Call for Papers

DEADLINE: JANUARY 11, 2019

Central States Anthropological Society
98th Annual Meeting April 11-13, 2019
University of Memphis in Memphis, Tennessee

Faculty, students, independent scholars, and practitioners are invited to submit abstracts for papers, posters, organized sessions, workshops, and roundtables in all fields and subfields of anthropology, both academic and applied. The annual CSAS conference is student-friendly and features a paper competition for both undergraduate and graduate students. It also offers an opportunity for anthropologists from throughout the Midwest, from institutions large and small, to meet, talk, and network in a welcoming and professional environment.

Submit an Abstract

Once you register (and pay fees), you will receive a registration confirmation email from aaameetings with a link to the abstract submissions website. Word limit: 250
Submission Deadline January 11, 2019

Distinguished Lecture

Dr. Vicente M. Diaz University of Minnesota, American Indian Studies
“Back to the Future: Navigating Micronesian Islands and Seas with Anishinabe and Dakota River and Skyways along the Mississippi”

Questions?

Email Charles Fruehling Springwood, 2019 program chair, csasmeetings@gmail.com
Check CSAS website for most recent information http://csas.americananthro.org

Early Online Registration

CSAS regular member: $60
CSAS student member: $20
Nonmember: $100
Student non-member: $40

After March 15th
CSAS regular member: $75
CSAS student member: $30
Non-member: $115
Student non-member: $50

To Register

[link will not be available until mid-November] Visit http://csas.americananthro.org/annual-meeting/ and click the registration link.
You must register for the conference to submit an abstract. If your abstract is not accepted, you can ask for a refund of your registration fee. Friday evening buffet for attendees is $5.00 (students are free), and all meeting participants are welcome to attend the Saturday business lunch, for which the subsidized ticket price is $10.00.

The Central States Anthropological Society welcomes scholars from all over the world, studying anywhere in the world. Our annual conference fosters inter-generational conversation with a strong, welcoming Midwestern atmosphere of equality, camaraderie and mutual growth. Students enjoy the focused attention and collaborative questions they receive on their research presentations and the opportunity to present alongside some of the big names in anthropology.
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CSAS FOUNDING

The name “Central States Anthropological Society” dates only to 1951. The organization was founded in 1921 as the Central Section (informally called the “Central States Branch”) of the American Anthropological Association (AAA).

The founding of the Central Section in 1921 reflected the frustration of an increasing number of Midwestern anthropologists who felt themselves geographically disadvantaged by the AAA’s policy of holding its annual meetings almost exclusively in the eastern one-fourth of the country. The AAA originally scheduled its 1920 meeting for Chicago, along with the AAAS, but pulled out in November, only one month in advance — to the sore disappointment of Midwestern anthropologists. One of them was Dr. Samuel A. Barrett (Ph.D. Anthropology, Berkeley 1908), Acting Director of the Public Museum of Milwaukee, who wrote to AAA President Clark Wissler, “We have in this . . . [middle-western] section a very considerable number, all told, of people who are either actively working in anthropology or who are at any rate interested considerably in the subject and who could be brought out to a meeting, let us say in Chicago, who would not be at all able to go to a meeting on the Atlantic seaboard.” Barrett hastened to reassure Wissler that “we are not exactly Bolshevists [i.e., revolutionaries] in this matter.” The petition was formally approved and the AAA Constitution amended accordingly at the December 1921 AAA annual meeting (in Brooklyn), and a Joint Committee on Relations with the Central States Section was appointed (Clark Wissler and George MacCurdy for the AAA, Berthold Laufer and Samuel Barrett for the Central Section).

CSAS Awards to Students

The CSAS Executive Board offers graduate and undergraduate paper prizes and sponsors two scholarships for student research—the Leslie A. White Award and the Beth Wilder Dillingham Award.

CSAS Student Paper Prizes are awarded for research papers based on presentations given at the CSAS Annual Meeting. Submissions are generally due two to three weeks following the meeting. Prizes in each category are $300 and papers in any area of anthropology are eligible.

