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Memory Spaces and Contested Pasts in the Haudenosaunee Homeland

Summary

American Indians are continually surrounded by memory sites of colonization. These often take the form of monuments erected by descendants of colonizers who 'remember' their heroic events while forgetting the atrocities they performed in order to achieve their objectives (violent dispossession). Some archaeologists are now lending a critical eye towards such memory spaces or Imaginative Geographies, as Edward Said called them, as they have been manifest in Haudenosaunee ('Iroquois') territory. They hereby support American Indians to counter skewed projections of their colonization with their own memorials of space. Such agency reflects the power to prompt a remembrance of some silenced or otherwise ignored history and to reverse the gaze.

Keywords: Archaeology; Haudenosaunee; Iroquois; colonization; memory spaces.

Amerikanische IndianerInnen sind beständig von Erinnerungsorten der Kolonisierung umgeben. Diese nehmen oft die Form von Denkmälern an, die durch Nachkommen der KolonisorInnen errichtet wurden, um an heroische Ereignisse zu ,erinnern'; während sie die Gräueltaten vergessen, die als Mittel zum Zweck der gewaltsamen Enteignung verübt wurden. Einige ArchäologInnen richten nun ihren kritischen Blick auf solche Erinnerungsräume oder imaginäre Geographien (Edward Said), wie sie im Haudenosaunee-Gebiet (der ,Irokesen') manifest geworden sind, und unterstützen damit amerikanische IndianerInnen in ihrem Bestreben, verzerrten Darstellungen ihrer Kolonisierung eigene Erinnerungsräume entgegenzusetzen. Dadurch kann totgeschwiegene oder ignorierte Geschichte erinnert und der Blick umgekehrt werden.

Keywords: Archäologie; Haudenosaunee; Irokesen; Kolonisierung; Erinnerungsräume.

This paper, and for that matter my overall research into the strained relationship between anthropology and American Indians would not be possible without the friendship, guidance, and assistance of John Kahionhes Fadden.

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My continuing research examines the production of anthropological discourses and the ongoing relationship between American Indians and the scholars who make their living by studying their culture and remains. More specifically, I examine the writings of ethno-historians, a collective mix of scholars from the disciplines of anthropology and history who study the 'Iroquois' or Haudenosaunee pasts and present. These discourse artifacts come from the self-appointed non-Native academic spokespersons of the Haudenosaunee, and deal with sites of contested memory and meanings. Such sites are contested because of insider/outsider differences in interpretations and understandings of the events that occurred within, though even more importantly because of the ideological posturing of non-Native so-called objective 'Iroquoianist' scholars (historians, anthropologists, ethno-historians) who have taken it upon themselves to define what is worth memorializing for a people they claim to speak for. Such people belong to groups for which academics are not a part of, and often they are not *recognized* by them as political nations. This conflict, between researcher and researched, arises where non-Natives inscribe their own meanings upon memory spaces. More importantly and specifically, the tension between archaeologists and American Indians, between so-called 'Iroquoianist' scholars and the Haudenosaunee in the traditional homeland of the confederacy of their nations, largely results from the perception of one such faction of academics that these particular Indian people are not their equals and should not be allowed to produce their own histories.¹ This powerful faction is variously referred to by Indians as *Fentonites*, after their leader and 'dean' of 'Iroquoianist' studies William N. Fenton, as *culture-vultures*, who pick at the dead, or as *trolls*, in reference to the mythic European creatures who attack those attempting to cross metaphorical bridges.

The Haudenosaunee are the people of the 'Iroquois' Confederacy whose traditional territories fall within the imposed boundaries of the state of New York and Canada. This alliance was composed of five distinct nations, the Seneca, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Mohawk, who were joined in the early 1700's by the Tuscarora, an Iroquoian speaking people who were displaced from their southern homes.² Collectively they known today as the Six Nations of the 'Iroquois' confederacy. The Haudenosaunee are living, breathing, vibrant, viable peoples who still practice their ceremonies, follow their traditional governance, and who still continue to struggle against colonial encroachment within the imposed borders of northeast states such as New York, and who continue to resist their disenfranchisement and the racism and xenophobia that fuels such cultural theft. Like many Indigenous peoples they are largely defined externally, with their histories principally produced and written by non-Native scholars. That is, the average non-Native primary school student in their formative years, learn about the 'Iroquois' from overwhelmingly white academic sources. Many of these scholars perform within

1 Chakrabarty 2000.

2 Johansen and Mann 2000.

disciplines such as archaeology and history, both of which have been and continue to be marked by a striking lack of diversity. For example, despite steady proclamations of inclusiveness since the 1980's, the discipline of anthropology did not award a single Ph.D. to any minority students, much less American Indians, between the years 1994–1995.³ Indeed between 1973, when the American Anthropological Association (AAA) issued its report *The Minority Experience in Anthropology*, and its follow up in 2010 *Minorities in Anthropology: 1973 versus 2008, Progress or Illusion?*, little has changed.⁴ American Indians with Ph.D.s in archaeology number no more than two dozen in the U.S. at the time of this writing, and those that enter the discipline consistently complain of ethnocentrism and overt racism.⁵ It is certainly not difficult to find non-Native 'Iroquoianist' experts busily composing the history of a people who they have never actually observed in the present much less participated in any aspect of their contemporary culture, who they have never actually spoken or otherwise interacted with, with most never having actually entered any of the several Haudenosaunee reservations (U.S) and reserves (Canada) of the people they claim expertise about (see for example William Starna's testimony on behalf of Tuscarora gambling interests, *The People of the State of New York vs. Joseph Anderson and Jerry Chew*, 1987). With sarcasm fully intended, these would seem to be the basic preconditions for a relationship, yet the tendency has been to bypass this and assume center stage as some sort of expert on the *other*, relying instead upon sources written by their own ancestral anthropologists/historians/heroes rather than the descendant people.

