legitimizing this comparison and perception. Take, for instance, the ethnographic work of Ernesto de Martino (1908 – 1965) in south Italy: De Martino explicitly made comparisons between southern Italians and American Indians. In De Martino's book *La terra del rimorso* he cites a Jesuit missionary named Michele Navarro who described southern Italy as "Indias de por acá" ("the Indies but here") or the Italian India in order to underscore just how the south

[43] Falcucci 2022, 140-141.

[44] D'Agostino 2002, 320; 323.

[45] Ciaceri 1966, xiii.

[46] Falcucci 2022, 144.

was "conceived of as a radical alterity."[47] Moreover it is well known that De Martino widely read ethnographic reports on Indigenous culture and religion which enabled him to participate in what scholars even now characterize as the "discovery" of a "new world" ("la graduale scoperta di un mondo nuovo").[48] De Martino explicitly positioned his own fieldwork within the ethos of discovery that characterized expeditions to the "new world," describing his travel to Lucania in southern Italy as a "spedizione etnologica."[49] In her article "The Magna Graecia of Ernesto de Martino" Salvo notes, "De Martino's career and work reveal how blurred the boundaries between classics and anthropology were in the intellectual milieu of mid-twentieth-century Italy."[50] Anthropology had a significant influence on the archaeology of Greek colonization and the indigenization of Italic peoples. For example, Massimo Pallottino (1909–1995), an Italian archaeologist, with respect to southern Italy wrote about the "genti indigene" or "indigenous races" (as published in the 1990s translation by the University of Michigan Press) and discussed the experiences of indigenous Italy ("esperienze dell'Italia indigena"). Moreover, in the introduction to his *Storia della Prima Italia,* he acknowledged that the study of the experience of indigenous Italy was "oriented towards protohistorical ethnography or anthropology" ("orientato verso l'etnografia o l'antropologia protostorica piuttosto che verso la storia vera e propria"). [51] Importantly, anthropology's study of the "disappearing" south was contoured by its comparison to the trope of the "vanishing indian," another kind of white logic. This is a U.S. racial logic that depicts American Indians as a disappearing race, with the extinction of Indigenous groups being unavoidable and imminently complete. It pays no attention to the violent acts of disappearance (epidemics, mass murder, blood quantum, removal, etc.) and instead positions Indigenous culture as needing to be "salvaged" by anthropology and archaeology before it disappears. It also positions Indigenous people as "vanishing" in order to, without obstruction, exterminate their place-based lifeways. This comparison between disappearing southern Italian culture and American Indians even makes it into popular imagination. Italian crime fiction writer Giorgio Scerbanenco (1969) describes the Stazione Centrale as "una riserva di pellerossa nel mezzo della città" or "a reservation of redskins (sic) in the middle of the city" within the context of southern Italians arriving to Milan.[52] Many tropes for American Indians became associated with not just the cultures of southern Italy but a referential framework for addressing the so-called "southern question." The trope of the "vanishing Indian" became a referent for the perceived decline of southern Italian culture.[53]

[47] Geisshuesler 2021, 97.

[48] Satta (2005, 291) writes, "Il contatto con le monografie etnografiche dovette rappresentare, per un lettore di etnografie da tavolino che pensava l'etnologia attraverso quel modello di scrittura, la graduale scoperta di un mondo nuovo. Nelle schedature di questi testi possiamo immaginare di seguire de Martino mentre si perde all'interno delle complesse trame culturali dello sciamanismo tunguso o eschimese, dimenticando sempre più spesso, man mano che procede nel lavoro, il proposito iniziale di raccogliere e ordinare l'attestazione dei fatti relativi ai poteri magici nelle società primitive, e si addentra nella complessità e nelle articolazioni delle credenze e pratiche magiche."

[49] Geisshuesler 2021, 99.

[50] Salvo 2018, 341.

[51] Pallottino 1985, 14 -22.

[52] Scerbanenco 1969/2020, 4. The invention of southern Italians as racialized "others" remained following their emigration to North America and can be seen in cases where they are perceived to occupy a mobile position between "whiteness" and "nonwhiteness."

[53] Caruso 2023, 390.

Interestingly, outside of anthropology and archaeology, the counterculture movements of the Italian "Years of Lead" (Anni di piombo), roughly the 1960-80s, appropriated inventions of American Indians, once again as an analogy for the south and even as a face for the youth protest movements. While inventions of American Indians had a place in the Italian imagination since the initial colonization of the Americas, "[b]y the beginning of the twentieth century, 'invented' indians had acquired a stable role in Italian popular culture," and fifty years later the Indigenous student activism, Red Power Movement, and American Indian Movements of the 1950s and 1960s inspired Italians once again.[54] A microcosm of this influence is seen in the proliferation of publications that explored Italian political protests and reactions to traditional capitalism, patriarchy, and bourgeois values through genres of American Indian literature as well as translations of American Indian memoirs into Italian.[55] The simulacral indigenous appeared outside of literature as well, with Italian protestors from the "Metropolitan Indians" (Indiani Metropolitani) group (much like the German "Stadtindianer) dressing up as "Indians" in the 1970s.[56] The Indiani Metropolitani in fact went so far as to tie bandanas on their head, sound drums and horns and, instead of yelling slogans, would ululate, drawing on stereotypes of "primitive Indians" "war whooping" as a form of political "subversion."[57] The simulacral indian created by the U.S. became the partial means through which Italian political protesting occurred during the counterculture movements of the Italian "Years of Lead" (Anni di piombo), as American Indians became shorthand for political alterities.

I offer this new (supposedly) subversive valence to the simulacral indigenous, which European youth movements picked up and which is grounded in the earlier archaeological and anthropological historiography of southern Italy and its prehistoric studies, as a possible context for the post-colonial turn anglophone scholarship. Ancient southern Italic peoples had, at this point, long been compared to these inventions of American Indians, and the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist agenda of the postcolonial turn in classics may have readily appropriated this new valence at the same time as it was being transformed by its own relationship to indigenous political movements in the United States and across the global South during the second half of the 20th century. What I have shown is that throughout the 20th century inventions of indigenous people first created through American racial logics have served as a referent for Italy's south and in turn for ancient southern Italic people. Inventions of "indigenous" people came to represent alterity itself in the face of modern imperialism and in the archaeology of Greek colonization in southern Italy. That is, in drawing analogies to American Indians, some Italian groups weaponized such analogies as political provocation – a provocation the postcolonial turn arguably picks up. I have argued that whiteness' racial logic of the "indian" actually crafts archaeological discourses in the twentieth century, beginning of course with those "indians" manufactured and inherited in and by the U.S.

Lower case "indigenous"

Against this political background two major changes prove important: namely, as mentioned above, the 1960s transition from a "barbarian" discourse in scholarship about non-Greek

[54] Giordano 1994, 94-97. Although, the Italian interest in American Indian culture can be traced as far back as the papacy's invested interest in the "spiritual colonization of the Natives" (82).

[55] De Giuseppe 2025, 130.

[56] Ibid., 140

[57] De Giuseppe 2025, 140; Caruso 2023, 403.

peoples of ancient southern Italy toward an "indigenous discourse," while the following decades witness the transformation of conception of "indigenous" into a political provocation in both American and Italian contexts. What remains outstanding then is the connection between this Italian historiography and classical archaeology's simulacral indigenous at the point of the postcolonial turn (1980s–1990s).

This subsection suggests that the category of a lower case "indigenous" became discursively positioned, contextualized by the goals of the postcolonial turn, as a de-racialized idea. The invisibilization of "race," which actually grounds inventions of indigenous, thus served as a veiled political maneuver that appropriated southern alterity in order to co-opt critical theory to secure an alternative futurity for ancient colonization studies. I argue that inventions of indigenous, as an "other" of Western modernity, become central to contemporary critical imaginaries of ancient Greek colonization, as the "West" tried to cope with the crises imbricated in its colonial archaeology that came under critique during the postcolonial turn. As such, the idea of "indigenous" was constructed as offering futural possibilities for the field and colonization studies in particular through a Western and colonial invented indigeneity.[58]

By the 1990s, "indigenous" came to function, for contemporary theorists/archaeologists, as a disguise for those critical scholars who aimed to meet the newly fashionable demand to develop alternative approaches to knowledge production around ancient Greek colonization. Going back a little, however, is necessary to understand this "move to innocence." Subaltern studies emerged during the 1980s as a critical approach to historiography; it directly challenged dominant historiographic narratives and practices by focusing on marginalized groups in South Asia. Subaltern studies significantly influenced humanistic disciplines that responded to the postcolonial turn such as classics, which emphasized the critical re-reading of ancient Greek colonial foundation narratives.[59] Similarly to what Métis scholar Zoe Todd has observed, anglophone scholars, "with the wave of the post-colonial wand," looked past ongoing colonial realities.[60] This, coupled with the political post-Cold War distinction between modern Western and traditional (premodern) societies, it must be noted, mapped onto older binaries between colonizer and colonized, so indigenous also became shorthand for the "colonized" – previously the "barbarians." The modern academy, in the decades since the rise of subaltern studies and the postcolonial turn, is being "rescued" by its creation of the subaltern, particularly indigenous peoples where Otherness or alterity – Indigenous – is grounded in myth, in inventions produced by racialist logics. In other words, "indigenous peoples/the subalterns" live in the Western theoretical imagination and are invoked as the invisible other to "rescue" modernity: modern Western scholars envision futural possibilities for their field based on the radical (sub)alterity of Indigenous peoples.[61] American inventions of "indians" were appropriated by Italian political, anthropological, and archaeological worlding and redeployed as a challenge to the

[58] This may be related to the so-called ontological turn. Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen (2017) state in the *The Ontological Turn*: *An Anthropological Exposition*, "the turn to ontology in the discipline of anthropology reverses the position of the Indigenous subject, from being an object of anthropological study to enabling a new approach of speculative analytics, placing Indigenous thought and practices as the 'analytical starting point' for the discipline itself." For an Indigenous critique of the ontological turn, see Todd (2016): "An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism."

[59] Marked in many ways by Palestinian-born Said's *Orientalism (1978).*

[60] Todd 2016, 15.

[61] Mendoza 2018, 119.

coloniality of archaeology of ancient Greek colonization. The simulacral indigenous legitimatized archeologists' attempts to "provincialize" how Western epistemology shaped the questions of ancient Greek colonization and served to meet the challenge of untangling the coloniality of knowledge by drawing on the latent power of alterity established through Italian appropriations of the simulacral indigenous.

The indigenization of ancient southern Italic people, however, was also racialized, predicated as it was on these racial inventions of "indians" (animated by the logics of fossilization, primitivism, and disappearance). Even in the 1990s, amidst the turn away from race and towards the analytic of ethnicity, race played a key role in the construction of southern Italic identity.[62] English translations racialize "Italic," with translators even going so far as to name prehistoric Italic peoples as "races" themselves.[63] Yet the role of racialization in the creation of simulacral indigenous was disappeared in the postcolonial turn. More often scholarship spoke in terms of ethnicity – a supposedly less politically charged analytic.[64] Yet ethnicity as a category in the study of Greek colonization reinscribes alterity – an idea reinforced by ancient Mediterranean scholar's reference to Gramsci.[65] This represents a new kind of white logic of the "indian."

A terminological hydra

It became apparent in my 2022 course on Greek colonization that some sort of three headed monster was being animated by the terms "indigenous," "native," and "local" in the archaeology of Greek colonization and that it was disappearing the racing of southern Italic people. This subsection argues that racing, an animating feature of the simulacral indigenous, was further disappeared through terminological ambiguation among the synonyms "native," "local," and "colonized."

I am first going to pick up again with Pallottino's *Storia della Prima Italia* (first published in 1985). The 1991 English translation published by the University of Michigan Press clearly participates in an indigenous discourse (the casting of southern Italic people as indigenous). This is intentionally tied to peopling archaeology and relies on a terminological slippage. In the 1991 translation, a slippage occurs between the idea of local and indigenous as well as indigenous and people. With respect to southern Italy, "local" and "indigenous" get used interchangeably, sometimes even in the same sentence to refer to the same subject. For example, the Italian reads "nel quadro di tali presupposti e orientamenti rientrano le relazioni pacifiche e la parziale reciproca permeazione con le popolazioni locali, rilevabili archaeologicamente nei casi degli *abitati indigeni* prossimi alle colonie greche," while the 1991 English translation reads, "Such motives would explain the fact that peaceful relations were established with *indigenous peoples* and that some degree of fusion took place, as the archaeological evidence shows, with the local populations who lived near Greek colonies".[66] The Italian calls the "abitati" or "settlements" indigenous while the English translates the

[62] Consider the work of scholars like Hall's (1997) *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* or Jones' (1997) *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*.

[63] Pallottino 1991, 26; 52.

[64] Malkin 1998, 55.

[65] Zuchtriegel 2021.

[66] Emphasis added.

Italian to "indigenous peoples."[67] While I am not arguing that this instance is the first time such slippages occur, I do want to suggest that they are representative of the archaeology of Greek colonization's wider discursive habits proceeding well into the twenty-first century. In fact, John Boardman does the same thing. In his paper entitled "Aspects of 'Colonization,'" he uses the words "colonized," "local," and "native" to refer to the same subject: south Italy.[68] There is a clear practice in publications to use these terms as functional synonyms. Yet the picture becomes more complex as we move into more recent scholarship. The synonyms act to obscure the "indigenous" discourse and its roots in racialization, functionally depoliticizing the terminology for the archaeology of Greek colonization in south Italy.

I have thus far suggested that the simulacral indigenous came to give shape to studies of ancient Greek colonization in southern Italy, yet these inventions do not remain static. Following the turn towards an indigenous discourse seen in the late 20th century, it is clear that the life of the term "indigenous" has taken on new valence, especially as critiques of the fixity and accuracy of categorical terms and binaries like colonizer and colonized have been called into question. This renewed life has been contoured by synonyms deployed in its place: local, colonized, and native. There are three observations I can make about the term "indigenous" and these localized synonyms in a brief survey of wider literature dealing with ancient Greek colonization: namely, (1) local is more often used as a reference to objects and places while indigenous and native is used to describe people, communities, and cultures; (2) local, native, and indigenous appear as synonyms for authors regardless of the type of text; and (3) each of these three terms is consistently orbited by critical discourses (e.g., hybridity), but particularly the terms indigenous or native. The surveyed material for these observations covers the years 1998-2022 and includes both anglophone single author publications and large edited volumes related to Greek colonial contexts, where possible with particular attention to south Italy in these texts.[69]

In Tsetskhladze (2008), the patterns I have mentioned above come into relief, including loose usage around the terms "local," "indigenous," and "native." Slippage abounds between the words local, indigenous, and native across nearly all the contributions. D'Agostino, for example, in his chapter "The First Greeks in Italy" seems to foreground what will become the discourse of "local responses" taken up by Hodos and Jason with his subheading "Local Responses."[70] Emanuele Greco, meanwhile, in his work "Greek Colonisation in Southern Italy: A Methodological Essay" uses a variety of terms to describe the peoples, sites, and cultures of southern Italy. He describes the ancient peoples of southern Italy as "indigenous populations of the Italian peninsula," "native Italian," and "natives".[71] Hybridity, middle ground, frontier zone, and "mixed" all appear in both the background of the introduction and in the individual chapters of Tsetskhladze's book. On the whole, the authors in the

[67] Pallottino 1985, 63; 80.

[68] Boardman 2001, 322 (emphasis added): "The 'acculturation' -awful word- took many different forms, all of it affecting the *colonized*, not the colonizers, who behaved almost as though they had never left home in terms of their way of life, art religion, language, and beliefs. In south Italy the *local* peoples accepted Greeks and Greek goods even to some degree Greek art, and if there are occasional examples of Greeks making objects of *native* forms, especially pottery, the motivation was purely commercial."

[69] These works include: Van Dommelen 1998; Graham 2001; Lomas 2004; Malkin 2004; Hurst and Owen 2005; Hodos 2006; Tsetskhladze 2006; Tsetskhladze 2008; Shepherd 2009; Van Dommelen 2010; Broodbank 2013; Garland 2014; Lucas et al. 2019; Colombi et al. 2022.

[70] Tsetskhladze 2008, 215.

[71] Ibid., 171-172.

volume do not clarify the distinctions or meanings of "indigenous," "local," or "native."[72] For example, in the case study of Taras by Greco, the descriptions "indigenous populations of Italy," "indigenous Italic peoples," and "local indigenous inhabitants" seem like synonyms. Indigenous appears no less than 94 times to describe people, cultures, and sites, and "local" appears more widely at 384 times. I see this volume as reflecting the shift away from "indigenous" to "local" (although both are still used widely), and this shift does not negate my wider argument given how each term is used in the chapters, i.e. with little distinction. Smaller scale sampling shows similar trends. Dietler (2010) is transparent about how he uses the terms "local," "indigenous," and particularly "native." He cautions against the fixity of terms like colonists and natives: "[T]he discussion of patterns in the regional archaeological record becomes so cumbersome and confusing without them that they are an unavoidable narrative vice. Hence, they will be employed in this book always with implicit 'scare quotes' as crude indexical markers of discursive convenience in referring, respectively, to people coming originally from elsewhere in the Mediterranean (and those broadly descended from them) and to people (and their descendants) who were already living in the region when these foreigners arrived."[73] In Lucas et al. (2019), contributors use the terms "Greek and 'indigenous' populations" as well as "Greeks and natives."[74] Colombi et al.'s (2022) volume contains an entire chapter dedicated to "Relationships and Forms of Contact with the Indigenous Population," which uses terms like "native groups" and "natives" and "local population," but without critical delineations. In his contribution Zuchtriegel even writes "non-Greekness/indigeneity," while putting scare quotes around the term "indigenous," and then reinscribes "Greekness vs. indigeneity," finally writing: "ethnicity–Greekness and indigeneity."[75]

There are of course nuances to these observations. Van Dommelan, for example, in his dissertation entitled "On Colonial Grounds: A Comparative Study of Colonialism and Rural Settlement in First Millennium BC West Central Sardinia," is terminologically strict. He uses the terms "local" and "indigenous" but clarifies that "local" need not be "inherently linked to the actual provenance" of people since people's identities are mobile and contextual. However, in the end he does explicitly tie together "local identity," "hybridization," and the term "indigenous."[76] Interestingly, his is the only writing of a Mediterranean archaeologist included in the volume *Indigenous Archaeologies* edited by Margaret Bruchac, Siobhan Hart, H Martin Wobst. In *Indigenous Archaeologies* he uses the term "colonized Italic peoples."[77] A good snapshot of how these terms are not only used but function comes from Tamar Hodos' milestone 2020 work, *The Archaeology of the Mediterranean Iron Age: A Globalising World C.1100–600 BCE.* While Hodos is intentional in her framing of contexts, responses, and people as "local," she nevertheless does not remain entirely consistent in her use of terminology. For example, she discusses the "local populations among whom these foreigners settled" and how "features we associate with colonial developments were sometimes adopted by local communities."[78] Yet she also uses the terms "indigenous communities" and "indigenous

[72] Tsetskhladze 2008.