The Leslie A. White Award was established in 1983 by the estate of Raymond L. Wilder, the father of then President Beth Wilder Dillingham, a former doctoral student of White. The award is meant to assist young scholars (that is, students, graduate or undergraduate) in any subfield of anthropology with research expenses. The White Award is $500.

The Beth Wilder Dillingham Award was established in 1989 by Mrs. Una G. Wilder and Clay Dillingham to honor Beth Dillingham’s commitment to the CSAS and the discipline. This award aids young scholars (students, graduate or undergraduate) with dependent children. It reflects one of Beth Dillingham’s major concerns—the difficulty of building an academic career while raising children at the same time. The Dillingham Award, like the White Award, is $500.

Application forms can be found at the CSAS website, http://csas.americananthro.org Applications for the 2019 White and Dillingham Awards should be mailed to Dr. Angela Glaros acglaros@eiu.edu. Submissions for the Student Paper Awards follow the Spring meeting.

CSAS Mentoring Initiative Awards 2017-2018

Congratulations to Laura Morillo and Crystal Sheedy, recipients of 2017/18 CSAS Mentoring Initiative Awards! The goal of these awards is to support the work of our undergraduate and graduate student members. Laura and Crystal have each received $375 to fund their professional development endeavors.
I am currently pursuing studies in environmental and ecological anthropology at Illinois State University, where I am in the second year of my Master's degree. I am writing my thesis on the Tsaatan Dukha reindeer herders in northern Mongolia, whom I had the pleasure of conducting field work with during the summer of 2018 with Dr. Julia Clark and NOMAD Science. My research focuses on environmental identity and the importance of place for creating and maintaining a sense of self in the Mongolian taiga, and I am interested in how changing climatic, economic, and socioeconomic changes affect Mongolian identity and livelihoods. I feel extremely grateful to have received the Leslie A. White Award, as it will considerably help to defray the costs associated with the fieldwork I conducted with the Tsaatan Dukha. My fieldwork enabled me to practice anthropology in a methodological way for the very first time, and I was able to revisit Tsaatan families whom I had spent the previous summer living with as a Peace Corps volunteer. I spent 4 weeks traversing the Mongolian taiga on horseback, and spent time conversing with Mongolian horsemen and reindeer herders about factors shaping their lives. I hope that my research will illustrate how Mongolians and the Dukha view themselves as part of nature and their environment, and how the forces of climate change and rapid industrialization directly affect their daily lives and contribute to the way they construct their identities.

Jessica Vinson - jlvins1@ilstu.edu
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Christine Hippert won UW-LaCrosse’s highest honor for faculty teaching, called the Eagle Teaching Award, in May 2018, AND was promoted to full Professor in July. Christine’s story tells us she was born an anthropologist, like so many CSASers, taking an eventful road to these rewards. She writes, I have an eclectic academic and professional background. I graduated from Clark University, in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1994, with a bachelor’s degree in psychology, Spanish, and education. Before getting my graduate degrees in anthropology and public health from the University of Pittsburgh in 2007, I worked in a number of different organizations and programs. For example, I was an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with the Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; I worked as an outdoor wilderness instructor in southern Utah with adjudicated teens; and as a behavioral health research associate, I modified a Sicilian program for a U.S.-based organization that provides assistance with daily living activities for people with developmental disabilities. All of these positions gave me experience with developing curriculum and teaching people with a variety of different abilities.

