



# Back to the Beginning

## Differing World Views

# What is a kaleidoscope?



# A Kaleidoscope...



- When Europeans first made contact with Aboriginal peoples, there was a kaleidoscope of ethnic groups, each unique in its economic organization, language, religion and values.
- However to the Europeans the ethnic diversity was difficult to deal with. They generalized by labeling all the indigenous peoples as “Indians”.
  - Obvious differences existed such as language, but these were ignored over the general characteristic or trait of “Indian”.

# Some Commonality...

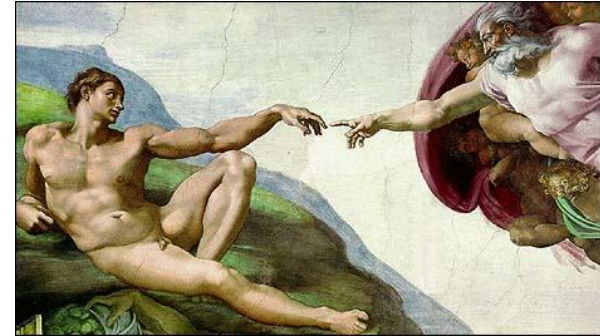
- While there was a lot of diversity, there were a number of ways these groups shared commonalities.
- Aboriginal peoples, particularly from pre and early contact, tended to interpret life from a fairly common perspective that was at odds with the Europeans.



# Where did man originate?

## According to the Europeans...

- Creation story – man was created in the image of God and woman from man
- Europeans in the 1500s and 1600s viewed science and religion as closely connected.
  - The Christian view looks at the universe as dominated by a God, man is in a privileged position and up to a certain point can control nature for his own benefit – for example through the use of technology – using metals for tools and weaponry and through their dominance over other species.
  - This natural order of domination helped explain of justify the presence of rich people over poor. ~



# Conversely...



**Aboriginal views...** many groups held that all things living and non living could have souls with a spiritual essence.

- Humans were not necessarily different or “better than” trees, the lakes, or the bears. Humans did not have any preordained importance in the world; while they were different from the other elements of the earth- they were essentially the same – having a spirit that provided life. [fourdirectionsteachings.com](http://fourdirectionsteachings.com)
- Thanksgiving Prayer [ThanksGiving Prayer Youtube Link](#)

# Traditions of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit tell us that North America is their land of origin...



- This confirms their attachment to the land – some groups believe that their ancestors were **born of the earth** (Salish from West Coast and Ojibwa of the Great Lakes). Other traditions include falling to earth or being born onto it.
- Archaeological evidence supports that people were here at least by **17000 BP** (before present) and perhaps as early as 50 000 years ago

# Beringia Bridge?

- Peoples of the North West recount **migration over a land bridge** connecting Asia and North America
  - The first identifiable land bridge dates back to about 75 000 years ago
  - The last one, **Beringia** (at some points 2000 k wide) looks to have ended around **14 000 years ago**
  - They may have come **by land bridge** or **by water**
  - They reached the southern tip of South America at least by **11 000 BP**
  - The high Arctic being the last region to be populated by about **5 000 BP**
    - see maps on page 4 Dickason text and page 15

