Tribal education : a case study of Northern Cheyenne elders
by Franklin Clay Rowland

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

Abstract:
Although culturally relevant education is recognized as a vital element for the self-determination of Indian people, success in this area has been limited and is essentially non-existent for the Northern Cheyenne people in southeastern Montana. The purpose of this study was twofold. First, an examination of the knowledge and the experiences of the tribal elders on the reservation today was conducted in order to get a more precise idea of how education is defined within the traditional framework of the Northern Cheyenne system. Second, the perspectives of the elders were used as a basis to make recommendations about how educational practice can adapt to the current needs of the Northern Cheyenne.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 elders in order to define the tribal concepts of wisdom and knowledge, the characteristics of Cheyenne teachers and students, the learning environment, and the role of education within the Northern Cheyenne community. Findings indicated a stark contrast between tribal and non-Indian views of education. Due to the oppressiveness of reservation life, the elders described how the holistic learning environment of the Cheyenne was ignored and violated by their experiences in the non-Indian government and Christian boarding schools. According to the Cheyenne, knowledge is perceived as a gift from the Creator, assumes a moral quality to benefit the community, and contrasts with the non-Indian practice of using education to assimilate and control.

The first phase of Cheyenne education must include dealing with the oppression and internal strife of the tribe. Tribal spirituality and mentorships should be involved in reservation education in order for learning to be meaningful for the purposes of the tribe. Conclusions and recommendations were made on the following topics: The Cheyenne Holistic System: A mechanism for Tribal Regeneration; The Latent Effects of Oppression; and The Primary Components of Cheyenne Education. Significantly, Dull Knife Memorial College, the tribal college on the reservation, can play an essential role in using the voice of the elders to -empower the community.

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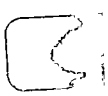

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This thesis has been read by each member of the graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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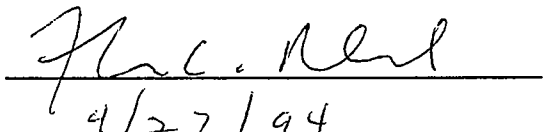
Signature 

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ABSTRACT

Although culturally relevant education is recognized as a vital element for the self-determination of Indian people, success in this area has been limited and is essentially non-existent for the Northern Cheyenne people in southeastern Montana. The purpose of this study was twofold. First, an examination of the knowledge and the experiences of the tribal elders on the reservation today was conducted in order to get a more precise idea of how education is defined within the traditional framework of the Northern Cheyenne system. Second, the perspectives of the elders were used as a basis to make recommendations about how educational practice can adapt to the current needs of the Northern Cheyenne.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 elders in order to define the tribal concepts of wisdom and knowledge, the characteristics of Cheyenne teachers and students, the learning environment, and the role of education within the Northern Cheyenne community. Findings indicated a stark contrast between tribal and non-Indian views of education. Due to the oppressiveness of reservation life, the elders described how the holistic learning environment of the Cheyenne was ignored and violated by their experiences in the non-Indian government and Christian boarding schools. According to the Cheyenne, knowledge is perceived as a gift from the Creator, assumes a moral quality to benefit the community, and contrasts with the non-Indian practice of using education to assimilate and control.

The first phase of Cheyenne education must include dealing with the oppression and internal strife of the tribe. Tribal spirituality and mentorships should be involved in reservation education in order for learning to be meaningful for the purposes of the tribe. Conclusions and recommendations were made on the following topics: The Cheyenne Holistic System: A mechanism for Tribal Regeneration; The Latent Effects of Oppression; and The Primary Components of Cheyenne Education. Significantly, Dull Knife Memorial College, the tribal college on the reservation, can play an essential role in using the voice of the elders to empower the community.

CHAPTER 1

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Introduction

During the 1960's many people in this country demanded social change. Although social unrest, turmoil, and sometimes tragedy accompanied this movement for human dignity, seeds of reform were undoubtedly planted during this era of American history. Along with other segments of society that were systematically denied their human rights, the Native American was a beneficiary of a heightened sense of pluralism and equality in this society.

Although educational policies toward the Native American began in early colonial times, religious conversion and assimilation into the dominant culture were the driving themes until recent times (McNickle, 1973, p. 114). It was not until the establishment of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (P.L. 92-638) that tribes gained greater control over their own educational policies. With this legislation Indian tribes could contract with the federal government for services such as education, law enforcement, and health. Formerly these community functions were administered by the

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). According to this act, Indian control of education was perceived as an important element for the future development and progress of Native American communities.

Propelled by the sentiment for Indian self-determination, Congress passed the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act in 1978 (P.L. 95-471) and acknowledged that Indian communities could rightfully charter their own institutions of higher education. The importance of this legislation was twofold. First, by providing greater access to higher education, tribes could begin to address the desperate social and economic conditions on reservations. Second, the form and function of these new educational programs were to be culturally relevant to provide a basis by which Indian people could rebuild their tribal identities. Subsequent to the Tribal College Act, Indian institutions of higher education were firmly established. Today, tribal colleges number 24 and serve approximately 4,400 full-time students (Boyer, 1989, p. 30).

The distinguishing feature of Indian colleges is the dual nature of each of the school's mission statements. For example, the Blackfeet Community College mission provides that the college will "achieve a balance between educational advancement and cultural preservation" (Blackfeet Community College Catalog, p. 13). Stein

(1992), an authority on the history of tribal colleges, states that:

> It is the philosophy and curricula which make tribally controlled colleges unique in United States higher education. Tribal community colleges have many aspects within their make-ups which are not different from other community colleges, but each has a statement adhering to its Native American (tribal) roots. These statements and academic programs which are Native American in nature have been deliberately inserted into the curriculum and philosophy to address the needs of tribal members. Each tribal college addresses its own tribal background in a philosophical statement, and each has developed curricula which enhance that tribal background. Tribal college founders and current participants believe that in order to succeed on the reservation, each college must be true to its tribal values and traditions and must carefully blend them with a comprehensive community college program of education. (p. 145)

From recent evidence it is clear that tribal colleges have been successful in forming culturally relevant academic programs. According to Boyer (1989), tribal colleges are a vital part of the reservation fabric, and "while non-Indian schools and colleges have long ignored Indian culture, tribal colleges view it as their curricular center" (p. 4). Moreover, "beyond the classroom, traditional values also are embedded in the very spirit of these institutions" (p. 4). In addition, Janine Pease-Windy Boy (1990), President of Little Big Horn College, indicates that her school "was designed and created over a period of about 20 years with the good wishes of elders who had an idea about our own scholarship, our own interest,

and our destiny" (p. 37). Further, Windy Boy stated that "we determined that we would have the largest department in our college called Crow Studies and have it based on that eminent community scholarship" (p. 38).

Statement of the Problem

In light of the foregoing examples, there are indeed tribal colleges effectively providing a culturally enriching experience for their communities. However, this task has thus far proven itself to be formidable for many tribal institutions. From his seminal study of the incorporation of Indian values within tribal colleges, Bad Wound (1990) found that with few exceptions, board members, administrators, faculty, and staff were sorely lacking in their understanding of how their school's mission statements could effect institutional life (p. 101). Further, in reference to integrating tribal cultures in the institutional setting of tribal colleges, Bad Wound concluded that "in view of their missions to promote tribal culture, the issue is how tribal beliefs frame the actions of constituents in tribal colleges. My analysis suggests that they do not" (p. 265).

In addition, from interviews conducted with Montana tribal colleges (St. Pierre & Rowland, 1990), it was found that a number of schools have yet to emphasize tribal cultures (p. 217). Indeed, it was insisted by one tribal

college president that cultures must be infused throughout the community and not a minor fraction of it and that it is naive and unrealistic for reservation communities to expect the colleges to act alone or take the lead role in perpetuating tribal cultures (Belcourt, Gordon, Personal Communication, January 23, 1990).

Tribal cultures and philosophies provide the moral and intellectual rationale for the practice of Indian higher education. From the evidence provided thus far, the task of blending theory and practice in Indian higher education is indeed difficult. However, Friere (1970) states that "praxis" or thinking critically about the past is careful reflective thought before taking actions in order to make intelligent choices in society.

> Just as an objective social reality exists not by chance, but as the product of human action, so it is not transformed by chance. If men produce social reality (which is the "inversion of praxis" turns back upon them and conditions them), then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for men. (p. 36)

By looking at the past a sense of purpose will be found about the future. Horton (1989) succinctly said, "I would rather know where I am going and not be able to get there, than be able to get there and not know where I am going" (p. 9). In regard to the professional field of education, "true professionals know not only what they are to do, but are also aware of the principles and the reasons for so acting" (Elias & Merriam, 1980, p. 9).

In addition, careful reflection on the possible consequences of educational practice must be an ongoing process. "Learning is not an isolated inquiry; instead it is exploration, followed by reflection and by action. In this dialectical process, the action stimulates a need for further inquiry. This in turn is followed by reflection and action in a continuous pattern" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 14).

Institutional mission statements should clearly define how the philosophical underpinnings of the organization will be implemented. Bolstered by legislation and the continuing legitimization of Indian higher education within the greater realm of American higher education, the tribal college movement has certainly made strides since its inception nearly two decades ago. However, there are factors that have evidently refocused Indian higher education. For example, the demands of accreditation authorities outside the reservation, such as the Northwest Accreditation Association, have resulted in an unfair balance away from efforts of cultural maintenance within tribal colleges (Bad Wound, 1990, p. 276). In addition, because of fiscal constraints tribal colleges have been limited in the degree to which than can pursue their mission to culturally enrich their communities (Sooktis, personal communication, April 2, 1990).

For those tribal leaders and congressmen who had the foresight and wisdom to frame Indian self-determination, tribal colleges were deemed an essential ingredient for Indian communities to rise above nearly 200 years of federal domination. Although various factors may have led some tribal colleges neglecting or ignoring the charge they have inherited, the diminution of tribal cultures within tribally controlled colleges can no longer go unheeded. In order to maintain credibility within the tribal communities, each of the schools must critically examine how the institutional life of the college is guided by tribal culture and philosophy.

The framers of Indian controlled higher education set out on a noble and worthy journey in 1968. In order to continue in the true spirit of Indian self-determination, it is imperative that each school become attuned to the cultural needs of their respective tribes. In short, Indian higher education, which is one major measure of Indian self-determination, can only occur when the successes of tribal colleges are in harmony with the ideals of Indian communities.

Statement of Purpose

The aim of this study was to help resolve the current dilemma facing the Cheyenne. By using qualitative research strategies such as interviews, the fundamental concepts of

the educational process of tribal people can be effectively explored (Bad Wound, 1990, p. 268). Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of selected Northern Cheyenne elders concerning the educational process and the implications these have for the tribal college and other elements present within the system of education on the Northern Cheyenne reservation.

For nearly two centuries federal policies have been aimed at dispossessing the American Indian (Deloria, 1985, p. 4). By not accepting or appreciating the richness and complexity of Indian cultures, government mandates have often tried to assimilate Indian people (McNickle, 1973, p. vi). In addition, because arbitrary federal policies have often been adverse to Indian people, it is only recently that Indian people have gained minimal control of how their world is interpreted.

As a substrata of a larger system, American education has not acknowledged the culture of Indian people. Rather, American educational policies and practices toward Indian people assumed that tribal cultures were destined to succumb to the dominant society (Guyette, 1983, p. xiii). Although American Indians have diverse cultures and languages, they stand apart from non-Indians in their belief systems and worldviews (Cornell, 1987, p. 63).

Like many other tribes, the Northern Cheyenne are marked by a distinct interpretation of life (Sooktis, 1976,

pp. 1-14), yet no one has critically analyzed the educational needs of the Cheyenne. Traditional values and current needs have not been systematically examined. The views of the elders of the community have not been incorporated into the argument. Thus, there has been a general failure to uncover Cheyenne perceptions of education and how these realities can be infused within the institutional setting.

By not having a coherent and systematic connection between educational theory and practice education may be random at best and adverse in the worst case. For the Northern Cheyenne, who have been historically isolated on the reservation, the vigorous new spirit of self-determination combined with the demands of modern society have placed an increasing importance on the need for praxis for Cheyenne education.

The integrity of the Cheyenne worldview was recently tested. During the 1970's, geological studies confirmed that the reservation was resting on massive reserves of low sulfur coal. Based on the market value of this resource, it was calculated that if coal was mined, every member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe could receive an excess of a million dollars. Considering the impoverished condition of reservation life, the potential for economic and social development (in many instances this development was based on non-Indian ideals) from coal was indeed great. After

carefully reflecting on ancient teachings and values, the Cheyennes chose not to mine their coal. However, despite the magnitude of this decision on the life of the tribe and implications it has for the contrast of being "Cheyenne" in the face of the main culture, the problem remains that the beliefs and culture of the Northern Cheyenne have yet to be defined in relation to the present systems of education on the reservation.

More recently, the tribe debated whether the reservation should have a public high school. Presently, there is one small dilapidated tribal K-12 school, and the only other option is for reservation youth to leave the reservation to attend nearby public or private schools. Proponents of the public school argued that having a new, large public school would mean less travel to schools outside the reservation. Conversely, those arguing against this school indicated that the tribal school at Busby, Montana, was chartered by the tribe and was represented by a school board which was elected from each of the districts on the reservation. Eventually, the tribal council voted to support the new public school. However, throughout these discussions, Cheyenne elders, who are the traditional and legitimate Cheyenne teachers, were never consulted in any systematic way, and their views were never critically examined.

In light of the foregoing circumstances on the Northern Cheyenne reservation, it is now apparent that Dull Knife Memorial College, the reservation tribal college, could play a vital role in reconciling the disquieting events that have recently unfolded. According to Boyer (1989), a primary aim of tribal colleges are to provide "long-standing cultural skills and beliefs that Indians can build a strong self-image and participate, with confidence, in the dominant society" (p. 4). In addition and more relevant to the needs of the Northern Cheyenne people is that part of Dull Knife Memorial College's Mission Statement that indicates that the school will "enhance and support the Northern Cheyenne cultural values, language, and traditions . . . for all students" (p. 9).

Undoubtedly, the Northern Cheyenne are having difficulties and ostensibly they could seek a resolution through their tribal college. Indian people have a distinct view of reality and when tested tribal groups like the Northern Cheyenne may choose alternatives very much unlike choices that would be made in the dominant culture. It is a safe assumption that education provides a vital role in transmitting culture for future generations. To date, however, little if any research exists describing how Cheyenne philosophy and beliefs can be incorporated within the present system of education on the reservation.