Growing up in a multiracial family taught me — sometimes quite painfully — that my own life experiences didn’t necessarily mirror the experiences of others. My undergraduate years filled my life with people, courses, and opportunities that helped me learn more about living in a global world. I’ve been lucky to have had great models of undergraduate teaching, and I strive to take what I learned from them and apply it in my own classroom. My favorite part of teaching is helping students see the connections between themselves and people all over the world. Whether I’m helping students make sense of other people’s beliefs and practices in another country, or involving them in community engagement to help them learn more about diverse experiences right here in La Crosse, Wisconsin, I enjoy seeing those light-bulbs turn on when they start to understand differences while simultaneously connecting to people’s humanity.
Harriet and Martin Ottenheimer are pleased to announce the publication of two articles in Early Maritime Trade in East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean: Papers from a conference held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (African Studies Program) 23-24 October 2015, with additional contributions, edited by Akshay Sarathi (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018.). Martin’s paper is titled “Traditional Indian Ocean Maritime Trade and Social Organization”. Harriet’s “Zilo and Zahula” (rice meals and stewpot meals) focuses on culinary traditions. The book will be “open access”; anyone wanting a copy should contact Marty or Harriet for the link. The Ottenheimers will visit the Kerala coast of India as well as the Comoro Islands in November of this year as part of their long-term research in the region. harriet@ottenheimer.com

Adam Kaul invites us to look into an intriguing new anthropological view of death and tourism: Leisure and Death: An Anthropological Tour of Risk, Death, and Dying edited by Adam Kaul and Jonathan Skinner, foreword by Jane Desmond, epilogue by James Fernandez

This anthropological study examines the relationship between leisure and death, specifically how leisure practices are used to meditate upon—and mediate—life. Considering travelers who seek enjoyment but encounter death and dying, tourists who accidentally face their own mortality while vacationing, those who intentionally seek out pleasure activities that pertain to mortality and risk, and those who use everyday leisure practices like social media or dogwalking to cope with death, Leisure and Death delves into one of the most provocative subsets of contemporary cultural anthropology.

These nuanced and well-developed ethnographic case studies deal with different and distinct examples of the intertwining of leisure and death. They challenge established conceptions of leisure and rethink the associations attached to the prospect of death. Chapters testify to encounters with death on a personal and scholarly level, exploring, for example, the Cliffs of Moher as not only one of the most popular tourist destinations in Ireland but one of the most well-known suicide destinations as well, and the estimated 30 million active posthumous Facebook profiles being repurposed through proxy users and transformed by continued engagement with the living. From the respectful to the fascinated, from the macabre to the morbid, contributors consider how people deliberately, or unexpectedly, negotiate the borderlands of the living.

An engaging, timely book that explores how spaces of death can be transformed into spaces of leisure, Leisure and Death makes a significant contribution to the burgeoning interdisciplinary literature on leisure studies and dark tourism. This book will appeal to students, scholars, and laypeople interested in tourism studies, death studies, cultural studies, heritage studies, anthropology, sociology, and marketing.

The launch of one of Illinois State University’s newest research centers is due in large part to the hard work and vision of a single professor. Anthropology Professor Nobuko Adachi started the Ethnicity and Ethnography Laboratory and Research Center (EELRC) last year after receiving seed money from the College of Arts and Sciences. So far, the center has held a conference and conducted a research project; however, Adachi’s vision for the center is much grander.

Adachi was hired at Illinois State in 2007 as an assistant professor and was promoted to full professor this year. She has published several research articles and six books. Her latest volume, *Ethnic Capital in a Japanese Brazilian Commune: Children of Nature* (2017), examines a Japanese commune in Brazil whose members consider themselves the heirs of the “real” Japan.

In an interview last spring, Adachi laid out what the center has done and which direction she hopes it goes in the future. “I was on the research committee for the University,” she said. “In that time, I asked the provost why we have CTLT (the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology), but we don’t have a center like that for research. I would like to create that center.”

The center’s coming out party was a two-day conference focused on immigration and racial issues in the era of President Donald Trump. Adachi found collaborators from throughout the college and used some of the college’s funding and grants from the Sage Fund and the Dean of Students’ Multi-Ethnic Cultural and Co-Curricular Programming Advisory Board to organize the event. “We want to inspire other people to share their research,” said Professor Adachi.

