

***Geografie del tempo.***  
***Viaggiatori europei tra i popoli nativi***  
***nel Nord America del Settecento***

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*Geografie del tempo*, consisting of an introduction and eight chapters, derives from the author's doctoral dissertation and deals with the multifaceted topic of the encounter between Europeans and the First Nations of North America during the eighteenth century.

The central theme of the volume is the role played by European perceptions of Native Americans in the 'historical hierarchisation of human diversity' developed within eighteenth-century European culture. This process involved a 'disciplinary transformation and secularisation of time' and the construction of a history of society by stages of development, resulting in the overlay of temporal distance from the European present with geographical distance from Europe. The author argues that this hierarchisation also implied the emergence of a European cultural identity and a growing European awareness of the 'global' (7–9). Of course, Iannuzzi discusses these phenomena in connection to imperial projects that aimed to control peoples as well as space and time, thereby linking political and cultural forms of supremacy. This process was shaped in fundamental but ambivalent ways by direct observation of human otherness.

The first chapter ('Distanze temporali, distanze spaziali. Cenni storiografici') provides an overview of the relevant scholarly literature. While the author positions herself in the domain of the history of ideas and the history of historiography, the volume's methodological background is quite complex. Iannuzzi primarily draws on English-speaking literature, but also includes Italian contributions to the history of Europe's intellectual engagement with the 'discovery of America,' such as pioneering work by Antonello Gerbi, Giuliano Gliozzi, and Sergio Landucci, and the Italian-speaking scholarly tradition on otherness (*alterità*). Furthermore, the author uses Reinhart Koselleck's reflections on the notions of time and modernity as a conceptual framework for discussing the inclusion of Native Americans in increasingly

‘secularised’ and future-oriented narratives of history during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Koselleck’s research has an impact on the volume’s periodisation too. The author frames the eighteenth century as a turning point in processes that unfolded in the preceding centuries, rather than as an exceptional period (21). The author emphasises the value of the Enlightenment as a research category, as it highlights intellectual processes rather than disciplinary boundaries. The Enlightenment is presented as the convergence point of several phenomena relevant to the book’s arguments, including the role of autopsy in knowledge production, the reconfiguration of European knowledge systems, the formation of new secularised and linear concepts of time, and the writing of stage-based histories that led to the temporal hierarchisation of human diversity (40–44). The chosen periodisation ends with Lewis and Clark’s expedition, which the author later presents as both a recapitulation of preexisting features of the entanglements between knowledge production, colonial agendas, and commercial expansion, and the ‘exploratory prelude’ of a new phase dominated by the presence of the US government as an imperial power (77–82).

The volume contains a wealth of insights into potential avenues of research thanks to the combination of different historiographical traditions. However, the primary methodological focus is somewhat more traditional, centring around the interaction of text (or tradition) and observation in the field. As a result, the corpus comprises a wide array of written sources based on firsthand observation, excluding performative and visual sources such as paintings and plays, while the focus on British and ‘American’ authors allows for an examination of the imperial entanglements at play. Correspondingly, Iannuzzi analyses French writings only insofar as they are part of a shared cultural background and their use by English-speaking authors contributed to the formation of the dichotomy between a European ‘self’ and a Native American ‘other’ (66). From this point of view, *Geografie del tempo* offers a partially different picture from such classics as Michèle Duchet’s *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières* (1971) or Landucci’s *I filosofi e i selvaggi* (1972).