Limitations

The focus of this study was limited to selected elders on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in southeastern Montana. Further, by imparting knowledge from a distinctive Cheyenne point of view, the contributions of the elders is reflective of a belief system which is not necessarily a part of the conventional paradigm of epistemological constraints (Deloria, 1993, p. 64).

Definitions

Bands: The band was the traditional social organization by which the Cheyenne organized their society and law ways. Unlike Clans, which are familial, the composition of the band is made up of members who are not necessarily related.

Breed: With the advent of federal control over the Cheyenne, tribal members were entered on "Rolls" which were a comprehensive listing of tribal members and maintained by the federal government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. "Full-Blood" Cheyenne were those individuals that were recognized as full members of the tribe during the first phases of the roll process. Since then, certain Cheyennes have ancestors and family members that are of white or another

tribe's blood, and these individuals are considered "Breeds" and are of mixed-blood origin.

Cheyenne: For the purposes of this study, the tribal affiliation of the elders in this study was referenced in one of two ways. Therefore, the terms of Northern Cheyenne and Cheyenne were used interchangeably and were in reference to the enrolled members of the Northern Cheyenne reservation located in southeastern Montana. This tribe's name for themselves is "Tsistsistas" and means "The People." The Southern Cheyenne, who now live in Oklahoma, are differentiated from the Northern Cheyenne who chose to remain in the north during historical times.

Elder: Although elder primarily denotes chronological age in western society, this designation is a compilation of a number of variables according to the Northern Cheyenne perspective. Accordingly, being an "elder" in the Northern Cheyenne sense is indicative of experience along the Journey of Life, the gifts of knowledge provided by the Creator, the propensity to draw wisdom from knowledge, and the status one enjoys by virtue of service and sharing in the community.

Journey of Life: The spiritual quest of each individual Cheyenne beginning in the womb and ending upon death when the person would rejoin all of the ancestors in the spirit world.

Maheo: This is the Cheyenne name for the Creator. The terms Maheo and Creator will be used synonymously.

Reservation: Indian reservations are tracts of land that have been reserved for Indian people through treaty, congressional act, or executive order.

Tribe: The Northern Cheyenne are members of a tribe of Indians which is one of more than 500 nation-wide. By virtue of being the original inhabitants of this country, tribes were at one time sovereign political entities. However, due to their incompatibility and resistance to the Euro-American presence in this country, these tribes were either disbanded or removed to reservations in which they now reside. In lesser cases certain identifiable tribes, such as the Little Shell Band of the Chippewa in Montana, are unrecognized by the federal government and therefore have no rights, lands or powers afforded to other tribes.

CHAPTER 2

REVIVING THE CIRCLE

Introduction

A primary function of a literature review exists because "no problem in education exists in isolation from other areas of human behavior. Consequently, there is always some research study, some theory, something related to the problem that can be reviewed to inform the study at hand" (Merriam, 1988, p. 63). Although a plethora of historical, anthropological, and sociological research exists regarding the Northern Cheyenne tribe of Indians, these studies are narrow in their approach and understanding. Moreover, little research has been conducted regarding the worldview of the Northern Cheyenne, and nothing has been completed examining how this way of knowing could be incorporated within the contemporary views of education.

In effect, the purpose for Northern Cheyenne education has been virtually ignored. Indeed, the problem of this study indicates that the values and beliefs of the Northern Cheyenne, which is espoused by the tribal elders who are the traditional leaders of the tribe, have yet to be

systematically included in reservation educational programs. In order to accomplish this, being Northern Cheyenne must be clearly understood particularly in terms of the tribe's holistic worldview. Within this context the role of the tribal elders as caretakers of Cheyenne knowledge will be discussed. In addition, the Cheyenne concept of wisdom and its relationship to education will be described. Finally, a discussion of recent barriers to the Cheyenne way which in effect have prevented the Northern Cheyenne from incorporating their way of knowing within the formal systems of education on the reservation today will be presented.

The Northern Cheyenne

Now residing on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in southeastern Montana, the Northern Cheyenne are essentially two bands: the Suhtai and the Tsistsistas. These two bands are of the same Algonkin linguistic stock and have now lived together since the early nineteenth century (Grinnell, 1915, p. 3). The following will describe who the Northern Cheyenne are and what changes they have had to adapt to particularly after contact began between the Cheyenne and the non-Indian. The Cheyenne are now referred to as the "Northern" Cheyenne and are distinguished from their cousins the "Southern" Cheyenne now living in Oklahoma. In this section, the terms of Cheyenne, Northern

Cheyenne, Tsistsistas, and Suhtai are used interchangeably in reference to the tribal group which is the focus of this study. This review will also provide anecdotal information about the Southern Cheyenne.

Pre-reservation History

According to legend, the Cheyenne first lived in the upper Great Lakes regions of present day Canada. Because of harsh weather and the difficulty of survival, the Cheyenne moved south into the western Great Lakes region (Weist, 1970, p. 10). From pressure by the Ojibwa, Cree, Assiniboine, and Sioux, the Cheyenne began moving westward and out onto the Plains by the middle of the eighteenth century (p. 20). By the end of the same time frame, the Cheyenne ventured further west and were living with the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara people along the upper Missouri River near present day Bismarck, North Dakota (Grinnell, 1915, p. 10). While in the Missouri River area, the Tsistsistas met the Suhtai. According to legend, a fight ensued when these two tribes met. It was during this skirmish that someone realized that both parties were speaking the same language. After holding a joint council, the tribes befriended one another and began to camp together.

The Plains Era

After the introduction of the horse in about 1750, the Cheyenne began to move from their horticultural existence on the Missouri to dependence on buffalo hunting out on the plains (Weist, 1977, p. 19). By 1800, the Cheyenne completely abandoned their sedentary village existence along the Sheyenne River in favor of one that was based on an equestrian way of life. During the 1830's, the Suhtai were incorporated and became one of 10 bands within the Tsistsistas system (p. 24).

In 1832, Bent's Fort was established along the upper Arkansas River in present day Colorado. During this time, the tribe split into two groups. The "Southern" Cheyenne led by Yellow Wolf, head chief of the Hair Rope band, chose to stay south and trade at Bent's Fort. By this time, the "Northern" Cheyenne located themselves in the north near the Black Hills (Grinnell, 1915, p. 37). After this time, the Northern Cheyenne are composed of part of the original Tsistsistas, which means "The People" when translated from Northern Cheyenne, and most of the Suhtai.

The Invasions of the Homelands

During the late 1840's, particularly after the discovery of gold in California in 1849, the United States government was compelled to make a treaty with the Plains

tribes in order to insure the safety of whites moving westward through Indian lands (Weist, 1970, p. 44). In 1851, the Cheyenne like many of the other Plains tribes signed the Horse Creek Treaty at Fort Laramie. This treaty stipulated that lands comprising a good part of the present state of Colorado and the surrounding area (see Figure 1) would be reserved for the Southern Cheyenne. In 1858, gold was discovered in the present area of Denver, Colorado. Again, under the guise of protecting migrating whites, the government had the Southern Cheyenne sign another treaty. According the Fort Wise Treaty of 1861, the Southern Cheyenne could claim only a sliver of land in southeastern Colorado (Andrist, 1982, p. 74).

During this time, the government supported the wanton slaughter of buffalo (pp. 147-48). The Southern Cheyenne relied almost entirely on the buffalo for food, clothing, and shelter. Tragically, in the years that followed the Fort Wise Treaty, it has been reported that buffalo could not be found within a 200 mile radius of the reserved lands in southeastern Colorado, and many southern Cheyennes were forced to migrate off their "reservation" in order to provide for their families (p. 75).

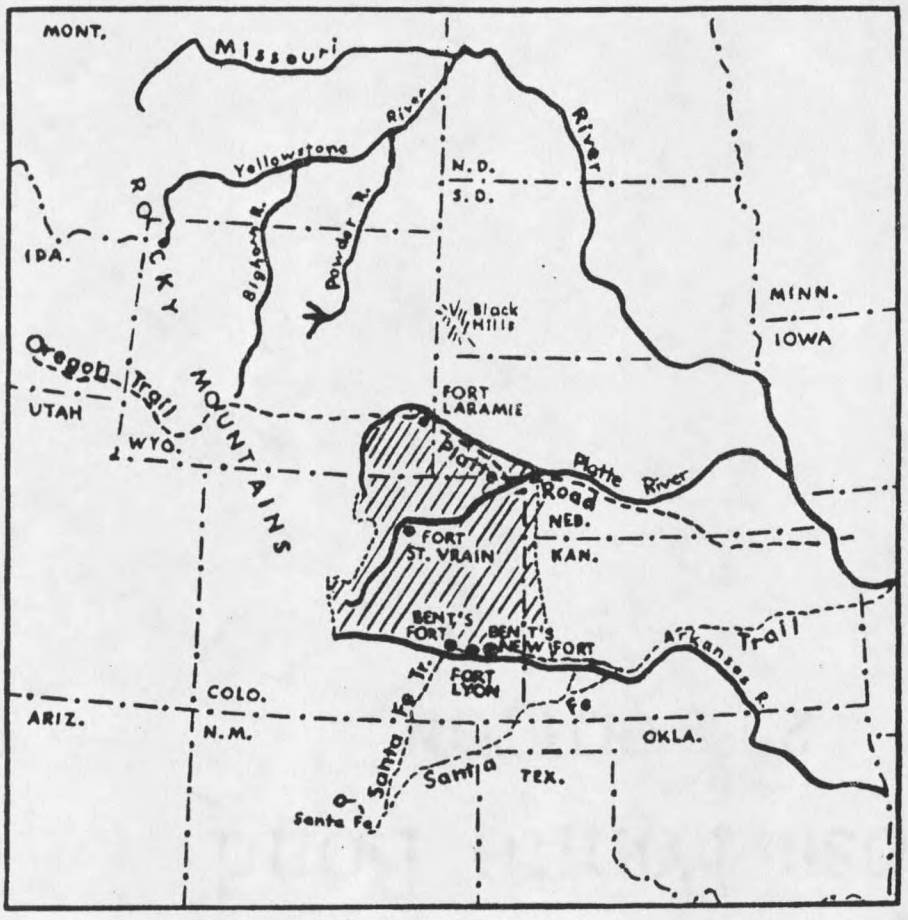

Figure 1. Cheyenne Lands - 1851. Taken from A History of the Cheyenne People by Tom Weist.

At War

While hunting off the reservation, a band of Southern Cheyenne were slaughtered in what has become known as the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. This band, which was composed largely of old people, women, and children, was under the renowned peace chief, Black Kettle. Black Kettle had worked hard to maintain good relations with the government. This slaughter of innocent Cheyennes marked a turning point in relations between the tribe and the United States government. After Sand Creek, all of the Southern Cheyennes except for Black Kettle and a few of his followers moved northward to join the Northern Cheyenne, Sioux, and Arapaho in war against the government. This pivotal moment in Cheyenne history is discussed at length by Grinnell (1915), Weist (1970), and Hoebel (1960).

The Northern Cheyenne, who also signed the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, were at this time located in the Black Hills region of present day South Dakota and were closely allied with the Dakota and Arapaho. After the Southern Cheyenne joined their northern cousins, this marked the first time the two had been together in more than two decades (Weist, 1970, p. 54).

During the 1860's to mid 1870's, these tribes effectively repelled white expansion into their lands and government attempts to subdue them (55-75). In 1868, the

government was forced to abandon its post at Fort Fetterman along the Bozeman Trail near present day Cody, Wyoming (p. 63).

However, in 1874, gold was discovered in the Black Hills of present day South Dakota. These lands were considered sacred to the Dakota and Cheyenne. Very quickly after the discovery of this coveted metal, the tribes were given an ultimatum to either get out of the Black Hills or become the mortal enemy of the government. When members of the Cheyenne, Sioux, and their allies did not comply, it became clear that war was inevitable (Andrist, 1982, p. 247). During this time, the Sioux and Cheyenne rightfully settled on "unceded Indian territory" in the Powder River country as established by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 (Weist, 1970, p. 68). However, an order directing all tribes in this area to move back on the reservation located further eastward out on the Plains was initiated in the winter of 1875-76. Not surprisingly, the "hostiles" in this region refused, and a contingent under General Custer was dispatched to subdue the Cheyenne, Sioux, and their Arapaho allies. In the battle of the Little Big Horn in June of 1876, the tribes were victorious. Government retaliation for this embarrassment was inevitable, and the victory was short-lived. By 1877, the Cheyennes were under the firm grasp of the military (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 225).

In late winter of 1877, the Cheyenne who were under the direction of General Crook, unwittingly agreed to go to Oklahoma to stay with their relatives the Southern Cheyenne. They were told this visit did not have to be more than one year if they did not want it to be. The year in Oklahoma was filled with misery, sickness, and death. Although the government intended this stay to be permanent, the Northern Cheyennes under Little Wolf and Dull Knife eventually, in 1878, escaped and returned north (Weist, 1977, pp. 80-84).

By the early 1880's, the Northern Cheyenne were detained at Fort Keogh near present day Miles City, Montana, at Fort Robinson in Nebraska, and at other posts in and around the Powder River country. The Cheyennes at Fort Keogh befriended commanding officer General Miles. Because of this friendship, General Miles advocated for and was instrumental in acquiring a reservation for the Northern Cheyenne (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 240).