[73] Dietler 2010, 78.

[74] Lucas et al. 2019.

[75] Zuchtriegel 2022, 220-224.

[76] Van Dommelen 1998, 214.

[77] Bruchac et al. 2010, 332.

[78] Hodos 2020, xviii.

Italic communities" when it comes to Italy.[79] The southern Italic site of Torre Galli, for example, has "indigenously characteristic assemblages" rather than "locally characteristic assemblages." [80] A true slippage occurs in her conclusion with the compound "local indigenous populations."[81]

Slippage particularly seems to occur in term usage when it comes to southern Italy. All of this is not to say that Hodos, like others, has not tackled this issue head-on. For example, she explains that our terminology is dissatisfying, especially the terms "native" and "indigenous." She acknowledges the slippage occurring between the term "local and "indigenous," but she ultimately concludes, "I do, however, use the term 'local' to distinguish the origins of pre-existing populations and their material culture from those peoples and goods that were initially colonial." (Notice the very next sentence is about hybridity).[82] Yet, as Heba Abd el-Gawad tells us in *Ancient Pasts for Modern Audiences*, "local and indigenous are not neutral terms and should not be used interchangeably."[83] It is my opinion that "local" is doing the work of "indigenous," carrying all its theoretical implications, but can be guised as raceless and apolitical in contemporary contexts. It is indexing what white logics mean when they say "indigenous" without overtly flagging that it is doing so since such racialization "goes without saying."

The third observation I made about these synonyms is that each of these terms is consistently orbited by critical discourses, but particularly the terms indigenous or native. There are two things to unpack in this statement; not only do synonyms for indigenous (like colonized, local, native, and so on) enable scholars to invoke postcolonial, decolonial, anti-colonial discourses, but also it is particularly words associated with indigeneity that are proximal to these same discourses. Calling these words out as functionally synonymic recalls the "mobility" with which "Westerners" treat theory that Beatriz Marín-Aguilera critiques.[84] Marín-Aguilera points to this "mobility" by citing a quote from the article "Theory Adrift: the Matter of Archaeological Theorizing" where Pétursdóttir and Olsen claim that theories are "adrift": "[theories] are not natives confined to any particular territory, but nomads in a mixed world, always accommodating themselves to shifting local conditions."[85] Yet, Marín-Aguilera tells us that theories are always "natives," contingent and contextual. It is because of this that theories matter for "what things they bump into, what networks and meshworks they become entangled in."[86] These synonyms bump into and up against American systems of racialization in classics, so they cannot function as raceless and apolitical. In fact as Marín-Aguilera tells us, [t]he very act of disregarding the politics of bio- and geopolitical locations, and their effects and affects in the creation and transformation of theories, is a performative practice that normalises power asymmetries and subalternisation."[87] Indigenous and its synonyms are thought to function as a raceless and apolitical category, yet they do not; their roots in the simulacral indian prohibit them from doing so. Moreover, the claims to

[79] Ibid., 140.

[80] Ibid., 106.

[81] Ibid., 221.

[82] Hodos 2006, 15.

[83] Gardner and Higgins 2025, 63.

[84] Marín-Aguilera 2021, 136-137.

[85] Pétursdóttir & Olsen 2018, 114-15.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Marín-Aguilera 2021, 137.

indigeneity that some of these terms seem to make become the means by which academics appropriate critical discourses but without attention to their "loci of enunciation," or the wider and ongoing social and cultural materialities from which they emerge.[88]

Conclusion

One cannot make sense of the epistemic norms of whiteness, how whiteness acts and how it "goes without saying," however, without considering the organizing structures of settler colonialism and the ways in which the construction of the colonial category "indigenous" is a project of elimination. Recalling Vizenor, the simulacral indigenous *does* something. This project of elimination is served not just by the "past tensing" of "indigenous" to ancient colonization, but through the reification of the racialized alterity produced by the history of the study of Greek colonization. Engaging the analytic of whiteness without facing the intersections of Indigenous perspectives, Indigenous racialization, and ongoing processes of colonization risks reproducing the problems described in this paper with the ways classics engages with colonialism, reproducing classics as a de facto and ongoing racial project.

In this paper, the analytic of whiteness has enabled me to connect the structural production of white racial logics to the discursive construction of race within the archaeology of Greek colonization. Archaeology, without exception, operates as part of a wider cultural matrix that, without intervention, reproduces extant hegemonic relationships. This paper has shown how "indigenous" peoples both are produced as an *a priori* subset of the subaltern, and through that production, remain the invisible "other" even as they are invoked to secure a settler futurity for the discipline. The examples in this paper situate whiteness as a producer of racially contingent models of ancient Greek colonization, reframing questions about the dirty "c" word from a "problem to be solved" to political and productive forces in the construction of Western modernity. The term "indigenous" in studies of ancient Greek colonization reifies particular categories, assuming they are objective and natural rather than relating them to their social conditions of production. Whiteness organizes not just the logics of Western modernity, legitimating racial settler projects, but discourses in classics as part of those projects and modernity. I offer this paper as an invitation, sharing a reading of this archive from my own position as a scholar of mixed Mvskoke and European heritage. My impressions of the theoretical matrix of studies of Greek colonization in southern Italy are not without consequence, since archaeology exists in the present as "a political field, and as a practice located in relation to power structures" and as a mediator of the "epistemological subject and object."[89] Part of this means confronting the role of racialization in our own contexts and its impacts on the field's discourses. The other part means we use this confrontation to ask different questions of the material from colonized worlds. We must analyze the internal structure of our discourse, and its imbrications with critiques already offered by Critical Indigenous and Native American Studies.

What can the question "What is ancient Greek colonization?" - a question posed by my 2022 course on the topic - look like when excavated from the ruins of indian simulacra and its white logics of the native? I invite this discussion. My suspicion is that there are unseen, but looming, stakes not only to the path this question takes as it becomes refined in and by

[88] Ibid.

[89] Shanks & Tilley 1987, 186.

the field but also to the answers offered: are they wrapped up in a desire to rescue classics (and in particular the Greeks) from the shadow of what the word colonization implies? This paper has been, not a rereading of the archaeological data for or against Greek colonization in southern Italy, but an examination of the impression the archive leaves as I come into contact with it. What I suggest the archive tells us is that answers about the dirty "c" word, what ancient Greek colonization, colonies, and colonialism is, *if it is*, not only are contemporary mirrors, but also implicate the future of this field. Towards what analytics do we turn or re-entrench? What debates can we not move past, and which do we skirt? Most importantly, what identities do our decisions reflect? What investments do they reveal?

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Punic Silence: Recovering Mestizo *Voices in Augustine's Africa*[1]

Cassandra M. M. Casias

Abstract: This article explores how educated men in late antique North Africa navigated the linguistic and cultural frontiers between the Latin and Punic languages. Using the surviving corpus of Augustine of Hippo, it provides case studies of provincials caught between their African origins and Roman education: Augustine's son Adeodatus, Augustine himself as a bishop, grammarian Maximus of Madauros, and controversial bishop Antoninus of Fussala. By applying a post-colonial framework of *mestizaje*, this study elucidates the ambivalent identities of North African elites while also exposing the marginalization of Punic-speaking populations in rural areas. Left without the same recourse to appeal to the pope or the Roman legal system, rural Punic speakers relied upon collective action to enforce their will.

Keywords: Roman Africa, Punic, *mestizaje*, Augustine of Hippo.

Augustine of Hippo spent his life between two cultural realities. Born in the Numidian town of Thagaste, his parents made sure he received a Latin rhetorical education. Their ambitions carried him to Madauros, Carthage, and then finally to Rome and Milan where he occupied the prestigious post of the city's teacher of rhetoric. Soon after his conversion to ascetic Christianity and baptism in 387 C.E., he returned to Africa, where he spent the remainder of his life as a priest and then bishop of Hippo Regius. *De magistro*, Augustine's philosophical dialogue between himself and his son Adeodatus, reveals the cultural tensions faced by the two African men who had just returned to their native land after a lengthy stay in Italy. Years later, as a bishop, Augustine had to find ways of preaching to the rural communities around the metropolitan center of Hippo who did not speak Latin.

This article is an exploration of the experiences of educated Africans when interacting with the Italians who sometimes scorned them and their Punic-speaking relatives and neighbors. Influenced by the work of fellow theologian, Virgilio Elizondo, Justo Gonzalez has previously analyzed the theology of Augustine as a product of *mestizaje*, that is, the blending of North African and Roman ideas, which were themselves influenced by multiple cultures for centuries beforehand.[2] Gonzalez aimed to uncover the different cultural strains present

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[2] Gonzalez 2016, 153.

in Augustine's theology, as well as to show the relevance of the ancient bishop's life to Latine[3] Christians today, particularly those in the Methodist tradition, of which Gonzalez is an elder.[4]

In contrast, this article employs the concept of *mestizaje* with a more historical orientation and a broader investigation of Augustine's cultural milieu. In addition to investigating Augustine's role as a bishop of Punic speakers, this article spotlights three other African men that appear in Augustine's writings: his son, Adeodatus; his former grammar teacher, Maximus of Madauros; and a bishop who had been educated in Augustine's own episcopal monastery, Antoninus of Fussala. By using the modern concept of *mestizaje*, this work sheds new light on the various experiences of educated African men in their colonized homeland, particularly through their different relationships with the Punic language and Punic speakers.

Mestizaje and Antiquity

As Mathura Umachandran has argued, any attempt to decolonize the discipline of Classics must "take seriously the kinds of knowledge that are produced from lived experience and from those who have suffered the harms arising from historical exclusions from the story of European universalism."[5] This warning is particularly poignant for the case of North Africa under the Roman Empire, the study of which has long been shaped by the modern European conquest and colonization of the Maghreb.[6] As David Wilhite has shown in his survey of postcolonial readings of the famous bishop, Augustine has long been considered a liminal cultural figure, caught between Africa and Rome.[7] The story of Augustine's travels and interactions with both Africans and Italians has often resonated with those in the modern world who exist between the culture(s) and language(s) of their family and those of their residence.

The author of this article is one of them. I am a Chicana/Latina from the Southwestern United States. Descended from both indigenous and European people, my ancestors' citizenship changed when the land under their feet changed hands in the Mexican-American War. While indigenous languages had long been suppressed in favor of Spanish, the internal hierarchy within European expansion soon displaced Spanish in favor of European languages with greater cultural hegemony. These languages continue to be considered the most acceptable for academic writing in the field of Classics: English, French, and German.[8]

As newly conquered citizens of the United States, my predecessors' use of English was the result of coercion. My grandmother suffered corporal violence in school whenever she spoke Spanish.[9] In order to help her children better fit into the U.S. education system, she taught them to speak in English, while they continued to hear and speak some Spanish with relatives and friends. The result was what Gloria Anzaldua has called a "forked tongue," the

[3] This article uses the gender-neutral "-e" ending because it sounds more harmonious with the Spanish language, rather than the "-x" commonly used by English-speakers in the United States.

[4] Gonzalez 2016, 11: "Thus, in studying Augustine we do not do so out of mere antiquarian curiosity or historical interest... but also in quest of a deeper and fuller understanding of the faith that sustains us."

[5] Umachandran 2025, 74.

[6] Mattingly 2023, 4.

[7] Wilhite 2014, 4—9.

[8] Mignolo 1996, 182, 193.

[9] Similar experiences mentioned by Anzaldua 1987, 53 and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986, 11—12.

ability to switch between language variants without full allegiance to any of them, a reflection of our residence at the border of two modern nations as well as between European and multiple indigenous heritages.[10]

My personal background informs my investigation of the experiences of Augustine and his fellow Latin-speaking Africans as they navigate the linguistic and cultural borders of their world. In doing so, I do not claim to have a true understanding of their lives or to "speak for" the inhabitants of North Africa under Rome, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak cautions in her landmark article.[11] Even less can I claim to represent the experiences of the Punic-speaking rural inhabitants of Roman Africa whose voices survive only in inscriptions. The parallel experience of living in the margins of cultures under settler colonialism merely provides a lens through which to read the texts produced in an ancient Roman province.

In an attempt to investigate ancient texts through theoretical understandings of race and ethnicity from other academic fields, this article engages with the term *mestizaje.* Spanish for "mixture," the term refers to the blending of cultures, particularly that of Spanish, indigenous, and (though often overlooked) African peoples that took place during the conquest and colonization of Latin America. This article will preface the term with a note of caution. Historically, the concept of *mestizaje* has been used to reinforce racist policies. While claiming to be inclusive, the mainstream discourse often attempts to erase African heritage, while also seeking to assimilate indigenous peoples into the larger population. The act of mixing races has long been appropriated as a tool for "improving" the perceived inferior groups by contact with European blood and culture.[12]

At the same time, the term has expanded to refer to the larger phenomenon of linguistic and cultural hybridity during the process of colonization, without necessarily including intermarriage.[13] As Gonzalez puts it, "to be a mestizo is to belong to two realities and at the same time not to belong to either of them."[14] In particular, Walter Mignolo has highlighted the linguistic aspects of cultural hybridity during the colonial process of prioritizing certain languages and certain writers of hegemonic languages over others. While acknowledging the historically harmful effects of the discourse of *mestizaje*, this article engages with this more general understanding of the term to describe the effect of being a colonized subject within an empire.

Although Gonzalez's theoretical framework is a useful tool in analyzing the culture of ancient North Africa, some of his arguments rely upon an anachronistic understanding of race and ethnicity in the Roman Empire. Gonzalez assumes that Patricius's name indicates his Italian descent and, similarly to other scholars, argues that Monnica's name shows that she was Berber.[15] "Berber" is a historically inaccurate term for the indigenous inhabitants of the Maghreb. It is a later creation made to support the myth that a united group had been conquered by Islamic forces. In reality, many different groups of people occupied ancient North Africa.[16] It is also misleading to characterize Augustine's parents as opposite poles with

[10] Anzaldua 1987, 55.

[11] Spivak 1994 [1988], 70.

[12] Flores 2021, 73; Johnson 2023, 820—22.

[13] Flores 2021, 70, Saldívar, Arenas, and Binmoeller, 2024, 2374—75.

[14] Gonzalez 2016, 12.

[15] Gonzalez 2016, 31; see also Wilhite 2014, 14—15.

[16] Rouighi 2019, 20—24.

monolithic identities due to their names. People in Roman Africa frequently had more than one name to deploy in specific cultural contexts, as can be seen in the epigraphic evidence from Tripotaliana. Patricius might have had a more traditional name for other situations, just as Monnica might have had a Roman name for official purposes, which Augustine might not have felt the need to disclose in his *Confessions*.[17]

Assuming an Italian father and indigenous mother, Gonzalez asserts that Augustine would have had darker skin than what he calls "pure Romans."[18] However, scholars of race in antiquity have demonstrated that this practice of tying race intrinsically to skin color, a product of the transatlantic slave trade, did not apply to the ancient Mediterranean. Skin color and other physical traits were one method of marking human differences, rather than the primary defining factor in the way that modern readers might expect.[19] Classicists such as Denise McCoskey and Sarah Derbew have argued for the continued use of the term 'race' to describe ethnic groups in antiquity.[20] Geraldine Heng, in her monograph *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, critiques the insistence on avoiding terms of racism for events in the premodern world due to accusations of anachronism. This forces scholars to "dance around words they dare not use; concepts, tools, and resources that are closed off; and meanings that only exist as lacunae."[21] Nevertheless, premodern race cannot be identified or understood in the same way as modern race.

This article makes no definitive claims about Augustine's own ancestry or skin color, given the complexity of trying to determine ethnicity or even distinguishing between ethnic groups in the ancient Mediterranean. Instead, I approach Augustine's cultural background through his own attestations of his experiences living between cultures and communicating with the inhabitants of Africa as both an insider and outsider. This analysis focuses on the linguistic markers that Latin-educated Africans relied upon to distinguish "Roman" from "African," and to live in the world existing between the two. By utilizing a modified version of the *mestizaje* framework, this article unearths the variety of possible experiences that a North African could have when engaging—by choice or by force—with the cultural hegemony of Rome.

Language in North Africa

As Gonzalez notes, North Africa was already the product of *mestizaje* long before the Romans arrived. Indigenous views and traditions mixed, co-existed, and clashed with those of the colonizing Carthaginians and Greeks, both of whom started establishing settlements around the seventh century B.C.E.[22] Unfortunately, little is known about the various autochthonous dialects of premodern North Africa (i.e. Libyan, Amazigh, or "Berber"), since they were not written in late antiquity.[23] Long before the arrival of the Carthaginians, the indigenous kingdoms now known by the names *Numidae* and *Mauri* show evidence of urbanization and

[17] Adams 2008, 215—16.

[18] Gonzalez 2016, 31.

[19] Nguyen 2025, 161—62.

[20] For an overview, see McCoskey 2012, 68—76 and Derbew 2022, 16—21.

[21] Heng 2018, 4, and Heng 2022, 163.

[22] Dossey 2010, 12—13; Gonzalez 2016, 14; Mederos Martín in Doak and López-Ruiz 2019, 638—39.

[23] Adams 2008, 245—47; Conant 2023, 38.

large-scale sedentary agriculture. Further south, the *Gaetuli* and *Garamantes* established desert oasis settlements.[24]

Roman Africa, which overlapped with parts of modern-day Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, spoke a variety of languages due to the region's history of conquest.[25] Punic had a prolonged vitality in both urban and rural areas of the province, although it was typically stereotyped as a rustic, lower-class language.[26] While it is difficult to determine ethnicity of individuals, Martyna Świerk's work on the nomenclature on inscriptions in Roman Carthage highlights the mixture of linguistic traditions in Africa. Her research suggests that African port cities likely had a prevalence of Roman cultural traditions while still containing a local Punic substrate. In addition, there was cultural influence from migration from the African interior as well as the Eastern Mediterranean.[27]

By the fourth century C.E., many native-born inhabitants were able to speak Punic (sometimes called "neo-Punic"), a language that developed out of the Phoenician language of the Carthaginians. In certain regions outside the Latin-dominated sphere in northern and central Tunisia, Punic was the majority language. However, by the fourth century C.E. it was no longer a language of written knowledge production as it had been previously.[28] In addition to thousands of dedicatory and funeral inscriptions bearing the Punic language, Augustine's own writings indicate the widespread importance of the language in the fourth and fifth centuries. In particular, Punic was more common in the rural hinterlands in Augustine's day, perhaps explaining why earlier African Christian writers from urban areas, such as Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage, never mention the language in their extant works.[29]

Even for those Africans of some social standing who spoke Latin, their linguistic abilities were scrutinized on the basis of their origins. I will mention only a couple of examples here.[30] The second-century African writer Apuleius, in his court speech defending himself against his influential in-laws in Sabratha, criticizes them for failing to properly continue the education of his stepson, Pudens. Apuleius claims that Pudens speaks Punic, and a little Greek, but is neither willing nor able to speak Latin. Pudens did know enough Latin to give testimony during the trial, but Apuleius asks the presiding proconsul to remember how the boy "barely stuttered single syllables."[31] In the *Historia Augusta*, the African emperor Septimius Severus is said to have been embarrassed by his sister's rudimentary knowledge of Latin when she visited Rome from their native Leptis Magna.[32] The emperor himself is said never to have lost his accent, even as an old man.[33] Although the *Historia Augusta* is generally unreliable for historical testimony about Septimius Severus, we can take this source

[24] Mattingly 2023, 166-67, 214—16.