When I entered academia and archaeology in particular, I was treated to various proffered reasons as to why there were so few American Indian archaeologists in attendance at universities; why there were so few American Indian students at all who chose to enter the discipline. I have found in my research that each explanation that ignores the obvious lends insight into the attitudes of the archaeologists themselves. For example, I have been told that American Indians are not really interested in their pasts, as if they are 'hard-wired' so to speak to feel this indifference. In addition to being complete nonsense and an argument based upon racialized, inherent, unchanging characteristics, this explanation is of course very convenient for those non-Native archaeologists who desire to maintain their exclusive access to Indian material culture. A very learned and well-paid college professor once told his class that American Indians, when they do make it into university, opt for disciplines where higher paying jobs are more plentiful. Again, it is as if disadvantaged people have no choice but to pursue a career where the financial returns exceed those provided by anthropology; that they simply follow in a Pavlovian way the trail of money to wherever their material pursuit lands them. When I protested such essentialist nonsense and offered to share my perspectives with

3 Patterson, Hutchinson, and Goodman 2008.

5 Patterson, Hutchinson, and Goodman 2008.

4 Patterson, Hutchinson, and Goodman 2008.

the professor and the class on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, and the problems American Indians have with museums and institutions collecting and possessing their human remains and sacred objects, another experienced and well-paid archaeologist informed me that with so many diverse American Indian nations I could not make generalizations about such matters. NAGPRA is a U.S. law that provides guidelines for the repatriation of American Indian cultural patrimony, including human remains and funerary objects that were unlawfully acquired by anthropologists and museums. This important piece of legislation requires all federally funded institutions to inventory their *booty of colonization* and to initiate the return of the sacred items and ancestral remains to the respective affiliated groups. Of course it is the archaeologists who define the categories of what can be considered ‘culturally affiliated,’ so this law is far from perfect. In an amazingly patronizing gesture, this *Indian expert* patted me on the leg as he told me that I could not talk about Indian attitudes to such things as human remains as I was not a spokesperson for all the nations. Yet somehow, throughout his career as an archaeologist he was able in turn to make widespread generalizations about American Indian assumptions and beliefs himself. I do not think he particularly liked it when I reached out, patted him back, and informed him that he did not speak for all archaeologists either.

To archaeologists like my former instructor, those American Indians that have negative sentiments towards the discipline are categorized as malcontents, radicals, or individuals with personality issues, and not reflective of the *true* feelings of the studied. Thus, when the powerful and critical characterization of the culture of anthropology by American Indian author Vine Deloria Jr. made it to print in his seminal work *Custer Died for your Sins*,⁶ archaeologists countered by asserting that the impressions that American Indians have towards archaeology are not all that negative. When the American Indian Movement (AIM) protested the anthropological sense of entitlement to Indian past remains by disrupting archaeological digs and entering campus labs,⁷ archaeologists assured themselves and all who were listening that AIM did not speak for all Indians. When Floyd Westerman Crow sang the lyrics to his hit song *Here come the Anthros*, “better hide your past away, here come the anthros, on another holiday”; the discipline responded with a “Disneyland version”⁸ of how helpful anthropology has been in saving the past for Indians. Not surprisingly these discursive impression management strategies have often come from archaeologists who prefer to remain detached, to maintain a distance from their objects of study, an illusory ‘objectivity’ that does not require them to actually speak to living Indians during the course of their research. Indians did not disappear, yet such scholars only commune with the dead. The maintenance of this

6 Deloria Jr. 1969.

7 Biolsi 2008; Cordell, Lightfoot, and McManamon 2008; Pauketat 2012.

8 Nicholas 2010, 289.

fiction of the disappearing Indian is of course solidly based upon the paradigm of the same name that was largely used as justification to shift Indigenous heritage to U.S. controlled post-colonial repositories and institutions, veritable gardens of knowledge from which book deals and careers could be grown. Items of cultural importance and sacred traditional cultural meaning, including Wampum Belts and False Face Masks, were appropriated, and this was often achieved where outright theft was not possible through the use of American Indian assimilationist *informants*, those who sold stories, artifacts, and even the ancestral bodies of their culture often without permission to do so. Many such *informants*, like Arthur C. Parker, did not even live amongst their people nor were they socialized within traditional Haudenosaunee culture, yet there seems to be a tacit acceptance that such people actually represented or acted as *authorized* spokespersons for their groups, and as such that the transfer of such items was *legal*.⁹ This illustrates the double standard under which the voice of American Indians are filtered; when they dissent, they are *not* representative of their groups, but when they make available the materials upon which 'Iroquoianist' careers are built, they are constructed as archetyp-ical. Rather than refer to them as assimilationists, thieves and/or traitors, as their local communities often know them, they become *complicated* characters to scholars of history.¹⁰ Such *sell-outs* have been incredibly important resources to archaeologists, so it makes sense that their view of them would be significantly more positive than the more critical opinion held by traditional American Indians. Archaeologists seem to have difficulty training their critical eyes upon the activities of such assimilationists because, on the one hand they have sold the discipline so many wonderful, quant stories and artifacts from the past, and on the other it is expected that they will continue to do so and thus provide a steady supply of Indian material for the perpetuation/profit of the discipline according to the terms of its most powerful actors.