Historical Summary

The Cheyenne adapted successfully to rapid changes around them. The perseverance of their society was fueled by the integrity of a distinct way of knowing. According to Weist (1970), a major theme in Cheyenne history is

> the remarkable story of how during a period of less than 350 years, the Cheyenne were able to adjust to different environments and adapt to

> what were essentially four different ways of life--as hunters and fishers living on the shores of lakes in Northern Woodlands, as planters living in earth lodges, villagers on the Minnesota, Sheyenne and Missouri rivers, as mounted buffalo warriors in the Black Hills and on the Great Plains, and their more recent years on the reservation. (p. 6)

Although ravaged by warfare against invading whites, by diseases introduced from the Old World, and by misguided and often tragic federal policies, the moral and ethical belief system endured. Today the Cheyenne belief in Maheo the Creator, the importance of spiritual cleansing and renewal, and the tantamount belief in tribalism continue to persist and indicate that the Cheyenne have a profound knowledge of the world and their place in it. Indeed, Cheyenne myth and cosmology contain essential directives for the proper conduct of modern Cheyennes (Moore, 1974, p. 12)

The Reservation

The Tongue River reservation was established in 1884 by executive order of President Chester A. Arthur. Today this reservation, which is properly referred to as the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, is located within the Big Horn and Rosebud counties of southeastern Montana (Figure 2). Of the 446,784 acres that comprise the reservation, approximately 98% or approximately 436,000 acres is Indian owned. Slightly more than 2% or 10,000

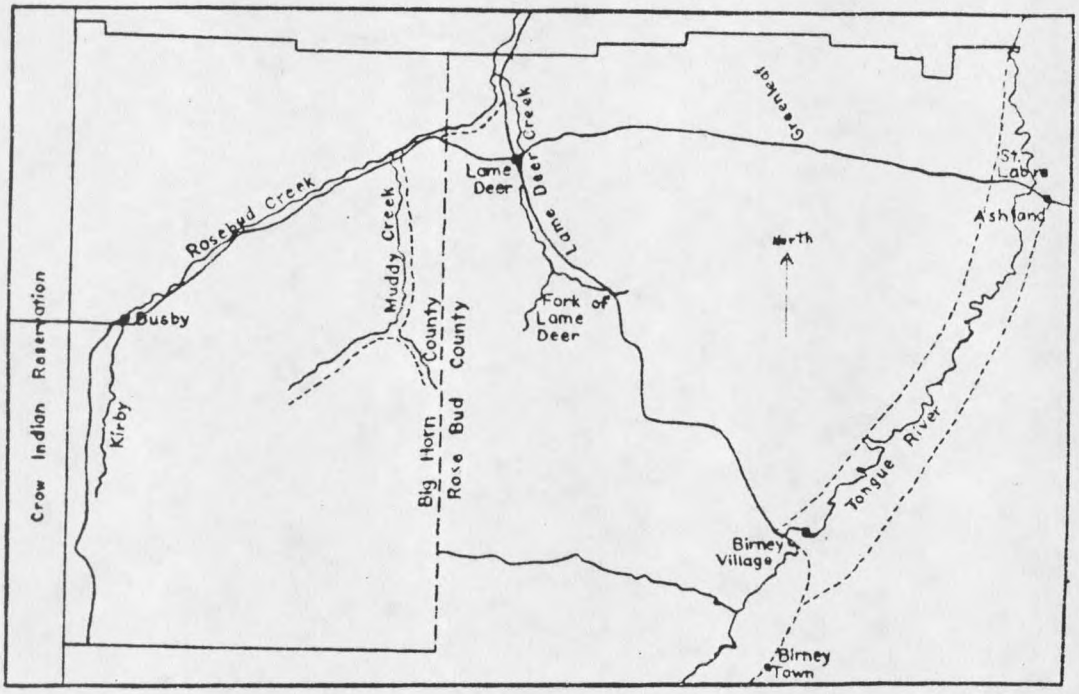

Figure 2. The Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Taken from A History of the Cheyenne People by Tom Weist.

acres is owned by non-Indians (Northern Cheyenne Research Project, 1977, pp. 4-15).

Currently, 2,213 Northern Cheyenne live on the reservation. This total equals 81.78% of those with a tribal affiliation on the Northern Cheyenne reservation. In addition, 344 or 12.71% are "Other Indians," and 149 or 5.51% are "Non-Indians." Presently, there are 2,706 people living on the Northern Cheyenne reservation (pp. 4-15).

The Cheyenne Worldview

Because of the sacred nature of Cheyenne religion, very little is known about it by the non-Indian lay person. However, the important ceremonies and rituals of the Tsistsistas are widely discussed by such scholars as Powell (1969) and Grinnell (1923). The works of these authors can be drawn upon to provide a brief explanation of the cultural heroes of the Tsistsistas and the ceremonies which they gave to the Cheyenne and to reveal important insights into the belief systems of the Northern Cheyenne. Precise models and descriptions of the worldview of the Cheyenne are delineated in the final portion of this section.

Cheyenne Cultural Heroes

The Suhtai and Tsistsistas have two cultural heroes that brought sacredness and law to the people. Erect Horns of the Suhtai instructed the Cheyenne in the proper way of

living through the Sacred Buffalo Hat, the Sun Dance, the Sweat Lodge, and the Buffalo Ceremonies. Sweet Medicine of the Tsistsistas taught the Cheyenne the use and purpose of the four Sacred Arrows. Both of these heroes received their instructions and accompanying ceremonies for these sacred objects from the Creator. Revealing the unanimity of the tribe, all of the ceremonies are held in reverence by all bands of Cheyenne (Grinnell, 1962, p. 337). In addition, Sweet Medicine was given a code of laws that were to be used to govern all of the Cheyenne people. From these instructions, the Cheyenne established a clear and meaningful definition of reality in traditional times.

Cheyenne Ceremonies

Because the Sun Dance is held annually and is witnessed by the entire tribe, it is the most widely known on the reservation today. The Sun Dance is a renewal ceremony and is conducted during the summer months when the Cheyennes gather together. During this time, a pledger, someone who has made a promise to dance in the Sun Dance and endure suffering from this ceremony, demonstrates spiritual obligations in the presence of the entire tribe. During this ceremony, the pledger publicly thanks the Creator for hearing his plea and seeks pity for his suffering in the Sun Dance medicine lodge. From this suffering the Cheyenne believe that the Creator would grant

new life to their loved ones and to the entire tribe for the coming year (Powell, 1969, p. 612).

The Sweat Ceremony is a purifying ceremony. In order to conduct this, a Sweat lodge is constructed and is covered with robes. After rocks are heated, they are placed in the lodge. Those who are participating must enter the lodge in a prescribed order, and the Sweat lodge door is then closed. During the Sweat, prayers are offered for all those in the Sweat, and additional prayers are said for those who need it in the community. During this time, water is poured on the rocks in the lodge to intensify the heat of the Sweat. After a prescribed number of "rounds," the Sweat is complete.

Ceremony and ritual surround the purification and maintenance of the sacred objects: The Sacred Hat and Arrows. These sacred objects represent a covenant between the Creator and the Cheyenne. The care and protection of these objects document the good standing the tribe has with the Creator. Conversely, if something was to happen to one or both of these objects, it is believed that something bad could befall the tribe unless repentance and cleansing occurs.

Perhaps the foremost scholar on the sacred traditions of the Tsistsistas, Powell (1980) states,

> To the people, tribal history is sacred. For their history centers upon the Prophets Sweet Medicine and Erect Horns, great holy men who are

> historical personages to the Cheyennes just as truly as John the Baptist and Moses are historical personages to Christians and Jews. In the same way, traditions concerning Sweet Medicine and Erect Horns are both truth and fact. (p. 11)

Cheyenne System of Reality

The worldview of the Cheyenne is addressed by such authorities as Campbell (1987), Turpin (1975), and Sooktis (1976). In discussing this worldview, they describe the Cheyenne concepts of physical and spiritual realities as well as the perception of the individual, the role of the community, and the sacredness of the circle of life.

Physical Reality

According to Campbell (1987), the Cheyenne believe the universe is a system of interrelated parts. For example, the "Heammahestonev," above the ground, includes a three part sub-system. The first part "Otatavoom," blue sky space, houses the Sun, the Moon, the stars, and the Milky Way. "Setovoom," nearer sky space, includes the clouds, wind, birds, and all the holy places. "Taxtavoom," which is the air and is a gift from the Creator, provides the breath of life. Below the surface are two sub-parts: "Votostoom," which is that part of the Earth that holds the roots of plants and trees which provide life-giving nutrients, and "Nsthoaman" or deep Earth (p. 380).

In addition, Turpin (1975) suggests that the Cheyenne believe that the world has a limited energy quotient which diminishes as it is used and which must be recharged periodically through ritualistic arts. Because the world is seen as a harmonious unit, it is symbolized by the circle. To symbolically reflect the human existence and the regeneration of life through the four seasons, the circle is divided into four quarters with a special "power" for each quarter. Therefore, the number four has great cosmic significance (p. 1171-A).

The Cheyenne believe that nature is basically good, and people must keep in close harmony through careful and tight control. All living things share creation and a Creator and, therefore, are considered relatives. Each has its own purposes and unique qualities. People are dependent upon everything in creation for existence. Because all species of life are looked upon as tribes of "peoples," all species can communicate and learn from each other. Humans can change into other forms of life, and other species can change at will into people.

Regarding the material world, the Cheyenne believe that all goods should be shared generously with others even though they are private property (p. 1171-A). This rationale is based on the belief that human relationships and spiritual development are considered of higher value than economic or political achievement. Because sex

interests generate jealousy and hostility, they must be held to a minimum with chastity and abstinence admired in both men and women.

Spiritual Reality

Each of the sub-parts of the Cheyenne system of reality have spirits associated with them that are helpers for the Cheyenne people. These spirits are beneficial to the people and act under the Great Spirit. Accordingly, Hoebel (1960) states the Cheyenne believe that:

> The great objective or religious practice is to relate to the spirit beings in such ways that life will be enhanced. . . . They [spirits] are generous in their blessings upon mankind. They are not niggardly and withholding by nature. They are not vindictive, punishing, cruel, or fearsome; although there are things to be feared, neither Cheyenne religion nor worldview rests on fear of the "Gods." (p. 83)

Further, the Cheyenne believe that they cannot control nature. "It is one . . . which people must keep in close tune through careful and tight self-control. Sweet Medicine and Erect Horns warned the ancients of the decline of the Cheyennes which would take place if they failed to act as they were instructed" (p. 84).

According to Turpin (1975), four principles from the spiritual and ceremonial functions frame the worldview of the Cheyenne. First, the Cheyenne believe there is one principle deity, Maheo, who is the primary creator and the all encompassing spirit of the universe. Although regarded

as separate spirits, all other "powers" are in reality merely aspects of one spirit, Maheo. Humans are part of that spirit and a part of the Earth, which is regarded as "grandmother." The entire Cheyenne world is subjective with each "thing" having its own life and spirit. These spirits are basically beneficent, and humans are subordinate to supernatural forces and spiritual beings which possess superior knowledge. Every Cheyenne individual can receive supernatural power through the tutelage of the spiritual beings. Once gained, it is expected that this power be shared with fellow tribal members (p. 1171-A).

The Cheyenne Community

Tsistsistas believe the social order is fragile and is primarily threatened by aggressive tendencies in human character (p. 1171-A). For example, the killing of a Cheyenne by another Cheyenne pollutes the sacred tribal objects, the tribe, and the murderer who must be banished by the tribal authorities. Because the physical and spiritual worlds are intertwined, the Council of Forty-Four, which is the traditional government of the Cheyennes, derives its authority from the supernatural through Sweet Medicine and is supreme over all other elements in the society.

Though survival and prosperity are essential to promote the family and the community, the Cheyenne hold these endeavors in perspective by virtue of the belief that each individual is responsible to and for the members of the tribe and has a special obligation to care for the aged, children, and the needy. All land and sacred tribal objects are public property. Because respect and courtesy are the basis for all relationships, the Cheyenne understand not to be impatient nor too direct in dealing with others.

The Path of Life

Although life is sacred, the Cheyenne understood the duality in life and the potential for good as well as for bad in the nature of humankind. Thus, the Cheyenne believe that Maheo, the Creator,

> blesses all living things in this way. His special blessing to human beings is the gift of breath/power (Omotome) and associated spiritual potential (Mahta Sooma) . . . under the direction of his parents, especially during the first twelve years of his life, the human being develops his Mahta Sooma. . . . When the Mahta Sooma is differentiated into its four parts, two of them "good" (representing the ordered cultural existence of man), two of them "crazy" (representing his unordered animal heritage), the individual will demonstrate in his behavior that he knows the difference; that is, comprehends the moral order within which he must live. (Straus, 1978, p. 2)

The order of existence is demonstrated by the Journey of Life (Sooktis, 1976, p. 2) (see Figure 3). In regard to

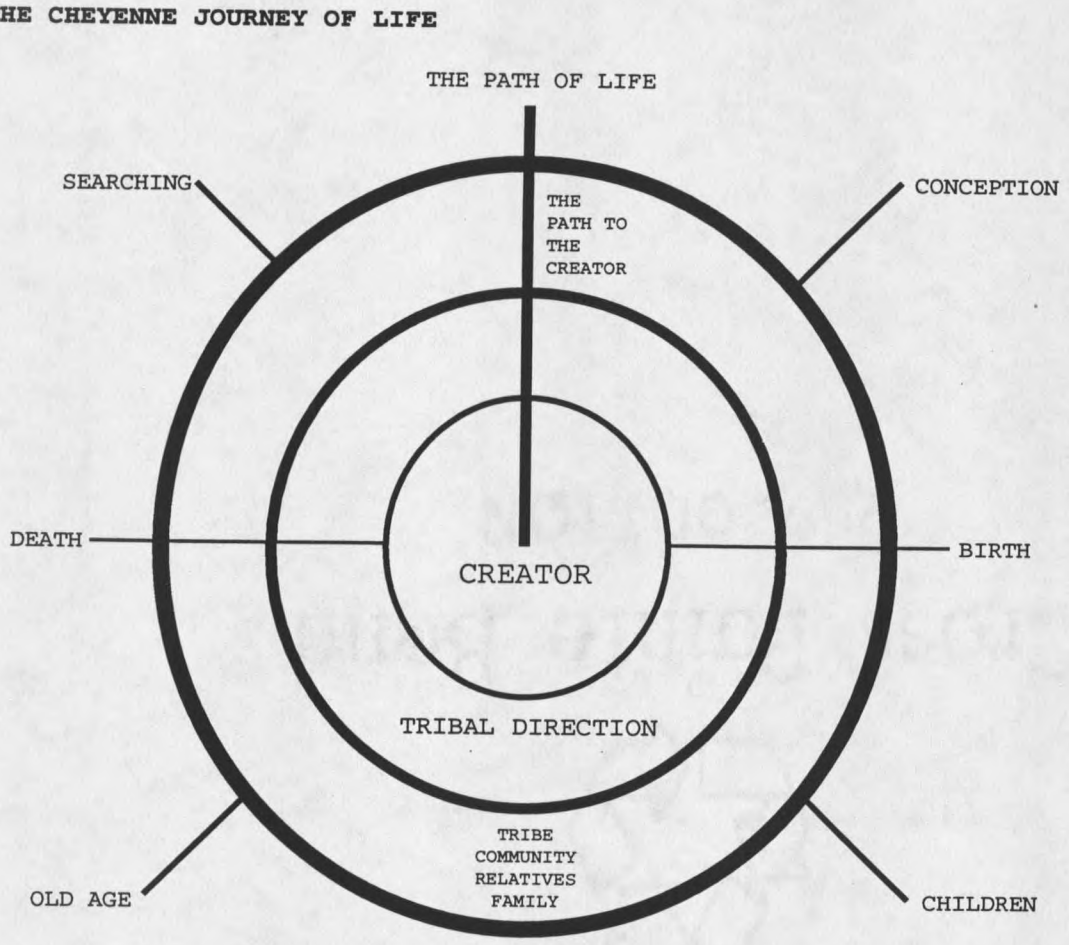

Figure 3. The Cheyenne Journey of Life. Taken from The Cheyenne Journey by Ruby Sooktis.

the process of life, "the entire Cheyenne journey is a journey of becoming. The journey involves balancing the good and the crazy; the right and wrong; happiness and sadness with all nature and with all people" (Sooktis, 1976, p. i).