[25] Hobson in Doak and López-Ruiz 2019, 188—90; Daniel-Hughes and Kotrosits 2020, 4.

[26] Adams 2008, 213, 242—43.

[27] Świerk 2022, 163, 175—76.

[28] Múrcia Sànchez 2011, maps 3 and 4; Conant 2023, 40, 48.

[29] Millar 1968, 133—34. For a summary of all the references to Punic in Augustine's corpus, see Lepelley 2010.

[30] See Adams 2008, 237 for overview.

[31] *Vix singulas syllabas fringultientem, cum ab eo quaereres, dona[s]setne illis mater quae ego dicebam me adnitente donata.* Apul. Apol. 98 (Teubner 1963, 109). All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[32] *Vix Latine loquens.* SHA Sev. 15.7 (Teubner vol. 1, 1965: 148).

[33] *Afrum quiddam usque ad senectutem sonans.* SHA Sev. 19.9. (Teubner vol. 1, 1965: 152).

alongside others to conclude that an elite African in Rome might be assumed to be ashamed of less fluent relatives, and that there was an identifiable "African" accent.

Augustine offers brief illustrations of some of his relatives that did not have the advantage of an elite Latin education. In his early dialogue *On the Blessed Life*, Augustine provides illustrations of the friends and relatives who joined him for his brief monastic retreat at Cassiciacum. Alongside the educated participants, there were his cousins Lartidianus and Rusticus, whose common sense he respected, "even though they had endured no grammar teacher."[34] His mother Monnica, depicted as a woman filled with divinely inspired wisdom, demonstrates her ignorance and/or indifference to proper Latin by making use of a colloquial term that amuses the group. Augustine glosses the ableist insult, *caducarius* ("spaz"),[35] as "a name commonly used among us to describe those who are affected by epilepsy."[36] Monnica's other son, Navigius, clarifies that this word is "bad Latin, but still very fitting."[37]

In this brief summary, it is evident that in late antique North Africa, the abilities and choices of language contributed to the perception of one's racial/ethnic identity, both by outsiders and by oneself. Latin was the language of power through which imperial administration, the law, the military, and taxation operated. As a result, a person's ability to speak Latin determined the degree to which they could access important parts of civic life. On a higher level, one's ability to speak Latin like someone who has had a traditional elite education determined the degree to which someone could socially advance. At the same time, Punic also played a vital role in African society in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. In the following case studies, it will be clear that one's knowledge of Punic strongly influenced cultural self-identity, perception of social status, and community cohesion.

The *Mestizo* Adeodatus

Adeodatus was born in North Africa, probably Carthage, in 372 C.E. His mother's name does not survive. She gave birth to him out of wedlock, but while in an exclusive relationship (known in Roman law as "concubinage") with Augustine, at the time a young student with high ambitions.[38] When Adeodatus was around eleven years old, he and his mother followed Augustine to Rome, and later to Milan for his teaching career. There, Adeodatus would have been able to hear the sermons of the city's famous and influential bishop, Ambrose, and witness the doctrinal conflicts of the day between Nicene and Arian factions. The following year, Adeodatus's grandmother Monnica came to Milan and helped arrange his father's engagement to a ten-year-old girl from a Christian aristocratic family. Adeodatus's mother soon left Adeodatus with his father and returned to Africa, vowing never to be with another man.[39] Adeodatus's father, on the other hand, took another concubine while he waited for his child fiancée to reach the minimum marital age of twelve years. When Augustine experienced his famous conversion, broke off the engagement, and vowed celibacy,

[34] *Nec Lartidianum et Rusticum consobrinos meos, quamuis nullum uel grammaticum passi sint, deesse uolui ipsum que eorum sensum communem ad rem, quam moliebar, necessarium putaui*. Aug. *De beata vita* 1.6 (CCSL 29: 68).

[35] Translation from Foley 2019, 33 and 144n90.

[36] *Quo nomine uulgo apud nos uocantur, quos comitialis morbus subuertit*. *De beata vita* 2.16 (CCSL 29: 74).

[37] *Male latino, sed aptissimo sane. De beata vita* 3.20 (CCSL 29: 76).

[38] Aug. *Conf*. 4.2.2. On concubinage, see Arjava 1996, 205—10.

[39] *Conf*. 6.15.25.

Adeodatus joined him in the private monastic retreat. After they were baptized, father and son returned to Africa, where Adeodatus died shortly before reaching his twentieth birthday.

Most of this information comes from Augustine's autobiographical *Confessions*, written after he had been a bishop for years. Augustine's goal was to describe his conversion to the Christian ascetic life, not to provide details about his relationships that would interest a modern social historian. However, Augustine also wrote a dialogue between himself and his son shortly after Adeodatus's death, between 388 and 391 C.E. *De magistro* is the longest mention of Adeodatus in Augustine's entire, massive surviving corpus. As with the other briefer mentions of his son, Augustine takes pains to show that Adeodatus was a bright pupil and carried no personal defects despite his conception from Augustine's sin, a blessing for which Augustine credits God rather than himself as Adeodatus's father.[40] Augustine declares before God that all the words he ascribes to his son were Adeodatus's true opinions when he was fifteen years old.[41]

Their discussion in *De magistro* deals with the limitations of learning from a human teacher and from language, rather than from divine illumination. [42] During their conversations about words, signs, and meanings, the topic of the Punic language arises:

> "Recently, when I had said that a certain Punic word meant 'mercy,' you said that you had heard that it means 'piety' from those who know the language better. But I resisted, insisting that you had completely forgotten what you had heard. For it seemed to me that you had not said 'piety' but 'faith,' although you were sitting really close to me, and these two words in no way sound similar enough to deceive my ear. Still, I thought for a long time that you did not know what had been said to you, when I was the one who did not know what you had said."[43]

Fitting the dialogue's theme, this anecdote shows the limitations of words as a means for gaining understanding.[44] As Donald Capps notes, it reveals a father-son relationship where Augustine is firmly in control, or at least where Adeodatus demonstrates idealized submissiveness to his father. Capps suggests that this passage is also Augustine's exploration of his own shortcomings, shaped by a lingering shame over how he sent away his son's mother when his son would die so soon afterwards.[45]

For the purposes of this article, this short exchange also sheds light on the experiences of two African men who received an excellent Latin education, lived in Italy, interacted with the senatorial aristocracy, and returned to their native land almost as strangers. Their experience is similar to modern *mestizaje* as a state of belonging and not belonging, belonging to both places, and belonging to neither place.[46] Like modern immigrants who have lost some

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[40] *Conf.* 9.6.14, *De beata vita* 1.6.

[41] *Conf.* 9.6.14: 'sixteenth year' by Roman inclusive counting.

[42] Aug. *Retract.* 1.12; Fladerer 2010, 316.

[43] *Tu nuper uerbo quodam punico, cum ego misericordiam dixissem, pietatem significari te audisse dicebas ab eis, quibus haec lingua magis nota esset. ego autem resistens quid acceperis tibi omnino excidisse asserebam. uisus enim mihi eras non pietatem dixisse, sed fidem, cum et coniunctissimus mihi assideres et nullo modo haec duo nomina similitudine soni aurem decipiant. diu te tamen arbitratus sum nescire, quid tibi dictum sit, cum ego nescirem, quid dixeris.* Aug. *De magistro* 13.44 (CCSL 29: 201).

[44] See Bordreuil 2012 for further discussion of the linguistic implications of this passage.

[45] Capps in Capps and Dittes 1990, 88—90.

[46] Gonzalez 2016, 12.

of their language or cultural ties in order to pursue upward mobility in their new country, Augustine and Adeodatus find themselves ignorant of a language that surrounds them once again, both familiar and alien to them.

By his own account, Augustine seems to have dismissed his son's correction immediately. He omits any excuses that someone could offer for not listening to his son. Was the brilliant Augustine uncomfortable studying something from the very beginning alongside his own teenaged son? Did it bring back memories of trying and failing to learn Greek well enough to avoid corporal punishment at school, and his parents' mocking laughter at his punishments?[47] Whatever the reason, it effectively illustrates the defects of human instructors.

Although Augustine does not focus on it, this anecdote also reveals that Adeodatus was learning Punic separately from his father. He had gotten his answer from fluent speakers, possibly some of their own relatives, since they were back in Augustine's native city of Thagaste.[48] Why was Adeodatus asking about the Punic language? Perhaps he was striving to reintegrate himself into his homeland after being absent for so long. For most of his life, learning Latin was prioritized for the sake of ensuring his social mobility. Punic, on the other hand, would have allowed him to connect with the people of his homeland and his other relatives. He had been separated from his mother, and his grandmother Monnica had recently died. When he tried to grieve Monnica's death, his father and uncle silenced him, considering displays of grief to be inappropriate for Christians who believed in eternal life.[49] Adeodatus perhaps sought connection from the new people around him.

Modern Kenyan author Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o similarly realized that in order to effectively work against the neocolonial structures in his homeland, he would need to write in Gikuyu, the language spoken by the working and peasant classes of his homeland, rather than in the English that an international, elite audience could read.[50] In Adeodatus's case, he may have decided to learn more Punic because he wanted to build social networks locally and live there as he grew older.

The *Mestizo* Bishop Augustine

The anecdote shows that Augustine was also learning some Punic soon after his return to Africa. Whatever his initial reasons for doing so, Augustine utilized his knowledge later in his role of priest and later bishop of Hippo. Unlike his secluded days in the Italian monastic retreat at Cassiciacum, Augustine was in charge of preaching Christianity to Africans of varying linguistic backgrounds. Although he could be reasonably sure that his urban audience in Hippo Regius understood Latin, many of them spoke Punic as well. Augustine never became fluent in Punic, but he incorporated it into his preaching in order to connect with different parts of his audience.

[47] Aug. *Conf.* 1.9.14; Capps in Capps and Dittes 1990, 71—72.

[48] Wilhite 2014, 18, suggests that Punic was spoken primarily by the women of the family, while the fathers wanted their sons to be more Romanized. However, there is no concrete evidence that the cultural ties fell along gender lines.

[49] *Conf.* 9.12.29.

[50] Brinkman 2024, 354—55.

Augustine cited Punic several times in his sermons, particularly due to its similarities to Hebrew.[51] Punic appears on lists of languages that Augustine would name to highlight the universality of Christianity and the Church.[52] Other times, Augustine used his audience's familiarity with Punic to explain the nuances of translating Greek Scripture. In a sermon delivered in 406 C.E., he translates the Greek particle *ara* with the Latin *forsitan.* Then, he mentions the Punic word *iar*, because, as he puts it, "it does not pertain to Latin but is suitable for your understanding."[53] Augustine often took advantage of the similarity between Hebrew and Punic to instruct his audience on Hebrew terms in Scripture, such as "mammon" and "Messiah." He was particularly fascinated when he learned that the Punic word for three is strikingly similar to the Latin word for salvation, *salus*, thus symbolizing the saving power of the Trinity.[54]

In other instances, Augustine cited Punic not for any exegetic goal, but to relate better to his audience. In one sermon, he elaborated on Jesus's instructions to avoid arguing over property in the courts by quoting a Punic proverb about giving in to a contentious person in order to get rid of them: "Disease is begging for a coin; give it two, and let it go away."[55] He quotes the proverb in Latin, because, as he says, "not all of you know Punic."[56] Edmund Hill suggests that this phrase indicates Augustine is probably in his own diocese, rather than a more rural area.[57] In this location, Augustine used Punic as a marker of African cultural identity rather than out of necessity for the audience's comprehension. It shows the importance that he, and likely other Africans, placed on the unique cultural makeup of their native land, even while still communicating primarily in Latin.

For Augustine, Punic functioned as a way to bridge the linguistic and social gaps within his diocese and the territories around Hippo. Perhaps it was his way of emphasizing his local status to his audience as well. The well-educated bishop, former teacher in Rome and Milan, may have impressed some people, but it is possible that he was perceived by others as an outsider. Similarly, Gloria Anzaldua gives voice to the potential accusations against a Latina who speaks English: "*Pocho*, cultural traitor, you're speaking the oppressor's language by speaking English, you're ruining the Spanish language."[58] If so, Augustine's efforts to speak about Punic in his sermons may have served to remind his audience that he was one of them.

The *Mestizo* Maximus

Although Augustine gladly made use of Punic to relate to his audience, he regularly encountered slights to himself and his native land by men who prided themselves on their

[51] Burton 2012, 118.

[52] Aug. *Serm.* 360A.2; *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 14.7.

[53] *Possumus illud uerbo dicere minus quidem latine coniuncto, sed apto ad intellegentias uestras.* Aug. Ps. 123.8 (CCSL 40: 138).

[54] Mammon: *Serm.* 113.2, *Serm.* 359A.11, *De sermone Domini in monte* 14.47; Messiah: *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2.239, *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 15.27; Salus: *De pecc. meritis et remissione et de bapt. parvul.* 34, *Ep. ad Romanos inchoata expositio* 13.

[55] *Punicum enim proverbium est antiquum: 'Nummum quaerit pestilentia; duo illi da et ducat se'.* Aug. *Serm.* 167.4 (SL 41Bb: 358).

[56] *Prouerbium notum est Punicum, quod quidem Latine uobis dicam, quia Punice non omnes nostis.* Aug. *Serm.* 167.4 (SL 41Bb: 358).

[57] Hill 1992, note 1 on Sermon 167.

[58] Anzaldua 1987, 55.

Romanitas. The Italian writer Jerome, annoyed by Augustine's questions about his Vulgate translation of the Bible, compared the younger man to the legendary Carthaginian and enemy to Rome, Hannibal.[59] The Pelagian writer Julian attacked Augustine's ideas based on his land of origin, mocking Augustine as the "Aristotle of the Punics."[60]

Despite Augustine's extensive experience speaking, writing, and teaching Latin, even in Italy itself, his doctrinal opponents fell back on attacking his views via his African roots, evidently confident that this could undermine his argument. As Mignolo notes in his analysis of Caribbean poet, Michelle Cliff:

> "Colonial literature will always be viewed as inferior when confronted with the practice defined and exemplified by the metropolitan literary canon. The same language, the same syntactic rules; but the game played under different conditions results in diverse verbal practices."[61]

The fact that Augustine did not even know a lot of Punic was irrelevant: Augustine's race was perceived by outsiders through the lens of language and, in Jerome's case, the image of the famous foreign general who challenged Rome.

The letter of one man in the African city of Madauros demonstrates that some educated Africans internalized this scorn of their native land. Early in Augustine's career in the clergy, a certain Maximus, a grammarian possibly known to Augustine from when he was a student in Madauros, wrote him a letter defending the traditional gods of Rome. Perceiving the Christian cult of the martyrs as a strange, foreign religion in which humans are worshiped instead of the traditional Roman gods, Maximus scorns the Punic names of African martyrs, which are "offensive to gods and men."[62] He compares them side by side:

> "Who could bear for Mygdo to be preferred to Jupiter brandishing his thunderbolts? For Sanaes and the archmartyr Namphamo to be preferred to Juno, to Minerva, to Venus, to Vesta and all the immortal gods? The horror!"[63]

Proud of his Latin education, Maximus states that the new religion of Christianity is a second "war on Actium… in which Egyptian monsters dare to shake their spears at the gods of Rome, but not for long."[64] He coopts the elite Roman scorn of 'barbaric' languages such as Punic to highlight the Otherness of Christianity as a whole.

Maximus treats this debate as a friendly disagreement between peers.[65] He claims that he must respond to Augustine's last onslaught lest "you mistake my silence for offense."[66] To Maximus, they are two Latin-educated African men engaging in a debate within the

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[59] Jerome *Ep*. 72.2.3.

[60] *Aristoteles poenorum*. Aug. *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* 3.199 (CSEL 85.1: 498). See also Aug. *Contra Secundinum* 25; Aug. *contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* 1.16, 1.72.

[61] Mignolo 1996, 188.

[62] *Diis hominibusque odiosa nomina*. Ep. 16.2 (CSEL 34.1: 38).

[63] *Quis enim ferat Ioui fulmina uibranti praeferri Migginem, Iunoni, Mineruae, Veneri Vestaeque Sanamem et cunctis, pro nefas! diis immortalibus archimartyrem Namphamonem*? Ep. 16.2 (CSEL 34.1: 38).

[64] *Sed mihi hac tempestate propemodum uidetur bellum Actiacum rursus exortum, quo Aegyptia monstra in Romanorum deos audeant tela uibrare minime duratura*. Ep. 16.2 (CSEL 34.1: 38).

[65] Ep. 17.1, 5.

[66] *Auens crebro tuis affatibus laetificari et instinctu tui sermonis, quod me paulo ante iucundissime salua caritate pulsasti, paria redhibere non destiti, ne silentium meum paenitudinem appellasses*. Ep. 16.1 (CSEL 34.1: 37).

framework of their shared cultural background, and the elite Roman disdain for 'barbarian' languages is one of Maximus's methods of defense against his humorless opponent.

Augustine, on the other hand, takes this debate very seriously. Throughout his career, he promoted the ideal of a Church that was both culturally diverse as well as a united whole.[67] It was therefore important to him to grapple with the scorn of Roman elite culture for the often lower-class provincial martyrs whose names and stories were so important to Christian communities. Augustine defends the African martyrs and Christianity by exercising his proficiency in their shared Latin literary education. He quotes Vergil to demonstrate that these Punic names are similar in meaning to important Latin mythological names.[68] The most important point for Augustine, however, is that African Roman intellectuals should not so easily dismiss the language of their countrymen:

> "For you could not forget yourself so much that, as an African writing to Africans—since we are both located in Africa—that you thought that Punic names ought to be criticized."[69]

Augustine reminds Maximus that "many words of wisdom have been committed to memory in Punic books."[70] If Maximus denies this fact, Augustine has a sarcastic response: "you should, of course, regret that you were born where the cradle of this language is [still] warm."[71]

In the words of screenwriter Priscila García-Jacquier, "I must reconcile that the very white of my skin is a product of an internalized self-hatred so deep, so ancestral, I will never be done unlearning."[72] Maximus mocks the Punic names of the martyrs, preferring to identify himself as an heir of the Latin language. He criticizes the language of his native land to declare his allegiance to traditional Roman religious practices and distance himself from the African martyrs with their foreign-sounding names. To him, the Punic language functions as a symbol of Christianity's inherent inferiority to the religious traditions of Rome.

