Social Studies 10-1

Unit 2: Legacies of historical globalization

Oral history and Eurocentrism

Two accounts of one river

- A Cree knowledge keeper describes a river by camps, kin, and the seasons when fish run.
- A 19th-century surveyor describes the same river by miles, timber, and a route for boats.
- A classroom wall map still draws Europe larger and more central than its land area.

Oral evidence and map centres

- An oral account is evidence when the teller, the protocol, and the community check are clear.
- A written colonial report is also evidence, with its own author and purpose.
- Eurocentrism shows up when Europe sits in the middle and other nations appear only after contact.

Key terms

oral history

Oral history is an account held in memory and speech, passed with witnesses, protocol, and the community's own checks.

protocol

Protocol is the set of permissions, gifts, and ways of listening that a community asks for before a story is shared.

Eurocentrism

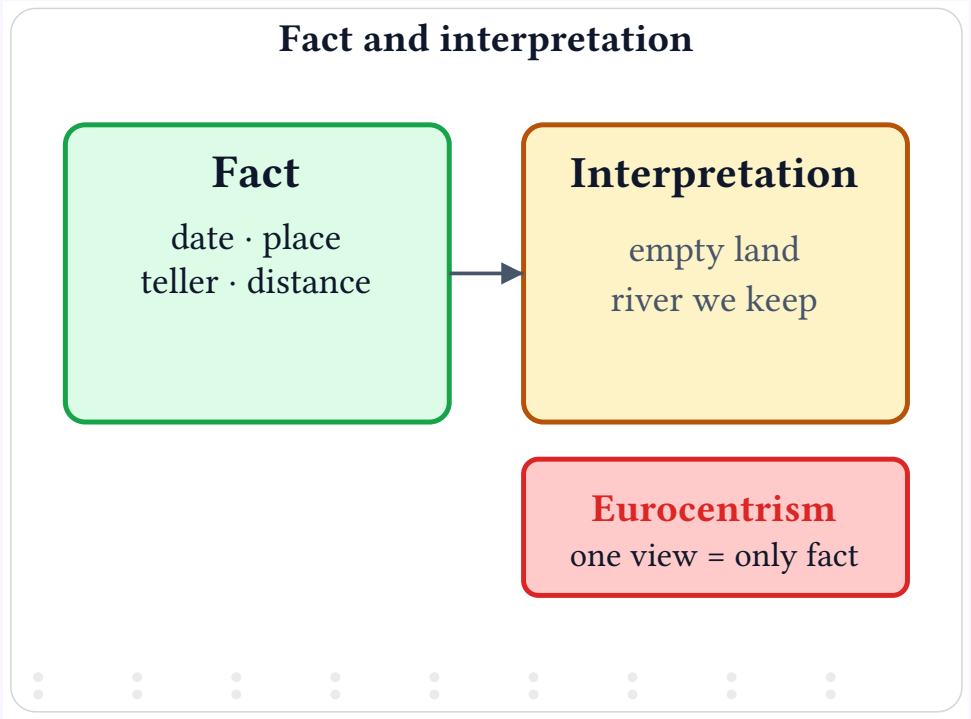
Eurocentrism is the habit of treating European history, maps, and writing as the center and the model everyone else is measured against.

interpretation

An interpretation is a claim about what events mean, built from selected facts and from the teller's position.

Fact and interpretation

- A fact here is a checkable detail: a date, a place, a named teller, a measured distance.
- An interpretation is the meaning someone builds, such as ‘empty land’ or ‘a river our families keep’.
- Eurocentrism is visible when the European interpretation is printed as if it were the only fact.