The Cheyenne world is a careful balance of all living things; disruption of one element of this system causes reverberations throughout the entire whole. According to the Journey of Life all living things are given life through the process of the four seasons. Likewise, the individual Cheyenne is intimately affected by this and also encounters four corresponding phases of life. The Cheyenne believe that one cannot become fully human until each of the phases in life is successfully completed, whereupon the Journey of Life ends on Earth and the Cheyenne trek into the spirit world begins.

Thus, the worldview of the Northern Cheyenne differs tremendously from that which is accepted in the main culture. For example, the Cheyenne believe that every living thing has its own spirit contrasts with the Christian belief that only humans have souls. Likewise, the Cheyenne belief in sharing material goods is opposed to the capitalist belief in individual prosperity in the main American culture. Also, the Cheyenne belief that all lands are public property is opposed to the American belief in private property.

Undoubtedly, the Cheyenne belief system, like other tribes', is quiet different than that which is understood in the mainstream of society. In describing this difference Cornell (1987) states:

> What is the American Dream? It has changed over the years and, like all powerful symbols, it surely means different things to different people. But at heart it seems to include two things: a specification of both ends and means. On the one hand it is the dream of individual freedom and attendant material success. On the other hand, that success is to be achieved in a particular way, through neither handouts nor special dispensations but individual work. The image of a nation of strivers, each making his or her own way up an essentially accessible ladder of economic achievement through individual effort . . . this dream has long been held out to the Indians as the carrot that briefly precedes the stick, the reason why they should give up tribal life and massive bodies of land and enter the mainstream. Individual economic success was assumed to be a common goal. . . . But while this dream may be a generalized expression of the ambition of many persons in this society, it substantially misses the apparent ambitions of many Native Americans. Many Indians are not full-fledged participants in American life, and one reason seems to be that they do not necessarily share the dream itself, or if they do, it is in some sense a subsidiary dream, ancillary to a larger set of concerns. The interesting thing is not that Indians have rejected this particular carrot; indeed, many have embraced it. But it has seldom been the focal point of Indian relations with the larger society. (p. 62)

It is evident that the Cheyenne belief system and that on which the American Dream is based are quite different. It is therefore not surprising that it is difficult if not impossible for many Cheyennes to come to terms with

"progress" and "civilization" as it is known by those outside the tribal world.

Northern Cheyenne Elders

In order to understand the role of the elder in the Northern Cheyenne community, it is important to examine tribal concepts of the individual, the community, knowledge, and wisdom. It is important to reiterate that the Cheyenne concept of "Mahta Sooma" or the spiritual balance in life is measured by how well one can discriminate the "crazy" from the "good" elements of life and how one can use the latter to benefit the tribe. "Personhood, full participation in tribal society, then, is not ensured by birth: it is possible for a child never to become a person. Personhood is the result of a long process of development" (Straus, 1978, p. 3). The determining factor of how successful one was in becoming a person depended on how well the community was served. "It is important to observe that there are no initiation or puberty rites for boys in Cheyenne culture. Cheyenne children acquire full adult status by performance without the necessity of under going hazing by the old men or any other form of rite of passage" (Hoebel, 1960, p. 94).

The Cheyenne believed that the well-being of the community was of tantamount importance: Intra-tribal murder

was most heinous, and sharing and generosity was most revered. Additionally,

> Cheyenne boys learn to become highly competitive in the skills of hunt and war. They are rewarded with great individual prestige for successful performance, but the fact is also impressed upon them that they fight for the benefit of the tribe, "to protect the people" and that the fruits of the hunt are to be widely shared. (Hoebel, 1978, p. 99)

Further, the Cheyennes believe that "chiefs, who are the greatest exemplars of Cheyenne virtues, are the greatest givers (p. 99). The high point of their independent life on the Plains was marked by the way they countered "the forces of internal disruption . . . by vesting authority in those who are learned" (p. 98). The elders held a special place in Cheyenne society.

> The old people are respected for their wisdom and their spiritual powers, for their special place in the life-system of creation. It is understood as 'natural' that they should depend upon those younger than them for food and physical strength, as it is that others should depend upon them for advice and instruction. (Straus, 1978, p. 5)

The prominence the elders have in the Cheyenne community is underscored in Cheyenne lessons brought by their cultural heroes. For example, when Erect Horns and Sweet Medicine returned from the cave with instructions from their grandmother they were given corn and meat; they were told that the old people should be served first.

In turn, the role of those who are younger was clearly prescribed. "The learned have much to offer, and what one

acquires in wisdom about the Cheyenne way one acquires through learning taught by those who know the way. Cheyenne relations between younger and elder are thus the relations of pupils and teachers--and pupils must be deferential" (Hoebel, 1978, p. 98). Thus, the Mahta Sooma reflected an understanding of the mandate of the Cheyenne way, and the elders were indispensable in order to comprehend those truths.

Barriers to the Cheyenne Way

Historically, the relationship between the federal government and the Cheyenne is marked by intolerance of the former toward the latter. Until only recently, the government willfully constructed many barriers against Cheyenne culture and tradition. The first and foremost barrier to the Cheyenne way was the invasion of the non-Indian onto Cheyenne lands and the ensuing war and defeat of the tribe. Following the war era, confinement on the reservation and the stringent control exercised by the government marked the next barrier. From the onset of the reservation system, the final and still present barrier is the government's ambition with the concurrence of other parties such as religious organizations to "civilize" the Cheyenne according to white standards and ideals.

This approach to federal-Indian relations led to government paternalism. A policy of assimilation was

enacted, and this concept was given life in the form of policies toward the Cheyenne. The Catholic and Mennonite Churches in particular foresaw a role in changing the Cheyenne. These forces brought about changes for the elders and the process of education that the elders were formerly charged to carry out. It must be noted that besides outright oppressive actions by the government, any change in the Cheyenne Way without the full understanding and consent of the tribe had the immediate effect of disrupting tribal systems of reality and action. In this way, federal actions have obliterated the traditional Cheyenne educational system.

Federal Control and Paternalism

During those years before the advent of the white discovery and colonization of North America, this land was inhabited by other cultures that were hundreds and thousands of years old. During this time, if a visitor from the "Old World" could stand and look from the highest point of any mountain top and strain to see the distant horizon, all of what could be viewed was already acquired by someone else. Although America was once Indian owned, the tribes of this country were no match for the whiteman's military and economic might.

The Cheyenne, like the Suak and Fox, Sioux, Arapaho, and hundreds of other tribes, cherished traditional

homelands. Like other tribes before them, they too fell victim to the shift in balance of power. However, despite its oppressive policies, the federal government understood its moral obligation towards the original inhabitants of this land.

> Cries for extermination of the Indians that were sounded by aggressive frontiersmen and exasperated frontier commanders were rejected by United States officials responsible for Indian affairs. These officials instead sought to treat the Indians honorably, even though they acted within a set of circumstances that rested on the premise that white society would prevail. The best term for this persistent attitude is paternalism, a determination to do what was best for the Indians according to white norms, which translated into protection, subsistence of the destitute, punishment of the unruly, and eventually taking the Indians by the hand and leading along the path to white civilization and Christianity. The relationship was sometimes described, as it was by Chief Justice John Marshall in 1832, as resembling that of a ward and its guardian. The modern emphasis on the trust responsibility of the federal government toward the Indians has elements of the same attitude. (Prucha, 1984, p. xxvii)

This trust relationship likened American Indian people to children and provided the conceptual basis for federal-Indian relations. Although treaties, Supreme Court decisions, legislation, and executive orders define a special legal and political relationship between the federal government and American Indians, the embodiment of all of the legal and political definitions rests on the paternalism of the United States government. The object of

this relationship was to civilize and Christianize the Indian (Prucha, 1984, pp. 30-31).

Because the balance of power once rested in favor of the original inhabitants of this country, this relationship first recognized tribes as being fully sovereign. However, the past 200 years has witnessed a systematic diminution of tribal power and status in its relationship to the United States government. For the Cheyenne, the loss of power meant a loss of traditional homelands in the Black Hills, the restriction to the reservation, and the subjugation to the will of the government. In effect, the Cheyenne are now exiles. The home of Sweet Medicine and the fountain head of Cheyenne knowledge is now apart from the daily lives of many Cheyennes because the Black Hills, the spiritual center of the Cheyenne world, are essential to re-invigorate the tribal life of the Cheyenne. Beyond the spiritual ramifications of being on the reservation are the factors related to dispossession of traditional ways of gaining sustenance, the shock of being faced with forced change, and the inevitable loss of self-esteem and self-worth by virtue of governmental policies designed to deny tribal customs and traditions.

Assimilation

The Cheyenne were not alone in the treatment they received from the government. Most of the federal-Indian relationship was marked by tribes being subject to unilateral governmental policies primarily designed to assimilate tribal people into the mainstream of society. Within this milieu, education played a special role.

> Whenever there was close contact between white settlers and Indians, efforts were made to make Indians conform to white ways of behaving, including religion, dress, and homes. Schools and education were seen as ways of assimilating young Indians into the dominant society. Attendance was enforced, students were not allowed to speak their tribal languages, and schools labeled tribal traditions as enemies of progress. Had the goal of assimilation been reached, there would be no culturally-recognizable Indian people today. (Eder & Reynor, 1986, p. 31)

Assimilation began for the Cheyenne before the establishment of the reservation. The Cheyenne were party to both the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie treaties. These treaties foretold the treatment the Indian people were to receive from the government. For example, the 1851 treaty, also known as the Horse Creek Treaty, promised in order to "civilize" the Indian,

> to protect the Indian from white depredations and to pay annuities of fifty thousand dollars a year for fifty years (reduced to ten years, with a possible five-year extension, by an amendment proposed by the Senate and later ratified by the tribes). The annuities were to be paid in 'provisions, merchandize, domestic animals, and agricultural implements, in such proportions as

> may be deemed best adapted to their condition by the President of the United States. (Prucha, 1984, p. 117)

Further, the 1868 treaty negotiations were prompted by Christian and humanitarian reformers. The Peace Commission which conducted the negotiations was chaired by Nathaniel G. Taylor, a former Methodist minister. Following the negotiations, the commission report recommended that:

> Districts in the West be set aside for the Indians, organized as territories, where agriculture and domestic manufactures should be introduced as rapidly as possible; schools to teach the children English; courts and other institutions of government; farmers and mechanics sent to instruct the Indians; and missionary and benevolent societies invited to "this field of philanthropy nearer home." (p. 156)

From the transcript and tone of the treaty language, it is clear that the government believed that Indian people needed fundamental changes in their cultures.

The Reservation and BIA Control

For the Cheyenne, the white assimilationist mentality was immediately implemented during the dawning of the reservation. Indeed, before the reservation was established, the Cheyenne were instructed in farming practices after surrendering at Fort Keogh in 1879 (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 277). The government intended to change every significant aspect of Cheyenne culture with the object being a total immersion into the mainstream of society (Svingen, 1981, p. 15). This was accomplished

through vast powers bestowed to Indian agents through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the diminished role of the Cheyenne elders, and the forced schooling of Cheyenne children.

With the establishment of the Tongue River Reservation in 1884, a primary task for Robert L. Upshaw, the first agent on the reservation, was to introduce farming to the Cheyenne (Weist, 1977, p. 107). However, farming was not conducive to the reservation. A succession of droughts, severe winter storms, and infestation of insects killed many crops.

Ranching supplanted farming on the Tongue River Reservation beginning in 1903. Between 1903 and 1912, the number of cattle increased from 1,000 to 12,000, and the Cheyenne proved themselves to be very adept at this business. Nevertheless, in 1914 a new superintendent again prodded the Cheyenne to return to farming, and in 1924 the tribal herd was discontinued. Although farming was a dismal enterprise on the reservation, the belief in it as a tool to civilize the Cheyenne can be witnessed by the government's continual attempts to incorporate it into reservation life even in the light of its failure (Svingen, 1981, p. 23).

The government had a paucity of knowledge and expertise, and this was demonstrated in failed attempts to

direct and manage Cheyenne economics and enterprise during the late nineteenth century.

> Although the Cheyennes worked hard, small-scale farming failed as a reliable means of providing food. Short growing seasons, droughts, hailstorms, insect infestations, and lack of irrigation continued to defeat their efforts. The introductions of wage labor did little to help the general condition of the people. There were only a few jobs available, hauling freight or cutting firewood for the agency. Men daily went to the agency seeking work, often to be turned away for lack of jobs. Hunting, the traditional means of providing meat, failed as well. Cheyenne hunters were confined to the reservation. The last buffalo on reservation land had been killed in 1884. (Weist, 1970, p. 114)

The failure of the governmental-backed economic scheme was clearly evident in a little more than 10 years from the establishment of the reservation. In 1888, 15% of the Cheyenne labor force was engaged in the "civilized" pursuits of farming and wage labor. Another 5% were engaged in hunting, fishing, and root gathering. However, 80% of Cheyennes gained their subsistence through government rations. By 1899, the "civilized" pursuits and hunting, fishing, and root gathering had disappeared; and subsistence from government rations were given to 100% of the Cheyenne (p. 114).

Although farming failed miserably, this effort was only the first of many economic initiatives designed by the federal government for the Cheyenne. Historically, the government has wielded overwhelming control over Cheyenne

affairs through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The introduction of farming, a limited wage economy, and the ration system were part of an overall plan by which the BIA hoped to

> civilize, Christianize, and educate the Indian. . . . To be civilized was to be like the whiteman. The Cheyenne were to learn farming or trades such as blacksmithing or carpentry, live in houses, wear white-styled clothes, learn to speak and read English, send their children to white-run schools, and come under the influence of Christianity. (Weist, 1970, p. 123)

However, more than indicating a failed experiment, the ration system installed by the government was a system to control the Cheyenne and acted as a means to enforce the agent's authority. In fact, the agent and the BIA were vested with the power to make all the important decisions affecting the lives and future of the Cheyenne (p. 123).

