CHAPTER 2

PREHISTORIC NATIVE AMERICAN SOCIETIES

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In 1823, the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, John Marshall, wrote the opinion for a case involving property rights, Johnson v. M'Intosh. Although the case was concerned strictly with whether individuals could legally buy lands from indigenous nations in the United States, Justice Marshall took the opportunity to render a long opinion, detailing the reasons why the United States, in his eyes, was holding the supreme title to all lands within the territory it claimed for itself. American Indians, Marshall wrote, had only a right of occupancy over their lands, and they could only sell these lands to the United States. In general, then, Native peoples occupied the lands until they would sell them to the federal government. This was, of course, absolutely in accordance with the policies of the federal government. We will look into these policies in later chapters. What is of interest here, however, is the image Justice Marshall painted of American Indian nations and their cultures: this was and still is a very popular image. Marshall followed popular ideas about Indians, but by integrating these ideas into a Supreme Court opinion, he was also building the case for the legitimacy of the colonization of American Indians. This is, then, part of a political and legal rhetoric that needed to be accepted as the truth by Americans; indeed, it very quickly became the accepted "common sense" and influenced federal Indian policies for the next one hundred years, at least. Marshall wrote 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 a wilderness; . . . As the white population advanced, that of the Indians necessarily receded. The country in the immediate neighbourhood of agriculturists became unfit for them. The game fled into thicker and more unbroken forests, and the Indians followed.*

Thus, he created a history that saw American Indians as hunters and gatherers, who did not use their land purposefully. Their lands were actually still wilderness, and they could not even live in the neighborhood of agriculture. In contrast, Americans would

put the land to good use, civilize the wilderness, and because of that have the right to settle the lands previously held by Indians.

Marshall gave voice to a popular view of history, and even though this history was historically absolutely wrong, it had and still has consequences because it fits in with popular expectations. When, ten years later, President Andrew Jackson tried to legitimize the ethnic cleansing of American Indians from the United States east of the Mississippi, for example, he used language that could have been drawn directly from Marshall's opinion. In 1830, he argued that American Indians were nomadic:

> *And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children?*

In 1835, he took up the theme that Native peoples could not survive near civilization:

> *All preceding experiments for the improvement of the Indians have failed. It seems now to be an established fact that they can not live in contact with a civilized community and prosper. Ages of fruitless endeavors have at length brought us to a knowledge of this principle of intercommunication with them.*

American Indians, in this view, were without civilization: without agriculture, law, order, true religion, political organization, etc. They were living in a wilderness and in a wild state. They shared no commonalities with American society.

We cannot be sure if Chief Justice Marshall knew much about American Indian cultures, but Andrew Jackson definitely did. He had fought with and against the Creek, Cherokee and other nations. Although he ultimately betrayed his Native allies, he knew their societies and cultures very well, and he knew that what he said about them was not true. Unfortunately, the creation of stereotypes that fulfill expectations and legitimize historical events is very powerful, and for too many Americans, the role of American Indians still is to melt into the remaining wilderness with each advance of the frontier of civilization. In many accounts of American history, Americans were simply more "advanced," more civilized, and more organized than Native societies. American Indian history, before and during the American presence on the continent, is not very often deemed worth studying. In this textbook, this view of history will hopefully be corrected. A good start might be by exploring those societies that lived here before the Europeans showed up. As a concrete example, we can start with a town on the upper Missouri River, in what is today North Dakota.

Huff

More than five hundred years ago, along the banks of the Missouri, people built and settled in a town that archaeologists today call "Huff site." The town was built in the fertile lands in Missouri River Valley, protected from the plains by the bluffs that are about a mile to the west. Across the river, behind stands of cottonwood, a wide view

opens vistas of distant buttes. Standing within the site today, it is hard to imagine that the inhabitants were not taken by the beauty of the area. They also, however, had much more practical reasons to build their town at this spot and to build it the way they did.

The Huff site, the map of which precedes these chapters, showcases several different aspects in North American prehistory that deserve discussion. *Look at the map of the site and see what conclusions you can make about the people simply from how they built their town.* This prehistoric village on the Missouri River, in what is today North Dakota, is not an exception to its time, although most contemporary town sites do not show neatly organized rows of houses. There are many prehistoric town sites like the Huff site on the Missouri River, and during what is called the Middle Missouri Tradition, they are all close to the river, fortified with palisades, and consisting of around a hundred large, rectangular earthlodges.[1] Huff shows 103 houses, and had probably around a thousand inhabitants. The fact that these villages exist alone deserves mentioning, as it, together with archaeological sites all over North America, clearly contradicts the persisting stereotype that American Indians were nomadic until contact with Europeans.

The fact is that many indigenous prehistoric societies in the Americas had built permanent settlements with often large public monuments. These settlements ranged from a few houses to large cities like Tenochtitlan, much larger than anything Europeans had ever seen at the time:

> *This great city . . . is built on the salt lake, and no matter by what road you travel there are two leagues from the main body of the city to the mainland. There are four artificial causeways leading to it, and each is as wide as two cavalry lances. The city itself is as big as Seville or Córdoba. The main streets are very wide and very straight; some of these are on the land, but the rest and all the smaller ones are half on land, half canals where they paddle their canoes. All the streets have openings in places so that the water may pass from one canal to another. Over all these openings, and some of them are very wide, there are bridges made of long and wide beams joined together very firmly and so well made that on some of them ten horsemen may ride abreast. . . . This city has many squares where trading is done and markets are held continuously. There is also a square twice as big as that of Salamanca, with arcades all around, where more than sixty thousand people come each day to buy and sell, and where every kind of merchandise produced in these lands is found; provisions as well as ornaments of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, stones, shells, bones, and feathers. . . . There is a street where they sell game and birds of every species found in this land: chickens, partridges and quails, wild ducks, flycatchers, widgeons, turtledoves, pigeons, cane birds, parrots, eagles and eagle owls, falcons, sparrow hawks and kestrels . . . . There are streets of herbalists where all the medicinal herbs and roots found in the land are sold. There are shops like apothecaries', where they sell ready-made medicines as well as liquid ointments and plasters. There are shops like barbers' where they have their hair washed and shaved . . . . There are, in all districts of this great city, many temples or houses for their idols. They are all very beautiful buildings. . . . Amongst these temples there is one, the principal one, whose great size and magnificence no human tongue could describe, for it is so large that within the precincts, which are*

surrounded by a very high wall, a town of some five hundred inhabitants could easily be built. All round inside this wall there are very elegant quarters with very large rooms and corridors where their priests live. There are as many as forty towers, all of which are so high that in the case of the largest there are fifty steps leading up to the main part of it; and the most important of these towers is higher than that of the cathedral of Seville. They are so well constructed in both their stone and woodwork that there can be none better in any place . . . .[2]

While arguably Tenochtitlan was the largest city in the Americas, North America, too, had settlements that amazed the early explorers.

