

riences as a child witnessing the civil rights movement. Eldon Yellowhorn provides us with his personal experience as a Native American starting out in archaeology in the early 1980s and now comparing those past experiences with his role as a professor of archaeology. Anne Kakaliouras presents a very thoughtful analysis of the concept of race from the perspective of physical anthropology and bioarchaeology. The

thematic volume concludes with an essay entitled “Merciless Greetings” by Roger Echo-Hawk, in which he reacts to the other essays and challenges the Society for American Archaeology to promote a meaningful discussion about race amongst its membership. Finally, Roger asks the question of whether the SAA should join other major anthropology organizations in producing a formal statement on race.

DECONSTRUCTING ROGER ECHO-HAWK (SORT OF)

Larry J. Zimmerman

Larry Zimmerman is Professor of Anthropology and Museum Studies and Public Scholar of Native American Representation at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art.

For most readers, Roger Echo-Hawk's essay will need at least some illumination. The voices of both S&S and Kennewickman reflect Roger's "split personality." Roger is a trained historian, a composer, a poet, and a member of the Pawnee nation, but he has not been an Indian for several years (Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman 2006: 662). (Yeah, I know. That last one probably surprises you, and it is related to the point of his essay!) He is no stranger to archaeology, observing and interacting with us since at least the 1980s. His first encounter with attitudes of archaeologists came when he worked closely with the Native American Rights Fund to repatriate remains of his ancestors from the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Smithsonian, and other places they were held. He also served as an archaeological monitor for construction of the Denver International Airport and handled repatriation for the Denver Art Museum and the Colorado Historical Society. Roger wrote a profoundly challenging essay about oral tradition published in *American Antiquity* (Echo-Hawk 2000), as well as a useful and thought-provoking guide on repatriation (2002). Like it or not, Roger knows enough about our discipline and how we think to make more than a few archaeologists uncomfortable!

Roger has been worrying about race-related issues for a long time. In late 2004, he and I began a discussion on race and

archaeology spinning off discussions by members of a Yahoo Group, the Closet Chickens (see below for an explanation), about the racialization of American archaeology. A news release had prompted intense discussion by the Chickens, recounting discovery in Mexico of remains supposedly more than 12,000 years old. The investigator and the reporter both described the remains in racial terms, the former contending that “[Native Americans] cannot claim to have been the first people there [in America]” and the reporter asserted that the findings were similar to those of the scientists who “won” the Kennewick court case (Rincon 2004). If you are curious, the spirited Closet Chickens discussion partly ended up in the article Roger and I wrote for *American Indian Quarterly's* special issue on decolonizing American archaeology (Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman 2006). You may also wish to read some of his other writing on race (Echo-Hawk 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d), several of them with archaeology-related content. His most recent pieces (Echo-Hawk 2009a, 2009b) are especially challenging!

What became apparent during the discussion was that Roger was able to play the anthropologist, on the outside-looking-in at a group of archaeologists, and with his focused questions, he forced us to compare our “reals” to our ideals and our good intentions to the sometimes questionable implications

of our actions. Making it doubly interesting was that the Closet Chickens is a group of archaeologists, most of whom would identify themselves as Native Americans, plus a few others who serve as elders, mentors, and concerned colleagues (of which Roger is one). The precise origins and lore of the Closet Chickens are known only to initiates, but the group organized just after a May 2001 conference, “On the Threshold: Native American-Archaeologist Relations in the Twenty-First Century,” organized at Dartmouth College by Deborah Nichols and Joe Watkins. The Chickens invite membership by consensus, and members participate in a listserv discussion group, hold a gathering every spring at the SAA Annual Meeting, bestow somewhat secret names upon one another—based on some assumed characteristic, personality trait, attitude, or whim—and devote themselves to esoteric studies in archaeology. For clarity, I reveal Roger’s and my own Chicken names in the list below.

As with most poets, Roger has figured out how to give his words prosody, once you go with the flow of the dialogue, but if you do not know some of his references or ponder their meaning, you can lose the rhythm. So read the list of terms below first:

- *Slim Shady*: Title of rapper Eminem’s (Marshall Mathers) persona on his album *The Slim Shady LP*. Roger says that he is not really an Eminem fan, but that both “play in the foggy boundaries between racial groupings.”
- *S&S*: Roger’s Closet Chicken name that he always abbreviates like this is Sweet and Sour Chicken. He likes the similarity to the S&S of Slim Shady.
- *Jumpin’ Jack Flash*: The 1968 Rolling Stones song where they attempted to return to their blues roots.
- *LB340*: a reference to the once-controversial Nebraska repatriation law that according to some became a template for NAGPRA.
- *Chicken Nuggets*: Larry Zimmerman’s referent in the Closet Chicken Coop given because he’s “all white meat.” Comments about being homeless refers to my recent project on the archaeology of homelessness (see Albertson 2009 for a description).
- *CNAR*: the SAA’s Committee on Native American Relations
- *S. 1980*: a reference to the Senate version of NAGPRA.
- *S. 2843*: an effort to alter the definition of “Native American” in NAGPRA, prompted by the Kennewick Man case.
- *HR 4027*: a bill to require under NAGPRA the demonstration of a significant relationship between remains and presently existing tribes (See the SAA’s comments on these bills at <http://rla.unc.edu/saa/repat/>).

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