The *Mestizo* Antoninus

Among African Christians, communication in Punic was especially important due to the competition between two churches: Augustine's faction, sometimes called the Catholics or the Caecilianists, and the so-called Donatists or dissidents.[73] As a result of the third and final imperial persecution of Christians at the beginning of the fourth century, the African church split into two factions over the question of whether or not sacraments performed by 'sinful' bishops were valid, particularly the bishops who had handed over copies of the Scriptures to

[67] Sarr 2017, 118-19.

[68] Aug. Ep. 17.2.

[69] *Neque enim usque adeo te ipsum obliuisci potuisses, ut homo Afer scribens Afris, cum simus utrique in Africa constituti, Punica nomina exagitanda existimares*. Ep. 17.2 (CCSL 31: 41).

[70] *Quae lingua si improbatur abs te, nega Punicis libris, ut a uiris doctissimis proditur, multa sapienter esse mandata memoriae!* Ep. 17.2 (CCSL 31: 41).

[71] *Paeniteat te certe ibi natum, ubi huius linguae cunabula recalent*. Ep. 17.2 (CCSL 31: 41).

[72] Cited in Flores 2021, 68.

[73] Shaw 2011, 5; Ando 2013, 198—99; Burns and Jensen 2014, 47—51.

imperial agents as a symbolic repudiation of Christianity.[74] Augustine's faction, which eventually won the competition for influence, believed that sacraments were ultimately from God and therefore could not be defiled by the flawed human agents who performed them.[75]

The Punic language was a necessary part of vying for converts. In one letter, Augustine suggests a debate between himself and Crispinus, the Donatist Bishop of Calama, who had just bought an estate and rebaptized the tenant farmers into his faction. Augustine claims to suspect that they have not gone to the Donatist side of their own free will but rather were pressured by their new landlord. According to Augustine, this debate would need to be written down and translated into Punic in order for the tenant farmers to understand it, highlighting the significant language barrier between these bishops and their audiences in rural communities.[76]

The infamous case of Antoninus of Fussala highlights Augustine's efforts to find qualified clergy who knew Punic well enough to preach to those who did not understand Latin. Details about the controversy survive in two letters: one to Pope Celestine and the other to Fabiola, a laywoman in Rome who hosted Antoninus while he visited Rome to appeal to Celestine.[77] Around 422 C.E., Augustine needed to find a bishop for the small town of Fussala. When his desired candidate deserted him, Augustine hastily offered a young man from his own monastic community whom he later claimed he had not thoroughly vetted. The new bishop, Antoninus, had come from humble beginnings. When he was younger, his mother and stepfather came to Augustine begging for food. The bishop of Hippo only agreed to aid them if the couple separated, because the woman's first husband was still alive and her current marriage was invalid in the eyes of the Church. Antoninus joined the monastic community with his stepfather, who apparently died soon after.[78]

Once he became bishop, Antoninus apparently began stealing from his parishioners and coercing them to sell their properties to him.[79] Perhaps Augustine was correct when he said that the young man, who was in his twenties, simply got carried away by his sudden elevation in status.[80] Alternatively, Antoninus may have resented his separation from his mother, or the confines of monastic life that he was forced to enter in order to survive. In any case, upon being discovered, Antoninus refused to give up his control of the Fussala bishopric, even in exchange for other territories, and took his case to Pope Celestine. Evidently, he placed great importance on remaining bishop of Fussala, even though he was strongly disliked there. He may have had more supporters than Augustine admitted, but the evidence is not clear.[81]

Unlike the other '*mestizos*' of this study, Antoninus was actually fluent in Punic. This skill gained him an episcopal seat and perhaps some supporters in his bishopric. However, the price of this eventual success was his separation from his mother and childhood community in order to be considered worthy of receiving the church's assistance. His knowledge of Punic

[74] Adamiak 2019, 46—47.

[75] *In Ioannis evangelium tractatus*, 5.15.

[76] Ep. 66.2.

[77] Aug. Ep. 209 and 20*. For a general analysis of the following events, see Dossey 2010, 136—39.

[78] Ep. 20*.2.

[79] Ep. 209.4, Ep. 20*.6.

[80] *Adolescentem non multo amplius quam viginti aetatis annos agentem*. Ep. 20*.3 (CSEL 88: 96).

[81] *Ep*. 209.7, Dossey 2010, 139.

worked to his advantage, but he had been uprooted from his community and placed into a Latin-speaking environment. He later took full advantage of this ability to operate within Roman educated culture by taking his complaint all the way to the pope.

While Antoninus was able to make use of the Latin that he learned in Augustine's monastery, his unhappy parishioners did not have the same cultural capital. Instead, their resistance took the form of collective action. For example, when Antoninus tried to gain clerical oversight of an estate near Fussala, the tenant farmers threatened in a letter to their landowner and Augustine that they would leave the estate if she permitted Antoninus to preside over them. Their protests caused her and Augustine to contact the primate of Numidia on their behalf.[82] At a meeting between the clergy and laity, the primate, Aurelius of Macomades, asked the people of Fussala, in Punic, what Antoninus had done wrong.[83] They gave him separate accounts of their injuries at his hands, but refused to put their accusations in their own names, for fear that their former bishop would "hunt them down individually and destroy them."[84] The clergy insisted that they do so, but the townspeople walked out in anger and, according to Augustine, "not even one of the consecrated women remained."[85]

Augustine and his peers understood this problem from an elite Roman perspective: as in the case of imperial law, complaints must be documented, they must be specific, and they need to have the names of the accusers attached.[86] On the other side, Antoninus's opponents were comfortable enough voicing their accusations in Punic and as a group, but they evidently did not trust the Church leaders to protect them once the accusation became official written record. Withdrawal, whether from the land they farmed or from the non-Donatist Church, was their last, best resort against an opponent who knew how to operate among the Latin-educated elite. In this case, their Punic language, rather than a less powerful alternative to Latin, was their means of maintaining community cohesion and collective resistance against the wealthier and more powerful Church leaders.

Conclusion

This article does not claim that premodern Africa directly correlates to Latin American *mestizaje*. It instead presents a lens through which to consider the experiences of subjects about whom we have very little direct evidence. As Gonzalez notes, *mestizaje* enables one to "claim resources from one culture or the other, according to various needs and circumstances."[87] Postcolonial readings of the Roman Empire, and specifically North Africa, have shown that subjects under Rome were very adept at what we now call code-switching.[88] By analyzing the writings of late antique North Africa through *mestizaje*, we can see how educated African men grappled with issues of identity in ways that are familiar to those in

[82] *Coloni, quia eum de uicinitate iam senserant et cum aliis mala illa pertulerant, scripserunt ad dominam possessionis, si hoc fieri permisisset, se continuo migraturos et ad me similiter, ut pro eis interuenirem ne fieret; propter quos et illa et ego ad senem scripsimus*. Ep. 20*.10 (CSEL 88: 100).

[83] Dossey 2010, 154, 164.

[84] *Responderunt se timere ne innotescerent ei quos singillatim persequeretur et perderet*. Ep. 20*.21 (CSEL 88: 105).

[85] *Nec feminarum saltem sanctimonialium aliqua remaneret*. Ep. 20*.21 (CSEL 88: 106).

[86] Uhalde 2007, 36—38.

[87] Gonzalez, 2016, 133.

[88] Adams 2008, 233-34; Mattingly 2011, 241; Mattingly 2023, 562—63.

the Latine community as well as others caught in the cultural clashes inherent under colonization.

Adeodatus, Augustine, Maximus, and Antoninus each sought to define themselves through the space between Latin and Punic in their colonized homeland. The Punic language could be used to relate better to the local community, mocked in favor of Latin to identify with the Roman elite, or even used to gain an episcopal seat. For all of these men, the language was a rhetorical tool through which they positioned themselves within the cultural mixture of their homeland.

The Africans who lived in the rural hinterlands did not have the same ability to move between the two cultures. When Augustine sent them a bishop who terrorized and exploited them—evidently because there were a limited number of candidates fluent enough in both Punic and Latin—their written and spoken words to those in power did not produce the results they desired. They fit among those who face what Spivak calls the "epistemic violence of imperialist law and education."[89] When they tried to speak, the bishops wanted them to conform their speech to the framework of Roman law. They had to resort to the threat of silent, empty churches and empty, untilled fields to demand change from the *mestizo* elites who headed the African Church.

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[89] Spivak 1994 [1988], 78.

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'Does Indians Have Feelings?': A Reverse Chronology of Indigenous Stereotypes

Jennifer Komorowski

Abstract: Over 50 years have now passed since the publication of George Manuel and Michael Posluns' groundbreaking text *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (1974) and the political and philosophical ideas presented prove to be just as important as ever. In the introduction, Manuel recounts the story of a settler co-worker asking him the question "Does Indians have feelings?" This question ties directly into the many myths perpetuated about Indigenous peoples, and reveals the denial of humanity that many Indigenous people experience. This article will trace philosophical ideas of the soul in a reverse chronology beginning with contemporary stereotypes and finding connections with seventeenth century ideas about Indigenous people, the soul, and animals.

Keywords: Indigenous, feelings, soul, 1492, George Manuel.

Introduction

In George Manuel and Micheal Poslun's groundbreaking text *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (1974), they discuss the justifications used by colonizers to excuse land theft and genocide. They write: "A cornerstone of the mythical structure that has stood in the way of the Indian reality has been a belief that an Indian way of life meant something barbaric and savage, frozen in time and incapable of meeting the test of changing social conditions brought about by new technology."[1] Manuel reflects on how this myth has changed very little over the course of his own lifetime (1921-1989), and demonstrates this by recounting the story of his coworker asking him "does Indians have feelings?" After telling some more anecdotes, Manuel reflects: "Perhaps neither of these conversations would be so likely to take place today."[2] Over 50 years after that was written, I've written "wrong" in the marginalia of my copy of Manuel's book. I've been teaching this text in my introductory level philosophy class for three years now and in every class I have students who give me hope because they are shocked and surprised to hear this question which Manuel is asked by his coworker. But as an Indigenous woman I feel this question deep inside of me whenever I read this text. I am a member of the Oneida Nation of the Thames, located just outside of London, Ontario, Canada, and also of Polish and British ancestry. My family has a long history of colonial disconnection. My mother was adopted and spent most of her adult life not knowing her biological family until my sister and I were able to find and reunite her with her three brothers. Within our family, my mother's generation has been heavily impacted by these kinds of stories, and her grandmother was also a survivor of the Mount Elgin Residential School. When I'm in spaces with settlers, because I'm white passing, I often hear comments and stories that echo the very question which was asked of Manuel. I have been at parties where Black Lives Matter comes up in conversation and everyone agrees that racism is bad,

[1] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 2.

[2] Ibid., 3-4.

except that one person who went to school with Indigenous people and thinks we are the exception. I have been at the doctor's office and when the assistant heard that the topic of my doctoral dissertation was Indigenous women's writing she commented: "those people are hard to read." It took me a moment to realize she didn't think reading stories about Indigenous disconnection or stories of residential schools is hard, but rather that Indigenous people don't show any emotions. These experiences inspired me to write this article and are the first step in the reverse chronology which traces stereotypes about Indigenous people from the present day back through history.

I will connect the question posed to Manuel, "does Indians have feelings?", which sits at the heart of the myth of Indigenous peoples as savages, to Western conceptions of the soul, and, importantly, beliefs about who has a soul. First, I will expand upon the myth that Indigenous people are savages by showing how pervasive this idea is and the significance of its role in the colonization of North America. The experiences of people such as Manuel, as well as Lee Maracle, whom I discuss below, show how the underlying myths about Indigenous peoples have also permeated the lives of colonized people. I will trace the philosophical framework within which these ideas emerge in a reverse chronology from the present-day instantiations of the myth of the unfeeling Indian back to Western beliefs about the soul. Following the work of Sylvia Wynter, I establish how the ideas about Indigenous peoples that emerged following 1492 and the colonization of the Americas create a dehumanized image of Indigenous people within the European imagination. During this period, a philosophical framework for these types of ideas can be understood to emerge from Enlightenment ideas about the soul through philosophers such as Descartes, who believed that the Rational Soul was what differentiated humans from animals. Finally, these Enlightenment ideas coupled together with concepts inherited from classical philosophy and thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle show how the notion of feeling is interconnected with rationality, and how the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples has denied them both the right to rational thought and feeling.

Does Indians Have Feelings?

Manuel relates the anecdote about being asked the question "does Indians have feelings?" by his coworker in the introduction to *The Fourth World*. This serves as both the title of the introduction and a pivotal question for introducing the concept of "fourth world" politics, which can be understood as both a process of decolonization which centers revitalizing Indigenous ways of being, while also hinging on the right to self-determination due to the unique geographic situation that fourth world nations find themselves in, in that they are landlocked within other independent states. Manuel then connects this question to the myths that were invented and spread by colonizers. Manuel recounts the conversation with his coworker and reveals much more about this myth than appears at face value. He recalls:

> Another worker with whom I often sat at coffee breaks said to me as he sat down, "can I ask you a question that's been on my mind for some time?"
>
> "Sure," I said.
>
> "Does Indians have feelings?" he asked.
>
> "Yes, Indians have feelings," I told him.

> "You know, my wife and I often talked about this, and since you're my friend I felt you wouldn't be offended if I asked you. We actually feel Indians is no different from dogs, no feelings at all for kinship."[3]

This interaction reveals both the myth that Indigenous people do not have feelings, and also the hierarchy which has been established in colonial countries with settlers on top and Indigenous people at the bottom, perceived to be on the same level as animals. This idea is reiterated by Sto:lo scholar Lee Maracle in *I am Woman* (1996) when she explains, "The denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a sub-human level. Animals beget animals. The dictates of patriarchy demand that beneath the Native male comes the Native female. The dictates of racism are that Native men are beneath white women and Native females are not fit to be referred to as women."[4] Although her work frames this racial hierarchy in terms of the feminist issues facing Indigenous women, she nonetheless discusses the same systems of colonialism in Canada, and the same underlying philosophical views which influence the beliefs of settlers. Maracle continues to explain the experience of Indigenous women under colonialism in Canada:

> Whereas Native men have been victims of the age-old racist remark "lazy drunken Indians," about Native women white folks ask, "Do they have feelings?" How many times do you hear from our own brothers, "Indian women don't whine and cry around, nag or complain." At least not "real" or "true" Indian women. Embodied in that kind of language is the negation of our femininity—the denial of our womanhood.[5]

Here, Maracle connects the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples directly to the abuse of Indigenous women and the internalization, by some members of our communities, of these colonial myths. Many Indigenous writers have discussed the connection between people and land, but Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson puts it best when she writes:

> [F]eminist scholars have argued that Native women's bodies were to the settler eye, like land, and as such in the settler mind, the Native woman is rendered "unrapeable" (or, "highly rapeable") because she was like land, matter to be extracted from, used, sullied, taken from, over and over again, something that is already violated and violatable in a great march to accumulate surplus, to so called production.[6]

When Indigenous peoples are located on the side of nature, and thus land, we become a commodity to be extracted in much the same way Columbus sought gold, or settler colonial governments seek oil and minerals. As Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes:

> A great deal of the colonizers' energy has gone into breaking the intimate connection of Nishnaabeg bodies (and minds and spirits) to each other and to the practices and associated knowledges that connect us to land, because this is the base of our power. This means land and bodies are commodified as capital under settler colonialism and are naturalized as objects for exploitation. This has always been extremely clear to Indigenous women and

[3] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 3.

[4] Maracle 1996, 17-18.

[5] Ibid., 17.

[6] Simpson 2014, 7.

> 2SQ people, and it's why sexual and gender violence has to be theorized and analyzed as vital, not supplemental, to discussions of colonial dispossession.[7]

Both Leanne Simpson and Audra Simpson theorize the ways in which colonization has used Indigenous peoples' connection to the land in order to assimilate Indigenous people with nature and thus able to be dispossessed of land. As I show below, the development of these colonial myths dates back to the fifteenth century and the beginning of colonial contact with Europeans, as seen in the writings about African and Indigenous peoples from writers such as the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci.

Manuel also explains these myths as being part of "a theory that would justify the theft of land." He writes: "The result of the collected work of these many minds was a series of racial and cultural myths: that we were savage and uncivilized; that we were unworthy of respect; that our lives are not European lives, and our property is not to be valued in the same way that Europeans value property until it is firmly held in European hands."[8] These types of beliefs date back to the very beginning of colonization and can be seen in the legal decisions and laws upon which both Canada and the United States are built. In the 1810 legal decision by Chief Justice Marshall of the United States Supreme Court, he outlines what Manuel describes as "the ultimate expression of the theory of our inherent savagery and racial inferiority," stating that "the tribes of Indians inhabiting this country were fierce savages, whose occupation was war, and whose subsistence was drawn chiefly from the forest. To leave them in possession of their country was to leave the country in a wilderness; to govern them as a distinct people, was impossible, because they were as brave and as high spirited as they were fierce, and were ready to repel by arms every attempt on their independence."[9] This 1810 statement is a reiteration of the 1776 Declaration of Independence which infamously states that "[the King] has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions."

These statements by American figures such as Thomas Jefferson and Justice Marshall are echoed by sentiments from Canadian politicians and law makers, who likewise associated Indigenous peoples with the natural world, and especially land to be managed and exploited. Manuel provides the example of the case of R. v. Bob and White (1965) in which Mr. Justice Norris, although finding in favour of Indigenous hunting rights on Vancouver Island, quotes Marshall in his decision. While the ruling was beneficial to Indigenous peoples, it is made within the context of Section 87 of the Indian Act, which "stated that treaties were paramount to provincial laws of general application."[10] Following Marshall's 1810 decision, Manuel explains that the policy at this time was to give rights such as property rights with the goal "to secure the 'confidence [of the conquered peoples] in their security' under the new regime."[11] The denial of property rights or ownership to Indigenous people is an exception to what Marshall describes as a general rule for humanity. As outlined in this particular case, the 1854 agreement between James Douglas, the Hudson's Bay chief actor, and the Nanaimo Nation, stated that the land "becomes the entire property of the white

[7] Simpson 2017, 41.

[8] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 56.

[9] Ibid., 57.

[10] Borrows 2017, 118.