On October 10, 1540, the expedition of Hernando de Soto came to yet another walled town in southeastern North America, for example:[3]

{De Soto} entered the village of Tascaluça, which is called Athahachi, a recent village. And the chief was on a kind of balcony on a mound on one side of the square, his head covered by a kind of coif like the almaizal, so that his head-dress was like a Moor's which gave him an aspect of authority; he also wore a pelote *or mantle of feathers down to his feet, very imposing; he was seated on some high cushions, and many of the principal men among his Indians were with him. . . . Before this chief there stood always an Indian of graceful mien holding a parasol on a handle something like a round and very large fly fan, with a cross similar to that of the Knights of the Order of St. John of Rhodes, in the middle of a black field, and the cross was white. And although the Governor entered the plaza and alighted from his horse and went up to him, he did not rise, but remained passive in perfect composure and as if he had been a king.*

These were powerful, agricultural societies, with standing armies, and their leaders, as much as the Spanish conquistadors tried to deny it, were indeed the equivalent of kings. The leader of the realm of Coça, for example, welcomed the expedition as such:

And the chief came out to receive the Governor in a litter covered with the white mantles of the country, and the litter was borne on the shoulders of sixty or seventy of his principal subjects, with no plebeian or common Indians among them; and those that bore him took turns by relays with great ceremonies after their manner.

When the first Europeans arrived at the upper Missouri in 1738, they were led to a Mandan village, not too far north from the Huff site. Pierre Gaultier, sieur de la Verendrye, the leader of this French expedition, described the village as such:[4]

I gave orders to count the cabins, and we found that there were about one hundred and thirty. All the streets, squares and cabins are uniform in appearance. . . . They keep the streets and open spaces very clean; the ramparts are smooth and wide; the palisade is supported on cross pieces mortised into posts fifteen feet apart with a lining. . . . As to the bastions, there are four of them at each curtain well flanked. The fort is built on an elevation in mid-prairie with a ditch over fifteen feet deep and from fifteen to eighteen wide. Entrance to the fort can only be obtained by steps or pieces which they remove when threatened by the enemy. If all their forts are similar you may say that they are impregnable to savages. Their fortification, indeed, has nothing savage about it.

About seventy years later, the fur trader Alexander Henry visited the Amahami and Hidatsa villages in the same area. He had this to say about the area between the villages:[5]

> *We proceeded on a delightful hard, dry road. The soil being a mixture of sand and clay and rain being infrequent, the heat of the sun makes the road as hard as pavement. Upon each side were pleasant cultivated spots, some of which stretched up the rising ground on our left, whilst on our right they ran nearly to the Missouri River. In these fields were many women and children at work, who all appeared industrious. Upon the road were passing and repassing every moment natives, afoot and on horseback, curious to examine and stare at us. Many horses were feeding in every direction beyond the plantation. The whole view was agreeable and had more the appearance of a country inhabited by a civilized nation than by a set of savages.*

Americans could and should have known that the indigenous peoples of the continent were not simply wandering hordes of hunters and gatherers, with no attachment to the land and no permanent settlements. It was the need to legitimize their conquest and their supposed cultural superiority that led them to ignore reality.

The development of human societies does not follow a linear progress, from hunting and gathering to pastoralism, to agriculture, to industrialism, to post-industrialism. Each society adapts to its natural and social environments, and makes these environments adapt to it. Societies do so according to their own cultural needs and wants, and make their own choices—or are forced to adapt in certain ways by other, dominant societies. This explains that societies can develop from urban into nomadic or rural cultures or vice versa.[6] It also explains how some neighbors of the people living at the Huff site were nomadic peoples, with different cultures. North American indigenous peoples are, and have been as long as anybody can say, culturally diverse, sovereign nations with different economies, languages, religions, technologies, worldviews, kinship systems, laws, government organizations, and societies. In short, they each had their own history and culture.

By the time the Huff site was occupied, around A.D. 1450 to 1500, indigenous peoples had lived in North America for at least 15,000 years. They had explored, explained, and exploited the land and its resources in various ways. They had found cultural answers to a multitude of natural and social challenges, and their solutions can in part be seen in their archaeological traces. Several cultural solutions of the people at the Huff site are apparent from the site map. First, the town was built along the Missouri; water was extremely important for agriculture, and provided transportation for trade goods. Second, the site is surrounded by a fortification. Third, there is a definite organization to the town, with a large open space, a plaza, in the middle of the town, and a house facing this plaza. These features point to some of the most important issues in North American prehistoric cultures in general. In the following, I will sketch a picture of North American prehistory by following these issues—agriculture,

trade, warfare, social organization—and then discuss some of the problems of historical and cultural research concerning prehistoric societies.

Agriculture

Not all palisaded, permanent, or semipermanent settlements indicate the presence of agriculture. For example, just east of Bismarck, ND and only a few miles away from Huff lie the remains of another settlement, Menoken village. This village was occupied around three hundred and fifty years before Huff, by people who relied a lot on bison hunting. It was palisaded and had a population of probably about two hundred people. Their residence at Menoken was probably semipermanent, but the care in planning and building the village shows that they used this site for many years. They did not pursue agriculture, but were in direct or indirect contact with people who definitely did, because they possessed trade goods like marine shells that originally came from the Atlantic or Gulf Coast. It is not clear what happened to Menoken or where the people lived after they stopped using the settlement, but its presence alone shows that even hunters and gatherers did not just wander the wilderness or follow the buffalo.