Cheyenne elders played an essential role as chiefs, teachers, and models for community behavior. All of these functions were firmly under the control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other reservation authorities. The program to assimilate Cheyennes included supplanting the Council of Forty-Four with governmental regulations and enforcement. Also, the police and courts for resolving conflicts which were traditionally under the direction of the elders were supplanted with governmental jurisdictions. Joined with the prohibition of traditional ceremonial functions such as the Sun Dance, which was banned in 1916,

the net effect was to have the elders' role in the Cheyenne community diminished. Indeed, alcohol abuse and the breakdown of the Cheyenne family began as early as the 1930's (Campbell, 1987, p. 382).

It was only recently with the oil and gas agreement with the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) that the Cheyenne exercised economic self-sufficiency without the involvement of the government. However, historically reservation control through economics was coupled with the dismantling of the tribal societal infrastructure in an attempt to change the Cheyenne people into the image of white people. Under such hardship and duress the Cheyenne now find it difficult to make sound, culturally relevant decisions within the context of the institutional setting on the reservation (Campbell, 1987, p. 385).

Reservation Schooling

Even before the establishment of the reservation in 1884, St. Labre Catholic School was built to begin the systematic education of Cheyenne children in the white ways (Weist, 1970, p. 129). Cheyenne children, who in the past were the proteges of the elders' knowledge, were forced to go to white schools thereby disrupting the process by which traditional Cheyenne education took place. Most Cheyennes did not want to send their children to school but were

forced to by the government (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 289).

By 1887, Congress was appropriating more than a million dollars a year to educate Indians. About half the appropriations went to missionaries contracted to educate Indians (Utley, 1984, pp. 216-217). In 1884 St. Labre, a Catholic school, was established outside of Ashland, Montana, approximately 20 miles east of the reservation agency in Lame Deer. During the early years of the mission school and until the opening of the BIA run Busby boarding school in 1904, the government financially helped St. Labre in its endeavor to Christianize Cheyenne school children (Weist, 1970, p. 107). St. Labre has grown from being a one room schoolhouse into a multi-million dollar business soliciting funds world-wide in the name of Cheyenne education.

Busby boarding school was run as a government institution until the mid 1970's when the Cheyenne tribe contracted it as a tribal school. During this span, Busby school offered the traditional academic and vocational programs the government deemed necessary for the Cheyenne to be successful in the world outside the reservation.

Although the circumstances on the Cheyenne reservation seem bleak, during the 1970's Indian "self-determination" was instituted by the federal government. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 is now

the basis by which many tribes have contracted their own schools and modeled their own culturally relevant educational systems. For the Cheyenne this has meant that Busby is now acknowledged as the center of the Northern Cheyenne School System. Currently, this system has the potential to incorporate Cheyenne beliefs and values into the curriculum and to use elders in the community to do so.

Educating other Cheyennes by modeling behavior cannot be understated. Thought and action were intimately tied, and those Cheyennes who were most highly respected demonstrated this in their daily lives. In terms of the larger community, the Cheyenne belief system was predicated on the harmonious relationship between all living things; and these things, whether they be the buffalo or plants used for medicinal purposes, were held in reverence and not abused or wasted.

> In a movement of self-determination that ultimately may become their greatest stand in a 500-year war against genocide, tribes are battling to defend their sovereignty, sacred lands, and religious freedom; reclaim their cultures; and once again become vibrant, healthy, self-sustaining communities. They are also offering up a peace pipe in the form of their traditional world views and environmental sciences for a planet many people see careening toward destruction. (Rayl, 1994, p. 48)

Thus, the ramifications of Cheyenne people carrying forth and modeling their own systems of education is of tantamount importance not only for the cultural existence of the tribe but also for their global survival as a people.

CHAPTER 3

STUDYING THE CHEYENNE WAY

Design

This study was based on semi-structured interviews of Cheyenne elders and spiritual leaders to uncover their views of education as an organizational phenomena. Darkenwald and Merriam (1981) suggest the key factors in looking at the aims of education are: (a) the nature of the curriculum and educational method; (b) the role of the teacher and learner; and (c) the disposition one has in regard to the learning process (p. 41). Therefore, in order to discover the purpose of education as perceived by the Cheyenne, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the Cheyenne concepts of wisdom and knowledge?
2. What are the characteristics of Cheyenne teacher and student?
3. What is the educational environment and the process of teaching in the Cheyenne culture?
4. What is the role of education within the Cheyenne community?

The case study design was chosen because this investigation is concerned with discovering new information, insights, and interpretations of education as it is perceived by the Cheyenne people. Because the Cheyenne, like many other native groups in this country, have fundamental cultural traits that bind them as a distinct group, the perceptions espoused by the Cheyenne elders represent a view that is found nowhere else. Thus, elders participating in this study represent a distinct social group whose views of the focus of this research represent the boundaries of this investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 98) and therefore provide a lens to examine the worldview of the Cheyenne people. Moreover, this study was guided by the belief that the Cheyenne elders, who were the teachers and purveyors of truth in traditional times, now have a substantial contribution to make in terms of defining a tribal educational system for their own people.

Case studies are a type of naturalistic, qualitative inquiry. There is a continuing debate in the field of education over qualitative research approaches and quantitative research models that are more rationalistic. Rationalistic approaches are based on the assumption that phenomena exist in one reality that can be manipulated and controlled. Further, research hypotheses are defined at the outset of an investigation and findings from

rationalistic studies are generalized to larger population groups (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, pp. 56-63).

However, naturalistic inquiry assumes that multiple realities exist in nature. Phenomena do not converge into a single form, a single truth, but diverge into many forms and multiple truths. Moreover, the layers cannot be described or understood in terms of separate independent and dependent variables; rather they are intricately interrelated to form a pattern of truth. It is these patterns that must be searched out, less for the sake of prediction and control than for the sake of human understanding (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 57). Consequently, this paradigm perceives many facets of reality that are impossible to identify and define prescribed variables at the start of an investigation. Additionally, in naturalistic inquiry, realities do not affirm research hypothesis but are discovered during the inquiry through direct observation and form the basis for "grounded theory" (p. 68).

Further, in "descriptive" research the focus of case studies is to describe as accurately as possible an entity in its natural surroundings (Merriam, 1988 p. 7). These descriptions are considered "qualitative" because instead of reporting findings in numerical data, "case studies" use prose and literary techniques to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations by documenting events, quotes,

samples, and artifacts (Wilson, 1979, p. 448). Finally, as opposed to "generalizing" research findings, qualitative studies investigate phenomena such as the Cheyenne worldview that are unique and atypical and that ultimately unveil truths that were beyond broad understandings in the first case.

Regardless of whether it is naturalistic or rationalistic, quality research must be rigorous. Rigor is defined as the inquirer's need to persuade other inquirers or audiences of the authenticity of the information provided and the interpretations that are drawn from it (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 87).

In the scientific or rationalistic model, rigor is tested by internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Internal validity refers to the degree to which the extraneous variables have been controlled in order that one can confidently state that X causes Y (McMillan & Schumacher, 1984, p. 109). External validity refers to the extent to which the results and conclusions of a study can be generalized to other people and settings (p. 114). Reliability measures how well a test can be repeated and yield similar results (p. 126). Finally, objectivity is defined as data collection and analysis procedures having meanings and interpretations from the test that are free from the researcher's personal bias (p. 5).

However, in naturalistic research, rigor is established by different means than in rationalistic studies. First, while the rationalistic model is concerned with internal validity, the naturalistic inquirer focuses on having credible findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 105). To insure credibility, research strategies included such things as the close monitoring of responses and prolonged engagement on site. Further, credibility can be affirmed by making the data structurally corroborative. That is, information gathered from the field form links and ultimately when together form a broader picture of the whole (p. 106).

In addition, all research must be concerned with objectivity and having factual and confirmable data. In naturalistic research the burden of proof is shifted from the researcher to the information itself (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 126). When the information derived in the field is consistent from each of the sources involved and that categorical information can be affirmed by the research participants, the mosaic that is woven is representative of an identified system and not of the investigator.

Finally, being neutral is an integral part of any investigation. Naturalistic methods are no worse than scientific in achieving neutrality and may at times be better. Whatever degree of apparent objectivity may be lost is more than compensated for by the continuously

emerging insights that naturalistic methods produce (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 127).

Sample

All of the research participants in this study have been life-long residents on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in southeastern Montana. Because knowledge is sacred to the Cheyenne and was first blessed by the Sacred Hat Keeper, each of the initial participants hold prominent roles within Cheyenne religion and spirituality. The initial four interviews were first identified and formed the basis for the network of informants that were involved in this study. Following these initial interviews, an additional 15 individuals were scheduled and were identified by reference by others in the study.

Also; the Cheyenne believe the circle of immediate family members impart to younger generations the ways of the past. Because of this, the Cheyenne advisor suggested that immediate family members be involved in this study. Therefore, three of the participants are from my immediate family.

All of the elders in this study except for one are enrolled Cheyenne tribal members. This exception was my mother. She has lived on the reservation all of her life and has always provided me with insightful and very articulate views of the Cheyenne people. My mother comes

from a very traditional family and has many relatives and friends within the tribe.

In total, 19 interviews were successfully conducted. Of this number, eight were close relatives and the balance of the participants included a role model identified by a prominent religious leader: a family historian, two medicine people, two prominent political leaders, four elders with extensive political experience, and four tribal historians. In total this group included five women and fourteen men.

Each of the interviews were taped and lasted from 45 minutes to 3 hours and were conducted at sites chosen by each participant. Following each of the interviews the information was encoded onto a database and coded with keywords, quotes, and comments. When all of the interviews were completed the data were grouped into categories reflective of the four research questions that guided this study.

Procedure

As its name implies, naturalistic inquiry takes place in the natural setting in which the phenomena occurs. In order to observe this natural setting, cultural norms were of utmost importance in the execution of this study. Therefore, data for this study were collected in a manner

which honors the Cheyenne culture. This was accomplished by observing several important considerations.

First, in order to confirm the importance and legitimacy of this study, an interpreter/advisor from the Cheyenne tribe was identified and conferred with in regard to the focus of this research. This individual was consulted at the very start of this investigation to assist in identifying prospective interviewees. In addition, by consultation with the above individual, interview protocols based on cultural norms were adhered to for the duration of the study. The interpreter/advisor is an individual who is fluent in both English and Cheyenne and was accomplished as an eloquent spokesperson and thinker for the Cheyenne people.

Second, in the ancient Cheyenne tradition of asking for a spiritual guidance, the Cheyenne Sacred Hat Keeper, who is the supreme holy man for the tribe, provided a blessing for this endeavor. Because this blessing confirmed the legitimacy of this effort for the tribe, this aspect of the investigation was absolutely critical for this study to be conducted.

Third, interviewees were identified and discussions followed regarding the purpose and focus for this study. It was emphasized to each participant that they served a vital role in this projects success. It was also expressed to the elders that by participating in this study they

provided an unprecedented service to have their ideas and opinions act as a framework for the restructuring of education on the reservation.

Fourth, arrangements were made for a Give-Away to honor the elders and their families, their relatives, and their friends for their participation in this study. This gathering served also to express my good intentions to the community as a whole and acted to solidify support for this project. In addition, a feast was held to serve as another opportunity to discuss and share ideas about this project and foster positive feelings in the community. Along with the principle investigator, the faculty advisor participated in some of these events in order to get acquainted with the community.

Fifth, 20 interviews were set up to begin the process of data collection for this report. Due to the poor health of one individual, 19 interviews comprised the basis for this report. The interviews proceeded until categories of information were saturated. During this phase of the study triangulation via perspectives from other interviewees and collaboration of pertinent texts, documents, and reports were employed to confirm and solidify categorical knowledge, thereby making this study structurally corroborative.

After a schedule of interviews was arranged, the investigator and Cheyenne advisor established a protocol

for each of the interviews. The aim of the interview protocol was based not only on sound theory and practice in education but also on culturally important considerations regarding the data-gathering process and the use of probes in the interviews for the participants in this study.

In general terms, the process of each of the interviews adhered to the following guidelines. First, these interviews were semi-structured. This is an important consideration in that individuals in this study needed to be provided the fullest opportunity to respond in their own terms and frame of reference (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 176). This was particularly important in the Cheyenne culture because questioning is considered impolite and signifies distrust by the listener. Additionally, the semi-structured format is more accommodating to the linguistic factors associated with the participants in this study.

In addition, the use of open-ended questions allowed the researcher to start each interview with questions related to the general nature of the experience of each of the participants. Following these questions, "probes" were used to pursue more specific information directly reflective of the research questions.

Second, many of the respondents in this study had limited English speaking ability. The format of the interviews helped the participants in this study feel at

ease and less intimidated and allowed them to define and describe things in their own language if needed.

Finally, because the interviews are designed to be in-depth, each of the interviews started with broad historical questions and moved to more specific questions about personal experience. This was accomplished by using the funnel sequence and probing techniques as the basis for interview questions (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, pp. 179-80). From this, more in-depth information was obtained that reflected more elaborate data (p. 179).

It is important to note that beyond having a sound theoretical basis, the above considerations fit traditional Cheyenne practices for imparting information. It is inappropriate to ask personal questions too quickly, and one must learn to infer from stories and anecdotal information that is provided by Cheyenne elders (Sooktis, personal interview, April 2, 1990).

From the above technique, a process of life review and reminiscence in late life becomes evident (Wolf, 1988, p. 131). In addition, this technique of gathering information has proven to yield greater amounts of data about the respondent's experience and feelings (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 180). Further, this technique allows interviewees to explore and objectify their own experiences (Wolf, 1988, p. 130). Indeed, from what Friere (1970) referred to as "dialogue," there is a time of understanding

and recreation of the past; and it is during this time that the investigator experiences the elder's life (p. 7).

Following each of the interviews, the investigator summarized what the respondent had said and asked the respondent for verification. At the end of each interview, respondents were asked for a recommendation for other people with whom it would be valuable to talk. All of the interviews were tape recorded. At the end of each day, the recordings were transcribed while the information was fresh.

In addition, as the process of gathering data continued, the content of each of the interviews was re-examined and compared to other interview data in order to begin the process of extending, bridging and surfacing categorical information (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 96). The on-site data collection process ceased when the data from the interviews became redundant and only a small amount of additional information was gained in return for substantial additional effort (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 100). At this stage, the participants were also not able to recommend additional elders to be interviewed for the study.