[11] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 56.

people forever" and only allowed for hunting and fishing on unoccupied lands.[12] This policy of denying ownership rights and control of land to Indigenous peoples is one example of the Canadian government's denial of equal rights to Indigenous peoples. This lack of rights is described by Manuel as an exception to the rules which normally apply to the conquered, outlined by Marshall as follows: "the conquered shall not be wantonly oppressed, and that their condition shall remain as eligible...Most usually, they are incorporated with the victorious nations, and become subjects or citizens of the government with which they are connected...and a wise policy requires that the rights of the conquered to property should remain unimpaired." However, under settler colonialism in North America it became the policy to disregard this rule because Indigenous peoples are an "exception to this general consideration of humanity because we are 'fierce savages, whose occupation was war.'"[13]

This exclusion from the human race is consistently established throughout both United States and Canadian law. In the Declaration of Independence it is declared that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." However, we can understand this equality and the rights that go with it to exclude Indigenous peoples, since they are later singled out as "merciless Indian savages."[14] In Canada, laws to control Indigenous peoples began to be passed by John A. MacDonald's government in 1868, just one year after Canadian confederation. These laws would eventually come to be known as the Indian Act, with the first of the laws under that name narrowing the definition of who was an Indian. The Act would come to define "a person as 'any individual other than an Indian.'"[15] At the same time, however, under "An Act respecting the civilization and enfranchisement of certain Indians" and "An Act for the gradual enfranchisement of certain Indians" (1869), there existed a pathway for Indigenous peoples to "become civilized and enfranchised by ceasing to be an Indian" and thus become a person in the eyes of the settler state. This was politically advantageous for Canada because enfranchisement meant the political assimilation of Indigenous people into the Canadian body politic. These types of policies remained in place until the Citizenship Act of 1956, which granted citizenship to Status Indians without having to go through the process of enfranchisement and losing legal status as an Indian.[16]

1492

The contradiction in the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples has always been present within the system of colonization. That the process of dehumanization hinges on the concept of conversion or assimilation is outlined by Pope Alexander VI in the *Inter Caetera* (1493), which appeared the year after Columbus' voyage in 1492. This papal declaration begins with the statement that Christianity (particularly Catholicism) must be spread, and that Christian souls should be cared for while "barbarous nations" must be overthrown and assimilated. This proclamation created a divide between Christian and non-Christian nations while simultaneously offering a potential path of inclusion within a Western concept of humanity. When Sylvia Wynter analysed the philosophical underpinnings upholding Columbus' 1492 voyage, she demonstrated that Columbus was following the model established by the

[12] Borrows 2017, 118.

[13] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 57.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 22.

[16] Ibid., 21.

Portuguese slave trade in 1441, by which Christian Europeans were granted the right to engage in colonial actions precisely by the Pope's authority. For Columbus, Wynter writes, the motivation behind colonizing the Indies was threefold: to expand the power of Spain as a state, to repay his Spanish financiers, and "to help accelerate the spread of Christianity all over the world, in time for the Second Coming of Christ, which he fervently believed to be imminent." In order to repay his financial backers, Columbus extorted gold from Indigenous people and made "some into cabezas de indios y indias (heads of Indian men and women), who could be sold as slaves."[17] Thus, while Columbus was a fervent believer in the apocalyptic millenarian movement, which worked for the good of all souls on earth–those souls did not include non-Christians. Wynter writes that "all non-Christian peoples and cultures became perceivable only in terms of their usefulness to the European states in securing their this-worldly goal of power and wealth."[18]

It is this transition point which causes the contradiction for the status of Indigenous peoples under colonization. Wynter writes elsewhere that "the medieval world's idea of order as based upon degrees of spiritual perfection/imperfection, an idea of order centered on the Church, was now to be replaced by a new one based upon degrees of rational perfection/imperfection."[19] This would come to the fore in the Valladolid debates (1550-1551) between the Dominican Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas and humanist scholar Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda where, as Wynter explains, the debate centres on the issue of whether identity emerges through "Las Casas's theocentric Christian, or that of the newly invented Man of the humanists, as the rational (or ratiocentric) political subject of the state."[20] The emphasis on rationality points to the mind-body dualism that would be popularized in the seventeenth century, which will be discussed later in this article.

This transitional point in the change from exploration as a divine mission to exploration for mercantile profit was led by men such as Columbus, whose mission challenged the Christian Church's orthodoxy of the earth's geography.[21] Although Wynter frames Columbus as a rebel in this sense of the geography of the known world, the concept of "discovery" now held a place both within the Catholic Church and also the "statal order," which came with rewards that included specific privileges given to individuals who could prove they were the first to exploit land in non-Christian territory. The Church would legitimize exploration for mercantile profit through papal bulls like the *Inter Caetera*, and granted the authority to "divide up the territories of the non-Christian parts of the globe, according to *which* the Christian state had first *arrived* at a part of the world hitherto unknown to Europeans and therefore 'discovered' it."[22] This notion of "discovery" is supported by the concept of *Terra Nullius*, or nobody's land, and, as Sai Englert outlines in *Settler Colonialism* (2022), it is "a key justifying narrative for settler expansion around the globe. The claim of non-existing occupancy before 'discovery' was a central aspect when claiming ownership over land and removing the Indigenous people who inhabited it."[23] This concept therefore implies that Indigenous peoples around the world are nobody, and have been treated as such.

[17] Wynter 1995, 16.

[18] Ibid., 17.

[19] Wynter 2003, 287.

[20] Ibid., 288.

[21] Wynter 1995, 20.

[22] Ibid., 24.

[23] Englert 2022, 63.

Of course, the apocalyptic millenarian beliefs that drove Columbus' mission create a contradiction which still exists in theory today. Wynter explains that with "the imminent Second Coming of Christ, and therefore of *all* the peoples of the world having to be converted to the Christian faith, Columbus put forward the hypothesis of an earth that had been intended for 'life and the creation of souls.'"[24] Therefore, Indigenous peoples were at once nobody, not people, not able to hold land, but also potential converts to Christianity. The conversion of Indigenous peoples has remained important to settler colonialism since 1492, whether as the mission of Jesuit missionaries or as a means of assimilation through church-run residential schools. In Canada, Indigenous people have been dehumanized to the point that the federal-provincial reserve commission in British Columbia claimed to own the land, and that the federal government "owned the Indians."[25] The idea that a group of people can be owned because of the land they live on follows the long existing logic of placing Indigenous peoples on the side of nature. Although First Nations peoples in Canada were not considered persons under the Indian Act, and did not receive Canadian citizenship without simultaneously losing their Indian Status until 1956, there is a long history of assimilationist policies within Canada. These take the attitude that Indigenous people are a problem to be dealt with, and the solution is to politically and culturally assimilate them in order to gain unfettered access to the land.

As with the conversion of souls to the Catholic Church following Columbus' "discovery" of the New World, Canadian assimilation involved the Christian churches, which helped to run the residential school system in Canada. The efforts to force enfranchisement upon Indigenous people are described by Mary-Ellen Kelm and Keith D. Smith in *Talking Back to the Indian Act* (2018), who discuss Canada's introduction of several amendments to the Indian Act prior to 1920 which were designed to restrict conditions in which Indigenous nations could resist assimilation.[26] These efforts removed the need to gain consent from both individuals and communities to enfranchise Indigenous peoples. It is also important to note that the 1920 amendment also includes the new provision for mandatory attendance at residential schools, in order to "further expedite assimilation."[27] The othering and exclusion of Indigenous peoples under colonization and the efforts to assimilate both contribute to the furthering of settler colonialism because both result in the acquisition of land, be it through expropriating land and confining Indigenous peoples on reserves or through cultural genocide and the political assimilation of Indigenous peoples.

Colonization and the Enlightenment

In the century following 1492, texts and images of Indigenous peoples spread throughout Europe. As Sylvia Wynter has shown, these European representations of "a new image of the earth" relied upon a revival of Greek and Roman systems of knowledge which had previously been stigmatized as pagan learning.[28] Amerigo Vespucci published his ethnography of the New World (*Mundus Novus*) in 1504, which was based on his experiences of the voyages that took place in 1499-1500 and 1501-02. In Janice Acoose-Miswonigeesikokwe's book *Iskwewak Kah'Ki Ya Ni Wahkomakanak: Neither Indian Princesses nor Easy Squaws* (2016), she locates the

[24] Wynter 1995, 25.

[25] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 30.

[26] Kelm and Smith 2018, 119.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Wynter 1995, 17.

origin of the sexist and racist stereotypes Indigenous women face within Vespucci's work, where he "wrote that when Indigenous women 'had the opportunity of copulating with Christians, urged by excessive lust, they defiled and prostituted themselves.'"[29] Vespucci's letters also include ethnographic descriptions of the Indigenous peoples he encountered, which likewise influenced the way Europeans understood and thought about Indigenous peoples. In the "Letter of Amerigo Vespucci to a 'Magnificent Lord'" he writes: "Their mode of life is very barbarous, for they have no regular time for their meals, but they eat at any time that they have the wish, as often as night as in the day—indeed, they eat at all hours."[30] He continues to describe the Indigenous peoples that he encountered on these voyages, stating: "They have none of the riches which are looked upon as such in our Europe and in other parts, such as gold, pearls, or precious stones: and even if they have them in their country, they do not work to get them."[31] This statement shows the underlying judgment against Indigenous peoples for failing to exploit the natural resources of their land to its full monetary potential, and it is this attitude which is at the root of Manuel's statement earlier in this article that "our property is not to be valued in the same way that Europeans value property until it is firmly held in European hands."[32]

Vespucci continues his descriptions of their manners and customs, writing that "[t]hey do not practise matrimony among them, each man taking as many women as he likes, and when he is tired of a woman he repudiates her without either injury to himself or shame to the woman, for in this matter the woman has the same liberty as the man."[33] Throughout his descriptions Vespucci makes several moral judgements, describing how women who are angry at their husbands will often abort their children "with certain poisonous herbs or roots, and destroy the child" and he claims "many infants perish in this way." He continues by comparing the laws and religion of Indigenous peoples to those he is already familiar with: "We did not find that these people had any laws; they cannot be called Moors nor Jews, but worse than Gentiles. For we did not see that they offered any sacrifices, nor have they any place of worship. I judge their lives to be Epicurean."[34] Similar depictions were used to justify the enslavement of Indigenous peoples from Africa. An example of this comes from the writings of Gomes Eanes de Zurara in 1444. He wrote that in Africa "[t]hey live like beasts, without any custom of civilized beings...They were without covering of clothes, or the lodgment of houses; and worst of all, they had no understanding of good, but only knew how to live in bestial sloth."[35]

[29] Acoose-Miswonigeesikokwe 2016, 33.

[30] Vespucci, translated by Markham 2012, 7-8.

[31] Ibid., 9-10.

[32] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 56.

[33] Vespucci, translated by Markham 2012, 7-8.

[34] Ibid., 8-9.

[35] Sartwell 2019.

Fig. 1: "Allegory of America," Jan van der Straet (Stradanus), c. 1587-89.
Metropolitan Museum, New York. Public Domain.
https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/343845; link accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

These moralistic ethnographic descriptions of Indigenous people spread throughout Europe following 1492, and inspired artwork and images based on descriptions from writers such as Vespucci. One such image, "Allegory of America" (1587-89) by Jan van der Straet, who was otherwise known as Stradanus, depicts Vespucci naming the allegorical woman in the image "America," the feminized version of his name. She is described as "[wearing] only a feathered headdress and skirt, her club abandoned against the tree at the right, where an anteater is shown feasting. Set behind her in the rolling landscape is a horse and a bear and a scene of cannibalism."[36] This is one of several allegorical images of America, and the other continents, that were produced during the early modern period, and which depict America as a woman. In Maria Lugones' analysis of this image, she emphasizes how this encounter between Vespucci and America is heavily eroticized and depicts the underlying ideas for a gendered hierarchy centred on sexual purity. Lugones turns to the analysis of this image by Anne McClintock, who writes, "the indigenous woman extends an inviting hand, insinuating sex and submission....Vespucci, the godlike arrival, is destined to inseminate her with his male seeds of civilization, fructify the wilderness and quell the riotous scenes of cannibalism in the background."[37] The combination of cannibalism and eroticized sexuality conveys to the late sixteenth-century European viewer the animalistic nature of Indigenous peoples, especially in comparison to Europeans. This is also the type of image Crispin Sartwell refers

[36] This text description accompanies the Met Museum's image online: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/343845; link accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

[37] Lugones 2007, 205.

to in his article "Western Philosophy as White Supremacism" when he describes how, during the Enlightenment period, "Sub-Saharan African peoples, as well as the indigenous peoples of the Americas, were pictured relentlessly, even in the Enlightenment philosophical texts themselves, as sheer bodies, while the European thinkers were, in their own view, minds." Sartwell continues his discussion by saying that "Indigenous peoples were understood to still be part of nature (and were devalued in that identification), whereas Europe had supposedly emerged from nature into culture."[38]

The juxtaposition that is happening here identifies Indigenous peoples as non-thinking bodies who are found in an undeveloped nature, while Europeans possess the ability to think and are separated from nature by their culture. These ideas were coming to the forefront of European thought following the events of 1492 and emerged in public discourse through academic debate in Spain where professors, such as Melchor Cano and Domingo de Soto, left their positions in the university to become councilors and diplomats and to participate in debate between what had become the three branches of learning relating to moral problems: theology, civil, law, and canon law.[39] In 1548, Sepúlveda produced *Democrates secundus sive de justis causis belli apud Indos*, described by Anthony Pagden as "the most virulent and uncompromising argument for the inferiority of the American Indian ever written."[40] This text was rejected by the universities of Alcalá and Salamanca and condemned by them. When Sepúlveda responded to critiques, he defended himself by stating that his argument derived from the first book of Aristotle's *Politics*, in which the ancient philosopher had laid out his theory of natural slavery.[41] Sepúlveda's text incited Las Casas, who attempted to show that "preconquest Indian communities fulfilled all of Aristotle's requirements for a true civil society"[42] during the Valladolid debates of 1550-51. According to Wynter, this debate is a clash between the two different conceptions of humanity: "one for which the expansion of the Spanish state was envisaged as a function of the Christian evangelizing mission, the Other for which the latter mission was seen as a function of the imperial expansion of the state; a dispute, then, between the theocentric conception of the human, Christian, and the new humanist and ratiocentric conception of the human, Man."[43] The idea that Indigenous peoples could be natural slaves was what Pagden describes as a "solution to a political dilemma: by what right had the crown of Castile occupied and enslaved the inhabitants of territories to which it could make no prior claims based on history?"[44] This line of thinking established through public discourse and debate continued throughout the Enlightenment and helped to create a framework which allows for the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples. This framework and these ideas about Indigenous peoples, which have emerged in stereotypes such as the savage or the squaw, are still present in Western culture today and remain the underlying principles upon which settler colonialism is based both philosophically and legally.[45]

[38] Sartwell 2019.

[39] Pagden 1982, 27.

[40] Ibid., 109.

[41] Ibid., 111.

[42] Ibid., 121.

[43] Wynter 2003, 287.

[44] Pagden 1982, 27.

[45] The legal ramifications of settler colonialism can be found in the Declaration of Independence, the Marshall Decision, and the Indian Act.

Sartwell concludes that "white supremacy lurks at the heart of Western metaphysics. This structure is formulated with crystal clarity by Descartes, who separates mind and body as two fundamentally different sorts of things and arranges them in a hierarchy of value." Nevertheless, he makes clear that he does not believe that Descartes and other philosophers such as Kant, Fischer, and Korsgaard were white supremacists but rather that the "metaphysics and ethics they endorse grew up in connection with white supremacism and helped shape it."[46] Descartes' own education benefitted from Europe's return to a Greco-Roman system of knowledge and his metaphysics is shaped by thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle. Sartwell establishes this connection when he quotes Descartes' statement that "reason alone makes us men and distinguishes us from the beasts," pointing out that Descartes here echoes Plato and Pythagoras. Descartes continues: "on this point to adopt the common opinion of philosophers, who say that the difference of greater and less hold only among the *accidents*, and not among the *forms or natures of individuals* of the same *species*."[47] Thus, Descartes only differentiates the level or ability of one's reason based on the accidents of one's life, such as level of formal education, but explicitly states that those of the same species are more or less the same. In the accounts of Indigenous peoples in Africa and the Americas, the dialogue at the time distinguishes them as beasts and describes them as barbarous, therefore differentiating Indigenous peoples as not part of the same species as Europeans. In turning to beasts, Descartes says of animals: "the animals void of Reason may be said wholly to resemble us; but among which I could not discover any of those that, as dependent on thought alone, belong to us as men, while, on the other hand, I did afterwards discover these as soon as I supposed God to have created a Rational Soul, and to have annexed it to this body in a particular manner which I described."[48] Thus, he acknowledges that animals may have a resemblance to humans, but man is alone in possessing a Rational Soul. The divide which is established between the animals which appear to be human and Man as a rational being is part of the Western framework which dehumanizes Indigenous people and, at the same time, justifies colonial actions.

In order to differentiate between "men and brutes," Descartes conceived of two tests. The first "is that they [i.e., brutes] could never use words or other signs arranged in such a manner as is competent to us in order to declare our thoughts to others." The second is "that although such machines might execute many things with equal or perhaps greater perfection than any of us, they would, without doubt, fail in certain others from which it could be discovered that they did not act from knowledge, but solely from the disposition of their organs."[49] Descartes believed that any human could pass these two tests, and that an animal would fail. Interestingly, one of the earliest criteria in the Indian Act for enfranchisement, and thus assimilation, was for Indians who were admitted to universities. The Indian Act of 1876 states:

> Any Indian who may be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or to any other degree by any University of Learning, or who may be admitted in any Province of the Dominion to practice law either as an Advocate or as a Barrister or Counsellor or Solicitor or Attorney or to be a Notary Public, or who may enter Holy Orders or who may be licensed by any denomination of

[46] Sartwell 2019.

[47] Descartes 1637/1850, 44.

[48] Ibid., 88.

[49] Descartes 1637/1850, 97-98.

> Christians as a Minister of the Gospel, shall *ipso facto* become and be enfranchised under this Act.[50]

This caveat for becoming a citizen of Canada and earning the right to vote appears to be contingent on the ability to pass the tests which Descartes has laid out for reason. Those unable to meet this qualification in 1876 would remain an Indian under the Act, and thus a 'brute' in the eyes of the West.