Towns such as the Huff site were dependent at least in part on agricultural production. While it is often still "common sense" to think of all indigenous societies in North America as hunters and gatherers, this is not at all true. Many more American Indian societies were agricultural. Eastern North America was actually one of the very few regions in the world where an agricultural culture complex was independently invented. Other such regions include the Middle East, India and China, and Mesoamerica. Europe borrowed the principles of agriculture and domestication of plants from these regions. The North American agricultural complex depended on the domestication of plants such as marsh elder, sunflower, sumpweed, goosefoot, and knotweed. It is also probable that certain species of squash and gourds were independently domesticated in eastern North America. Between 250 B.C. and A.D. 200, this agricultural complex had begun to have significant impact on social, political, and probably religious aspects of indigenous cultures.[7]

There are a few regions with such rich, year-round available natural resources in one place that hunting and gathering, and especially fishing societies can become sedentary (for example on the Northwest Coast). As discussed, there are also permanent or semipermanent settlements without the evidence of agriculture, although many of these were in contact with agricultural societies. Because it enables reliable resources to be harvested throughout the year in one place, however, it is often assumed that it is agriculture that allows people to establish permanent settlements. Assumptions can be misleading, as Menoken shows. The earliest permanent settlements in North America did not depend on agriculture: the resource they exploited

was mostly shellfish. Sometimes between 6000 and 3000 B.C., as the northern regions were becoming ice-free, people in the southeastern United States began to establish permanent settlements. These settlements had become possible because the water level in rivers had receded, they were flowing less rapidly, and the water was warmer: the rivers began to support, as a consequence, a wide array of mussels, shellfish, and bottom feeders. It was this stable and reliable resource for subsistence that allowed societies to settle down. Shellfish and fish were not the only foods exploited, but they were the staple foods that provided a secure subsistence basis, subsidized by hunting and gathering. The gathering of local wild plants by sedentary populations would surely have increased plant knowledge, led to the support of growing patches, and thus slowly brought about the foundations for domestication of these plants.[8] As a result of shellfish consumption and localized settlements, shell middens begin to appear at around 4000 B.C. Some of these shell middens were also used as burial places, while others were used as house locations.[9]

During these early times, peoples on the Plains were still living in nomadic, small bands. It is extremely difficult to know how these groups lived, because they did not leave much of an archaeological footprint aside from small campsites and tool manufacturing sites. What we know is that during the Archaic period, between about 8000 and 1000 B.C., these societies became more territorial. Coinciding with this, climate, flora, and fauna in North America became very similar to what they are today.[10] Cultural distinctions become evident not only between different territorial groups but also between larger regions; people make choices in accordance with their different environments, and their solutions are mirrored in their cultures.

The fact that groups become territorial does not mean that they become sedentary. Most people in North America at that time were still nomadic hunters and gatherers, but it seems that definite hunting territories were developing. This is reflected, for example, in the geographic sources of lithic materials used to make tools and weapons. While before, a wide array of materials from geographically very different sources was used, in this period, the materials begin to be more limited to local or regional sources. The bow and arrow were not yet known in most parts of North America. In the Archaic, people used instead the *atlatl* or spear-thrower. In addition to hunting, an increase in wild plant use is evident during this period, and *manos* and *metates*—tools for grinding grain—appear frequently in the archaeological evidence.

With the spread of agriculture, which is of course dependent on water resources, sedentary or semisedentary societies developed or settled along river systems, including the lower Missouri. This is the beginning of a division in subsistence activities and settlement patterns on the plains. In a rough generalization, sedentary agriculturalists came to live along the main river valleys and pedestrian nomadic hunter-gatherers on the high plateaus. These societies are certain to have had contacts, and some of these groups might have been semisedentary, tending to their fields and also undertaking hunting

expeditions away from the rivers. The cultural patterns, as in evidence in the late historic period from the 1700s to the 1800s, depended on two more introductions, one prehistoric, and one historic: corn and horses.

Corn was introduced to North America from Mesoamerica, where it was domesticated. In North America, it first appears in the Southwest, around 1500 B.C. It was then traded into the Southeast at around A.D. 1. During the first few hundred years that corn was planted in southeastern North America, it was not a staple crop, but played a secondary role to the indigenous domesticated plants. Very probably, corn was much more important in ceremonies than as food. Some researchers also think that corn might have served as a status marker, and that local and regional elites ate corn as a sign of their wealth and political power.[11] This changed at around A.D. 800, when corn quickly became the staple crop of the newly evolving Mississippian societies.[12] These societies built large fortified cities, with central sacred districts and strict hierarchical political and social ranks. Together with other aspects of these cultures, corn was traded into the northeast as well as up the Mississippi and Missouri valleys. Eventually, societies along river valleys on the northern plains would grow large fields of corn as a staple crop and trade it for other materials with their neighbors.

Trade

Although archaeological evidence at the Huff site does not support much trade activity, towns like the Huff site along the upper Missouri were engaged in trade. The Huff site was probably only occupied for about twenty years, and that might have been too little time for many trade goods to accumulate. Or perhaps during the period that the town was occupied, trade was at a lull; exchange networks in the region might have been busier before and after. As evidenced by the trade goods at Menoken, for example, long-distance trade had spanned North America from east to west from at least 1000 B.C. on, and much of the east-west trade was carried on along the Missouri valley. Since there were no domesticated pack or draw animals, transportation of goods in prehistoric North America was only possible either on foot, on dogs, or on watercraft, and this made the Missouri a very attractive trade route. In fact, the area that is today North Dakota was the key to the control of the continental trade, and would continue to be so until the mid-nineteenth century.

One should not imagine Native traders from the East Coast or the Gulf traveling all the way to the Pacific and back. Although this remains a possibility, most trade was carried on between locations of so-called rendezvous or trade fairs. Every year, people from different nations would meet in these places and exchange goods, reconnect with acquaintances, and learn about news. One major place like that was The Dalles in Oregon; another was the villages on the Missouri. In this way, individuals traveled

hundreds of miles, but did not cover the whole distance across the continent. Trade was carried on mostly through the hands of high-status individuals, and exotic trade goods, like Atlantic seashells on the Pacific or obsidian from Yellowstone on the Gulf Coast, were highly valued status markers. Besides utilitarian goods, such as obsidian blades, the most highly valued trade goods were shells, pearls, decorated copper plates, and other luxury goods.[13]

Exchange of goods not only served a purely economic function but also built social networks because transactions through the years usually took place between the same trade partners. As exchange was primarily a social activity, in many ways based on kinship obligations, these activities were not barter systems and cannot be understood from a modern economic perspective. Some Native American societies had professional traders, organized in castes or guild-like structures, for example the Aztecs. In North America, some societies also engaged in trading activities on a level that might be termed professional, especially during the early contact periods of Native nations. Since trading partners often became relatives of one another, they could provide extremely valuable services, not only in acquiring news but in many places also as a social security network. In the far north, for example, people could stay with their exchange partners during times of need, such as a disappearing resource base. With trade goods, ideas were of course also exchanged. It is through such long-distance trade that, for example, corn and the knowledge surrounding it were traded from Mesoamerica to the Southwest, from there to the Southeast, and from there to the Northeast and the Plains. Exchange networks also served to spread other cultural traits, such as certain ceremonies.