Knowledge keeper and surveyor

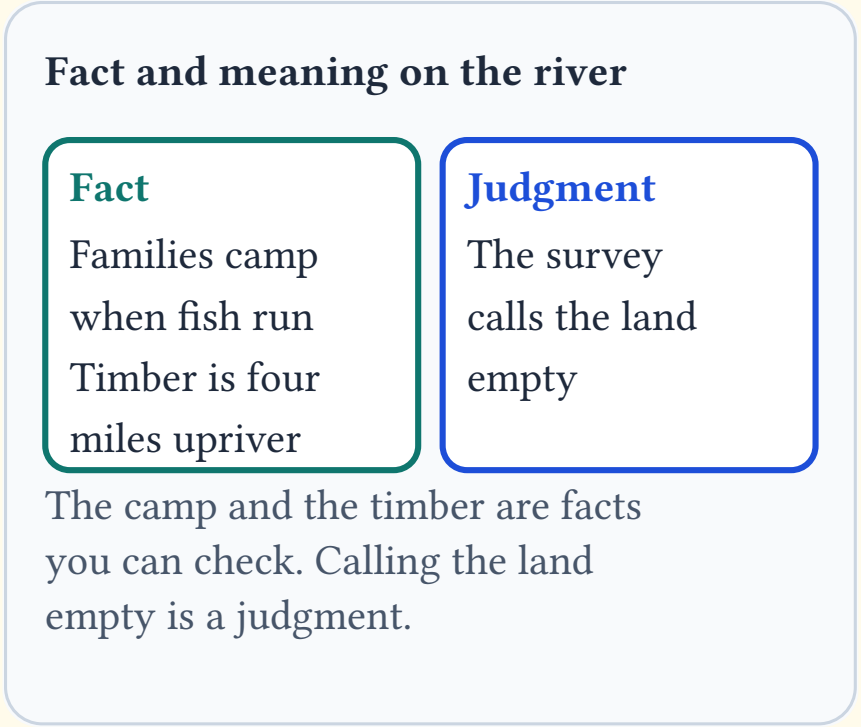
- Knowledge keeper: speaker is a named Cree teller, evidence is camps and fish seasons, meaning is relationship to the river.
- Surveyor: speaker is a colonial official, evidence is miles and timber notes, meaning is a route for outside use.
- Wall map: speaker is the publisher, evidence is the chosen projection, meaning is a world that starts in Europe.



The top drawing marks Cree camps on the river. The lower drawing shows Greenland large on a Mercator map and smaller when degrees are equal.

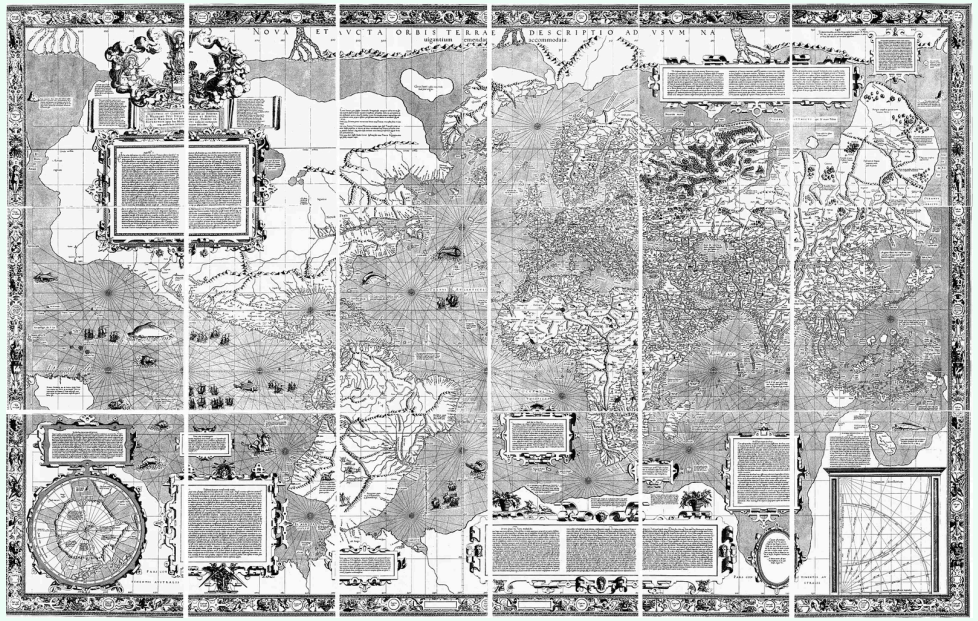
Fact and meaning

- Keeper: ‘We camp below the rapids when the fish run.’ That sentence holds a place and a seasonal use.
- Surveyor: ‘The channel is four miles to the timber berth.’ That sentence holds a distance and a commercial goal.
- A caption that says the river was empty until the survey confuses an interpretation with a fact.



A Mercator map caption

- A Mercator map enlarges lands near the poles and was built for ocean navigation.
- Greenland looks huge beside Africa, though Africa's land area is far larger.
- A fair caption says who the map helps and which view it pushes aside.



Review

- An Elder describes a trail by stories of who traveled it.
- A railway planner describes the trail as an empty right-of-way.
- The answer separates fact from interpretation and names Euro-centrism if it appears.

Image credits

Gerardus Mercator, Mercator 1569 world map composite, public domain