Cartesian thought in relation to animals developed into the idea that animals are non-thinking automata who lack the ability to both think and feel. Complicating matters is the story of Descartes kicking his own dog and claiming that it could not feel. This story has been challenged by many philosophers, who instead attribute it to one of Descartes' followers, Nicolas Malebranche. According to Francis Lecompte's article "Animals: from mechanical objects to sentient subjects," Malebranche compared the "cries of the animal to the sounds made by a bell being struck [and] his excuse was that he was simply applying the ideas of his mentor René Descartes." [51] Although who is responsible for the notion of animals as mechanical automata is still being debated, the notion of "the Cartesian model of an animal that does nothing more than respond mechanically to stimuli remained alive and kicking right up to the dawn of the twentieth century."[52] Lecompte explains that the popular understanding of animals as automata began to change around this time when scientists began to study behavior in animals.

The Greco-Roman Return

Descartes' formulation of the soul was influenced by philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. In Plato's Socratic dialogue in Book Four of *The Republic*, Socrates poses questions about the nature of the soul: "Do we do each of these things with the same part of ourselves? Or, since there are three elements, do we do different things with different elements? Is there one element in us for learning, another for feeling spirited, and yet a third for our desire for the pleasures of food, sex, and things like that? Or do we do each of these things, when we embark upon them, with our entire soul?"[53] After much debate with Glaucon, Socrates declares, "'It will be a reasonable inference, then...that they are two completely different things. The part of the soul with which we think rationally we can call the rational element. The part with which we feel sexual desire, hunger, thirst, and the turmoil of the other desires can be called the irrational and desiring element, the companion of indulgence and pleasure."[54]

Plato continues the dialogue with an analogy comparing the soul to the city: "is the soul like the city? The city was held together by three classes, commercial, auxiliary and decision making. Does the soul also contain this third, spirited, element, which is auxiliary to the rational element by nature, provided it is not corrupted by a poor upbringing?"[55] After convincing Glaucon of the tripartite nature of the soul, Socrates also acknowledges that some human children do not develop rationality as they mature, thus implying that not all humans have the rational part of the soul. In addition, through Socrates, Plato states that

[50] Kelm and Smith 2018, 96.

[51] Lecompte 2023.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Plato, *The Republic*, translated by Griffith 2000, 436b.

[54] Ibid., 439d.

[55] Ibid., 441a.

"Even in animals you can see that what you are talking about applies," using the example from Homer's *Odyssey*, "He smote his chest, and thus rebuked his heart."[56] This passage compares the spirit to a dog; however, this example only uses two elements of the soul, implying that animals lack something which humans may possess.

Although Aristotle conceptualizes the soul differently than Plato, there are still some important similarities between their theories. Abraham Bos explains that "Aristotle divides the realm of (sublunary) living creatures into three subrealms, plants, animals, and human beings. To each subrealm he assigns a different soul-principle. Plants have a vegetative or nutritive soul; animals have a sensitive soul; and human beings have a rational soul."[57] Aristotle categorizes the soul into three types and only assigns the designation of having a rational soul to humans. However, the main difference between Aristotle and Plato's theories on the soul emerges with the body/soul divide. Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not follow the same soul/body distinction but instead, as is summarized by Thomas Olshewsky: "'Soul is an actuality or formulable essence of something that possesses a potentiality of being besouled' ([*On the Soul*] 414a27). In the course of coming to this conclusion he treats soul as an instance of form and of actuality, and in parallel fashion he treats body as an instance of matter and of potentiality."[58] In comparison, for Plato "the soul is conceived as substantial, personal and separable. As substantial, it is a stuff or entity distinguishable from the body; as personal, it has individual characteristics that distinguish it from the souls of others; as separable, it is not dependent upon the body for its existence."[59] While Aristotle discerns three separate types of soul for plants, animals, and humans, for Plato, who focused on the human soul, the soul exists as a tripartite soul with the third element, rationality, being limited to human beings. Both see humans as the only beings capable of rational thought, however, and this is what distinguishes humans from other non-human animals. While both serve as influences on Descartes' work, as Sartwell points out, the *Cogito* is more closely related to Plato's conception of the soul.

As mentioned earlier in this article, Aristotle's *Politics*, and debates involving arguments about natural slavery, had already proven important in the discourse surrounding the humanity of Indigenous peoples. Aristotelian thought had already permeated European universities prior to colonization, with "the universities and colleges of Muslim Spain...already infused with the thought of Aristotle from the 12th century onwards"[60] and professors from the University of Paris, who "would go on to be the first philosophers in New Spain, had already absorbed Aristotle from Latin as well as Eastern sources." The interpretations of Aristotle by Averröes (1126-1198) outline how "some individuals have an abundance of rationality by nature and are capable of attaining the ultimate truths of science and faith. In contrast, common folk are better off being obedient to the wise" which would, according to the work of Virgina Aspe Armella, have an influence on the formation of "a colonial order of castes" justified by Aristotle and Averröes' theories on the soul and natural slavery.[61]

[56] Plato, *The Republic*, translated by Griffith 2000, 441b (quoting *Odyssey* 20.17).

[57] Bos 2010, 821-822.

[58] Olshewsky 1976, 397.

[59] Ibid., 392.

[60] Aspe Armella 2025, 49.

[61] Ibid., 49-50.

In Aristotle's discussion of slavery in Book I of *Politics*, he states that "among barbarians no distinction is made between women and slaves, because there is no natural ruler among them: they are a community of slaves, male and female. That is why the poets say, 'It is meet that Hellenes should rule over barbarians;' as if they thought that the barbarian and the slave were by nature one."[62] Aristotle goes on to explain that "in the arrangement of the family, a slave is a living possession"[63] and later, "The master is only the master of the slave; he does not belong to him, whereas the slave is not only the slave of his master, but wholly belongs to him."[64]

The infamous description of the slave as a living possession is discussed by Emily Greenwood, who focuses in particular on the translation offered by C.D.C. Reeve: "the slave is a sort of animate piece of property." She points out that, in contrast, the Jowett translation leaves out the important detail "a sort of," which she explains "connotes vagueness and indicates the oddity of what Aristotle is claiming: how can a person be a thing or an object (*ktēma*), and how can a piece of property be animate/possess a soul (*empyschon*)?" [65] Greenwood contends that behind this metaphoric description of the slave is "a legal definition that itself relies on a metaphor in which the law's addressees are encouraged to think of one thing (a person) as something else (an item of property)" and explains how this connects to "tensions and intellectual evasions inherent in the institution of chattel slavery."[66] While Greenwood is clear that Aristotle's use of the term "barbarians" does not map directly onto modern slavery, she explains that "Aristotle's ready use of chauvinistic binary contrasts between Greeks and Barbarians shares kinship with the use of binary polarization in modern racial theories."[67] This makes Aristotle's work easy justification for the enslavement of Indigenous peoples following 1492, and the establishment of chattel slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Greenwood compares the metaphorical language of Aristotle to the method Hortense Spillers deploys to analyze the language of race laws in the American South to reveal the way they dehumanize those who are enslaved. She draws on the example Spillers examines from an 1806 Louisiana statue which states: "Slaves shall always be reputed and considered real estate; shall, as such, be subject to be mortgaged, according to the rules prescribed by law, and they shall be seized and sold as real estate." Spillers points out the words 'reputed' and 'considered' here are predicate adjectives which "denote a contrivance, not an intransitive 'is'." Greenwood explains that this language is used to "normalize non-obvious relations and to camouflage exclusive categories of the human."[68] While language may be used to debate and define the Other who is a slave, it is always experienced in the bodily for Black and Indigenous peoples. This is how settler colonialism has designed it to be experienced because, following Aristotle, "slaves have the bodies of freemen and freemen the souls only."[69] Thus, the subjection of those considered to be lacking rationality and, in turn, humanity, is normalized through Western thought.

[62] Aristotle, *Politics*, translated by Barnes 2016, 1252b5 (quoting Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1400).

[63] Ibid., 1253b32.

[64] Ibid., 1254a11.

[65] Greenwood 2022, 343.

[66] Ibid., 345.

[67] Ibid., 350.

[68] Greenwood 2022, 337.

[69] Ibid., 342.

Conclusion

"Does Indians have feelings?"[70] is a question which is entangled with Western philosophy all the way back to Plato and Aristotle and their conceptualizations of the soul. Only humans have a rational component to the soul, but within this framing, the idea of feeling is not relegated only to humans. In the debate between Socrates and Glaucon, Socrates explains: "The part with which we feel sexual desire, hunger, thirst, and the turmoil of the other desires can be called the irrational and desiring element, the companion of indulgence and pleasure."[71] Thus, we can understand the oversexualization of Indigenous women as being related to the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples overall, but also an expression of this Platonic overindulgence in pleasure. At the same time, however, within the colonial construct of Indigenous people, human emotions and feeling are not afforded to Indigenous peoples. Although Vespucci references hundreds of thousands of souls that he encounters during his voyages to the New World, Indigenous people soon became subject to systemic dehumanization through the writing of people such as Vespucci, along with artists who were inspired by his work. The images and texts showing and describing Indigenous peoples from Africa and the Americas proliferated in the centuries following 1492 and, as Sartwell emphasizes, metaphysics developed alongside white supremacy and helped to shape it. It is during this time period that animals begin to be thought of in terms of non-feeling automata, and due to the racist depictions of Indigenous peoples, they too get classified in this way. The hierarchy of body and mind established during the Enlightenment is reflected in the racial, class, and gender-based hierarchies that Indigenous scholars have been challenging for decades, and which place Indigenous women at the bottom, at the same level as animals.

The situating of Indigenous peoples on the side of nature and as sub-human has permeated every facet of Western society and can be found in philosophy and literature, but is also present in healthcare disparities and discrimination, environmental racism, education inequalities, racial disparities in the criminal justice system, and housing inequities. These injustices are part of the system of settler colonialism the West has built and are justified using the same types of excuses and myths that Manuel dealt with over 50 years ago, which are carried on through stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as "dirty, squaw, bad mothers, lazy, promiscuous, irresponsible, addicts, criminals, prostitutes, easy, bad with money, bad wives, dumb, stupid, hysterical, angry, wild in bed, useless, drunks, worthless, without feeling, violent, weak, partiers, [and] alcoholics."[72] Even as an Indigenous scholar, these stereotypes are felt by myself every day and present themselves in a variety of ways, from the anecdotes discussed in the introduction, to the epidemic of sexual and physical violence that presents itself through the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across North America. Indigenous scholars continue to challenge the legacy and violence of colonialism that began over 500 years ago and remind us that we have to work to rid ourselves of the many different forms of violence that continue to be committed against Indigenous peoples today.

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[70] Manuel and Posluns 1974/2019, 2.

[71] Plato, *The Republic*, translated by Griffith 2000, 439d.

[72] Simpson 2017, 84.

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Indigenous Thoughts and Ancient Philosophy

Ashley Lance

Abstract: This article grapples with the relationships and assumptions that define how Indigenous philosophy is or is not related to the study of ancient philosophy. I show that these assumptions are defined by a willingness to contrast Greek and Roman philosophy with Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems as being from a distant past. I argue that this tendency reveals larger questions at hand: what 'counts' as philosophy? Who can 'do' philosophy? In the first section of this article, I address these questions following the works of Charles Mills, Hamid Dabashi. I argue that Indigenous people can do philosophy. In the final sections of this article, taking lessons from Coyote, V.F. Cordova, and Brian Burkhart I demonstrate how Indigenous philosophies are beneficial for creating space for new methods on approaching ancient texts.

Keywords: Indigenous philosophy, ancient philosophy, Charles Mills, Hamid Dabashi, Global philosophy.

I begin this article with two stories.[1] This first story is neither Wiyot nor Yurok, but it features characters that resonate with the stories I was told as a child. Brian Yazzie Burkhart, Cherokee, tells this story at the beginning of a chapter entitled 'What Coyote and Thales can teach us':

> 'Coyote is wandering around in his usual way when he comes upon a prairie dog town. The prairie dogs laugh and curse at him. Coyote gets angry and wants revenge. The sun is high in the sky. Coyote decides he wants clouds to come. He is starting to hate the prairie dogs and so thinks about rain. Just then a cloud appears. Coyote says "I wish it would rain on me". And that is what happened. Coyote says "I wish there were rain at my feet". And that is what happened. "I want the rain up to my waist" he then says. And that is what happened. The water continues to rise higher and higher as Coyote begins to think and speak about it. Before long, the whole land is flooded' (2004, p. 16).

Burkhart goes on to contrast the figure of Coyote with the image of Thales in Plato's *Theaetetus*. Plato's Thales is a version of the true philosopher, so engrossed in looking up at the sky that he does not even notice he has fallen into a hole. Thales' enslaved Thracian mocks that he claims to know the heavens, but does not know what is under his feet (*Theat.* 174b). Burkhart's invocation of this story alongside the one he chooses to share of Coyote emphasizes a core mistake when approaching philosophy: forgetting to be connected with what is around you. His comparison of Coyote and Thales also offers a useful contrast for this article in terms of the dividing lines between 'ancient' and 'Indigenous' philosophy. The former tradition is given accolades as the beginnings of philosophy, shaping notions of

[1] I would like to offer wok-hlew to Hannah and Tara for guiding me through this process with patience and care. Wok-hlew as well to Ashton, Cassandra, Kendall, and Jennifer for their contributions. Finally, Wok-hlew to the *Res Diff* contributing editors and team for their hard work and help.

civilization and progress. The latter, however, has been understood until recently to be representative of a barbarian or minoritized philosophical discourse, if anything at all.

The apparent dichotomy between ancient and Indigenous philosophy is made clear in my second story. In the spring of 2022, during the first year of my PhD, a seminar was offered on the historiography of philosophy. This seminar was loosely structured on a lecture series given under the same name by Michael Frede at Oxford in the 1980s. The seminar asked us to consider what we were doing as modern subjects when we study ancient philosophers. Was what we ourselves were doing really something we could call philosophy? Or were our research projects better described as intellectual history? To answer these questions, we not only looked at Frede's response but also examined a series of articles which attempted to 'place' ancient philosophy inside the purview of the discipline of philosophy. As we moved through the seminar, one constant in the pieces we read were the brief mentions of 'Native American' philosophy, which were consistently contrasted with ancient philosophy.[2] I began to keep track of these instances and noticed that a certain conception of what constituted Native American philosophy underpinned these remarks: according to these scholars, whatever Native American philosophy was belonged to the distant past. I began to feel that as someone who is Indigenous, even though I work on Plato and Aristotle, I might not be able to do philosophy at all. I also became worried that these remarks reflected a pervasive belief that there is or was no philosophy in North, Central, or South America until Europeans graced us with the gift of philosophy. Further assumptions surrounding the 'past'-ness of Indigenous philosophy became apparent. One reason it seemed so easy to group Greek and Roman philosophy with Indigenous philosophy is a shared assumption that the beliefs which marked Indigenous thought are primitive and no longer practiced. Just like the ancient Greeks and Romans, Indigenous thought is dead and in the distant past.[3] The tension then arises from a presumption of shared distance between modern academic philosophers and the history of philosophy.

In this article, I unpack the presumptions made about ancient and Indigenous philosophy along with the concerns they left with me.[4] Those concerns stem from an uneasiness with the ways in which Indigenous peoples and Indigenous systems of knowledge are contrasted with the Greek and Roman tradition. The present piece also meditates on larger questions relating to the definition of philosophy itself: what 'counts' as philosophy, and what does not? Further to this, is the title of 'philosophy' even worth pursuing, particularly to the intellectual communities it has excluded? As I examine these concerns, I will begin by surveying some of the statements that have been made which compare Indigenous philosophy to Greek and Roman philosophical traditions. In part, this will include examining how scholars of ancient philosophy relate their own subject to the history of philosophy by defining their academic discipline through the exclusion of other philosophical traditions. I will then consider what it even means to be included or excluded from 'philosophy' itself. In offering a critique of 'philosophy' in its limited form (i.e., as an

[2] I offer the story of this seminar not as a condemnation but an explanation for the purposes of this article. I would like to thank the convener and my fellow participants for encouraging me to offer a presentation on the remarks we encountered in the seminar.

[3] I am invoking the language of 'the dead' here to parallel the rhetoric Rorty uses to describe his views on the history of philosophy, which will be explored in the first section.

[4] See Todd (2016) for a similar approach to critiquing academic disciplines. In the case of Todd, the discipline under critique is anthropology but the main contentions are the same: a refusal to acknowledge the presence of Indigenous thought.

academic discipline), I show how Charles Mills, through his development of a Black philosophy, offers a way to reconceptualize philosophy. Even further, by engaging with Hamid Dabashi's influential article 'Can non-Europeans think?', I contend that Mills' arguments are in keeping with the calls from anti-colonial thinkers to abandon philosophy. Mills and Dabashi lay the groundwork to provide a critique of inclusive or 'global' philosophy, which seeks to show how non-Western philosophy can exhibit the same traits and 'rigor' of academic philosophy. In the final section of this article, I show how these distinctions between philosophy and thought, and the critiques of disciplinarity, are apparent in Indigenous philosophies. Using work from V.F. Cordova and Brian Burkhart, I show how Indigenous philosophy creates space for broader conceptions of thinking and offering new methods for thinking with ancient thought.

Before we begin, I want to make a brief note about my use of the term 'Indigenous'. For the most part, when I use the word, I will be referring to Indigenous people from North, Central, and South American contexts. This is not because I think this is the only claim to Indigeneity, but because I am speaking as a North American Indigenous person. While speaking from this positionality, I also do not foreclose the interpretive possibilities which emerge from the scholarship of African philosophy, Indigenous African philosophy, and Indigenous philosophy in other areas of the world.

Mapping Ancient and Indigenous Philosophy

τὸ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἔργον ἔνιοί φασιν ἀπὸ βαρβάρων ἄρξαι
'Some say that the work of philosophy began among the barbarians'

— Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 1.1

This section surveys the comments that have been made about the status of ancient philosophy and its place in the history of philosophy. Specifically, I will be pointing to moments where these discussants choose to include or exclude 'Indigenous', 'Native American', or even 'Barbarian philosophy'. My suggestion is that these small moments (sometimes obviously—sometimes not so obviously) reveal a slip: whatever Indigenous philosophy might be, is not thought of as deserving the title of 'philosophy'.

To begin with, I turn to Michael Frede's *Historiography of Philosophy*. This work, published in 2021, began as a lecture series held at Oxford between 1989 and 1990. In the lectures, Frede is concerned with the question of what ancient philosophers are doing. Is it doxography? Is it philosophy? What is the difference between a historical version of history of philosophy and a philosophical version of history of philosophy? (Frede, 2021). These questions point towards a worry that what we do in ancient philosophy might not actually be 'philosophy' properly speaking. Here, I want to flag that this is a worry that will crop up in the rest of the sources I will be examining. This anxiety pertains to a suspicion that though the ancients seemed to be doing philosophy, what modern scholars are doing might seem like something very different–something that attempts to track intellectual history and context, but not something that is interested in providing and developing answers to philosophical questions.