While purely economic theories and values cannot grasp fully the values of these exchange networks, engagement in trade definitely helped to elevate individuals' status within their societies. Trade and trade goods were often reserved for the elite families or classes of Native societies. Gaining advantages or making profits through monopolizing trade in certain regions was not a concept foreign to these societies, either, and in fact trade was probably one of the major diplomatic tools between Native nations.

Fortifications

While not all Native towns and settlements were fortified, the Huff site was, and so were other towns of that time, before, and after. Fortifications point to warfare; it is possible to have warfare without fortified towns, but usually people only fortify a town militarily if there is a threat. It seems from other archaeological sites in the area that threats were not uncommon at the time. While there are areas and times in Native North America where warfare was probably not a very important factor in people's lives, such as most of precontact California, most Native societies engaged in warfare, and some made it one of the central traits of their cultures.

Some societies in North America—very similar to the city states of Mesoamerica—probably had standing armies. Warfare played an important part not just in political, but also in ceremonial and spiritual life; a recurrent motif of southeastern prehistoric art, for example, is a man in what is probably a ceremonial costume holding a war club in one hand and a trophy head in the other. While Native North America is sometimes portrayed as living in peace until the colonization by Euro-Americans, prehistoric evidence from all over the continent proves this image wrong. Along the Missouri River, the most important site speaking to this issue is Crow Creek, a site dated to the fourteenth century. Here, a mass grave contained the remains of slightly less than five hundred individuals, many of whom showed signs of dismemberment and scalping.[14]

Warfare in Native North America was closely aligned with trade and exchange relationships. The same people could fight each other and trade with each other during the same year. Notions of "traditional enemies"—peoples who always fought and never interacted peacefully—have to be taken with extreme caution. Trade and exchange were simply two available relationships with foreigners, and decisions toward one or the other were often situational. This means that we cannot analyze Native American warfare according to European-derived notions of war. In order to understand Native warfare patterns, conflict has to be understood as an integral part of kinship relations, including relations with non-human beings, religious values, and social demands.[15] Prehistoric warfare is an extremely complex puzzle to solve because we can also not assume that historic patterns of conflict (such as the demand for honorable war deeds as a prerequisite for status) but also goals, strategies, and tactics, can simply be extended into prehistory.

Social Organization

The deliberate organization of the town is very probably a reflection of the people's social and political organization. It is obvious that the Huff site, and other comparable settlements of the time along the Missouri, was not simply an amalgamation of houses in any which way, but was deliberately planned. Planning a settlement and building public works, such as fortifications, indicate the presence of some political authority that had the power to convince or force people to adhere to decisions.

In part dependent on comparisons to historic societies, some researchers have come to believe that the large house facing the plaza in the Huff site represents this authority. There is, of course, no real way to know what this authority looked like, how exactly it functioned, and how it was expressed and represented symbolically. The house does not give any indication of its potential use for political purposes—such as usage only for political meetings. It is not a council house, in other words. Perhaps it was the house of the most important family in the town. It might also have been a ceremonial place.

In most societies, ceremonial and political spheres are not clearly separated. Like most other Native American societies, Huff was most probably not a democratic society in the modern meaning of the term. Important decisions might have been made by respected men who had proven themselves to be valuable members of the community. Whether the authority represented by this governing body was religious, political, or both, and whether there were separate religious and governmental bodies cannot be determined with assurance. The people living in the Huff site definitely had laws, and somebody upheld and enforced them, however.

Sometimes American Indian societies are seen as in general less hierarchical, more decentralized, and less authoritarian than American society. For example, the idea that Native societies reached decisions by consensus often leads people to think of them as constituted of equals in status, wealth, and power, an idea that fits neatly with another stereotype, that of equal communal sharing of resources. These notions are more based on idealized alternatives to American society than on the reality of Native societies, historical or contemporary. Many historical Native societies were extremely centralized in authority. Status and wealth differences were present in almost all. While people acquired status differently and handled wealth differently from culture to culture, that does not mean these differences did not exist. It is true that some Indian societies made decisions based on consensus. However, one needs to keep two things in mind. First, those who disagreed might simply have been quiet and not voiced their opposition. Second, in many societies, if one really disagreed, one left. Consensus never meant that one hundred percent of the people agreed or that this was based on a vote. These notions sometimes stem from the idea that Native societies were communal and not individualistic like modern American society. However, while it is true that in many American Indian societies, the well-being of the community was of highest importance, individual status and power were sought in very individual ways. Generalized dichotomies like these usually turn out to be more romantic, wishful thinking than reality when cultural details are taken into account.

Apart from political organization, the arrangement of the houses at Huff might also point to the importance of social organization. While the exact structure of this social organization—the kinship system—is unknown; for example, whether the people were divided into moieties and clans or not, or whether they were matrilineal or patrilineal, the overall importance of kinship in Native American societies and in later Mandan society specifically makes it very probable that the population of the Huff site also organized itself according to kinship. Kinship not only made relatives of people but also most often included the nonhuman environment. This does not mean that American Indians revered "Mother Earth" and "Father Sky" in a romanticized fashion, but that kinship relations placed certain specific obligations and rights on all beings in the universe. As kinship in all societies extends beyond the social realm into the political and religious aspects of cultures, people at the Huff site must have had a religion that was in accordance with these rules of relationships.

The Interpretation of Cultures

Far from Marshall's and Jackson's portrayal of American Indians as nomadic hunters and gatherers, without attachment to land and property, and without law and government deserving of the terms, indigenous nations in North America lived in well-ordered societies, within national territories they defended from their neighbors, and had long developed diverse subsistence strategies, including agricultural technologies and methods that allowed them to plant crops in the difficult climate of the northern plains. The rhetoric used to legitimize their colonization, however, was vastly successful: it developed into the "common sense" assumption that Native peoples were roaming the land in search of food, never long attached to any given place, and gave rise to the assumption that they were therefore wasting the resources. This common sense was successful, of course, in part exactly because it legitimized what the United States and its citizens wanted: the taking of the land from Native nations. However, if such rhetoric can so easily deceive us, despite all the evidence to the contrary in plain sight, we need to understand how we can and should proceed to interpret historical and contemporary cultures.