CHAPTER 4

THE NATURE OF CHEYENNE EDUCATION

Introduction

Interviews were conducted with 19 elders of the Northern Cheyenne tribe regarding traditional tribal ways of knowing. From these interviews, categorical information was established delineating tribal concepts of learning and education. From a philosophical and spiritual perspective, the Cheyenne perceive their existence and purpose in life very differently from that which is accepted in the larger non-Indian society. Because of this and the fact that the Cheyenne continue to exist and remain steadfast in their beliefs, a dichotomy exists between the Cheyenne way of knowing and that reality imposed upon them by outside authorities of the reservation system. Most regrettably, the elders have reported that history has not been kind for Cheyenne education. The fundamental Cheyenne belief that all living things must live in harmony is being aborted by a reservation system driven by a white value set. Whether it be church or governmental authority, when left unchecked, the effect has been to systematically supplant or distort the traditional Cheyenne way of knowing.

Knowledge

Spiritual and physical realities are intimately bound in the Cheyenne Way, and the extent of an individual's knowledge of this system is commensurate with how well one can contribute to the well being of the tribe. Therefore, the Cheyenne believe the most important knowledge is that which will alleviate pain within this world and thereby make the tribe stronger as a whole.

By communicating with other life forms, certain people with special powers can act to help others in the community. For example, one elder reported, "There was an old man in Birney who was a grandfather to Young Bird who could talk to animals. If a family had someone missing, they would go to this man and by using his medicine he would be able to tell the family where to find that person." Another elder related, "I lived the traditional teachings when I was very young. My grandmother used to doctor people."

The Cheyenne also understand that the Creator can act independent of them to provide knowledge. "Certain individuals make songs, and yet they have never been involved in the ceremonies. Sometimes these songs come to them in dreams and they bring them to us to use." The Cheyenne believe that both the conscious and unconscious mind work in unison to perceive reality. To underscore

this, the Cheyenne believe that "dreams can tell you about what is to come in the future. My adopted brother has that gift. That is what he has been taught."

To demonstrate the importance the Cheyenne place on the role of the unconscious, it is believed that the Creator through spirit helpers can provide knowledge. Often these lessons are not induced or received through conscious efforts.

Thus, knowledge is sacred not only as it is imparted from the world beyond but as it is shared between Cheyennes in the world today. Therefore, knowledge must be honored with an exchange of something of value by whomever wishes to obtain it. Typically this transaction would proceed by someone saying, "I'm going to give you this horse because I want to know the expertise that you have so I can always help my people." In the view of the Cheyenne, knowledge and spirituality are inseparable. Knowledge is measured by how well it benefits the tribe, and good knowledge is sought after and passed down through the generations.

Leading a spiritual life is the essence of being Cheyenne. "We can have the intellectual prowess and the economic power, but without the spiritual guidance we will no longer survive as a people." Knowledge is sacred and is a gift from Maheo in order to enlighten and enhance the Journey of Life. This in turn is a telling statement of the beneficent role Maheo has toward the Cheyenne.

This system is infused with a sacredness, and the potential for knowledge is represented in all living things. However, in order for the Cheyenne to survive, other living things are here to help them. In order to reconcile death with life, living things must be sacrificed in a respectful and honorable way. For this to occur and to be truly Cheyenne requires that one be knowledgeable and receptive to the spirituality of life and demonstrate this in daily life.

Spirituality played a vital role in daily existence. So, "if something happens accidently, there are things that you do that ward off the accident. Otherwise, things could happen to you before the sun went down. We quickly learned things we were not to do, and there were a lot of them." In order to understand how Cheyennes were touched each day by spirituality, one elder said, "I learned from my grandmother to pray every morning and evening. I was taught from her that it was important to pray before starting something new or before going on a trip. This was done to prevent something from going wrong and to have protection."

The Cheyennes believe spirituality is invaluable in the health of individual tribal members. "Because of my continuing heart problems, I made a vow to my grandfather, and I Sun Danced for four years in a row. After that the problems I had with my heart went away." This individual

deliberately sought out spiritual help and in turn was blessed not only with good health but also was able to use this moment in his life to begin acquiring the knowledge and power of a medicine man.

Just as modern science cannot explain the recovery of a heart patient, individuals who were deeply spiritual demonstrated powers beyond understanding by enduring the physical punishment of the Sun Dance. For example, "there was an old man who had so much knowledge about things that I used to just sit there and think to myself how much I wanted to be like him. He could understand the dogs when they would bark." When the dogs talked to this individual they would provide important messages for the well-being of the community.

By being attuned to other life forms, the Cheyenne understood that all living things, including the spirits, were connected. Therefore, the ceremonial people, who were the most closely attuned to this reality, were most highly respected. In traditional times, "a lot of the Sun Dance people were highly respected because they led a good life." In addition, "people that were strong in their Indian religion and those that were considered 'healers' were highly respected." Further, the Cheyenne recognized that because of the interconnectedness of life, spirituality which is tantamount to life's existence cannot be dissected and set aside. Rather, it must be used to guide moral and

productive lives. Indeed, life is reciprocal between that world which is known and that which is not. It is understood that life is more than physical aging. Indeed, it means a process of learning about lessons provided by Maheo. For example, once during a visit to Bear Butte, the Cheyenne holy land, the older men chose to give higher status to a younger man. This younger man related that "the older ceremonial men put me first, and I asked them, 'Why do I have to be first?' They said, 'We respect your ways, you pray better, you have more knowledge then us, and you learned a lot before you came to us.'" For the Cheyenne, wisdom is taking sacred lessons and applying them in life as well as demonstrating through actions the lessons that have been learned. Thus, both the spiritual and physical realities provide revelations on how to lead a good life.

Life's experience is a continuing revelation by Maheo. "The old Cheyenne believed that experience in life was a prerequisite to wisdom." One elder spoke of how he had served two terms in World War II. After returning home from the service, he was elected to the tribal council. In a discussion with some of his elders he related, "When I was 37 years old, I was serving on the tribal council. One day I walked into the store and was asked by an old man about something regarding council business. Another old

man responded to this by saying, 'Why are you asking him? He just grew up!'"

For the Cheyenne, wisdom was learning how to use profound knowledge to help the community. If knowledge was gained but was not used to help the community, it was meaningless. One elder was told by his uncle, "I heard you. You talk good--like a lawyer. But you don't live the way you talk."

Therefore, the perpetuation of the Cheyenne way involves deep spirituality and using this knowledge to promote the community by living harmoniously as an individual with all other life forms. Such a way of life supports the fundamental Cheyenne belief that reality is comprised of a complex of interrelated parts which are dependent on the other and which are all infused with the spirit of Maheo.

Cheyenne Reality

Within the model of the Cheyenne elders, it is believed that "the Creator could be our father, mother, or our grandfather or grandmother. The Creator could be our friend too. The Creator helps us along this Journey of Life and is not bound by physical form." As such, the Creator can intervene in one's life in a natural and unimposing way. "The Creator or Maheo can take the form of any animal to become a helper." By intervening in the

lives of individual Cheyennes, important lessons in life and much needed guidance can be manifest at any point and place in one's life.

The Cheyenne view all of reality as interrelated. "The rocks are the ones that have been here the longest; everything else lives and then dies. That's why when you use mother Earth, you take only what you need and don't waste." Accordingly, those life forms rooted in the Earth live harmoniously. "Plants are picked in the middle of the day when they are the strongest. Plants for melancholy are picked by children in order that these children's life and joy become part of the plant that is picked." All life forms live together in harmony. "Certain medicines come from certain animals and birds and other knowledge can be received during vision quests, sweats, and dreams." For the Cheyenne, life exists in harmony, and everything in creation has a purpose and is capable of providing the Cheyenne with life-giving knowledge.

Because Maheo is conceived as a compassionate living part of daily life, the Creator blesses the Cheyenne by providing knowledge particularly in times of peril or great need. One elder related the successful trek of the Northern Cheyenne from Oklahoma back to the Powder River country during the fall and winter of 1877-78. "Northern Woman helped the Cheyenne return from Oklahoma. At this time they needed direction. By covering herself with a

buffalo robe and eating raw liver, she performed some kind of ceremony, and the spirit helpers would tell her which way to travel." However, several elders noted that during this journey from Oklahoma, a certain group of Cheyennes did not heed the advice of Northern Woman and that the consequences were tragic for them.

Other life forms can communicate and lead the Cheyenne. In 1958, when many Cheyenne were hunting and when too many animals were being killed "a person fasting was given a message by the animals that they were going to leave because they were tired of being mistreated by the human beings. The animals were begged not to leave. They said they would stay but would leave if things didn't improve."

Maheo can act unsolicited in a person's life to provide life-giving knowledge.

> I went into the service and was stationed at Saipan. One night when I was on guard duty, I heard a Sun Dance song. I have never sung a Sun Dance song nor do I know any. I started singing and my partner said, "We're going to get back home."

This was particularly astonishing because this individual was brought up a Christian and before this had no knowledge of the sacred ways of the Cheyenne.

It is believed that spiritual and physical realities are so intermeshed that living things transcend the boundary between the two to communicate and enhance life.

Describing how the sorrow and longing of death brought these worlds together, an elder reported:

> After my grandfather died, my younger sister and I stayed with my grandmother on the divide. One day we went to look for mushrooms. While we were in the hills, my grandfather visited my grandmother and my sister who was with her. Soon after that, both of them died and went to be with my grandfather.

Although death is sorrowful, it is but a part of a cycle between the physical and spiritual worlds. As such, those Cheyennes particularly blessed have special knowledge about the nature of the bridge from this world to the other. Perhaps most profound is the ability for some individuals to perceive that juncture between this world and the other by predicting their own death. An elder stated:

> Before my father died, my mom told us that he said, "I will use the peyote way." He told my mom to fix the medicine and he would pray for the last time for his family and relatives. He prayed, blessed himself, and then laid down to die.

By virtue of spiritual encounters such as these, the Cheyennes believe that Maheo acts in tangible ways to protect and look over them during perilous times. From this, it is clear that the tribe is dependent upon the daily blessing of Maheo and this knowledge is an essential element to the survival of the tribe.

The Cheyenne Community

The harmonious existence prevalent throughout all of creation is also sought after in the Cheyenne community. "All of our homes and the beginning of life are oriented to the east because that is where grandfather sun comes up. Grandfather brings new life each day."

In the old days, each opening of the Cheyenne tipi faced the east to meet the morning sunrise. Today, the location of the homes in physical space is still important. "Before we chose our homesite, we asked my wife's grandfather to come up and look at where we wanted to live. During his visit, he prayed, and afterward he told us exactly where and where not to put our home." Likewise, "when we got this homesite, I asked a medicine man to visit so he could advise us if this was the right place to live and how to treat the animal and plant life." For the Cheyenne, all of creation is respected, and it is tantamount for all to live harmoniously with one another. Even the seasons have purpose to sustain life. The Cheyenne understood that "if you have mild winters, the people are not going to be as strong. If they have to struggle to survive, they are stronger people for it."

To affirm the relationships in all of creation, the Cheyenne believe that "to live as a traditional Cheyenne, you must love everybody and give of yourself whatever you

have." For those who have helped others, the community acknowledged them openly. "My grandparents taught me that if I saw someone that did something good for our people, I should go up and thank that person."

In Cheyenne society, the love for your family and community is demonstrated by sharing and generosity. There is a high premium for sharing both materially and spiritually. "Magpie was a chief. He was very generous. One day he invited a family who had recently suffered the death of their father to come to his place and eat. After dinner Magpie gave them a tipi, all the dishes, and extra food."

Whistling Elk was another person many Cheyennes remember for being generous. "Whistling Elk was highly respected. When I was a young man, I used to see him come into town pulling a horse with deer over the top. I had a picture made depicting this, and many people wanted prints of it after I explained to them what it meant." Whistling Elk would often give meat to those families that were in most need of it.

Sharing was highly virtuous to support the community. "My grandfather used to get money from oil royalties in Oklahoma. This money would come in every month, and everybody would look forward to this. My grandmother said he shared this money with the community all his life."

Sharing was more than virtuous; it was tantamount to the survival of the tribe. Perhaps that is why the Cheyenne believe that "when someone comes to you for help, you can't say, 'No.'" In describing the unselfishness of the Cheyenne people, an elder stated, "When I was growing up, I would visit different families and make myself at home. They all knew who I was. In those days people were different; it seemed like their doors were always open, and they never turned you away." This particular elder, who is a breed, continued:

> My dad died when I was 3 weeks old. I was more or less raised by the Cheyenne people. I lived here and there and not in any one place. In the morning they [families] would find me laying by the stove and because I would often go from place to place I was given the Cheyenne name, "Ghost Friend."

Solidarity existed in the Cheyenne community. "When I was young, everybody worked together and got along well. You never heard of people fighting one another. People always had dinners together and shared company."

This strong belief in sharing propelled social engagements. "The social center was in the Rosebud area. A community hall was there and was built by people from that district." Social events were not only a time to relax but were also an opportunity for Cheyennes to literally display the fruits of their labor. "The Cheyenne used to have a fall celebration in September. A big hall was built, and families would show off what they grew in

their gardens." A common feeling was that "the biggest and happiest occasion of the year was the fair we had in Birney each fall. All kinds of arts and crafts, produce, and choke-cherry competitions were entered."

Indeed, industriousness was a prized trait of the Cheyenne. "Everyone had wagons, gardens, and cellars. They were hard workers." Moreover, "the Cheyenne were hard workers and were self-supporting. They lived on their own places and had their own gardens and cattle."

Having their own land was important for the Cheyenne. "As a youngster, our family spent most of the time out in the country and came into town on rare accessions. During that time [1940's], many people had cattle and worked their own land." In recent times the Cheyenne demonstrated en masse their adeptness for hard work. "We started a sewing factory on our own at Busby. Soon the welfare role was reduced to 'zero' because everyone was working. The woman [welfare worker] from Hardin lost her job because the bulk of the welfare recipients were right from Busby."

Although industrious, the Cheyenne understood there must be a balance between the social and material worlds. For example, "my grandfather did not encourage borrowing. He told me that if you borrow and you get into the habit of doing that, it's not good in the eyes of the people. He said that if you need something you may ask your neighbor but give something in return." Realizing that the material

world existed by virtue of spirituality, the Cheyenne took this into account when having to borrow from someone else. In this regard an elder said,

> My grandfather said that if you are going to get something from a neighbor and he is not there, go ahead and utter the words, "I have come to get this, and I have left this [a good exchange] for you."

Nevertheless, the Cheyenne also understood that the community would recognize when someone was in need of help. "My mother told me it wasn't good to borrow. She said if someone offered something to you it was all right." Clearly the Cheyenne understand that a balance must be struck in life and that sometimes when some prosper others may be less fortunate. In those cases, the Cheyenne gave unhesitantly for those in need.