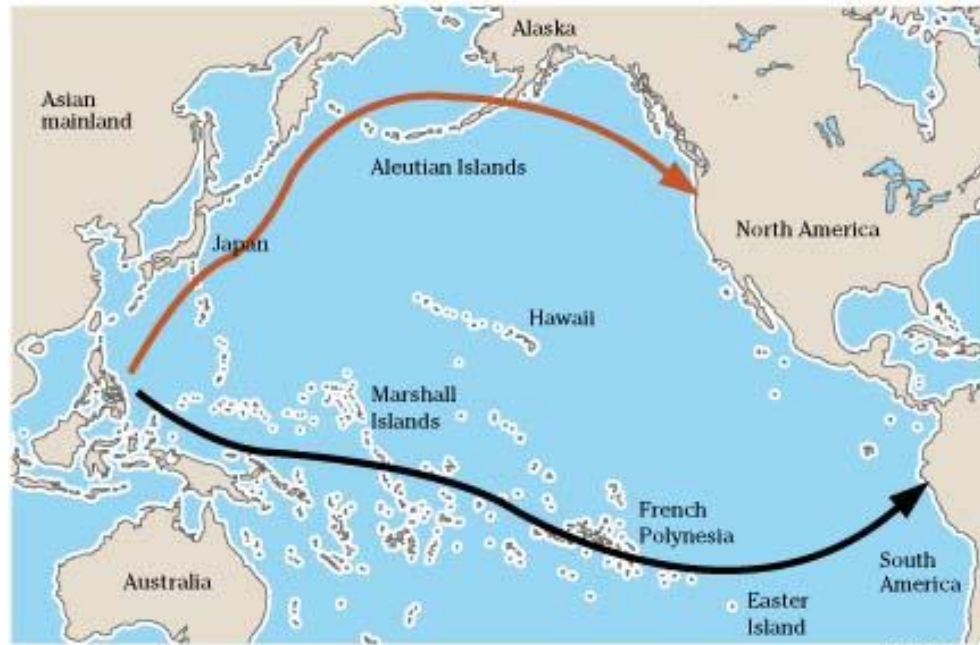




# Conflicting Genetic Research

- Some genetic research **supports** the idea that migration happened **across the Pacific** because of **DNA links to South Asia instead of Siberia** (also see Dickason map p. 15)
- American Journal of Human Genetics *"Our results strongly support the hypothesis that there was a gene pool of a single Native American founding population; they do not support models that propose independent migrations"*
  - Research identified haplogroup **Q-M242** as the YDNA male ancestor of the "Siberian Clan," some of whom remained in Asia, but that today **"almost all Native Americans are descendants from this man."**<sup>L</sup>
- Goodman's theory of American Genesis (1981) states that a **unique evolutionary line** occurred in the Americas **separate from Asia** and that **migration occurred from here to there** instead of the other way around \*

# Pacific Migration Theory



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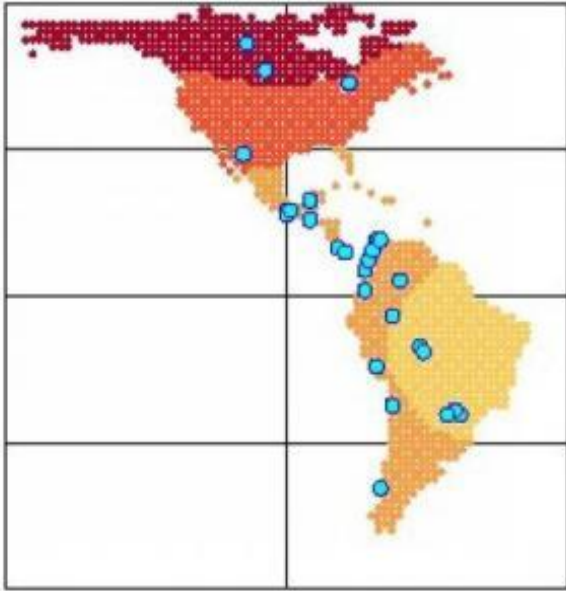


Original Bering  
Theory of  
Migration

Goodman  
Theory of  
Migration

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- Researchers examined genetic variation at 678 key locations in the DNA of present-day members of 29 Native American populations across North, Central and South America & data from 2 Siberian groups.
- They found genetic similarity to the Siberian groups, *decreases the farther a native population is from the Bering Strait + a unique genetic variant is widespread in Native Americans across both American continents*
  - **suggesting that the first humans in the Americas came in a **single migration or multiple waves from a single source, not in waves of migrations from different sources.** *The variant, which is not part of a gene and has no biological function, has not been found in genetic studies of people elsewhere in the world except eastern Siberia.***



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- By 11 000, campsites of peoples with different economic adaptations and cultural traditions were scattered through North and South America
  - From 11 000 to 8 000, 200 species of animals disappeared from the Americas
- The people used **Stone Age technology** stone and wood to make weapons and tools some of which were so sophisticated that some finds were previously thought to have been made by vanished races or even outer space inhabitants (Dickason).
  - Tools included those for hunting & dressing meats and hides
  - Also for gathering and preparing – collecting, carrying, cutting & grinding



# The Land and its Resources

- In contrast to a Eurocentric view of the land and its resources, Amerindians used land and its resources mainly to express their sense of cosmological order – which was an understanding that essentially they belonged to the universe as a part of the whole complex mechanism.