Rhetorical constructions of cultural "realities" are not limited to the history of colonialism in the United States: every society tries to paint images of its own and other cultures and of historical events that serve its own best interests but are not necessarily accurate. Hollywood movies, from *Enigma* to *Blackhawk Down* are guilty of that, yet obviously very influential. Many times, these constructions of reality become so ingrained as common-sense reality that they become hegemonic. They cannot be questioned, even if evidence points directly against them. A contemporary example might be the notion that the "Sioux" divide themselves linguistically into Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota, corresponding to the Santee, Teton, and Yankton/Yanktonai societies. The notion of LDN groups has become hegemonic and is often repeated, without questioning, in the academic and popular literature as a simple fact. The evidence, however, points to a different conclusion. In fact, the Nakota are the Assiniboine, a group of Siouan speakers that separated from the Dakota probably about six hundred years ago, settled in the northernmost plains, and historically aligned themselves with the Cree against the Dakota and Lakota. The Yankton/Yanktonai spoke a version of Dakota. They call their own language Dakota, called themselves Dakota, and historically never identified themselves as Nakota.[16] The perpetuation of the LDN assumption thus is as wrong as the perpetuation of the notion that all Native American societies were hunters and gatherers. Yet, it remains as persistent in the common sense of this society, and indeed of academia.

The same process of scientific reasoning that applies to physics and geology applies to archaeology, history, and cultural anthropology. Many people think that science proves facts by proving that a hypothesis is true: this is not so. In fact, science proves that hypotheses are *not* true; out of a potentially indefinite number of hypotheses, science selects the one that is most probable. If there are a number of hypotheses that cannot

be proven false, then a principle that is called Occam's Razor is applied. This principle states that out of two hypotheses, which both are otherwise equal, that is take the same facts into account, the one that explains a phenomenon most elegantly and most economically, that is with the fewest additional assumptions, is the most probable. It is, for example, possible that the sun and planets revolve around the earth, like astronomy assumed for centuries. However, it is much more probable that the planets, including the earth, revolve around the sun. It is impossible to prove that aliens did not teach humans how to build pyramids, as it is impossible in general to prove that something did not happen or to prove the negative. However, given the facts, it is much more probable that humans learned themselves how to build large pyramids over time, starting with small ones and gradually building more complex and larger works. Hypotheses that are true, that is those hypotheses that provide the best explanations, remain true until a better hypothesis is found. Science is thus ever evolving. For example, the hypothesis that the first humans came to the Americas from Siberia has been revised several times, as new data has shown that these groups did not have to wait for a dry Bering Strait or for an ice-free corridor to move into North America: they probably knew how to build ships and took those across. However, the Bering Strait in general is still held to be the most probable route for the peopling of the Americas, and other routes, such as across the Pacific or across the North Atlantic, are therefore scientifically untrue, as is the assumption of human origins in the Americas. To evaluate a hypothesis, the context of the facts to be explained needs to be explored. We can learn a lot from archaeological data once we develop an understanding of the relations involved. Once we understand the overarching structural relationships between different data sets (for example, house structures, tools, fields, and the distribution of trade goods), we can read the archaeological landscape. That landscape becomes more familiar and more true the more detailed knowledge we possess. Any interpretation of facts, therefore, requires an understanding of specific, detailed contexts.

Archaeology and History

The threshold between prehistoric and historic societies has been conventionally defined by the existence of writing systems in historic societies. In North America, where no writing systems existed before contact with Europeans, the so-called first contact therefore establishes the beginning of the historic period. However, first contact with Europeans is a problematic marker for several reasons. First, contact with Europeans (or non-Europeans who were literate) occurred at different times for each indigenous society. Second, reports about any given society are not necessarily dependent on actual contact. In many cases, neighbors of these societies gave very detailed, if biased, descriptions to missionaries, traders, government agents, and travelers before any European actually reached the people described. Third, the first written description of a given society cannot be taken as the time of first contact. Many Europeans,

especially those traveling, living, and trading in the backcountry, were not literate. It will probably always remain unclear, for example, for how many decades Basque fishermen had been fishing off the northern Atlantic coast before first contact was officially made with indigenous peoples in the area. It is very clear, however, that they were present, and that they interacted in some way with the indigenous peoples there. There is therefore a period between prehistory and history in which there were indirect, undocumented, or very sporadic contacts, and this period is called protohistory. As most of North American history falls within the prehistoric and protohistoric periods, the interpretation of this history cannot rely on written documents only. There are two possible main sources for the interpretation of these histories: archaeology and oral history.

Archaeological findings are basically the material remains of peoples, from pots to weapons, from bones to house posts. While the nature of these findings is sometimes obvious, the interpretation of material culture is very complex because the context, which gives material culture its meaning, is usually religious, social, or in other ways symbolic. The fact that domesticated seeds show up in the archaeological record, for example, needs interpretation. Were these seeds traded in with other goods from neighbors or other trade partners? How many people used these seeds, and in what ways? If plants were grown from the seeds, for what purpose did people plant them: subsistence, religion, political status, or something else? Sometimes these questions can be answered by cross-reference to other finds. For example, if at about the same time that seeds appear in the records as farming implements appear, and there is a general change in food-preparation technology (although similar technology was often used for the preparation of wild plants), we can cautiously assume that the subsistence changed. But unanswered questions remain, such as who tended the fields, and how the land allocation for fields was handled.

Archaeology teaches us to be detailed and specific in our argumentation. Whether a woven item was a flat basket used to collect berries or a fan used to alleviate heat in leisure hours makes a huge difference for the interpretation of a specific society, and these questions can only be answered through detailed and comparative analysis. Hypotheses constantly have to be questioned and refined. While the dangers of hasty and generalized conclusions are most obvious in archaeological contexts, they apply just as much to other historical and cultural conclusions. Usually, what we think is common sense stops being common when we deal with different cultures. In general, the more archaeological data can be historically and culturally cross-referenced, the better for the interpretation of culture. This means that we know much more about people with large quantities of material culture, in parts also simply because large amounts of stuff are more easily found. It is extremely easy to overlook the imprint of a lean-to and a few arrow points; it is much more difficult not to recognize a large burial site next to a walled settlement with big trash mounds. Since sedentary people usually leave more traces behind than nomadic people, a lot more is known about village and urban dwellers.

There is another reason why the writing of history focuses on sedentary peoples: the fact that the people who write history are themselves urban peoples. Events of the past are always interpreted through the lens of the contemporary. This also influences the second data set available, oral history. Societies without writing systems often use different methods to ensure the accuracy of their histories. Some use mnemonic devices, such as winter counts, wampums, or time sticks. Others school specialist historians, whose task it is to memorize past events, often in song. Because events need to be interpreted, translated into the contemporary, and put into context to make sense, every generation narrates history a bit differently from the previous, however. This is not the case only in oral societies; written history also changes with reinterpretations. The difference is simply that with written history, older sources are often preserved and can be consulted. Sometimes, however, the reinterpretation of history does not tolerate older, now heretic sources. The history of literate societies is full of occasions at which documents are burned, broken, or otherwise destroyed, and others at which pseudo-historic documents are invented, falsified, and forged.

