

Critical Genealogies: Collaborative Archaeology in Settler-colonial Contexts
Alison Wylie

Coffa Lecture, 27 September 2022

Demands to decolonize archaeology in settler-colonial contexts have mobilized a growing commitment to work in collaborative partnership with Indigenous communities. A succession of critiques of such practice throw into sharp relief a tangle of jointly epistemic and political/ethical questions about the status of archaeology as a discipline, who it serves, whose protocols should govern its practice, and what counts as credible evidence and warranted claims. I explore the question of what's required to meet the challenge posed by Tuck and Yang – that “decolonization is not a metaphor” – focusing on approaches to archaeological inquiry that conceive of it as a practice of “bearing witness.” I also ask what role philosophers and historians of science can play in decolonizing the epistemic underpinnings of the sciences we study and, indeed, our own practice.

Alison Wylie holds a Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of the Social and Historical Sciences at the University of British Columbia where she is a Professor of Philosophy. She has a long-standing interest in philosophical questions raised by archaeology and feminist social science: How do we know what (we think) we know about the past? In what sense are knowers and knowledge claims ‘objective’, given the ineliminable role of values and interests in all aspects of inquiry? And, how can research be held accountable, in its aims and practice, to the diverse communities it affects?

Recent publications in philosophy of archaeology include “Triangulation and Traceability” (*Data Journeys in the Sciences* 2020), and *Material Evidence* (2015) and *Evidential Reasoning in Archaeology* (2016), co-authored/co-edited with archaeologist Robert Chapman. Her work on standpoint theory and ideals of objectivity is represented by a 2012 APA Presidential Address, “Why Standpoint Matters,” and essays on “What Knowers Know Well” that have appeared in *Scientiae Studia* (2017) and *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science* (2011). Since joining UBC in 2017 she has worked with the [Indigenous/Science research cluster](#); related articles include “A Plurality of Pluralisms” (*Objectivity in Science* 2015), “Collaborative Archaeology in Global Perspective” (*Archaeologies* 2019), and “Bearing Witness” with Eric Simons and Andrew Martindale (*Working For and With the Ancestors* 2021).

Wylie is past President of the American Philosophical Association (2011-2012), and of the Philosophy of Science Association (2019-2020). She is a corresponding fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and was recently elected to the Royal Society of Canada. In 2013 she received the Distinguished Woman Philosophy of the Year (SWIP), having served as editor of *Hypatia* (2008-2013), and engaged in a number of activist/research projects on “chilly climate” issues in academia; she is currently working with a UBC-based philosophy collective on the “[Philosophy Exception](#)” website project.

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Indigenous/Science website: <https://indigenousscience.ubc.ca/>

The Philosophy Exception website: <https://www.thephilosophyexception.ca/>