With such a disconnect between what scholars are saying about their relationship with the objects of their study, and what American Indians are saying, I decided early on in my academic career to critically evaluate the words and actions of the observers. My object of study, therefore, is the culture of anthropological archaeology. The orthodox gaze of anthropology is reversed in my work, and instead of asking Haudenosaunee peoples to provide material on themselves, which is unquestionably the traditional main entrée of archaeological consumption, I rather listened as they offered their views upon the sometimes exotic, often factional culture of archaeology. These outlooks were unmistakably and overwhelmingly negative, as in the words of late Mohawk scholar Salli M. Kawennotakie Benedict:

9 McCarthy 2008.

10 Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2009; Crawford and D. Kelly 2005; Swearingen and Pruett 2009.

Generally speaking of course, our image of archaeologists, whether stereotypical or not, are those academics who have worked to study ancient aboriginal cultures, ripping into the land collecting burial goods, human remains, and artifacts, building their own reputations without regard for the living aboriginal cultures who have a cultural bond with these goods.¹¹

Further, the disconnect between the positive things archaeologists say about themselves and their practices is quite clear here:

Archaeology must be counted among the list of oppressive acts that have been inflicted on aboriginal cultures by western civilization. Its effects are surely as oppressive and devastating to a culture as are relocation, confinement to reservations, or placement in residential schools. We believe that it is part of the process of cultural genocide.¹²

That last bit needs to be emphasized lest there is still any confusion or perceived ambiguity with the words the respected Salli M. Kawennotakie Benedict conveyed: archaeology has been, and continues to be thought of amongst traditional non-assimilationist Indians at Akwesasne as part of the “process of cultural genocide.” This pattern is repeated amongst the traditional peoples of many nations. Despite this, archaeologists continue to minimize the dissatisfaction and anger American Indians have towards their practice, though this should not be so surprising, as the discipline has consistently ignored living, sentient Indians that are critical of their work, from its earliest 19th century inception to present.

I The trolls under the bridge

During the course of my research, I recorded a number of discursive strategies and devices used by archaeologists to silence such forms of dissent as they exist in traditional Haudenosaunee territory. In my dissertation, I provide specific details on how a faction of ‘Iroquoianist’ scholars, including notables such as William Starna, Lawrence Hauptman, Jack Campisi, and James Axtell, regularly violated the maxims of western discourse in order to silence the critiques of traditional Haudenosaunee like Salli Benedict, Chief Leon Shenandoah, and John Kahionhes Fadden. As mentioned above, this group of scholars, many of whom were or are employed by non-traditional pro-gambling assimilationist American Indian groups in the capacity of *expert consultants*, which in itself is a topic that should prompt a discussion of conflict of interest, are known as *trolls* by many

11 Benedict 2007, 433.

12 Benedict 2007, 433–434.

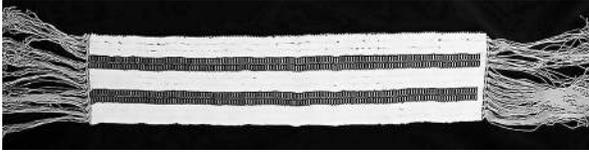


Fig. 1 The Kanien'kehaka Two-Row Wampum Belt.

traditional Haudenosaunee.¹³ Those attempting to cross the metaphorical bridge under which the trolls lurk are both non-Native scholars and American Indians who carry with them the objective of creating a new relationship. This *new* relationship is not a novel idea, but one that is modeled after the Kanien'kehaka Two-Row Wampum belt (Fig. 1).

The Two-Row Wampum Belt commemorates the signing of the Tawagonshi Treaty of 1613, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Dutch. Amongst the Haudenosaunee, the Two-Row Wampum Belt provides a model or a guiding principle for the ongoing relationship with colonial powers, and has been invoked as a symbol for a new collective relationship between archaeologists and American Indians.¹⁴ The two purple parallel rows of Wampum are seen as vessels moving across a white Wampum sea of life or time.¹⁵ Upon one are the Haudenosaunee in their canoe and the other vessel is piloted by the Dutch, though any colonial power, institution, or discipline that emerged from imperial hegemony (including anthropology) can be substituted.¹⁶ Both vessels are seen as separate but equal, both contain the culture, values, and laws of each respective sovereign nation or institution, and neither interferes with the other.¹⁷ Such a relationship is anathema to those of the troll faction who believe they, *and they alone*, are the ones who should be in control of the production of 'Iroquois' pasts and present. In their version of 'Iroquois' history, the traditional Haudenosaunee Confederacy came about only in the 16th century as a response to European powers, and then simply disappeared and ceased to function after the American Revolutionary War.¹⁸ The Chiefs and Clan Mothers who continue to meet in the Grand Council, who issue decisions relevant to the Six Nations, and who practice the Long House traditions are simply ignored by the troll faction who find working with assimilationists to be apparently more fulfilling and certainly more lucrative.

To redress violations (land claims, sovereignty issues), American Indians are at a distinct disadvantage as they must enter the legal system of the U.S. where they are obliged to retain lawyers and scholars alike to present and validate their complaints as *valid*.