Academic and Cultural Histories

Academic or scientific history is a project, like all of science, that was created to stand above the truth as it is known to and in individual cultures. Science was created to be disconnected from culture: its truth is not what any specific culture knows to be true, but what is determined to be true for all cultures.

It is not primarily interested in finding explanations—why things are the way they are—but facts—what kinds of things are in what ways. Academic history, for example, is interested in finding how people lived at a specific time in a specific location. The reality that is constructed in this way can only exist if, for any given event, different and differing interpretations are overcome in order to know what "really" happened. Cultural history, however, of which oral traditions are a large part (but nothing prevents cultural history from being written down), has a very different goal. There is no need to compare different interpretations from two or more societies. The question is not so much how people lived in a specific past, but why things are the way they are in the present. In order to explain that, cultural history looks at the past. The primary object, however, is not to explain the past but to explain the present. This explains in part the difference between anthropology and history: history needs to construct one's past—something either happened or did not happen, no matter the cultural explanations or beliefs. Anthropology is trying to find out what things mean for a given culture. Because cultural meaning is dependent on cultural belief, it is valid within a given culture, but does not have to be valid outside of it.

Because culture changes, and different presents have to be explained at any given time, cultural history also changes over time. The cultural history that is valid today for any

culture did not exist a hundred years ago and will no longer be valid a hundred years from now. What we can learn from cultural histories, then, is not so much how people lived in the past, but what was important to people at the time that the history was told or written down. This makes it very difficult to use oral histories to write academic history, or to use oral traditions recorded two hundred years ago to understand what happened two thousand years ago. Just like culture overall, cultural histories are true in the context of the societies in which they are known. For example, the story of Genesis, like any other cultural history, cannot be read as a literal account of the past, but needs to be interpreted. If we read it literally, we pretend that the cultural environment and meanings that were valid two thousand years ago are still valid today. The Navajo origin story or the Arikara origin story places a lot of emphasis on corn, which stands at the beginning of human origins. However, we know scientifically when corn was introduced to the southwest and on the northern plains. What we can learn from these cultural histories is what was important for these societies when they told these versions of their histories. People who read cultural histories literally, however, that is who insist that cultural histories are academic histories, are fundamentalists. They cannot accept that cultures change and instead maintain that the foundations of culture stay the same.

It is because academic history and cultural history do not ask the same question that they are not in direct competition to each other. Genesis and Evolution do not contradict each other: they explain different things and therefore they provide different answers. The theory of evolution cannot and does not want to explain why species evolved; origin myths cannot and does not want to explain how they evolved. Because many people confuse this issue, they think that cultural history and academic history contradict each other. However, academic history is what is supposed to be true, independent of cultural beliefs; cultural history is what is true within and for each specific culture, but not outside of it. Despite these differences, the two are not irreconcilable, however. For example, it is perfectly reasonable to assume that the Navajo or the Arikara only came into existence as Navajo or Arikara with the introduction of corn into their societies, so that corn did indeed stand at the origins of their existence as true human beings, that is, imbued with their specific cultures. Similarly, the Lakota came into being as Lakota only when they crossed the Missouri River, so that it is reasonable to understand that they, as Lakota beings, emerged in close relationship with the buffalo. As these specific historical cultures change, these specific myths would change too. What might impede that is that they have become written down. What will change, however, and is changing, is their interpretation.

If history changes over time and is constantly influenced by the present, oral history data have to be handled carefully. How far back can people remember events accurately, and what events are added, subtracted, or emphasized for purposes of interpretation or presentation for contemporary audiences? Every society sees itself as the most important focus of history, and every society needs to portray itself as legitimized in its decisions. It is naive

to assume that history is simply the telling of the "truth"; rather, it is a presentation of the truth as a society perceives it. Since historic truth is so closely associated with societies and cultures, there is another problem with oral history in North America. Since the settlement of North America, and in an accelerated mode since the beginning of the European conquest of North America, numerous societies have simply ceased to exist. People were killed, died from diseases, merged with other societies, or split up into other groups. The oral histories that have survived are not a representative sample, but stem from those groups that were large and strong enough or able to forge alliances to guarantee their survival. History is always written by the survivor, and only rarely are voices of the marginalized heard or passed on. An unbiased view of what happened, based on the analysis of different perspectives, is therefore many times impossible to achieve.[17]

Because Mandan origin stories and archaeological conclusions coincide in the assumption that the historic Mandan society had migrated up the Missouri River, and because villages such as the Huff site show many similarities in terms of organization, subsistence, and material culture with Mandan towns, it is generally agreed that the Huff site represents a prehistoric Mandan settlement.[18] This conclusion is made much easier because only little time passed between the occupation of the Huff site and the evolution of historic Mandan towns. In general, association of prehistoric sites with historic peoples is extremely difficult, if not impossible. This is so for several reasons, which all revolve around cultural change.

Culture Change

Cultural change occurs in every society, although some societies in certain times experience faster changes than others. In the dominant American society, cultures seem to change at least fast enough that the changes are perceptible over three generations; grandparents usually talk of the "good old times" because some of the values with which they grew up have been changed, so that their value expectations do not coincide anymore with the reality that their grandchildren learn. Cultures, then, change even if they are fairly stationary. Basically, everything about a culture can change over time: religion, language, laws, moral values, kinship systems, material culture, histories, ethnic affiliation, etc. If enough cultural traits have changed, it is often assumed that a new culture has replaced the old one, although to define the exact point at which this change occurred is often impossible. No society is without culture; therefore, it is a misnomer to say that a society has lost its culture: its culture has changed. Culture change can happen for many reasons. It can be voluntary or it can be involuntary. If culture change happens too fast, catastrophic consequences can ensue. Human beings orient themselves in the world and interpret their environments through culture. When old cultural interpretations are all of a sudden no longer valid and there has not been time to develop a new system, people often literally lose their bearings.

Culture change impedes the correlation of contemporary or historic peoples to archaeological records.[19] Without the presence of reliable oral history, the material record is the only data on which to base such identifications. Ideally, the presence of, for example, a central plaza, a centrally located social or religious building, fortifications, and agriculture at the Huff site could thus be taken as an indication that the people at Huff, and by extension the Mandan, are descendants of a Mississippian society because Mississippians organized their towns in such ways. Indeed, anthropology and history used such theories to explain prehistoric societies, especially in the early twentieth century. Some of these so-called diffusionist theories argued that certain cultural inventions, such as pyramids, the wheel, or specific clan-systems had to be invented by one society and then spread through migration or trade.