In February, the center held “Social, Ethnic, and Racial Boundaries on Campus and Community in the 21st Century,” attracting about 90 attendees to the Bone Student Center. The conference featured international scholars, students, and community members sharing research and their experiences on topic such as guns and policing, travel bans, undocumented students and immigration policy, and the impact of microaggressions on communities and higher education. Adachi said there was powerful testimony from campus members, including an African-American student from Chicago’s South Side, who recounted an episode in which he and a white friend were stopped by police while walking around town but only he was questioned. “Microagression is everyday life,” Adachi said. “(Victims) have struggled with it since they were born. They are not really inside America society.”

Last year, the center sponsored its first research project, a study examining the marriages
of Japanese women to American men who live in the United States. Adachi’s undergraduate students conducted interviews with couples from different eras, exploring how they raised their children, focusing on questions of culture, language, and education. One student plans to further the project in graduate school. “It’s successfully working for that one project,” Adachi said. “But we would like to put up the information online so people can accumulate more work together, so it can develop.”

Sharing research and connecting with other researchers are the main objectives of the center, Adachi said. Like CTLT, she would like to offer workshops to faculty. Instead of focusing on teaching, EELRC’s events would train faculty on how to procure grants or publish research. She conceded her plans for the center could largely depend on how much support she can muster from across campus. “There is only so much I can do by myself.”

Interested in collaborating with the center? Contact Nobuko Adachi at nadachi@IllinoisState.edu

News, Illinois State University (http://news.illinoisstate.edu/), Sept. 12, 2018

Nick Kardulias (College of Wooster, Ohio) and colleagues have published their excavation of a mastodon in Ohio, using a range of sciences to assess whether, or how, Paleoindians used it: Nigel Brush, Brian G. Redmond, P. Nick Kardulias, Gregory Wiles, Jarrod Burks, Robert Hannan, Haskel J. Greenfield, Richard Yerkes, Karen Leone, Gregory McDonald, Scott Donaldson, and Jeffrey Dilyard - 2018 “Description of an American Mastodon (Mammut americanum) Site in Morrow County, Ohio and Assessment of Evidence for Early Paleoindian Exploitation.” Archaeology of Eastern North America 46: 215-240.

Little Free Libraries
We pay tribute to Todd Bol, who died October 18, age 62, of cancer. Mr. Bol lived in the heart of our central states, though, not being an anthropologist, he wasn’t a CSASer. In 2009, he made a dollhouse-size one-room school from an old garage door, filled the box with yard-sale books, set it up at the end of his driveway in the town of Hudson, Wisconsin, and called it Little Free Library. Bol made more Little Free Libraries for people around Hudson. “Take a Book, Leave a Book” caught on; Rick Brooks, outreach program manager for UW-Madison Continuing Studies, joined him and in 2012, Bol turned the movement into a nonprofit. Today there are 75,000 Libraries registered with it, in 88 countries. “The library was a hit,” Bol told the St. Paul Pioneer Press in a 2015 interview. “I watched reactions of kids and grown-ups, and I knew we had something meaningful. It magically brought out the sweet side of humanity, the secret primal urge calling us to come together.” Margaret Mead preached that understanding of human nature. Todd Bol demonstrated it.

Notes From the Field

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MARGARET BUCKNER?

Rain is falling, mosquitos humming, music blaring: all is normal in Jaltenango, Chiapas, Mexico. I’ve been here since July, and will be here until next July, volunteering with Compañeros en Salud (CES), the Mexican branch of Partners in Health (PIH), co-founded by Paul Farmer. My official job is Monitoring and Evaluation of the maternal health program, and though a lot of the work is data entering and analysis, I also get to wear my ethnographer’s hat as I investigate perceptions of the new birthing center and the activities of traditional midwives. This part of Chiapas—as opposed to the highlands, several hours away—has a very small indigenous Maya population; it was settled during the land reforms in the 1940s-1960s, when people came to homestead under the ejido system. Besides subsistence crops of beans and corn, most also grow coffee, though income from coffee sales is quite low because of coffee rust and fluctuating prices. CES helps local folks get the health care they need but can’t afford or access on their own. I spend most of my time in the town of Jaltenango, where I live in a house with an open courtyard that I share with a young volunteer from Iowa. I also spend about a week per month in the smaller communities CES serves, which can only be reached by steep, windy roads or tracks that collapse during the rainy season. I highly recommend working with PIH, for it was founded by anthropologists! Check out these websites for Compañeros en Salud (http://companerosensalud.mx/inicio) and Partners in Health (https://www.pih.org/), including volunteer and employment opportunities.