Cheyenne Ceremonies

Because knowledge emanates from Maheo, it is considered most sacred. The Cheyennes believe that "the way knowledge is being retained is through the ceremonies. There's a certain protocol that is needed and in order to observe that protocol you have to have certain knowledge that was given to someone beforehand." So important are the ceremonies that the Creator is known to help the Cheyenne sustain them. An elder recalled, "My brother told me that when important ceremonial songs are lost, there is

always somebody that is not associated in any way with the ceremony itself that knows the song that has been lost."

The Cheyennes understand that knowledge has a dual nature that has great potential for good or bad.

> I would ask my mother, "Why is it that we can't make toys that look like bow and arrows?" She would say, "Your grandfather was an arrow-maker, and he had to go through a lot of ceremony. He had to be very careful; otherwise someone could get hurt."

In describing the relationship of Cheyenne ceremonies to life, one elder stated, "It gives me a good feeling to know that I am taking part in ceremonies that have their origin in ancient times. These ceremonies are hard, and that's the way life is."

To demonstrate how ceremonies play an important role in transcending the dogma of religions known in the non-Indian society, one elder reported, "I used to think that I read the Bible but really didn't learn anything. But when I go into the ceremonies things come back to me that I once read in the Bible." Cheyenne ways influenced Christianity on the reservation. An elder explained how Reverend Petter, the Mennonite minister, incorporated Cheyenne beliefs in church service: "The Cheyenne are believers in sunrise services. So early one morning Mr. Petter prayed for me at a Mennonite service that was arranged by my mother at the church. He [Reverend Petter] named those spirits used in the Sun Dance." It was

explained by this elder that Reverend Petter highly respected the Cheyenne ways. "Mr. Petter always told me that the Cheyennes had a 'deep' history. I never knew what he meant. Later I realized he was referring to the religious ways as it was expressed by the language."

For the Cheyenne, religious practices are more than abstractions; they are meant to help the community. Perhaps the most obvious role ceremonies play in the community is that they act to cement families together and bond them into the community. An elder reported, "My uncle came to my house one day and asked me to go in the Sweat with him. After this first sweat, I started going more. These experiences were like a 'door' to the other side of which I wanted to learn more about."

More importantly, ceremonies lead the Cheyenne in a path of spirituality. An elder who is now a medicine man reported that "after all the vows I took, my instructor told me that I could and couldn't do certain things. He said, 'You have to practice what I am teaching you.'" It is not easy to lead a spiritual life in the Cheyenne way.

> The nature of religion is somewhat like law. There's the procedural and the substantive. Procedure is always there and will vary. It is a medium. But the substantive requires that you have a good heart, and you must go out alone and suffer.

The meaning of prayers in the Cheyenne way epitomizes the relationship of spirituality and the Cheyenne

community. "The prayers of the Cheyenne emphasize the importance of being useful, helpful, and fruitful. They pray that people find good companions and have a good home." The Cheyenne system contrasts with that of the non-Indian society because "for me there is no such thing as the separation of church and state. Our identity as a Cheyenne people is preserved within our ceremonial ways."

The Circle of Life

When they are born, the Cheyenne enter the sacred circle of life. "My mother was told by a medicine man that the night I was born 'the wolves were talking' and that in 40-years time the wolves would talk to me." As predicted, the wolves returned to this individual when he was 40 years old and told him of a special place he would have in the Cheyenne community.

This circle starts at birth. As a gift from the Creator, this early phase of the circle is when life must be nourished and provided for by all segments of the community particularly the family. The next phase which leads to early adolescence is marked by exploration and discovery. During this time of life, girls and boys begin to learn the vital lessons important to live together in the community. During the third phase of the circle from early adolescence to adulthood, the Cheyenne provide protection and good work to their own families, the

community, and ultimately assume roles for the physical survival of the tribe. In the final phase, the Cheyenne become elders and begin to teach those who are just beginning the trek in life. During this time because the old will soon pass on to the other world and be with the Creator again, the Cheyenne believe the old and young are especially close.

This circle is intimately related to all other creation. Understanding the larger processes of life, "Cheyennes refer to the sun as 'grandfather' and the Earth as 'grandmother.' Together the sun and Earth procreate to continue life."

Corresponding to the sacred directions, the Cheyenne believe that "all of the types of education that deal with those things that a child needs to survive and grow come to fruition in the south." Accordingly, in adolescence the Cheyenne believe that "the child is starting to ripen." Upon adulthood, "the child is now an adult and is now 'ripe' and is ready to procreate with the Creator. This disposition is put into our very being. This is our nature." The Cheyennes believe that old age "is symbolized by the direction of the north. Just as fruit over-ripens and eventually dies so does the person. But this phase of life also signifies victory in that a person has lived a long life."

Because birth meant one was brought from the spirit world and death meant one was returning to it, the Cheyenne believe the very young and old were closest to the spirit because "the Creator used part of himself to make us. Upon death we return right back to the Creator because that's where we came from." Because of this, the Cheyenne believe that the young and old could communicate. "When I was born, my grandmother held me and talked to me for a long time. After she was done, she turned to my mother and said, 'She is going to be a smart woman!'" Another elder stated that "people would bring their sick babies to my grandfather. He would talk to these babies. When he was done, he would tell the parents what was wrong and what they could do to make their children well." Thus, the relationship of the old and young complete the Circle of Life as it is represented in human existence.

The Teacher and Learner

In times of great stress the old were of particular importance to help the younger ones. Grandparents served a vital role in educating the young in the community. "When I was growing up, there was not enough food in our home to feed all of us kids. My mother decided one day to have us kids stay with different elders in the community." Another elder stated, "My grandfather had a house made for himself where he and his wife stayed along with other relatives

that had no place to stay." Demonstrating the vital role the elders had for those who were orphaned, it was reported, "My dad died when I was about two years old. When this happened, my grandparents, on my mother's side, took and raised me."

This included even those beyond the extended family. "Whether old man and woman Strange Owl were our grandpa and grandma really didn't matter. They were as far as we were concerned. They took us in and taught us." Because of this, the elders have a vital role in teaching the younger ones about important lessons in life. An elder stated, "If there wasn't an old man at our neighbors' and they visited my grandfather, I knew that the kids would be doing a lot of things they're not supposed to do without knowing any better."

The old and young were always together, and formal schooling took them apart. As one elder put it, "My grandmother wanted me to stay with her all the time. When I was old enough to go to school, she didn't want me to go." Consequently, serious discussions preceded the decision to let children go to school. "One time when my dad was talking to my grandmother about me going to school, I heard my grandmother say, 'I want her to stay with us longer because once she goes to school, she won't be around us anymore!'" Perhaps because of this, many children did not go to formal school until they were older. An elder

stated, "I was with my grandparents until I came to school when I was eight years old."

The summers provided opportunities for the young and old to be especially close. "When I was growing up, I was especially close to my grandmother on my dad's side. She lived in Ashland, and I learned the traditional ways from her. My other grandmother lived in Birney, and I would take turns staying at both of their places during the summer."

Indeed, the young and old had a close relationship. This is understood in the prayers of the Cheyenne. "In a prayer that I have I say, I ask that these children be allowed to become the people that they are going to be and to carry on all the things that they are able to including the traditions."

A primary means the elder used to instruct the younger ones was with ancient stories held in the tribe. In explaining the importance of these stories, a grandparent said, "These stories are given to you, and they are yours to carry all of your life. It is up to you to hand them to someone else." According to one elder, "the stories that I grew up hearing always taught for us to work hard, to do our share, and never be dependent. They were also used to explain how we should get along with the community and help others."

In learning the lessons being taught, it is of utmost importance to be respectful, not question, and trust in what was being taught. "As children, there were a lot of the things that we were told we did not understand 'why,' but we would never question." In explaining this an elder said, "A child is too young to know the important questions to ask. When I was young, I would just listen."

Spirituality is a central focus in Cheyenne reality, and the protocol for learning in ceremonies set a framework for other lessons in daily life. "We were forbidden to talk about religion because we didn't know much about it. What you don't know much about, you don't discuss because you might give the wrong information." This also affected actions in daily life. One elder reported, "My grandparents told me that when I left the reservation, I should always ask before I did something because I might do something wrong."

Lessons were not imposed randomly by a "teacher" upon a "pupil," but skills and proper behaviors were based on careful observation by the young of their elders. An elder said,

> Instruction didn't mean, "Look, you need to learn this." Through observation and time we learned what was expected of us and how to do work around the house, the handling of horses, and the like. It was only recently that I realized that I was being taught.

Another elder said, "My uncle didn't 'teach' me songs. He just sang. I would listen, and I would begin to learn." It must be noted that uncles played a vital role in the instruction of the young.

By carefully listening and observing, lessons are learned. "As a child when you go to talk to people, you sit quietly. You don't say anything until an adult asks you something. If you in turn need a question answered that is of profound importance, then you should give him [the one giving the information] something in return." Showing respect and honor is represented in the gifts the younger Cheyenne give to their elders.

The lessons being imparted to the young explained how to lead a good life, and it was expected that the respectful behavior demonstrated while learning the lessons be used as discipline for daily life. "When we would have visitors, my parents would tell us to sit down and be still. If we wanted to play, we would have to go outside. We were also told not to pass in front of them." Revealing the epitome of what lessons were to teach, an elder explained why he respected his mentor. "The Sacred Hat Keeper is my mentor. I chose him because he is living a quiet, respected life, and he is very knowledgeable about the Cheyenne ways."

Commensurate with their duties of teaching, the elders also gauged the behavior and worthiness of others in the

community. "After I started school, my grandparents used to say, 'Who did you play with today?' When I would name them, they [grandparents] would tell me whether they were from good or bad families."

Those families who carefully instructed their young were well-respected. "Respected families were those who were well-disciplined and mannered and who had good fathers and mothers." Thus, "the old Cheyennes would judge a man by how well he treated his family. People admired someone who was doing well and never had marriage trouble." To demonstrate the character of the Cheyenne, it was stated, "All of the old Cheyenne were proud, dignified, kind and generous. Morality was high. The Cheyenne were shy people but gave you everything they had." Moreover, unlike the stereotypical image projected by Hollywood, an elder said that "the Cheyenne believed that a good man would walk away from a fight. If you fought, it was believed that what was on them will get on you, and you will become just like them."

Literally translated good parents are known to "talk to their children." In relation to this, another elder stated, "Somewhere I heard, 'A wise man learns from experience but a wiser man learns from the experience of others.' That is why some of the older Cheyennes when observing a wrong behavior will say, 'No one has ever talked to that person.'"

The grandparents also had other roles that were closely aligned with being teachers. "My grandfather was known as a counselor down at Birney. People would come to him if they had problems." The grandparents' roles were differentiated. "My grandfather disciplined us while my grandmother always showed us affection."

While the grandfather was a central figure as a role model and teacher, the women of the family were no less important. Although it was not proper to ask questions of the grandfather who usually taught the lessons, the grandmother played a significant role in the instructional process. "The women already have a relationship with their husbands, and they know how to ask him questions you may need to have answers for." One elder said, "I knew I could not ask my grandfather why the wolves were going to talk with me, but I could talk freely with my grandmother."

Although the elders are considered the first teachers of the young, each Cheyenne is ultimately responsible and must respect and contribute to the tribe by leading an honorable and productive life. By doing this, the older ones would instruct the younger ones by their actions and by being role models. It cannot be understated that actions in the community are supremely important. "According to the Cheyenne way, many people are responsible for what a child learns. This learning can't be assigned to a few people or confined to certain years but occurs

over one's entire life and can be brought on by any segment of the community." Other children who had lessons fresh in their minds acted as mentors for others. "When I was a child, the bigger kids were quick to tell the little ones not to do this and that because they learned good behaviors from their grandparents."

Learning the Cheyenne way started with the grandmother but was reinforced by others in the family and community. "I began to fit into this way of life of my grandmother. My grandfather and all of these others who influenced my life as a youngster helped me realize that I was to contribute something special back to the community." In order to insure this, others in the family played a vital role. No doubt the grandparents were the charismatic element in the family, but the uncles were the disciplinarians to insure the young stayed on task. "When I was growing up my uncles provided the discipline for us. I guess it was prearranged [by the parents or grandparents and uncle], but my uncle would act like he was just dropping by. When I would see him, I would straighten up immediately. He never did anything to me but just scare me." Along with this disciplinary role, the uncles had much authority in making important decisions for the family. "I had nine saddle horses that my uncle sold to support the family after I went in the Army."

In the Cheyenne home the father was the provider and avoided endangering a loving relationship with his children by enforcing discipline. "When I was about nine years old, I made my younger sister cry. My dad took off his belt and began chasing me. Although he didn't touch me, he had never done this before." As a rule, "I don't think it is right to physically punish a kid."

Thus, lessons imparted on the young involved a number of different elements within the family and community. The primary teachers were the elders, but parents modeled good behavior while other individuals such as uncles and friends reinforced lessons that should be learned.

CHAPTER 5

THE FRACTURE OF THE CHEYENNE WAY

Introduction

Captain Richard H. Pratt, who founded Carlisle Indian School in 1879 at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, may have expressed the sentiment of American policy-makers when he stated, "All the Indians there are in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him and save the man" (Prucha, 1984, p. 191). In the years that passed since the Pratt era, virtually every tribe would be affected by federal policies designed to change Indian people into the vision of what the non-Indian thought was good. This motive was pervasive in the educational policies directed at Indian people. Indian education meant that

> in the fifty years before the publication of the Meriam Report [1928], the federal government pursued a policy of total assimilation of the American Indian into the mainstream society. Recognizing the vast difficulties in achieving this goal, Congress and the Indian Bureau adopted a plan to remold the Indian's conception of life, or what came to be known as his "system of values." If this could be changed, assimilationists reasoned, the Indian would then become like the whiteman. The Indian system of values was expressed in the education of his children and his attitude toward the land. Consequently, the assimilationists chose to attack these two concepts as the major targets of their campaign. (Szasz, 1974, p. 8)

The Cheyenne were no exception. Whether they be Christian or government boarding schools, children were sent off for training for periods of up to five years without returning home to their families (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 289). Regrettably, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the trustee for tribal people, provided education authorities great and obtrusive power into the lives of Cheyenne people by initiating and condoning assimilationist policies.

Assimilation meant the Cheyenne were subject to the willful control of others. They were told when, how, and what to eat, how to dress, and how to act. This is criminal by itself and struck at the spirituality of an otherwise beautiful culture. However, to apply this to helpless and innocent children is indeed reprehensible.