It is the possibility of trade contacts, a very popular mechanism of culture change, that impedes the assumption that societies with similar material culture must be related to each other. One could still argue, though, that the Mandan are cultural descendants of a Mississippian society. Although this is probably right, at least in some aspects, another word of caution is warranted by the possibility of independent invention. While, for example, the presence of corn unequivocally points to contact with people who grew corn themselves, the presence of fortifications or a central plaza could be due to an independent cultural development. The investigation of history in prehistoric societies requires extreme caution and attention to detail. General statements are too easily proven untrue.

Cultures change, and the direction of these changes is impossible to predict. Societies change languages, religion, subsistence, laws, social organization, and along with them also material culture. To assume that it is possible to trace the history of a given society simply by its continuous material record alone would therefore be a huge mistake. Early anthropologists fell into this trap, for example, when they assumed that prehistoric peoples did not live on the Plains. In their eyes, there were no horses; therefore, none of the cultural traits associated with historic Plains Indians could have existed, and therefore nobody could have lived in this environment. While peoples had lived on the Plains before horses were reintroduced to North America, the deep and very quick culture change and the migration to the Plains with the possession of horses, however, still leaves us with the question of what happened to these societies. There are no oral histories claiming those cultures for contemporary or historic societies, only a sudden change in the archaeological record usually associated with new cultures.

Such breaks in the archaeological record are often associated with the "disappearance" of societies. Hopewell and Mississippian societies in the east, as well as Hohokam and Anasazi in the southwest, have conventionally been seen as suddenly and mysteriously collapsing. The mystery behind these events probably derives just as much from the perception by the dominant society (and "history" is always written by dominant societies) that societies can only develop in one direction, toward greater complexity and urbanization. When societies decide to develop in the other direction, we say they "revert" to

being hunters and gatherers, with a definite negative association. These value judgments show very directly that a primary function of the telling of history is always the legitimization of contemporary society and culture.

There is one more hurdle to overcome in order to understand how peoples—cultures, societies—lived in prehistoric times and, for that matter, in historic times, too. What is recorded in histories, whether written or oral, is a matter of personal and cultural selection. Which events are deemed to be worthy of remembrance or necessary to remember can differ greatly. For example, no winter count of the summer 1876 remembers the battle of Greasy Grass or Little Big Horn. It seems that this event was either not important enough to record or, on the contrary, so important that it was not necessary to record it. Most histories are a chain of events that have been included in the historical record, but in order to understand how a culture worked, how people lived, what actions and inactions led to these selected events, we need to know both what Raymond Fogelson termed "events and non-events."[20] For example, Fogelson writes, the American Revolution might have been a nonevent for most Native societies. Treaty making, on the other hand, constituted a significantly higher marked event for American Indians than it was for American society. Certain events of recorded or narrated history are imagined. They are events that could have happened, or events that should have happened. One might add events that must have happened. Certain of these events are condensing years of history into one event. Other events did happen, but are too traumatic to be remembered; Fogelson gives the example of the Trail of Tears, which was not an event that was remembered for decades after removal. The battle at the Little Big Horn River, then, might not have been an event: it was one in a series of other battles, from the victory at Rosebud Creek to the killing of Crazy Horse. Many of these events are nonevents in American history. All history is, then, selective, and that selection depends on cultural meanings associated with history. Archaeological data are selective in a much different way, as they are not event centered or person centered; ideally, historical and archaeological data complement each other in various ways.

Prehistoric Societies

Despite the difficulties in reconstructing North American prehistories, several developments are certain. At the time the Huff site in North Dakota was occupied, several hundred societies lived in all regions of North America, each with its own language, religion, material culture, laws, value system, and subsistence forms. Some of them organized themselves in small, nomadic hunting and gathering bands, like on the plains. Others had developed extensive agricultural systems and lived in fortified cities of over 10,000 people, for example, in the southeast. A few of these societies had standing armies and a very complex politico-religious system. Yet others engaged in dry farming or had built large canals into the desert southwest to sustain corn fields. All of

these peoples engaged in trading or exchange activities. They all had geographical and ethnographic knowledge of large regions, and they made strategic decisions on war and peace, alliances and conflict. Some, such as the Hopewell societies, had built large, geometrically exact ceremonial structures and sun and moon calendars. Others, in the southwest, built ball courts and adobe houses. These were all sovereign, independent nations, centered around their own cultures. One of the characteristics of the prehistoric Americas was a relative absence of domesticated animals. In South America, the llama and alpaca served as wool bearers and for transportation. In North America, turkeys were domesticated in the southwest. The only other important domesticated animal in North America was the dog. This meant that all goods had to be transported either by dogs, by people, or on water; it is no wonder that exotic goods were highly valued and served as status markers. In marked contrast to the domestication of animals stands the domestication and usage of plants. Plant knowledge in the Americas was extensive, ranging from subsistence crops to medicinal plants and hallucinogens for ceremonial purposes.[21]

Before the fifteenth century, North America was covered with regionally specialized societies, connected by trade, warfare, alliances, and kinship. It was not paradise; occasional and systemic wars, famines, malnourishment and other social ills existed just like everywhere else. Nations vied for territories, hunting grounds, and other resources. Religious and political leaders sometimes oppressed people. Over the more than 15,000 years of settlement on the continent, however, cultures by themselves and neighbors together had developed systems that worked. These systems were about to encounter new cultures, and Europeans and other nations were about to encounter the North American cultures. Working systems are always greatly disturbed when new, unforeseen elements are introduced into them; cultural systems are no different. The stresses involved in these encounters, and the cultural and social responses that they brought about would not allow some of the cultures to survive. The process of what is often called the "discovery" or the "conquest" of the so-called New World did not happen over night, and it was not a unilateral, nor a unilineal process. North America, of course, was not discovered for the first time in 1492. It had been settled thousands of years before, and even Europeans had previously discovered the continent and some of its peoples. The Vikings had built settlements in Newfoundland. Basque fishermen had probably fished off the Atlantic coast for a few decades. In most of the Americas, contact and the political, economic, military, cultural, and social processes that followed it, and which ultimately fundamentally changed all societies involved, would continue at a gradual pace for two hundred years or more. Enrique Dussel argues that Columbus did not discover, but invented North America; the discovery followed in the process of the integration of the Americas into a true, global world system. This, he argues, constitutes the "origin of modernity" as such. What was discovered, then, was not so much one continent by people from another continent as a new global system that would influence and change all peoples on all continents.[22]

During this time Native and European societies established economic, political, and social ties. Through the exchange of goods, people, and ideas, they sought to come to an understanding of the other. Usually, each party expected the others to behave according to its own cultural norms. Breaches of these norms, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, often led to conflict. Where the norms were learned, respected, held, and upheld in accordance with each other, compromise could ensue and mutual agreements were observed. In some areas, mutually profitable economic or political schemes came to be negotiated. In other regions, Native societies had to defeat large and small military expeditions encroaching upon their territories and resources without permission. Since the European societies in North America were integrated into the existing cultural system, they often presented simply another potential ally or foe.