Photos by Margaret Buckner

Jaltenango central plaza

Breakfast in my Jaltenango house

Footbridge in a remote Chiapas community
BUDAPEST STUDY ABROAD

Elizabeth Peacock announces an exciting interdisciplinary study abroad opportunity for undergraduate students: Culture and Politics in Central/Eastern Europe is a 4-week blended summer undergraduate study abroad program organized and led by faculty at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UWL). This interdisciplinary program focuses on the socialist and post-socialist culture and politics of Eastern Europe, with a special emphasis on a specific country. The program will be held in Budapest, Hungary in Summer 2019. Students will complete online blended coursework for 1 week, and then spend 3 weeks in-country. As part of the program, students will experience the city as a native by living in neighborhood apartments, trying local food, listening to live music, and meeting local university students. Excursions include visiting local museums and sites of importance during and after the socialist period, visiting local government and a local non-profit organization, and taking a day trip outside the city. For the final project for the program, students will create a short film on a topic of their choice, with the help of local university students. Students will earn six upper-division credits in anthropology and political science from UWL. Program fees include academic credits, housing, some meals, excursion fees, and tour guides. The program runs June 4- June 24, 2019, with online blended coursework to be completed May 22-June 4. Applications are due January 1, 2019 for priority consideration. All application materials are due by February 1. Apply at UWL Study Abroad

For more information: Program page: https://www.facebook.com/uwlculturepolitics
Contact information: Dr. Regina Goodnow (rgoodnow@uwlaux.edu) or Dr. Elizabeth Peacock (epeacock@uwlaux.edu)

EDITING WIKI | Guven Peter Witteveen

Perhaps you have seen the announcement for the workshop at the AAA’s annual meeting in November about refining and enriching Wikipedia by your own editing, shared media, and checking the articles found in languages-other-than-English for subjects of your own interest and expertise. That session will include Wiki-Education staff from the Bay Area where the WikiMedia Foundation is based.

On a similar note, it occurs to me that many of you have publications and online materials that would helpfully fit into one or more Wikipedia articles, either as hotlink or at the foot with other External References. It is true that creating a new Wikipedia article does require a stock of references to substantiate it, the task of editing an article that already exits by adding a phrase, some clarifying punctuation, or newly published work to an article is very simple, indeed. Please consider looking up the Wikipedia articles that pertain to your field of study and give readers a reference to the anthropological lens you bring to the matter! The world and all its Wikipedia readers needs more anthropological perspectives and who better than yourself to insert the link or reference.
I have collected a few “how to” screenshots to make a very short introduction to logging in and editing Wikipedia if you are unfamiliar with the steps and don’t want to consult Youtube or the Help Pages of Wikipedia itself. https://sites.google.com/site/anthroview2/editing-wikipedias
Try your hand at editing! See also, Your Fieldwork and Thinking Lives On, http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2018/08/03/your-fieldwork-and-thinking-lives-on/

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PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY: AN OPEN ACCESS SERIES

Drawing on the example of the California Series in Public Anthropology, the Center for a Public Anthropology announces a New Open-Access Book Series that addresses important public issues. It embraces the hope that anthropology has value to those beyond the discipline, beyond the university. The focus is on publications that matter to other people – by the power of their ideas and by how, with the help of others, they transform peoples’ lives for the better. It is one thing to write a thoughtful book. It is another to do so in a manner that attracts the attention and collaboration needed to help address a problem.