Chapter 2 (‘Resoconti di viaggio e conflitti conoscitivi’) lays the groundwork for the rest of the volume by providing bio-bibliographical outlines for each relevant author. The chapter focuses on administrators, policymakers, fur traders and ‘explorers’ up to Lewis and Clark. This highly informative chapter displays the author’s dedication to a book history perspective. By thoroughly examining the political, social, cultural, and material context of the production of each source, Iannuzzi provides valuable insights into the often-complex process leading to the publication and later circulation of notes collected in the field. This approach allows the author to highlight the links between colonial events, the biographies of the observers, and the specific characteristics of the knowledge they produced about Native Americans. It also illuminates the tension between the individual and collective aspects of knowledge production and the entanglements between experience and tradition.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 delve into how concepts developing in Europe—savage, primitive, barbarian—were used to make sense of Native Americans' place in history, and how first-hand observation shaped such uses in eyewitness accounts. In chapter 3 ('Declinazioni diacroniche della diversità americana') the author explores how perceptions of skin colour, of the standing of women within native societies, and of the local effects of diseases shaped European hierarchical and dichotomous understandings of Native Americans. Chapter 4 ('Scrivere la storia degli altri') and chapter 5 ('Inscrivere gli altri nella storia') focus on classic questions related to European perceptions of Native Americans, such as their origins, their troubling or inspiring resemblance to Europe's past inhabitants, and their place in a history increasingly written by excluding local system of recording the past. The author notes both the continuities and the ruptures between missionary, Bible-inspired readings of the origins of Native Americans and the new temporal-spatial hierarchies within stage-based histories of society. Iannuzzi highlights the profound ambiguities of such readings: because Native Americans were seen as closer to the state of nature, they were simultaneously perceived as less 'civilised' than the European man and less corrupted by the vices of society imported through colonialism.

While this ambivalent picture of European perceptions of Native Americans is well known to scholars, chapter 5 convincingly fleshes it out by contrasting the reports produced by James Adair—trader and author of a *History of the American Indians* (1775)—and by John Douglas, who published the official report of Captain James Cook's third voyage (1776–1779). Adair argued for the Jewish origin of Native Americans while Douglas' *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (1784) provided a complex historical and philosophical framework of stages of development to explain encounters with Native Americans. Iannuzzi argues that Adair's thesis guided his observations and 'the attribution of semantic depth to the customs and traditions of native peoples' (195). Adair's work still served an imperial project, but it also allowed for cultural relativism, which could lead to criticism of colonial society. On the other hand, in the case of Cook's report, the temporal hierarchisation of Native Americans as 'savages' took place through a circular process of textual construction based on the report's theory-laden introduction as well as on the information that Douglas carefully selected for publication in the journal. In summary, these central chapters provide well-crafted examples of how observation in the field contributed to modifying, correcting, destroying, or confirming ethnocentric views of Native Americans that European travellers brought with them from Europe. The author rightly points out that these outcomes were not mutually exclusive, nor were they always clearly distinct from one another.

Chapters 6 and 7—the most original and compelling parts of the book together with chapter 8—further explore these issues in the linguistic domain. Chapter 6 ('Storia e discorso: interpreti, genealogie, gerarchie') focuses on how observers interpreted native languages and chapter 7 ('Vocabolari selvaggi') discusses dictionaries attached to travelogues. Language, recorded in various forms by travellers, was used as a source

for studying the origins of Native Americans and as evidence of their primitive developmental stage. Observers often claimed to have identified a lack of abstract and rationalising tools in native languages, which further solidified the derogatory view of indigenous forms of recording and communicating the past. However, these alleged linguistic deficiencies were also interpreted by Europeans as impacting Native Americans' ability to control the future, as argued in chapter 8 ('Un futuro malleabile'). By analysing, among other sources, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters of an American Farmer* (1782), the author provides a dismal view of how European—soon to be 'American'—colonisers excluded Native Americans from their vision of North America's future, thus operating a double removal, first cultural and then material.

In conclusion, *Geografie del tempo* is a fascinating read that updates the Italian-speaking scholarly tradition on the subject through its attention to the linguistic and methodological issues of the last decades, while also offering interesting new research on some understudied subjects. However, the volume makes another important contribution by highlighting a persistent methodological problem within the subfield. The author acknowledges in the introduction that her analysis strives to consider the 'subjectivity of American interlocutors' (9), a perspective partially indebted to the field of Critical Indigenous Studies (38). The work pays commendable attention to the history of Native American polities by presenting a wealth of political and linguistic details and using endonyms consistently. Yet, Iannuzzi points out time and again the opaqueness of social and cultural relations between observers and observed—as seen in written sources—and shows how much European descriptions of Native Americans were socially and culturally removed from the 'source.' This underscores the extreme difficulty that historical sciences face in reaching out to the 'subjectivity of the North Americans interlocutors.'