13 John Fadden, personal communication 2013.

14 Benedict 2007; Jemison 1995.

15 Bonaparte 2007.

16 Tehanetorens 1999.

17 George-Kanentio 2000.

18 Starna 1979, 70.

Some must even prove they are American Indian first, even where they had already been recognized as such at the federal and/or state levels. Up until 1964, the official policy of the U.S. towards American Indians was one of assimilation, with the objective of removing their separate identities and making them Americans. This was enacted especially through termination policies, where in a ten year period from the 1950's to the 60's the relationship between over 100 tribes and the federal government was extinguished. The federal government in effect told them, "we no longer recognize you as Indians", and by extension no longer considered them sovereign nations with the right to self-governance. Before being able to legally pursue the various thefts of their lands and resources, those who had their identity extinguished faced the burden of proving that they were American Indians, and this was and is quite expensive, especially for groups who fall within the lowest socioeconomic levels in the U.S.¹⁹ Solid sources of revenue to retain consultants and expert witnesses necessary to make a strong case are truly limited for many groups. For some, casinos, bingo halls, and smoke shops offer the possibility of increased revenues and by tying in the establishment of such operations with issues such as federal recognition and land claims, outside venture capitalists are convinced to invest. Thus, these groups are able to justify the high price tag of retained experts through the knowledge that if legal challenges are successful, such businesses will potentially produce large amounts of revenue. Where assimilationist Indians often did not have the permission of tribal governing powers to sell or give Haudenosaunee culture to archaeologists (esp. Wampum Belts, False Face Masks), the gambling supporters are also often at odds with traditional tribal decision making structures and values, and this is certainly the case in Haudenosaunee Confederacy territory. Members of the troll faction have positioned themselves as the go-to experts for non-traditional assimilationist Indians to call upon, and like lawyers following ambulances they proceed with vigor. Indeed, the troll faction has a financial stake in protecting and furthering its assimilationist employer's agendas, and they do so by attacking those traditional Haudenosaunee who are critical of their bosses' entrepreneurship. Not surprisingly, this involves a spin-doctoring of the past and present where the troll faction consistently disparages, minimizes, silences, and calls into question the *validity* and *legitimacy* of those people, structures and symbols that are at odds with their employers. Simply stated, such scholarly troll narratives have little to do with *truth*, but are instead shaped and fabricated according to political and economic concerns.

There is a clear binary tendency amongst the troll faction in particular and 'Iroquoianist' scholars in general, to define American Indians as either *friendly* or *hostile*, though the preferred terminology I have overheard at archaeology meetings and stumbled upon written in the margins of state archived documents (Peebles Island, NY),

19 Williams 2006.

seems to be that of *reasonable* vs. *unreasonable* Indians. The latter of course refers to those Indians who disagree with the assumption that archaeologists should continue to have unrestrained access to their graves, bodies, and artifacts. In such documents and through interviews with various New York State archaeologists I have uncovered a pervasive and simplistic dichotomous categorization of the Haudenosaunee people, and this illustrates one of many contradictions amongst 'Iroquoianist' scholars. As mentioned above, I was rebuked for attempting to convey to students of archaeology American Indian views about NAGPRA and the housing of ancestral human remains. My former professor argued there was simply too much diversity amongst American Indians for me to be able to articulate just one attitude they might have about archaeology. Yet in the next breath, so to speak, this professor, and members of the troll faction of 'Iroquoianist' scholars, then move on to their own binary categorization of Indians into the *reasonable* and the *unreasonable* camps. Put another way, Indians are either conceptualized as sensible, rational, and practical, or as arbitrary, irrational, and difficult, and hence little has changed since colonizers divided up the populations of this continent into groups of *friendlies* and *hostiles*. Archaeology was the handmaiden of colonization, working alongside and benefitting as the invading powers pacified American Indians and made it safe for its practitioners to enter and take what they wanted from groups who had their ability of dissent beaten out of them in extraordinarily dehumanizing ways. These processes, based upon the behaviors of the troll faction, have clearly not run their entire course nor has dissent been extinguished.

2 Monuments and monumental practices

During the course of my study, an unpublished document was graciously shared with me that lists many spaces of Haudenosaunee memory in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and parts of present day Canada. The author, Ray Tehanetorens Fadden, travelled during the 1940's with other traditional educators to give young Haudenosaunee students a tour of their eastern territory, stopping at every known marker or important monument erected to the Six Nations Indians. The monument dedicated to Deskaheh is a great case in point (Fig. 2).

Deskaheh was a Cayuga Indian and member of the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy who travelled to Geneva in 1923 in an unsuccessful effort to enlist the League of Nations in the Haudenosaunee struggle for sovereignty. When he attempted to return to his home on the Grand River territory, the Canadian government refused his entry, dubbing him a *troublemaker*. While he was gone, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) changed the locks on the door to the Confederacy Council



Fig. 3 Young Mohawk Indians visit a monument to Deganawidah in the 1940's.

different aggrandizing pro-U.S./pro-colonizer memorials and monuments. The bigger the monument, the more persuasive the propaganda. For example, a site of grieving for American Indians is the Mount Rushmore monument in S. Dakota, and while this is obviously outside of Haudenosaunee territory, I include it as it illustrates in colossal scale the predominant strategy used to wrest control over such contested spaces away from Indians. In 1868, the Treaty of Fort Laramie was signed as an agreement between several bands of Lakota speaking peoples and the US that guaranteed the Black Hills, viewed by the Lakota and other American Indians as sacred, to remain in their possession forever.²¹ Forever of course lasted just two years as the famous General George Custer

21 Johansen and Pritzker 2008.



Fig. 4 The ubiquitous Clinton/Sullivan monument mass produced for highways and parks in upstate New York.

himself began leading gold speculators into the hills, and the treaty was repeatedly violated and broken.²² To spur tourism, the faces of four white U.S. presidents were carved into the sacred Black Hills and today the leisure industry industry here is dominant with gift shops, motels, fast food restaurants, and strip malls covering the landscape. This is all on land illegally taken by the U.S. in direct violation of the Fort Laramie treaty, on land considered to be sacred, and with a monument that celebrates Euro-American violent conquest. This is, in other words, the largest *'fuck you Indians!'* monument I could find in North America erected by the U.S. colonizing nation. There is no point in my sugarcoating this rape of Indigenous collectivity for the safe consumption of academics.