Among the forthcoming books in the series are works by Philippe Bourgois and Nancy Scheper-Hughes. David Price will highlight the work of Marvin Harris and Marshall Sahlins in initiating national teach-ins and organizing anthropological opposition to the Vietnam war.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Each year the Center will hold an international competition seeking out prospective manuscripts that align with this vision. The Series reviews proposals independent of whether the manuscripts themselves have been completed. The proposals submitted should be 3-4,000 words long and describe both the overall work as well as a general summary of what is (or will be) in each chapter. The Center expects to select, through competition, one to two books each year for open-access publication. Selected manuscripts will then go through a “sighted peer review” process. Rather than being “blind”, the review process will be an open, collaborative endeavor between an author and reviewers.

The deadline for submissions to the Series’ International Competition is Nov. 5, 2018. Submissions should be emailed to booksseries@publicanthropology.org with the relevant material enclosed as attachments. Questions regarding the competitions should be directed to the series’ editor, Dr. Rob Borofsky, at booksseries@publicanthropology.org.

The open-access books will be available on line with full re-use rights based on a creative commons license (CC-BY-NC). NOTE: In contrast to a number of open-access presses, authors will not be charged the publishing costs associated with their books. For those interested in purchasing a printed version of a book, top quality copies will be available from Amazon.com at $14.95. Please forward notice of the competition to colleagues and students who might otherwise not see it. Thank you.
Paul Radin was an anomalous figure among Franz Boas’s first generation of anthropology students, standing out among his Boasian peers for his outspoken statements and activities on behalf of racial equality.

In current parlance, Radin’s advocacy represented a form of public anthropology, the use of the discipline to highlight and ameliorate injurious social conditions. Sharply focused on the inadequacy and injustice of racial classification, Radin provided expert testimony on behalf of people seeking to quash restrictive covenants—legal real estate provisions preventing the sale or rental of properties to African Americans and other minorities. Through the 1950s, determined advocacy supporting racial equality invited government surveillance. The FBI, which compiled a substantial file on Radin, regarded him as a Communist and took note of his speeches on behalf of African American civil rights.

A familiar bastion of liberal and radical thought over the last two generations, Berkeley during Radin’s long residence instead marched in step with other American communities that limited by law where African Americans might live. Radin lent his expertise to legal efforts at overturning statutory barriers to open housing. For example, he testified in support of a couple threatened with eviction because of their color. Played out in an Oakland court in 1945, the case marked the first time that anthropological evidence and expertise were brought to bear in challenging the legitimacy of racial covenants. The couple’s attorney utilized Radin’s testimony to expose the widespread but unscientific use of skin color to classify races. Radin asserted in court that the colors of each so-called race overlapped at the extremes, rendering impossible racial classification through the criterion of color. He claimed that race mixing was common in the American south beginning in the seventeenth century and, consequently, southern whites “may be not entirely of Caucasian origin.” That claim, of course, was almost incendiary in 1945. Although Radin pointed up factual errors in popular American thinking about race, the judge ruled against the couple, apparently persuaded by neighbors who claimed that they recognized Negroes when they saw them.

Some months later, Radin served as a defense witness in a second losing case. He testified in support of the famed jazzman Benny Carter who was also found in violation of a racial
covenant in a Los Angeles neighborhood. The Carters had bought a home from owners who had agreed in 1928 that they would not sell it to a non-Caucasian. When asked how many races constituted the human family, Radin asserted that “there is considerable doubt in the minds of almost all anthropologists whether it is possible to make any kind of an accurate and distinctive classification.” Although Radin pointed to the problematic nature of classifying people by race, the presiding judge adhered only to statutory law and ruled against the Carters.

In a case going beyond real estate exclusions, Radin testified in a third case that also turned on race issues. Reaching the California Supreme Court, the case appealed a lower court ruling preventing a couple from marrying because of their putative racial differences. Supported by Radin’s argument that racial designations based on color or hair type lack scientific foundation, the couple successfully challenged the state’s anti-miscegenation law. The Supreme Court overturned it by a single vote.