Returning to Frede, his lecture on doxography attempts to rehabilitate the genre from the idea that it is merely a collection of various philosophers' opinions, suggesting instead that doxography can be a philosophical exercise in its own right (Frede, 2021, p. 20). Frede analyzes the lengthy history of the genre, from its origin in antiquity with Diogenes Laertius

(third century CE), to the doxographical practices of nineteenth century Europe. As part of his characterization of philosophical doxography as developmental (he views it as increasingly critical and comprehensive over time), Frede includes a reference to Indigenous philosophy:

> 'And when we come to Brucker [Johann Jakob Brucker, 1696-1770] we not only find ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy but also barbarian philosophy, including the philosophy of the Native Americans' (2021, p. 24).

The 'philosophy of Native Americans' is subsumed under the general umbrella of 'barbarian philosophy'. On the one hand, this counts Indigenous peoples as having philosophy, but the language surrounding this inclusion is not something to take lightly.

Other philosophers interested in the question of what philosophy is, and what the history of philosophy is specifically, have similar slips. Richard Rorty, for instance, discusses what historians of philosophy who apply anachronistic philosophic or scientific concepts really want: namely, for past philosophers to be persuaded to accept modern differences on 'grounds they would accept' (Rorty, 1984, p. 51). In making this argument, Rorty imagines an encounter between an ideal Aristotle, an 'Aborigine' [Indigenous Person], and a Gulag guard. This exercise is in service of his broader conception of one genre of history of philosophy: historical or rational accounts. This genre seeks to ask what a philosopher from the past might think about a present issue (1984, p. 50). In pursuit of these questions, Rorty makes a direct comparison to the aims of the anthropologist who 'wants to know how primitives talk to fellow-primitives as well as how they react to instruction from missionaries. For this purpose he tries to get inside their heads, and to think in terms which he would never dream of employing at home' (1984, p. 50). It is through this account of a historical approach to history of philosophy, that Rorty describes what the Indigenous person can be 'brought to accept' in contrast to Aristotle:

> 'The ideal aborigine can eventually be brought to accept a description of himself as having cooperated in the continuation of a kinship system designed to facilitate the unjust economic arrangements of his tribe. An ideal Gulag guard can eventually be brought to regard himself as having betrayed his loyalty to his fellow-Russians. An ideal Aristotle can be brought to describe himself as having mistaken the preparatory taxonomic stages of biological research for the essence of all scientific inquiry. Each of these imaginary people, by the time he has been brought to accept such a new description of what he meant or did, has become "one of us"' (Rorty, 1984, p. 51).

These comments not only represent a racist and regressive view of the status of Indigenous peoples but showcase the flippancy with which Indigenous thought is treated. We might ask why Rorty has chosen this specific example. Which tribes have unjust economic systems? And what makes those systems unjust? According to who? That the invocation of Indigenous people here is one of a stereotype–so far away from grasping any specifics that it is hard to imagine if there is any Tribe that actually has the practices Rorty describes–showcases the depths of racism at play here.[5] That this example is preceded by the description of an anthropologist who is not just studying but assessing for the purposes of missionary work implicates him in settler colonial violence. If the first example contains an implicit assumption of colonial violence, the second example surrounding the Gulag guard

[5] See Blackhawk and Wilner (2018) for a discussion of Franz Boas' impact in moving away from describing Indigenous peoples as primitive, as well as critiques of his method.

is telling. We might not know the individual Gulag guard or suspect that this is another disingenuous example made by Rorty, but the fact that this is more specific should tell us something about the minimization of Indigenous thought. In light of these examples, the question of whether or not Aristotle might accept a different account of the natural world seems banal.

Finally, Rorty's example is useful in showcasing the temporal assumptions made about 'ancient' philosophies. Throughout his article, Rorty is emphatic in labelling past philosophers as the 'dead' where in this first genre of philosophy in particular the questions surrounding its methods are boiled down to 'making clear what the dead really said' (1984, p. 53).[6] It is telling that his imagined anthropologist is in the more recent past. Aristotle, however, is used throughout the article as a stock example of someone who is *really* dead. As will be shown in the rest of this article, the assumptions about what and who are in the past reveals what scholars are willing to label as philosophy. Aristotle is very dead and representative of thought which we would call mistaken but he is nonetheless a philosopher. Indigenous peoples, however, exist in the confines of anthropology, contributing to philosophy in neither past nor present.

More recent attempts at describing ancient philosophy and its special status are instructive to show how it is defined against other modes of thinking. Julia Annas' *Ancient Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (2023) dedicates a chapter to discussing how ancient philosophy became mostly Greek and Roman. Annas considers the special status that has been attributed to the Greeks, and as a consequence, the Romans for 'using reasoning'.[7] Here, she addresses the 'unfortunate results' that this focus has had on ancient philosophy– namely, that other areas of the world which were engaging in philosophy during contemporary periods are downplayed, especially in regards to the 'Eastern' and 'Western Tradition' (Annas, 2023, p.103). In particular, she gestures towards some of the philosophical traditions of India as concurrent with many of the Greek and Roman philosophers, and in many ways influential towards some of their discussions (2023, pp. 104-105). What is more, she also points to (what she labels as) postcolonial critiques which have attempted to correct this divide, noting that 'we have yet to reach a completely postcolonial view, which can get beyond the false contrast of "Western rationalism" and "Eastern mysticism" and recognize the strong affinities between some of the Indian traditions and ancient Greek and Roman traditions more familiar in the West' (2023, p. 106). What is notable here is the use of 'we' in what postcolonial thought has failed to provide. The 'we' is left ambiguous and no clear citations are made of who the postcolonial thinkers are that have been unable to bridge Eastern and Western philosophies.[8]

Finally, Annas chooses to end the chapter by retelling a story written by a second century CE satirical author, Lucian of Samosata:

[6] In asking this question, Rorty uses Columbus and the 'discovery' of America as an example, however, it is not as helpful for the purposes of this article, but still worth noting nonetheless (1984, p. 53).

[7] Annas quotes Martin West (1986) who said the following: 'What provokes admiration is the mental vigor and independence with which these people sought after coherent systems and did not shrink from following their lines of thought to astonishing conclusions. It may well be that contact with oriental cosmology and theology helped to liberate their imagination; it certainly gave them many suggestive ideas. But they taught themselves to reason. Philosophy as we understand it is a Greek idea.' This sense of specialness attributed to the Greeks will be discussed in the next section.

[8] See Lance (forthcoming) on the use of Aristotle. See also Wynter (2003) for a broader break down and understanding of this history.

> 'In his essay *The Runaways* [8-21] he has Philosophy remind her father, the chief god Zeus, of the reason he sent her down to earth in the first place, namely so that humans, hitherto ignorantly and violently mismanaging their lives, would do better. First, she continues, she went on her improving way to India, to the Brahmans, then to Ethiopia, Egypt, and Babylon, and then to the wild north. Finally she went to the Greeks...Philosophy goes on to complain about the less than wonderful time she went on to have in Greece. Most people respect her, she says, though without understanding her, and there are genuine philosophers who love and strive for truth, and this makes it worth while' (2023, p. 106).

In some ways, ending with this story points to some of the contradictions of attributing a special place for Greeks because of their development of philosophy. It seems difficult to square with the Athenians' reaction to Socrates or the Platonic complaint of sophistry running rampant. However, what is more interesting in this story is where Philosophy goes first: from India, she travels to Ethiopia, Egypt, and Babylon, areas which are still contending with having a claim to philosophy in contemporary academic philosophy.[9] Furthermore, even in this story there is a gesture to a 'wild north', again appealing to the vaguest of stereotypes to conjure up images of Scythians or mythical Hyperboreans.[10] What is most noticeable about Annas' choice to end here is what areas of the world are not spoken to. Can redefining ancient philosophy only be done on an East/West divide, where West is a stand in for Western, white, often European practices of philosophy?[11] Where might Indigenous people fit in for Philosophy in this story?

There are further examples that are both implicit and explicit. For instance, consider the philosopher Levinas' remark: 'I always say, but in private, that the Greeks and the Bible are all that is serious in humanity. Everything else is dancing'. Or the inciting incident for Dabashi's piece 'Can Non-Europeans Think?', an introductory comment preceding an opinion piece by Slavoj Žižek, which reads:

> 'There are many important and active philosophers today: Judith Butler in the United States, Simon Critchley in England, Victoria Camps in Spain, Jean-Luc Nancy in France, Chantal Mouffe in Belgium, Gianni Vattimo in Italy, Peter Sloterdijk in Germany and in Slovenia, Slavoj Žižek, not to mention others working in Brazil, Australia and China' (Dabashi, 2013).

Again, we see that there is an omission in which places have philosophers. Not only that, but the list also implies that whiteness is the prerequisite of philosophy. Where we might imagine non-white philosophers would be–in this instance, the last three places mentioned–again we see the slip from the specific to the generic. There are philosophers working in Brazil, Australia, and China, but who are they? What does it serve not to include specific names in this list?

There is a similar statement to those quoted above, made in jest, by Jonathan Barnes in his infamous article 'Bagpipe music,' which surveys the declining state of ancient philosophy (Barnes, 2006). In his introduction he provides three warning statements:

[9] This will be explored further in the next section.

[10] See Gagné (2021).

[11] The idea that the Greeks in particular are responsible for Western philosophy and technology is still rearing its head, see for instance Soames (2019).

> 'First, I can only talk about what is quaintly called "ancient philosophy," i.e., about Act One of the history of philosophy. I don't know to what extent my remarks hold good in other parts of the world. Secondly, for the last decade I've been working in French-speaking Europe. I don't know, except at second-hand or by inference, what things are like in America or Australia or Antarctica. Thirdly, I shall say nothing about one half—and in most cases by far the more important half—of any ancient philosopher's activities; for I shall say nothing at all about teaching' (2004, p. 17).

We here see a flippant and casual regard for where philosophy might be done—with the joke being that the places he names are increasingly absurd. Who could be doing philosophy in Australia or Antarctica? Barnes continues his screed by lamenting the use of TLG (a searchable database of all extant texts in ancient Greek), the increasing metrics used to judge academic success via quantity and not quality, and the insistence that ancient philosophy produces people who can do philosophy.

The article ends on a darker note than might be indicated in the introduction. He warns that philosophy, along with Classics, will decline:

> 'The Knight is the most dangerous. There is no unhorsing him. He is there for keeps. Classics will continue to decline. In a few decades, the study of Greek will match the study of Coptic or of Akkadian. And there's nothing anyone can do about that. (But perhaps here will be something we can make of it. Akkadian—if not Coptic—seems to flourish)' (2006, p.20).

It is his final remarks in the conclusion, paired with the third warning in the introduction, that the article will not cover half of what philosophy is—i.e. teaching—that I want to focus on here. The fading of the study of Greek with the rise of other languages like Akkadian and Coptic relies on what he has left out of the discussion, that is teaching languages. If the focus of the article is to track the decline of ancient philosophy, why end on a note that is not even covered? The broader question that deserves to be unpacked however, is why Greek would 'match' Coptic or Akkadian. What underlying assumptions are being made about the study of Greek, that has privileged it to such a degree that it can only fall to 'non-Western' languages? I think the answer to this is that Greek, and ancient philosophy, is seen as integral to the development and maintenance of Western philosophy.

What Western philosophy looks like in contrast to non-Western philosophies will be explored in the next section. For now, we might ask: what does reviewing these comments tell us? On the side of Frede and Rorty, there seems to be some type of concern with what is going on in ancient philosophy, and its status as philosophy proper or merely history. 'Including' Indigenous thought in doxographies, like the case Frede points to, is a positive in one sense, but the idea that it is 'barbarian' and 'other' should give us pause. Rorty is, I think, more honest in his analysis. He does not even consider whether Indigenous people have thought but goes ahead to conclude that any Indigenous way of life should be considered defective. Panning out to broader comments about who does philosophy and where it is done demonstrates that the status of Indigenous philosophy is not just a foil ancient philosophers can point to, but something all philosophers should contend with seriously. Barnes' comments show us the limits of a 'global' view of philosophy. The places where philosophy is imagined are marked by their relationship to western philosophy and the traditional canon.

Locating thought and philosophy

The last section explored the associations between 'ancient' philosophies and non-Western philosophies. We saw a tendency to worry about the philosophical relevance of maintaining Greek and Roman philosophy as a discipline. This section seeks to further unpack the underlying claims being made about the status of philosophy as a tradition, or what types of thinking and people get awarded with the title of philosophy and who loses out. I explore this concern through three examples. In the first instance, I consider the question of who is capable of philosophy as a question of canon. Drawing on the work of James Maffie, I explore what it means to be included in 'Club Philosophy'. From here, I consider two different approaches to 'Club Philosophy' that I will argue offer routes to the critique of philosophy as a discipline. In the first instance, I draw on the late Charles Mills' arguments for what Black philosophy offers for our understanding of the world. I then contrast Mills' arguments with Dabashi's argument for disambiguating philosophy from thought. I explore the distinctions being made between philosophy and thought, and their advantages, against the more common tendency to expand the canon via 'World philosophy'. While the main purpose of this section is to explore the contours between philosophy and thought, and how this affects the understanding of philosophy as a discipline, I also take seriously the developments of 'World philosophy' and argue that both Mills and Dabashi provide reasons to be critical of the trend.

First, Maffie introduces his remarks on 'Club Philosophy' by drawing out a distinction that is often implicit: having a philosophy versus actually doing philosophy. In *Aztec Metaphysics* (2014), Maffie introduces the distinction in this way:

> 'Contemporary Anglo-American and European academic philosophers routinely distinguish having a philosophy, in the sense of holding an implicit worldview, ideology, or "cosmovisión," from doing philosophy, in the sense of self-consciously and critically reflecting upon and speculating about the nature, structure, and constitution of reality, the nature of truth, the nature of right and wrong, the possibility of human knowledge, the meaning of life, and so on' (2014, p. 4).

What having a philosophy is, and who has a philosophy according to Maffie is 'the sole invention and possession of Western culture beginning with the Socratics and the Sophists' (2014, p. 5). Non-western philosophy is assumed, according to Maffie, to exhibit the former: having but not doing. This assumption is almost atemporal, as speculations are made about both pre- and post-colonization belief systems. Mayan and Nahua beliefs are cast in a distant past, and importantly those beliefs do not count as being grounded in philosophy, but rather exhibit 'having a philosophy'. Maffie's argument is based on the idea that these philosophies stem from religious and spiritual practices. The same assumptions are made literal in the case of Léon-Portilla's groundbreaking *La filosofía náhuatl estudiada en sus fuentes* (2006). The English edition and publication of this work changes the title from '*filosofía*' to 'thought'.

For Maffie, Léon-Portilla's work, which provides the first published account systematizing Nahua philosophies and metaphysics, represents the stakes of membership in 'Club Philosophy'. Navigating membership might go one of two ways: 'They may seek admission into the club by arguing that what they do sufficiently resembles what bona fide club members do. León-Portilla pursues this strategy on behalf of the Aztecs. Or they may reject the philosophy versus nonphilosophy binary–along with the entire debate–as a now discredited, self-serving relic of Western colonialism (racism, modernism, paternalism, etc.), not worry about whether or not what they do qualifies as "real" philosophy and continue

doing what they have always been doing' (Maffie, 2014, pp. 6-7). There are many examples to pursue, even within the realms of ancient philosophy. For instance, Barry Hallen asks why African philosophy is not treated or mentioned in ancient philosophy courses and scholarship (Hallen, 2002).[12]

On the other hand, there are those who pursue 'philosophy', but not on the basis of inclusion. I argue that this is what Mills is interested in as he develops his vision for Black philosophy (Mills, 2013). His vision for Black philosophy begins with a critique of white, Western philosophy:

> 'White (male) philosophy's confrontation of Man and Universe, or even Person and Universe, is really predicated on taking personhood for granted and thus excludes the differential experience of those who have ceaselessly had to fight to have their personhood recognized in the first place. Without even recognizing that it is doing so, Western philosophy abstracts away from what has been the central feature of the lives of Africans transported against their will to the Americas...' (2013, p. 9).

These comments come from an exploration of what Mills terms 'sub personhood' or the experience many people feel as a part of being racialized as Black (2013, pp.4-7). Within this, however, Mills is able to recognize the futility of Western philosophy and create the possibilities for Black philosophy. The questions central for Black philosophy revolve around a socially and historically contextualized ontology (2013, pp. 10-12). As such the project for Black philosophy which Mills is interested in constructing is one where philosophy of race, or the explanation of the subordination and sub personhood of certain groups into racial categories, is crucial to understand the political and ethical dimensions of today's world. Given these aims, I argue that Mills is not interested in pursuing either route that Maffie provides. Instead, Mills shows how Black philosophy can contribute to pressing issues about the world, without appealing to the methods of Western philosophy.[13]

Whereas Mills wants a very specific version of Black philosophy that can satisfactorily explain the status of the world as something made up of and informed by a global system of white supremacy, a different set of solutions is offered by 'World philosophy'. 'World philosophy' is representative of a reaction to some of the critiques offered above—that the history of philosophy, and what is studied and taught in a typical philosophy course, is too focused on European whiteness. In the same vein as Annas' consideration of the status of Eastern philosophy against Western philosophy, these books, often encyclopedic in style and content, place various philosophies from different parts of the world together. They often take a liberal and multiculturalist stance on World philosophy, where the correction to the problem of exclusion is simply one of inclusion. For instance, the introductory anthology series *A History of Philosophy without Any Gaps* includes stand-alone works on African, Indian, Chinese, and Islamic philosophy.[14] There is no mention of Indigenous philosophy in this series as it stands. Where Indigenous philosophy is mentioned, as the case in Van Norden's

[12] I want to emphasize that I do not view Hallen's questions about the status of ancient African philosophy as similar to the arguments made by those interested in World philosophy presented below.

[13] The force with which Mills develops his 'epistemologies of ignorance' and white ignorance in particular also demonstrates his disinterest in claiming that Black philosophy is like white/Western philosophy. Instead, Mills' conception of ignorance argues the inverse. For the beginnings of this see Mills (2007).

[14] See Adamson (2018), Adamson and Ganeri (2020), and Adamson and Jeffers (2025) for those works.

book *Taking Back Philosophy: A Manifesto for Multiculturalism*, it is not the primary focus of the work. Instead, Van Norden offers Chinese philosophy as a model for creating a multicultural version of philosophy in academic departments (Van Norden, 2017).[15] These examples show the initial route proposed by Maffie: attempts to argue that non-Western philosophies show the capacity to be at the same level of those already in 'Club Philosophy'.