# Development of Agriculture

- **Signs of the development of agriculture** seem to date back to between 10 000 and 15 000 years ago (squash seeds found in Mexico)
- Gourds domesticated around 9 000 BP
- Squash and avocados, beans, chili peppers and amaranth around 8 700 BP
- Corn, potatoes, tomatoes, peanuts, pineapples and cacao followed
- then tobacco
- More than 100 species of plants that are still farmed today



- **North Eastern Woodlands of North America** – agriculture was introduced with the cultivation of squash around **4 300 BP** probably through trade with the south
  - At contact the Huron (Wendat) were growing 17 different types of corn and 8 types of squash, gathering more than 30 types of wild fruit and 10 kinds of nuts
  - Corn was the first to reach Southern Ontario around 500 AD (anno domini – year of our lord)
  - Tobacco and beans around 1000 AD
  - Then Squash follows in the 13<sup>th</sup> C 1200s


# The Three Sisters or The Three Sustainers

- Corn, Beans and Squash
- these three **were grown together across Ontario by the 16<sup>th</sup> C or 1500s**
  - they were sustainable, benefiting the soil when planted together
  - and nutritionally complimenting each other when cooked or consumed together
- Plants were also used as medicines – at contact First Nation peoples were found to have a knowledge of herbs to cure ills Europeans believed to be incurable
- Farming focused on **plants** more so than livestock – and utilized hunting and fishing for protein



# Egalitarian & Hierarchical Societies

- First Nation peoples did not separate authority from the group as a whole
- Available resources were for everyone and leaders used influence rather than force – it was important to be eloquent (well spoken) and be able to persuade
- This ensured that the skills of some benefited all rather than just the individual
- The power of chiefs depended on their ability to provide for others and to represent the common will – they were expected to set an example – in particular by being generous

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- Instead of gaining wealth they were more likely to be the poorest after looking after the needs of the others
  - Chosen by social consensus – based on their skills to lead, hunt, spiritual powers
  - Power was transitional and tied to projects or tasks at hand
  - Lacked quarreling and conflict – impressed Europeans
  - Amerindians – were not impressed by the fact that Europeans feared their own authority figures – while they were more apt to make sport of theirs and laugh at them
  - Having said this – respect was essential when it mattered

# Individualism and Discipline

- The Amerindian warrior and European soldier differed
- The warrior in the Eastern Woodlands was the bearer of the bones of the nation, a responsibility that included the duty to fight for it – on your own accord or not – you could leave without losing face
- A soldier who was under the command of a superior officer could not leave on his own without disgrace or legal penalties



- While rule and authority may be shared, discipline was instead viewed as an individual matter – the ability to go for long periods without food or to withstand torture; calm endurance of inconveniences, hardships and suffering – the capacity to resist fatigue and the ability to think for oneself in battle **were all stressed**
- The Amerindian code of bravery in warfare was unlikely to call for dying while trying to maintain an untenable position as that of the Europeans often did – but there was an expectation of individual toughness or sacrifice

# Chiefdoms

- existed on the North West Coast which were more hierarchical with class distinctions between chiefs, nobles and commoners based on wealth and heredity
  - these groups went from being egalitarian groupings of mobile peoples to hierarchical sedentary chiefdoms some of which were highly complex city states
  - This was more likely to happen here than most other areas in Canada because ...




Chief Muquinna was so wealthy that he once had a potlatch where he gave away 200 muskets and 7 barrels of gunpowder

# European Interpretations or Differences also included...

- A different understanding of the term father – which meant authority and control of the family to the more **patriarchal** Europeans
  - To Amerindians, father means protector and provider who could be influential but who lacked authority in the European sense – particularly among **matrilineal** societies where mothers had more say over the children. The authority figure here would be a maternal uncle.

What kind of ramifications could this difference in understanding have later on?



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- Places were often named after individuals in European societies
  - However, places were not named after individuals in Amerindian pre-contact culture (exception some reserves after D & A).
  - This is likely a reflection of ...