Diplomatically very astute, each Native nation analyzed the situation and acted in its own best interest. During this time, trade goods, but also information, intelligence, and ideas were distributed through the newly established Atlantic trade network in Europe and through the existing continental trade network in North America. Europeans lived in Native societies and learned their languages and cultures; Native peoples lived in European societies and did the same. Both Native and European societies were changed in this time period not so much through direct as through indirect contact. The exchange and distribution of goods had vast consequences on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe, the influx of exotic goods coupled with stories of foreign societies created wealth, both materially and culturally. In North America, the distribution of goods also created symbolic and material wealth, but European goods, animals, and traders carried more than economic value. They also carried European germs. Europeans had lived in very close proximity to domesticated animals for several thousand years; pigs, goats, cows, and other animals routinely exchanged diseases with people, and new varieties of these diseases developed. While Europeans had developed immunity against these diseases through frequent exposure, Native societies were hit by them just like Europe had been hit by the plague.[23] It is impossible to know the numbers of victims; to calculate, scholars have started with eighteenth and seventeenth century estimates of living populations, estimated the numbers of epidemics that had affected these societies, tried to determine what kinds of diseases were involved, estimated the death rates these diseases might have caused, and in such a way calculated backward from the survivors. So many variables flow into these calculations that differences in the millions of people have resulted. However, it is clear that millions of people died, most from epidemics. Depopulation through epidemics of measles, smallpox, chicken pox, the common cold, and a variety of malignant fevers left whole regions devastated.

The people at the Huff site did not know of these coming developments. Three hundred years after the Huff site was occupied, contact with Europeans would bring their descendants power, wealth, and devastation. In the meantime, they and their neighbors continued to build their own societies.

Endnotes

[1]For a discussion of the Huff site, see W. Raymond Wood 1982 *An Interpretation of Mandan Culture History*. Reprints in Anthropology 25. That text informs this whole chapter.

[2]This quote is from Hernon Cortes' description of the capital of the Mexica, taken from pages 102 to 105 of *Letters from Mexico*. Translated by Anthony Pagden. 2002 New Haven: Yale University Press.

[3]The quotes from the De Soto expedition are from John R. Swanton 1985 *Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, pages 192–193 and 211.

[4]The quote and the English translation of Verendrye's journal comes from pages 339 and 340 of Lawrence J. Burpee (ed.) 1927 *Journals and Letters of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la La Vérendrye and His Sons, with Correspondence between the Governors of Canada and the French Court, Touching the Search for the Western Sea*. Toronto: The Champlain Society.

[5]The quote stems from the journal of Alexander Henry; I take it from page 53 of George F. Will and George E. Hyde 1964 *Corn among the Indians of the Upper Missouri*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

[6]This goes against notions of unilineal development, which posit that history has a goal toward which all human cultures progress (think of Marxist or capitalist notions of history). It actually questions notions of cultural "progress" altogether.

[7]For general overviews of North American agriculture, see Richard I. Ford (ed.) 1985 *Prehistoric Food Production in North America*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Museum of Anthropology, and R. Douglas Hurt 1988 *Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

[8]Bruce D. Smith 1992 *Rivers of Change. Essays on Early Agriculture in Eastern North America*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.

[9]Cheryl Claassen 1986 "Shellfishing Seasons in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States," In: *American Antiquity*, 58 (2), 21–37.

[10]The best, though very technical, overview of Plains archaeology is provided by W. Raymond Wood (ed.) 1998 *Archaeology on the Great Plains*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

[11]For a great interpretation of corn in North America, see Sissel Johannessen and Christine A. Hastorf (eds.) 1994 *Corn and Culture in the Prehistoric New World*. Boulder: Westview Press.

[12]Rebecca A. Hawkins 1992 "Subsistence Inferences from Woodland and Mississippian Ceramics: The Central Ohio Valley, circa 1000 B.C. - A.D. 1200," In: *Long-Term Subsistence Change in Prehistoric North America*, Dale E. Croes, Rebecca A. Hawkins, and Barry L. Isaac (eds.). Research in Economic Anthropology, Supplement 6. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc.

[13]General collections on trade in prehistoric North America are Timothy G. Baugh and Jonathon E. Ericson (eds.) 1994 *Prehistoric Exchange Systems in North America*. New York: Plenum Press, and Jonathon E. Ericson and Timothy G. Baugh (eds.) 1993 *The American Southwest and Mesoamerica. Systems of Prehistoric Exchange*. New York: Plenum Press.

[14]Douglas B. Bamforth 1994 "Indigenous People, Indigenous Violence: Precontact Violence on the North American Great Plains," In: *Man*, N.S. 29 (1), 95–115.

[15]Sebastian F. Braun 1998 "Ceremonies of Contact. Warfare and Exchange in Traditional North America," In : *Bulletin - Société Suisse des Américanistes*, 62, 29–33.

[16]Douglas R. Parks and Raymond J. DeMallie 1992 "Sioux, Assiniboine, and Stoney Dialects: A Classification," In: *Anthropological Linguistics* 34 (1–2), 233–255.

[17]The interpretation of archaeological and historic materials along "frontiers" needs to be undertaken extremely carefully in general. One example, on which I have drawn heavily here for theoretical points, concerning Roman

history is discussed in Thomas S. Burns 2003 *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C. - A.D. 400*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

[18]W. Raymond Wood 1982 *An Interpretation of Mandan Culture History*. Reprints in Anthropology 25.

[19]See, for example, Jeffery R. Hanson 1998 "The Late High Plains Hunters," In: *Archaeology on the Great Plains*, W. Raymond Wood (ed.). Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

[20]Raymond D. Fogelson 1989 "The Ethnohistory of Events and Nonevents," *Ethnohistory*, 36 (2), 133–147.

[21]For an overview of historical and contemporary plant knowledge on the plains, see Melvin R. Gilmore 1991 [1914] *Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, and Kelly Kindscher 1987 *Edible Wild Plants of the Prairie* and 1992 *Medicinal Wild Plants of the Prairie*, both Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

[22]Enrique Dussel 1998 "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity," In: *The Cultures of Globalization*, Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (ed.). Durham: Duke University Press.

[23]See Alfred W. Crosby 1986 *Ecological Imperialism. The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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