Closer to home probably the most omnipresent *'fuck you Indians!'*-monument in New York State is that associated with the Clinton and Sullivan expedition of 1779 (Fig. 4).

Thirty-five of these mass produced identical monuments are found in major cities and large towns, along highways, and as markers in local, state, and federal parks in upstate New York. Commissioned in 1929 to mark the 150th anniversary, the monument

²² Fixico 2007.

commemorates the Clinton/Sullivan army routes as they went on “expedition against the hostile Indian nations which checked the aggressions of the English and Indians on the frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania extending westward the dominion of the U.S.”

As a growing number of historical scholars now acknowledge, much of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy actually stayed neutral during the hostilities between England and its rebellious subjects notwithstanding the revenge/justification propaganda used to rally the American public and troops towards the eradication and dispossession of the Six Nations. For instance, the role of the Mohawk Indians in the service of England during the revolutionary war under the so-called leadership of ‘Chief’ Joseph Brant has been wildly exaggerated. The rationalization recurrently cited for the Clinton/Sullivan punitive expedition is the Cherry and Wyoming Valley massacres of frontier Americans by the ‘Iroquois.’ There is ample evidence, however, that Brant’s *bloodthirsty* Mohawk warriors numbered only in the dozens, not in the hundreds as has been claimed, and many were not even Haudenosaunee, but actually displaced individuals from other Indian nations.²³

Above I mentioned the disconnect between the scholarly treatment of anthropological *informants*, and the traditional Haudenosaunee views of such *traitors/thieves*, and Joseph Brant provides another good example of this. Like other assimilationists he is treated by scholars as a complicated character, as “a Man of Two Worlds,”²⁴ as a man “who led his people on the side of the British.”²⁵ Simply juxtapose these attitudes towards Brant with those of the traditional Haudenosaunee and again it is as if two different figures were being discussed:

Among the Mohawks of Akwesasne his name is spoken with spite for he was the person who signed away our ancestral lands to the Americans, giving away millions of acres of territory for a few thousand dollars which he conveniently pocketed, claiming it was for damages he suffered during the American Revolution.²⁶

Akwesasne or Kanien’kéha refers to Mohawk Nation territory in the northern portion of New York on the American side of the border with Canada. Doug George-Kanentiio further challenges the myth of Brant by pointing out that he was never a Chief, he was denied a formal clan title name because he was too ambitious and motivated by material greed, he was a drunk who killed his own son during an alcohol fueled brawl, and he was deeply distrusted by the Mohawk people and required armed guards to protect him on his rare visits to Akwesasne and other reservations.

23 Mann 2005; Tierney 2006.

24 Kelsay 1986.

25 Bolton and Wilson 1992.

26 George-Kanentiio 2009.

What might be the motivation of the U.S. for creating such a fiction? Colonizing nations are quick to offer excuses or justifications for their various transgressions, be it the *White Man's Burden*²⁷ and its overt racism-disguised-as-philanthropy, or *Manifest Destiny*²⁸ with its land greed rationale obscured by gods-will-be-done, or the removal of Indians to *protect them*,²⁹ ostensibly (and with straight faces) from themselves. There certainly is a history of fabricating events in the U.S. to rally the masses towards warfare to achieve the colonizing objectives of possession and control, such as the myth of the last stand at the Alamo,³⁰ the Gulf of Tonkin incident that never really happened,³¹ or more recently the non-existent weapons of mass destruction that Iraq was said to possess.³² Overstating the scale of Brant's attack ('massacre'), and positioning him as a *noble* character torn between two worlds but respected by those he led ('Iroquois'), is just another example of such *false flag* incidents, as they are sometimes called, whereby mythic events are created to overcome public opposition to colonizer objectives. Fear sells, and by discursively positioning Brant as a hero of the Haudenosaunee and not as a disliked opportunist, this allowed the U.S. government to shape the public perception of not only him, but the collective 'Iroquois' who supported him. Thus the Haudenosaunee, like Brant, become at once *noble* and torn between two worlds, and *savage*, prone to resorting to *uncivilized massacres* of white people. The latter obviously was used to rally support for their removal and relegation to reservations. But why then would scholars emphasize the *good* qualities of Brant (*noble, conflicted, complicated, trying to do what was right for his people*, etc.)? Assimilationists give all things Indian away, albeit for a price. Anthropologists and archaeologists have an interest in maintaining good relationships with such sell-outs, as this is where they acquire the material culture and stories so necessary for the perpetuation of their discipline and the collective control they exert.

What is not stated in these monuments is the unwillingness of Clinton and Sullivan, under orders from American hero and first president General George Washington, to distinguish between those many Haudenosaunee who wanted peace, and the few who allied themselves with the British. What is not stated on the multiple monuments is that this, the single largest expedition ever mounted against American Indians,³³ was a campaign of ethnic cleansing. Those not killed in battle were slaughtered in their longhouses. Those who escaped watched as their orchards were cut down, and their crops burnt by Clinton and Sullivan's men who knew full well that as a result of their actions winter starvation for the Indians was just a few months away. George Washington is still known today amongst the Haudenosaunee as the *town destroyer*, for the scorched

27 Kipling 1899.

28 O'Sullivan 1845.

29 Jackson 1835.

30 Tucker 2009.

31 Goulden 1969.

32 Creed 2013.

33 Tucker 2009.



Fig. 5 The red handprint on the Clinton/Sullivan plaque.

earth policy he directed Sullivan and Clinton to enact, and for the many Indians who perished as a result of his directive.³⁴

So how do the Haudenosaunee counter these fictions? One way is to disrupt the spectacle of the monument by defacing them with something recognizable in Indian communities. In Figure 4 above, a red handprint is visible in the center of the Clinton/Sullivan plaque, and this can be seen more clearly in Figure 5.