Unlike Alfred Kroeber and his close friends, Robert Lowie, and Edward Sapir, Radin held no long-term position at any academic institution. He had no coterie of doctoral students who might have promoted his distinct vision of anthropology. Radin’s was a peripatetic career defined by temporary appointments at nine colleges and universities in the United States and Britain. The instability of his job history is undoubtedly connected to the fraught nature of his personal and professional relationships; none was more troubled than his association with Boas. Kroeber found Radin unreliable, although he held a high regard for Radin’s scholarship, built in considerable measure on methodological opposition to Boas’s program of research. Supported by Kroeber, Radin held a series of temporary appointments at Berkeley from 1917 to 1920 and again from 1930 until 1949. By 1949, the Cold War was underway and the fear of Communist subversion in the United States was intensifying. At that point, Radin departed for a prolonged stay in Switzerland, enabling him to escape the onslaught of McCarthyism beginning in the early 1950s. Radin was an anthropological original, a courageous if controversial figure, who did not shrink from the risks of using his discipline for the public good.

Editors’ Note: Paul Radin is best known for his ethnography of the Winnebago (now known as Ho-Chunk) Indian nation, including the unusual as-told-to autobiography of Sam Blowsnake, “Crashing Thunder”. Jack Glazier has been researching Radin’s years, 1927-1930, teaching at Fisk, a Black college, and his rescue there of narratives from elderly former slaves, “Souls Piled Like Timber: The Religious Experience of the Prewar Negro”.
Racism Galore at Hallowe’en

Is the parade of little treat-or-trickers down your street a blatant display of racism and hollow promises of social class and power? And how is your gang partying on Hallowe’en? Costumes?

George Nicholas, an archaeologist/anthropologist at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, is disturbed by these stereotypes literally masquerading as innocent fun. Nicholas headed IPinCH, Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage, a seven-year project supported by Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (http://www.sfu.ca/ipinch/). Building a network of associates—ten in North America, one each in southern Africa, Kazakhstan, Hokkaido, Australia, and New Zealand (Chatham Islands)—Nicholas realized that appropriation of a First Nation’s crafts and art style meshed with colonial appropriation of its lands. Bluntly: everything that has been part of a First Nation’s habitus has been up for grabs. “Sexy Indian Costumes” (Google that) perpetuate the stereotype of the savage, SOMEONE WHOSE “WILDERNESS” LANDS AND RESOURCES SHOULD BE TAKEN.

Nicholas recently expressed the standpoint of respect that should inform us even at Hallowe’en: https://www.sapiens.org/culture/cultural-appropriation-halloween/ None of us would put on blackface and big red lips, N----- is not funny. Googling “images Hallowe’en costumes nigger” brought up blogs about racism but no costumes. Googling “images Hallowe’en costumes Indian” brought up dozens of costume retailers selling them, from Europe as well as North America. The sub-category “Sexy Indian” is particularly prolific.

“Hallowe’en costumes” links to a spectrum of sites selling Disney character costumes. Predominantly, they are “Disney Princesses”, either specific characters from films or generic princess. Young girls are transformed into beauties whom wealthy princes will marry. One day when I was a kid, my sister and I dressed up in our mother’s dresses and jewelry, made paper crowns for our heads, and paraded past our dad. He glanced up from the newspaper and remarked, “If you girls lived in the Middle Ages, you’d both be scullery maids.” Where are the scullery-maid costumes? Even Cinderella costumes all show lovely blue ball gowns. And the ads’ princesses and Cinderellas are White.

“Sexy Indians” carousing with “Disney Princesses” on Hallowe’en mask our society’s continuing paternalistic colonialism crippling First Nations, and late-capitalist pauperization of the laboring classes. Hallowe’en can be a teaching moment, for our students and our own kids.

Are there alternatives to the stereotypes? You bet! Here’s my neighbor Oliver Grasse, trick-or-treating in the costume he and his dad worked on together.

-- Alice Kehoe

CSAS Officers & Board 2018

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