I offer Mills in contrast to those who support a global philosophy. In part, Mills shows how simple methods of inclusion fail to address the underlying assumptions behind why non-Western philosophies are so often discounted: a refusal to understand and engage with the realities of racism. Dabashi offers insight on a related assumption: that non-Western ideas must speak to and with the same types of claims to universality as Western thought. The assumption goes even further, that any non-Western thinker must present a legible account of why their thought is philosophy. In response to this expectation, Dabashi questions the claims to universality and 'self-conscious confidence' that often comes with Euromerican philosophy (Dabashi, 2013). Dabashi asks why people like Žižek and Butler get labeled as philosophers or at the very least public intellectuals, while modern philosophy in Cuba, China, and India, if mentioned at all, gets prefixed with 'ethno-'. In other words, Dabashi shows the consistency with which non-Western peoples are given the label of 'thought,' let alone philosophy. Instead of arguing for Euroamerican philosophy to accommodate non-European philosophy, Dabashi reframes the debate: 'The question is rather the manner in which non-European thinking can reach self-consciousness and evident universality, not at the cost of whatever European philosophers may think of themselves for the world at large, but for the purpose of offering alternative (complementary or contradictory) visions of reality more rooted in the lived experiences of people in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America' (Dabashi, 2013).[16]

The emphasis away from philosophy to thought is particularly helpful here. If one of the problems Dabashi–and, as we have seen, Mills–recognizes is a self-assuredness in universalizing thought, what does it mean to pursue the title of philosophy? In what ways does World philosophy, as has been discussed here, actually provide space for alternative visions?[17] I suggest that it attempts to fit marginalized thinkers into the space of Western philosophy at the expense of losing the contours, nuances, and applicability of their thought into the world. This suggestion is in line with both Dabashi and Mills. For Dabashi, the problem with the focus on 'philosophy' does not leave room for expansive re-thinking of the canon. 'Thinking' however does not come with all of the baggage that a discipline like philosophy brings. Moreover, 'philosophy' as a term is more inclusive for Dabashi–it can allow for different types of thoughts and theories to exist as something which should be taken seriously. Dabashi then showcases the opposite of what has been explored in this section. Disinterested in resurrecting, purifying, and curing philosophy, he instead offers a route out of philosophy. This route focuses on the practices of thought and thinking, and in particular, looking for types of thought that have not been considered. Instead of relying on arguments for a multicultural and liberal approach to inclusion, the thoughts looked for here

[15] This approach has been critiqued for Van Norden's methodology. Kim (2019) argues that Van Norden's views cannot and do not effectively confront endemic racism, or much of the discipline's investment in whiteness (p. 626).

[16] We might also think of Wynter (2003) here.

[17] Furthering the use of Mills in this article, these questions are representative of what Mills calls an 'epistemology of ignorance'. See Mills (1997) for his articulation on this.

are at the core of what is going on within the debates of expanding the canon in philosophy or adding new members to 'Club philosophy'.

Crucially, however, embedded within Dabashi's critique of Eurocentrism in philosophy is the refrain 'why not the dignity of "philosophy"' (Dabashi, 2013). Along with the arguments presented above, Dabashi is concerned that if non-Europeans are denied the title of philosophy, philosophy will only be delegated to Western public intellectuals (Dabashi, 2013). I take this refrain as important in distinguishing between thought and philosophy. As I have argued above, Dabashi presents a clear case for rejecting the call to incorporate all thinking into philosophy. The focus on thought, instead of indicating a disregard for complex systems—as the change made to Léon-Portilla's book title shows—demands that philosophy as practiced in the Euroamerican system makes a case for itself. It is this distinction that I take to be the key link between Dabashi's arguments and Mills. On the face of it, they look to be in a slight disagreement, especially with Mills' acceptance of the term philosophy. However, I take it that what Mills has done with his development of Black philosophy is to move the concept of philosophy away from the traditional, academic space of the discipline. In this way, both Mills and Dabashi offer visions of philosophy that operate outside of Western philosophy's epistemological landscape. This allows us to avoid the pitfalls of 'global philosophy' and, as I will show in the next section, creates space for thinking through what Indigenous philosophy can offer outside of the confines of philosophy as an academic discipline.

Locality and Indigenous Philosophy

The previous section has demonstrated the limitations of viewing philosophy as primarily an academic discipline. Both Dabashi and Mills show us how to move beyond the confines of disciplinarity and the benefits of doing so. What has been underdiscussed is the status of Indigenous philosophy and how it might reject disciplinary boundaries on its own accord. It should be noted that Mills does offer a view of what he takes to be Indigenous philosophy in his development of Black philosophy:

> 'Anti–Native American racism was, obviously, central to the founding of the United States, and the white settler states of the Americas more generally. But the creation of the reservation system means that today they are a marginal presence in the daily life of the white American polity. Moreover, both in the U.S. and the Latin American nations where they make up a larger proportion of the population, their relation to race is ambivalent. Though their racial categorization—Indians—was, of course, crucial to white settler ideology, it is not generally one that they have embraced themselves, except for contingent reasons of political solidarity against the white man, since they retain their preconquest civilizational identities. So their philosophical opposition to the conquest really involves the reclaiming of these distinct and disparate ethnic identities and their linked philosophical outlooks: it is not a philosophy of race as such' (2021, p. 30).

Mills' understanding of Native American philosophy is driven by a historical account of racism and settler-colonialism. This move is motivated by Mills' requirements for a philosophy that can provide a comprehensive account of a philosophy of race. What I take seriously in this description of what Indigenous philosophy will look like is that it reclaims 'distinct' philosophical outlooks. These distinctions are made on the basis of unique cultural understandings of space and place. The two philosophers I engage with here, then, represent

only a small portion of Indigenous philosophy. The emphasis I want to make clear at the outset is that Indigenous philosophy is not a monolith but is representative of the diverse experiences of Indigenous peoples globally.

This section seeks to move philosophy beyond the confines of academia with accounts of philosophy from an Indigenous North American perspective. Drawing on V.F. Cordova and Brian Burkhart's approaches and conceptions of Native American or Indigenous Philosophy, I argue that Indigenous philosophy is helpful precisely in its ability to go beyond boundaries. With both works, I make a case for reclaiming American philosophical traditions away from the Euroamerican tradition and as a space for Indigenous traditions and thoughts. The questions of the boundaries of philosophy, or our spatial conceptions of the discipline, also correlate to the temporal questions set out in the first section of this article. Here, I argue that 'Indigenous' philosophy does not and should not necessitate an association with Greek and Roman philosophy. Instead, the urge to place Indigenous and ancient thought next to each other is emblematic of Cordova's criticism of Western assumptions about Indigenous philosophy. In this same vein, I show how Brian Burkhart offers a critique and engagement of ancient thought that demonstrates the benefits of Indigenous philosophy for the history of philosophy, rather than as a contrast to the history of philosophy.

In V.F. Cordova's work 'Approaches to Native American Philosophy', she is concerned with what a non-native philosopher could get out of Native philosophy, and how to do that philosophically. She lays out three underlying assumptions that Western philosophers make when dealing with Native philosophy: '(1) the view that all human beings are operating on a common theme; (2) that non-Western peoples are a less complex form of being, less developed than Westerners; and (3) that Indigenous peoples are incapable of engaging in philosophical discussions' (Cordova, 2004, p. 31).

We have seen, I think, all three assumptions laid out in the previous discussion—the confidence of Western philosophy, the assumptions about Indigenous ways of life, and the less than sensitive inclusion of Native philosophy as 'Barbarian'. Cordova proposes solutions to these assumptions: in the first case, the solution is to move away from comparison and to look for a common theme. This leads immediately to the solution for two. She notes that the act of looking for something in common or saying 'this is like' often slips from an equitable comparison to 'this is a less developed form than that'. Rejecting this approach is key (Cordova, 2004, p. 32). Here is where I want to return to the question of teaching Indigenous philosophy with ancient philosophy. I think the desire to do this is partially because many Indigenous philosophies are ancient and trace a long tradition of thought. However, I think this does not quite address what happens when comparing the two, not least because the moniker of 'Ancient' denies Indigenous presents and futures. I think Cordova is right that it is easy for people to slip from an open comparison to 'this is a less developed form of that', not the least because Indigenous knowledge is already epistemically marginalized. What good does it do to put Indigenous philosophy in the past, allowing all the assumptions that we have surpassed and progressed from these views?

Returning to the assumptions, Cordova's solution to one is to reject a 'this is like that' approach, and her solution to three is a simple denial. Cordova then details a moment speaking with a fluent Anishnawbe speaker: 'He gave me the literal translation of engwaamizin as "tread carefully". Some, he said, interpreted this as "be careful", but, he pointed out, it means much more than that. Unspoken, but understood in that word is a whole worldview having to do with humans' place and effect on the universe. From my own experience...I discovered that many of our family discussions around the kitchen table

consisted of very sophisticated philosophical dialogue…We did not use the language of philosophers but the activity and the intent were the same' (Cordova, 2004, p. 32).[18] Returning to the question of philosophy, the philosophical endeavor should 'extend its present perspective to an attempt to understand all of the possible ranges of human thought…Imagine for example instead of a concept of "progress" we had merely a concept of "change"' (Cordova, 2004, p. 33). The historiographical and doxographical remarks surveyed at the start of this article, for instance, might look different with an application of Cordova's urging to tread carefully and view the history of philosophy through change rather than progress.

Cordova's work has continued to inspire philosophers who are interested in how philosophy can be reshaped to allow for Indigenous philosophy. Brian Burkhart in his book *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures* (2019) develops a critique of Western philosophy. This critique is centered on Burkhart's conception of Western philosophy as being delocalized in contrast to a localized philosophy. In this respect, Burkhart views the fundamental problem with Western philosophy as its disinterest in the relationship between peoples, their community and land. Environmental philosophy and questions of environmental ethics have entered the field too late in order to showcase that Western philosophy is capable of providing answers to questions centered around land and community.

Burkhart considers the history of Western philosophy from Aristotle to Descartes and Kant to showcase the nature of these claims. In particular, he takes aim at Aristotle as the originator of the Law of Non-Contradiction, an instance where Western philosophy will commit itself to universalizing methods (2019, p. 153). Of interest is how Burkhart compares whether other ancient philosophers fall into the same trap. Citing Heraclitus' account of *logos*, he rejects Aristotle's response to that account:[19]

> 'Aristotle notices the ambiguity in these words. Even in the first sentence, the context of "forever" is unclear, he pointed out. It is not clear if "forever" is referencing "being" or "prove" (*Rhetoric* 1407b11-18). Aristotle regarded this ambiguity as a weakness in Heraclitus's thought, but does not see what seems like Heraclitus's purposeful attempt at layering complex and dynamic meaning in his words… The spoken word is both forever in locality and forever incomprehensible out of locality. Heraclitus, even in the fragmentary nature of what is written and in part because of it—at least in the context of any attempted abstract, delocalized framing of the meaning of his words—displays perhaps the clearest understanding of epistemic locality of any philosopher in the Western canon' (2019, p. 155).

Burkhart, through his emphasis on locality, is able to rehabilitate aspects of ancient thought. Whether or not Burkhart effectively captures the debate Aristotle is inserting himself into, is secondary to what is demonstrated in this passage.[20] The primary importance

[18] We can also connect this to problems of incommensurability or how language can fail to communicate the scope of a meaning when translated. See Meissner (2023) for an application of this in Indigenous philosophy. Relevant, but not explored in this article, is how Meissner's conception of 'world travelling' might help to navigate the claims made about world philosophy in the previous section.

[19] This is not the first time someone has pointed to Heraclitus as an instance of a model for decolonial philosophy. See Nkrumah (1970) for an earlier version of this.

[20] To be clear, this is not an endorsement of what Burkhart thinks is going on with Aristotle and Heraclitus. I find many of the claims he makes about ancient philosophy to be unconvincing and ungrounded.

is the way Indigenous philosophy offers Burkhart a route to show us new perspectives on a non-Indigenous philosophical tradition. Asking what ancient philosophers have to say about locality and relationships grounds questions within an Indigenous framework. In this sense, having a flexible account of philosophy that wants to account for all possible ranges of human thought, opens more doors even within the traditional sphere. We can see how thoughts on place or relationships have changed rather than asking for an account of progress. While still critical of Western philosophy, this analysis from Burkhart provides a contrast to the brief engagements from scholars of ancient philosophy in the first section. Rather than offering a comparative approach between an Indigenous concept and an Ancient Greek philosophical concept, Burkhart demonstrates what can be generated by adopting locality as a method of philosophy.

How Burkhart approaches his critique of Western philosophy by beginning from the Greeks is in tune with his former mentor Vine Deloria Jr. For instance, Vine Deloria Jr. in *Power and Place* repeatedly criticizes Plato and Aristotle as originators for a detached and universal account of the world: Plato through his emphasis on forms, and in Aristotle's use of essences for metaphysical explanations (Deloria and Wildcat, 2001). What I want to suggest here is that despite the strength of critiques levied at Greek and Roman philosophy for its influence, Burkhart's conception of locality is not antithetical to discussing ancient sources, even if those ancient sources are a part of the Western tradition. Indeed, as shown above, Burkhart can offer new interpretations of ancient material even if that is not the primary goal for the development of his concept of locality.

Here, then, I return to the distinction between thought and philosophy made multiple times in this article. If it is helpful to think of philosophy as distinct from the idea of it as an academic discipline, then we might think that what Burkhart and Cordova offer us is a way to approach 'ancient' philosophy. Engaging with ancient material on the basis of their thought invites and makes room for applications of Indigenous perspectives. This then reverses the relationship between academic philosophy and ancient philosophy's status as a philosophical endeavor. Instead of ancient philosophy and Indigenous philosophy representing two geographically distinct areas of philosophy, where both are imagined as in the temporally distant past, Indigenous philosophy becomes a method of engaging with a specific (or localized) area of the past and asks how this might be significant for our readings of an ancient thinker.

This section presented two views on Indigenous philosophy from Indigenous philosophers: in both instances, Indigenous philosophy is viewed as an act that goes beyond the confines of academic disciplinarity. Cordova teaches us how and where philosophy can happen, whether a classroom or a kitchen table.[21] Burkhart, I argue, inverts the anxieties about the status of ancient philosophy discussed at the outset of the article, and shows us how to think not only within our own context but also how to ask and seek out that locality in other sources. These are only two Indigenous philosophers, representing a brief and

What I do find convincing is the idea that we should be considering different routes and entry points to what philosophy is and how new questions can be opened. For instance, I think Aristotle is cast in a very uninteresting way throughout his book, but the interesting thing would be to explore, using what Burkhart has offered here, if an account of Aristotle as someone interested in locality and community can be developed, what that would look like, and how that account gets changed in the reception of Aristotle.

[21] See Lustilla (2025) for further thoughts on applying Indigenous philosophy in and outside of the classroom.

partial account of Indigenous philosophy. Kyle Whyte, to offer a further example, demonstrates and utilizes conceptions of locality and kinship in asking deeply philosophical questions, as evidenced in his chapter 'What do Indigenous Knowledges do for Indigenous Peoples?' (2018). In the same vein as Dabashi, many other Indigenous thinkers might deserve the title of 'philosopher'. I direct philosophical readers to Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's new work *A Theory of Water* (2025), which demonstrates a deep concern with ideas of change. Likewise, scholar and cultural critic Nick Estes in his work *Our History is the Future* (2019) provides an ethics of resistance in his discussion of the Dakota Access Pipeline. I end with this emphasis on current Indigenous thinkers that we might want to call philosophers because I take this point to be the more urgent one to make. If part of the issue with contrasting 'ancient' and Indigenous philosophy is that it gestures to a distant past, then I want to give space to where contemporary Indigenous thought is happening, at the very least in academic spaces.

Conclusion or How is this Article about Classics?

The title of this conclusion is a riff on the article by Kirstie Dotson entitled 'How is this Paper about Philosophy?' (2012). Dotson discusses many of the same themes discussed here, above all that academic philosophy as a discipline is not a space that is conducive for diverse practitioners of philosophy (2012, p. 4). The critiques she levies at academic philosophy are precisely against the field's demands for 'philosophical rigor' which do not leave room for anything that does not obviously appear as philosophy (2012, p.7). The solution for academic philosophy is to develop a 'culture of praxis' where different methods and modes of inquiry are encouraged, even if they would appear incongruous under a more traditional framework (2012, pp.16-17). I end with this final reflection to show, first, that the critique of academic philosophy I have offered here is not new. Dotson, Mills, and Dabashi all offer a critique of the aims of 'philosophy' in their own ways. The critiques we have seen of philosophy as a discipline sit easily with the critiques also levied against Classics. The story that we have looked at here, tracing the contours of the tensions surrounding opening up and redefining philosophy, is closely akin to the debates currently taking place within Classics. Following Mathura Umachandran and Marchella Ward's introduction in *Critical Ancient World Studies* (2024), we might find that the arguments for simply expanding Classics are, at best, the same as the arguments for World philosophy. Ancient philosophy sits at the intersection of these two disciplines, and for that reason, special attention should be paid to how the practice of 'ancient philosophy' is justified in a modern context, and who is marginalized in that context. I have shown that there is some desire by philosophers to maintain ancient philosophy as an integral part of Western philosophy. Even when the relationship between the two is contested, the Greeks and Romans are nevertheless comfortably placed into 'Club philosophy'. Moreover, we have seen how concerns about expanding who is included in the History of Philosophy has often marginalized non-western forms of philosophy. There have been some violent examples of this exclusion, in the instance of Rorty discussed in the first section.

In picking apart the roots of this exclusion, I have considered various critiques of Western philosophy as well as solutions proposed. I considered both Mills' and Dabashi's stances on philosophy as opposed to thought and showed how both provide an account of philosophy that exists outside the realm of justifying and appealing to Western philosophy as the primary basis for including non-Western philosophy. Starting with Charles Mills and his advocacy for Black philosophy can help us offer a comprehensive account of race without

falling into the universalizing tendencies of Western philosophy. Through these arguments, Mills and Dabashi go against the trend of other solutions to the problem of exclusion in philosophy. Here, we looked at the trend of World philosophy and the arguments for a multicultural approach to teaching and studying philosophy. Finally, I argued that Dabashi's move from philosophy to thought offers a variety of benefits, but non-Western scholars might still want the dignity of philosophy, albeit not philosophy as done by Western standards.

It is this intervention I have left readers with an introduction to Cordova's account of philosophy which emphasizes how relationality, locality, and change over progress can overcome some of the criticisms of attempts at a multi-cultural philosophy. Most importantly, Cordova gives us a route to think with Indigenous philosophy. Likewise, Burkhart's most recent work showcases an argument which applies Indigenizing philosophy to ancient Greek works based on similar tenets. We might close by taking heed of the lessons offered both by Cordova's story of the elder offering the advice to engwaamizin and Burkhart's story of Coyote: be careful. This care extends to how philosophy is constructed, who might be excluded from it, and how we carefully evaluate our sources.

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