The closer one gets to Haudenosaunee population centers, the more often one can see this red hand print, and while local and state authorities regularly remove these markings you can still usually see the chemical incongruities of their paint removal upon the surface of the monuments illustrating this contested narrative. The red handprint is a reminder of not only a past wrong (Clinton-Sullivan genocide), but also an understanding that such pervasive fiction that was put in place during the initial colonizing dispossessions continues today in stone and spoken discourse. It signals a remembrance, and those who maintain the fiction must in turn continually clean their

34 Mann 2005.

monuments lest the *blood on the hands* of colonization be remembered and the disappeared/assimilated/compliant Indian myth be challenged.

The group of young Mohawk Indians also visited memory spaces that were not so clearly marked. For example, there are sacred springs known only to the Haudenosaunee, and certain hidden graves of important Indians that are visited regularly, as are the usually unmarked locations of particular important councils and meetings that are remembered. Tribal Stones are visited as well, where it is said that in certain instances, a boulder would appear near Haudenosaunee villages, and when the villages moved, the stones seemed to follow them to their new locations. The Oneida tribal stone is located in a Euro-American cemetery near Utica. Non-Natives placed it there after the Oneida were forced to leave their ancestral territory in central New York and resettle in Wisconsin in the 19th century. When a group of Oneida people returned they located this important tribal stone, and continue to visit it today. Its placement in a Euro-American cemetery affords it the protection it would not have were it placed in a Haudenosaunee memory space. New York still (at the time of this writing) affords no protection to unmarked Indian graves in the state, so by virtue of the individual Euro-American stone monuments otherwise known as gravestones, the Oneida Tribal Stone is secure through association.

So too the Mohawks visited groves and sites where longhouse towns and villages once stood. Archaeologists and pothunters alike have dug into many of these, and with few exceptions, such *research* was conducted without any sort of contact with the living Haudenosaunee descendants. One excellent exception is that of the site of White Springs, located in Geneva, NY, wherein a Seneca longhouse town stood in 1687. At this important memory space a non-Native scholar, Kurt Jordan of Cornell University, is conducting archaeological research and working collaboratively with G. Peter Jemison and the Seneca Nation, who each have their own objectives and things they want to learn from this site. Yes, Indians are in fact interested in the past! Jordan has provided scholarships for Native students, and I argue his approach should be considered as a model for respectful consultation and cooperative archaeological undertakings. The group of traveling Mohawks spent hours in this space quietly contemplating Haudenosaunee pasts. They also visited markers erected by non-Natives grateful for the help/assistance they received from the Haudenosaunee, such as the monument to the Onondaga Indians in Syracuse, New York, a place where starving non-Natives were rescued and given food by Onondaga peoples. Other memory spaces that were visited include natural landmarks, like Bare Hill or Genneudewah the sacred mountain of the Seneca's. There are also Treaty rocks like the one near the village of Canandaigua that mark the spot where the Treaty of Canandaigua was signed. So too the group paused to observe trails of memory, path-

ways like the great central trail of the longhouse, which is now paved over as New York State Rte. 5, and used daily by many oblivious drivers.

Throughout Haudenosaunee territory the names of the Six Nations are naturalized and commoditized by non-Native interests. One finds 'Iroquois' estates, *Oneida* bus manufacturers, *Mohawk* River fishing reel makers, *Cayuga* speedways, there are counties, lakes and towns, there are dorms at Universities named after the 'Iroquois' nations of the confederacy, and so on. The Haudenosaunee through such naming, are thus constructed as objects and places, but not as people. This is an effective strategy towards propagating the disappearing Indian paradigm, the likes of which anthropology used and still uses to shift Haudenosaunee heritage away from its rightful makers and owners. Objectifying American Indian symbols or likenesses into commercial ventures or stone monuments that celebrate the conquering nation, subsumes or assimilates Indian descendants and survivors within the dominant colonizing ideology, and in effect causes them to be forgotten as living peoples.

Now memory sites of different places are of course...different in the sense that the various strategies of colonialism and past mastering, as well as the forms of resistance to this domination, occur relative to their own specific context. Yet despite this some generalizations are possible. In Germany, for instance, there is at least an acknowledgment that horrible things occurred in the past (for example Holocaust). This awareness, while surely variable, far exceeds that of U.S. *remembering*, especially with regards to the Indigenous genocide of the Americas, truly a holocaust (a term I use with no compunction) of epic scale. These various memorials and monuments in Haudenosaunee territory, and elsewhere in the U.S., played an important role in the formation and ongoing maintenance of ideologies meant to deny, or where this was not possible, minimize or conditionally accept past deprivations against American Indians. They create a fiction of heroic proportions played out on the stage of stolen Indian land, and buried under dominant narratives which are locked in seemingly immutable stone form, are the stories of conquest seen through the eyes of the *other*.

3 Memory and resistance

Recollection rather than forgetting, in my view, is the criterion for a more balanced future. Furthermore, I believe it is my political, social, and ethical responsibility to contest such official memories, the likes of which are used to cover undesirable remembrances of the past and to legitimate U.S. authority and control in the present. The objective here, and of my overall research, is to expose and make present otherwise suppressed, concealed, lost, or awkward political memories that are manifest in material remains,

be they monuments, archaeological reports, or source documentation. Memory sites controlled by colonizers first and foremost are characterized by a silence about the existence of victims and the survivors. Edward Said referred to these as “imaginative geographies,”³⁵ spaces that pay scant attention to the reality of events preferring instead to narrate the fantasies of conquerors, and this must be seen as an ongoing process of colonization. My intentions are not to intellectually dabble with monuments and memory spaces, to ruminate on the arbitrary and context-specific meaning of symbols, but to assist in formulating a resistance to these less overt but no less dominating forms of inequality and silencing.

There are a number of strategies of resistance that are variously employed to counter the dominant narratives of colonizer monuments. As mentioned, some Indians, when they can afford to do so, simply erect their own monuments and inscribe them with memories of their own. Some disrupt the spectacle by inscribing their own symbols (the red hand print mentioned above; Figs. 4 and 5). The metal plaque of the monument becomes the contested battlefield of past memory, where the state removes and silences dissent and the Indians return consistently to symbolically re-inscribe a past that the state would prefer to forget. Other strategies include removing and/or destroying monuments. For instance, in 2010, a group of Mohawk Indians at Akwesasne used a backhoe and dug up a marker delineating the territory of the U.S. from Canada, as they do not recognize this imposed boundary that arbitrarily separates them into two groups (Akwesasne and St. Regis). The monument subsequently was smashed to pieces. This direct action is reminiscent to artist Horst Hoheisel’s idea for the Brandenburg gate in Germany,³⁶ but the problem is that by completely destroying the monument the memory of its placement is severed as well. In other words, the memory of the conditions of inequality that provided the context for the establishment of such markers and monuments in Haudenosaunee territory and elsewhere will become faint without a tangible symbolic manifestation. When the memory of the first colonizing fiction is completely destroyed, the unchallenged counter discourse is placed upon a falsely cleansed backdrop. This is not so much a visualization of repression, as it is a visual narrative of both resistance and ideological victory over colonizing fictions.

As seems clear with this relatively new scholarly interest in memory and spaces, there is a tendency to consider multiple agendas, to recognize the complexity of such negotiations, to problematize the ownership of the past. Archaeologists, who I would never expect to embrace post-modernism or the like, seemingly are doing so today, though in a highly selective way. Memory according to them is after all continually unfolding. Who can say what past is correct, who can even say there is an objective reality out there to find? Yet in the same breath, they position themselves as grounded experts able to give

35 Said 1979.

36 Young 1999.

voice to the past.³⁷ Much as priests of various religious persuasions have claimed they are in sole communion with a higher power, so too archaeologists like to claim to be intermediaries between the past and the present. For example, those scholars who continually measure and marvel over the Ancestral One (so-called Kennewick man) claim to be allowing him to speak in the present, though only they can read his remains and narratives like a book.³⁸ There are many such contradictions in monuments and memory spaces, though they are not uncommon in archaeological narratives as well. It seems quite convenient for archaeologists to problematize ownership of the past, as it can be quite lucrative acquiring, possessing, and studying the cultural material of *others*, especially if archaeologists can convince their respective governments that the *other* does not own their heritage, and this has certainly been the case in the U.S. Examples of this prior to the passage of NAGPRA were innumerable, as archaeologists and institutions simply assumed ownership of the past and its objects through tropes of relevance and discursively constructed notions of a shared history. Seen from this light it is expected that archaeologists will point out contradictions between competing Indigenous narratives of the past and not be so much concerned with the dominant fictional colonizing narratives themselves. Indeed, archaeologists and their discipline stand to continue profiting from American Indian material culture. They are the default owners to the spoils of conquest, and resistance to NAGPRA, repatriation, and diversity within the halls where the production of knowledge occurs is viewed by many American Indians as nothing more than an effort to maintain non-Native hegemony.³⁹

It is not a stretch to say that many in the discipline of anthropology wish to continue their unfettered access to American Indian graves, goods, artifacts, stories, notwithstanding that irksome new NAGPRA law we have in the U.S. Truth be told, few institutions are actually in compliance with it anyway. There are some 150 000 American Indian bodies still stored in museums and institutions in the U.S., and where many archaeologists claim these bodies cannot be culturally affiliated to living Indians, archaeologist David Hurst Thomas believes some 80% can in fact be connected to descendants even within the restrictive wording of the law.⁴⁰ Such annoying facts get in the way of an otherwise lucrative field for the politically well-positioned archaeologists who articulate the trope of *shared heritage*,⁴¹ as if non-Natives experienced the repression of colonization themselves. There is a financial stake in maintaining a separation between living and dead Indians, in maintaining the fiction that there is no cultural affiliation, a category whose boundaries are defined and redefined by archaeologists all the time. Such categories are,

37 Fenton 2009; Shimony and Rouse 2011; Starna 2013.

38 Chatters 2002; Owsley and Jantz 2001.

39 Alfred 2004; Owsley and Jantz 2001; Benedict 2007; Deloria Jr. 2000; Hill 2007; Jemison 2007; George-

Kanentio 2007; Mihesuah 2004; Riding 2000; Rosier 2003; Smith 2006; Watkins 2000.

40 D. H. Thomas 2000.

41 Pollock and Lutz 1994.

importantly, not defined and redefined by living Indians. Archaeologists argue for a shared global heritage,⁴² yet even when they acknowledge this ideology as largely indistinguishable from those that drove colonist dispossessions of the *other*, they continue as stakeholders with an unmistakable economic incentive to maintain their elite positions as spokespersons for the dead. As a result, the foot dragging non-compliance of institutions to NAGPRA, and the vocal opposition by some of the disciplines *guard dogs* should not surprise anyone.

Lynn Meskell, in a paper she wrote shortly after the attack of the World Trade Center in New York City on 09/11/01, talked about the “unimaginable commodification” of the site of the towers.⁴³ She notes how the site of this loss of life was remarked upon by one grieving family member as, “a burial ground...a cemetery, where the men and women we loved are buried”⁴⁴. The unimaginable commodification occurs as the site is turned into a tourist attraction, and parts of the fallen buildings are loaned to museums throughout the nation where you too can pay a fee and view these artifacts. The boundaries of the unimaginable commodification do not extend to Meskell’s own view of the event, and in this way the critique of archaeology’s own unimaginable commodification of fetishized Indigenous material culture is situated as outside of the *normal* purview. Of course, this sounds all too familiar to American Indians.

I offer non-Native scholars a solution to the problems that affect the relationship between them and the American Indians they study (past and present). Instead of continuing to lament, like a litany, how complicated it is to sort through the various stakeholders of archaeological material, or how difficult it is to inventory items that your discipline has removed from American Indians without receiving more funding, why not put your years of learning and scholarship to use for something other than yourselves and attempt to actually work through these issues? Why not help American Indians devise strategies to oblige a visitor to a memory space to actually remember what happened there, to challenge the dominant narratives? Better yet, how can American Indians best convince you to examine your own uncomfortable practice of Indigenous disempowerment, your own relationship to colonizing powers, and your own role in burying your undesirable pasts, the likes of which regularly insert themselves into the present? Lynn Meskell also claimed that archaeologists are not known for their political acuity.⁴⁵ I would argue the opposite, that archaeologists are indeed aware that their position as authorities of the past resides within the very same power structures that create the fictionalized accounts we all read and marvel at on these various monuments. Whom do archaeologists want heritage preserved for? For a collective humanity, or for themselves?

42 R. Kelly and D. Thomas 2013; Luke and Kersel 2013.

43 Meskell 2002, 560.

44 Meskell 2002, 560–561.

45 Meskell 2002.

Referring to the density of dominant/subaltern group networks of memory spaces as more or less relative to each other is akin to the initial categorizations archaeologists do when they come upon layers of multiple behavioral activities during the course of their field research. While initially of use to make some semblance of the oft times dizzying variety of cultural material one can encounter, this is only the first step in understanding the phenomena. Contextualization, the likes of which I have touched on here, is absolutely necessary in order to understand the relative appearance of density or the lack thereof. The networks of memory spaces of dominant groups are ubiquitous, and this is reflective of the controlling strategies of colonization that have been put into place. Within the context of the Haudenosaunee homeland we find a white-washed historical landscape where the remembrance of one usually mythic and heroic past is presented as the single narrative from which the descendants of the victorious (dominant) are, and continue to be socialized. As mentioned earlier, the cost of erecting a monument or other memory site marker can be cost prohibitive, so the investment in establishing, maintaining, and adding to the past narrative of dominant group memory site networks attests to the importance attached to this powerful post-conquest tool. One finds the largest colonizing monuments closest to the largest population centers, where daily throngs of people who know next to nothing about American Indians or history come to be passively socialized into an ideology of both fate and entitlement, and where one can note the high investment in maintenance (for example removing counter discourse/graffiti) that occurs upon the dominant, albeit contested, narrative. Conversely the networks of memory spaces of Native (subaltern) groups are more uneven, as attempts to counter dominant historical narratives are pricey and resisted by non-Natives who have been socialized to view and protect a certain history, infused as it were with American exceptionalism and patriotism.

Upon such a naturalized landscape, where monuments tend to either glorify the subjugation of the original inhabitants (for example Clinton/Sullivan campaign markers) of the continent, or celebrate those assimilated sell-outs (for example Joseph Brant) who helped the colonizers achieve their objective of dispossession, it is important for those scholars who study networks of memory spaces to note the incongruities that mark attempts to counter the dominant narrative (for example red hand prints, chemical removal or paint cover ups). The red hand print can be found on many Clinton/Sullivan monuments at any given moment, as the investment of dominant groups on isolated monuments mostly found along highways and rest areas is far more limited than the response one can find in civic parks within urban centers. As Indians become empowered and mobilized in their resistance, the scene of contestation shifts to those high population urban centers where their counter discourse can be heard by the most people. A good example of this occurred in the 1990's where Russel Means and the American

Indian Movement (AIM) launched a protest to the annual Columbus Day parade in Denver, CO by throwing red paint upon a large statue of Columbus, while articulating through a mega horn the facts of his 'discovery.' So too there is a qualitative dimension that distinguishes subaltern memory networks from dominant, as American Indians like the Haudenosaunee know of and visit sites that are not marked by the conventional Euro-American edifices of stone, but are nonetheless carried from generation to generation through oral history. Thus, such different ways of remembering produce equally different memory networks.

When American Indians do in fact reclaim sacred sites and remove, destroy, or otherwise counter the fictionalized *false flag* narratives encapsulated within imposed monuments/memorials, what will archaeologists do and say? If the Black Hills are ever returned to the Lakota, will you liken the Indians to the Taliban, or ISIS if they smash to bits the white faces carved into their revered mountain? Surely, they have the right to do so. Will you call them looters and destroyers of some sort of global heritage, a *heritage* that is of course not really shared with but taken from them? This sort of disdain is evinced on an almost daily basis albeit at smaller scales, as powerful members of the discipline bemoan the loss of material culture and bodies through the bothersome NAGPRA law that they and their predecessors expropriated from American Indians. Ultimately anthropology/archaeology has created and is a part of its own networks of memory spaces, spaces where the colonizing ideology of dispossession has been enacted. The one-way gaze continues to be dominant methodology, and such welcomed criticality of scholars regarding "imaginative geographies"⁴⁶ and memory spaces is sorely limited if it simply replicates the same sort of colonizing mentality that has been historically used by anthropology to paint the quant picture of disappeared or assimilated *others*. A critical scrutiny of the role of anthropology/archaeology as part and parcel of a larger memory space of dispossession is far overdue.

46 Said 1979.

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