Tragically, the violation of the Cheyenne Way did not cease on the frontier. Likewise, it did not cease one or two generations ago. This violation continues to manifests itself on a daily basis in the form of a backlash of self-destructive behavior by Cheyenne people who themselves perceive little control over their lives.

A Firm System of Control

The federal-Indian relationship, including the Cheyenne, is described as a 300-year process of dispossession and exploitation of tribal lands and cultures

(Campbell, 1987, p. 378). This system was exercised through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and was aided and abetted by church officials and other assimilationist proponents during the Reservation Era. Whether altruistic or malicious, the effect was the same; these authorities conspired to forcefully change the Cheyenne by virtue of their shared abhorrence of the Cheyenne culture. Friere (1970) defines violence as

> initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognize others as persons--not by those who are oppressed, exploited, and unrecognized. It is not the unloved who initiate disaffection, but those who cannot love because they love only themselves. It is not the helpless, subject to terror, who initiate terror, but the violent, who with their power create the concrete situation which begets the "rejects of life." It is not the tyrannized who initiate despotism, but the tyrants. It is not the despised who initiate hatred, but those who despise. It is not those whose humanity is denied them who negate man, but those who denied that humanity (thus negating their own as well). Force is used not by those who have become weak under the preponderance of the strong, but by the strong who have emasculated them. (p. 41)

During most of the Reservation Era and only until recently, being Cheyenne meant being a "reject of life." Precious lives were meaningless, histories were dispelled, songs were hushed, and life was not to rejoice but to be endured. Indeed, the Cheyenne suffered the brunt of the powerful rule of the federal government.

During that time, Indian boarding schools such as Carlisle Indian School were established in distant places

away from the reservation. To coincide with this, an infrastructure for Indian education was immediately put into place on each reservation. Part of that structure for the Cheyenne was the establishment in 1884 of St. Labre Catholic boarding school. In addition, the Busby School (government boarding school) opened its doors in 1909. Both of these schools were supported by the government not only in moral terms but financially as well (Weist, 1977, p. 107). Subsequently, other schools were established which included the Birney Day School and the Lame Deer Public Elementary School.

Until only recently the Cheyenne had little control over their own affairs. For example, along with educational policies that were imposed, it was not until the passage of the Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1968 that the Cheyenne and other tribes were recognized as having the right to conduct their own ceremonies (Pevar, 1983, p. 2). Moreover, the Cheyenne would have to wait until the enactment of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975 to begin to at least theoretically have control over the charter and direction of their own governmental and educational systems (Szasz, 1977, p. 201). However, in the years preceding this legislative era, the onerous role of these authorities which violated the Cheyenne ways were painfully recalled by the tribal elders.

A Network of Coercion

In order to enforce governmental policies of education, several elements were established. First, educational policies for mandatory attendance were strictly enforced by the reservation police. These police who were Cheyenne themselves but were hired to enforce the will of the government and were not respected (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 271).

One elder recalled the role of reservation police by reporting that "the police all rode horseback and travelled in force. Their main concern was to keep kids in school." Upon occasion, reservation police did not hesitate to show force. For example, "my mother told me that one little boy kept running away from school. One day this little boy's father was bringing him back to school after he had run away when a policeman, who was known to show his authority, shot the father in the leg."

Short of police actions, the BIA exerted force to prompt families to send their children to school. "There was a law on the reservation that said your children must be sent to school when they turned six years of age. If parents didn't send their kids to school, they wouldn't get their rations to feed their families." Reservation police went to great lengths to enforce this policy. An elder recalled,

> I left Lame Deer to stay with my uncle in Lodge Grass. The authorities found out, and soon they found out where I was. When I realized they were looking for me, I hitched a ride on the train and was intending to go stay with some of my relatives in Billings. They [tribal police] chased that train all the way to Hardin where they ordered it to stop. After they caught me, I was taken back to Lame Deer where I was forced to go to school.

Ineffective and arbitrary policies enacted by the BIA led to the tribal instability and made the Cheyenne more prone to follow government directives. "An agent for the BIA told the Cheyenne that their cattle had some kind of disease. The government then began killing off many of the cattle the Cheyenne owned. After that they did the same thing to the Cheyenne's horses." Another elder added, "When governmental regulations regarding such things as planting continually changed, people couldn't keep up and simply gave up."

Before the government took an active hand in Cheyenne economics, this was not the case. Speaking of the initiatives of the early 1900's, an elder stated, "The cooperative farming efforts stopped long before the work programs of the 1930's because of governmental intrusion. They [BIA] did not give the farming efforts any time to see if they would work."

The net effect of these BIA policies resulted in failure and hopelessness and led to a meager subsistence economy by the 1930's (Campbell, 1987, p. 382). In the

wake of frustration, many Cheyennes moved from the country into town. According to one elder, "Many of the Cheyenne began selling land they were not using." Another elder stated, "Our families moved into town, and no one in the family wanted this to happen."

Nevertheless, modeling of acceptable behavior was supported by the BIA and Christian authorities in the hope that Cheyennes would emulate the white patterns of culture particularly in regard to making a living. In recalling one individual who accepted the white system, an elder stated,

> After the reservation system was introduced, the BIA realized that Squint Eye would be good for the reservation system. Squint Eye could plow and garden, and the BIA wanted him back on the reservation to teach others the reservation educational model and practices for making a living.

However, the primary method of modeling acceptable behavior was provided by the local non-Indian business people. An elder reported, "The store was always run by whites, and the Cheyenne had nothing to do there but buy things." Likewise another elder stated, "When I was a kid the businesses were run by non-Indians. I think that was a holdover from the policies of the BIA who used merchants to train Indians."

In recent times the burdensome presence of the BIA is still felt. "We are the most regulated people on the face of the Earth. In 1963, it was said that if all of the

rules, regulations, and memorandum were placed one on top of the other, it would reach eight feet high." To demonstrate the extent that the church (St. Labre) went to control Cheyenne ceremonies, an elder reported, "At night the spies would come back to the Sweat and listen to the prayers that were being said. Those in the Sweat would include names from the Bible to fool the intruders by making them believe that Christian beliefs were being supported." When asked what would happen if individual Cheyennes were caught practicing their beliefs, this elder said that St. Labre worked closely with the BIA superintendent and would have rations cut off in such cases.

Noting that the Cheyenne rarely spoke out about the treatment they received, an elder said, "The mentality of the BIA in early 1970's was that we'll tell these Indians what to do and they will do it because they're scared." For example, until the late 1960's and by virtue of the dual interest of the government and Christian designates, the Cheyenne were banned from practicing their religion.

Violence in the Schools

Overwhelmingly, the elders emphasized that the first lessons Cheyenne children learned at school were in contrast to what their families taught.

> Boarding schools were set up to isolate you, and it worked. I always missed my family. There was also less supervision. The younger boys were taught how to steal and other anti-social things by the older boys who were pretty much like delinquents.

Pointing to the violence imposed on the young by the older children, an elder stated, "I was sent to Busby in the second grade. I remember being picked on by the bigger kids, and I eventually learned how to survive." Busby's reputation became renown in the community. An elder reported, "When I was growing up many of the children would fight like heck to stay out of school at Busby because when they would get up there others would pick on them." Another elder said, "In spite of all the torture we got from the kids at Busby, we still made good grades." However, this elder said she ran away from Busby after one of her friends got stabbed. In addition to physical violence, an elder sadly remembered, "During the time I was at Busby, there were more serious situations than just having bullies to contend with. Situations of sexual misconduct went unreported."

If there were chilling memories of Busby, the Catholic mission school at St. Labre did not fare any better. An elder painfully recalled, "My dad was sent to St. Labre to go to school. My dad received his education there, but he did not like the treatment he received. He said that one sister used to beat kids up, and they all were forced to

shave their heads, speak English, and pray for hours at a time." In comparing the two schools an elder reported, "St. Labre wasn't much different from Busby--they had bullies there too." This violence was in stark contrast to what was being learned at home. "When I was young my grandparents taught me that it was wrong to be assertive and imposing on others. The boarding school [St. Labre] taught me those things." The Cheyenne system of knowledge was based on trust. Trust that when something of importance was explained or demonstrated the expectation of the child is not to question but to accept and be reverent. Obviously, when one's culture is being uprooted and ties to family are being severed, trust and reverence are thrown by the wayside.

These conditions of violence led to the corruption of the young. At St. Labre, "We were always hungry. We were taught by the bigger boys how to pick the locks to the storeroom to get food. If we didn't comply, they would lock us in the linen closet, and it was almost airtight." Violence breeds violence, and this is borne out in an account that "because I didn't have my mom, dad, or grandparents there at St. Labre, I used to get beat up and humiliated all the time. Finally, I started standing up for myself, and people learned to think twice about hitting me again."

Within the classroom, violence was a means to dismantle the culture. "At St. Labre you were punished for speaking Cheyenne and for doing other things that were not socially acceptable. I was punished for holding a fork in a different manner. It seemed as though they punished me for all sorts of little things."

The recollections by the elders of their school teachers and what they taught did nothing to lighten the burden of this negative image of school. "I spent 12 years at St. Labre. It seemed like the nuns that I had for teachers didn't ever smile. Everything was regimented. We would all wear white shirts and march two by two." When asked, this particular elder could not remember any teacher of which he had fond memories. Another elder reported a student being publicly humiliated when he announced to all in the classroom that "you're in eighth grade, but you don't know anything. I am going to push you down to grade 'zero.'"

In recalling Busby teachers and their methods of instruction, an elder said, "I don't think no one at Busby really cared if we turned in our homework. When we went to class, we really didn't do anything." In this vein, another elder reported, "I went to school at Busby in the fifth grade. I didn't like it there and only stayed about a month. We never did anything. We just sat in class and looked at the pictures in our textbooks."

To compound the problems for Cheyenne children at school was the fact that until only recently both Busby and St. Labre required their students to stay all year with leaves granted only during Christmas. Today it is incomprehensible, but students in the past "stayed at school seven days a week. Our parents could come to see us on Saturday afternoon from 1:00-5:00 p.m." Indeed some students didn't see their families even during the holidays: "When I left for school at the mission, I boarded all year and didn't come home even for Christmas."

The recollection of school experiences by the elders led to further insights perhaps signalling the suppression of bad memories or the large degree of intimidation wielded by school authorities. An elder stated, "I didn't report to my grandparents the treatment I received at the mission. I figured I would finish the school year out and not come back." Another elder reported how the rediscovery of the culture saved him from the dark experiences of his boarding school years: "The saying, 'The truth shall set you free' meant for me that when I learned that I didn't need to be saved, I was free. But I had to go back to the culture to find that out." One elder left the reservation after graduating from St. Labre, and "after returning home after 20 years it was a shock to find that the Catholic Church had become more human. Before Cheyenne ways were looked

down upon as being 'pagan,' and tribal ways were not respected."

The Birney School: An Educational Refuge

The political and economic centers of the Northern Cheyenne rest in the communities of Busby, Lame Deer, and Ashland (the location of St. Labre) as they have been since the dawning of the reservation. Busby and St. Labre based their economic and political control over tribal members by virtue of established mandatory school attendance policies and influence as centers of employment. With these schools reservation employment and economy formed the basis for respective community relations. Additionally, Lame Deer is both the location of the Bureau of Indian Affairs administrative agency and is also the seat of Northern Cheyenne tribal government.

Conversely, the Birney "village" is distant from each of these other locations and is seemingly less prone to direct and obtrusive influences exerted by the dynamics of reservation politics and economics on the reservation. The people at Birney were relatively autonomous compared to other Cheyenne within the reservation setting. In terms of education, an early form of self-determination is best demonstrated in the establishment of a school by Birney people themselves for children within the community. According to Stands In Timber (1967),

> The Indians started it all by themselves. Over at Birney, old man Young Bird was our neighbor. He was a medicine man and people respected him. One time he said, "Why can't we gather all these boys that are going to the mission school, and let Three Fingers teach them? He knows a lot of things in English. Then they won't have so much trouble when they go to school. We all gathered at his home in the evening. He called on different ones to bring fry bread, chokecherries, and jerked meat, "and coffee will be cooked over at my place." So we brought it. And here came the teacher, Three Fingers, and we sat around inside the room. He got charcoal out of the stove for us to write with, and broke up wooden grocery boxes for slates. And he started teaching us the English words he knew. (pp. 289-90)

Although this school was short-lived, this experience "was the best school that I went to . . . we all were very interested in the school and learned a lot" (p. 290). Perhaps due to this relative freedom and in contrast to the Cheyenne experiences at Busby and St. Labre, the elders who attended Birney Day School had fond memories. In fact, it was reported that whole families moved to Birney so the children could go to school. "The only reason that my family moved into Birney was for us kids to attend school there." In contrast to Busby, an elder said, "My dad didn't want me to go to Busby school. He said that they would cut off my hair and force me to do this and that. Because of this, all of my brothers and sisters graduated from Birney Elementary."

To show the extent of support the Birney school received from Cheyenne families, an elder stated, "If we

were not behaving in school, the teacher would threaten to tell our parents." In consideration of the importance Cheyennes placed on individual behavior and accountability, this threat was particularly unsettling for Cheyenne children. It must be understood that for the Cheyenne, how one behaved was reflective of what one believed. Therefore, individual actions were of tantamount importance and could bring either pride or shame to one's family.

Moreover, another elder said, "After my brother had his mouth cleaned out for cussing at school, we went home after school and my dad asked us what happened. When we told him, he got after my brother and told him, 'Didn't I tell you never to cuss at anyone!' My father then said that he was going to see the teacher and shake hands with her."

The grandparents also showed support for the children at school. "My grandparents were happy about me going to the Birney school. They used to say, 'It's going to help you. Don't give it up!' So all of my family were encouraged to go to school." The sentiment of those students attending the Birney Day School can perhaps be best summarized by one elder who said, "The years at Birney school were the best years of my life. We used to have plays for the holidays, pageants, and little pow-wows. The parents knew the teachers very well."

The Birney school represented the eye of a turbulent storm. In more than a geographical sense, the Birney school was in close proximity to the community. Unlike other schools on the reservation that attempted to coercively civilize or Christianize Cheyenne children, the school at Birney drew upon the strengths of the community for support and never intended to remove Cheyenne children from their families for extensive periods of time. Because of this, families remained relatively intact, and some of the very characteristics of respect and trust were practiced at the Birney school.

In terms of instructing Cheyennes in the white ways, the experiences the elders had at the Birney school proved that St. Labre and Busby did not have to be the way they were but were blinded by religious intolerance and the political goals of the government. Moreover, this was compounded by the woeful non-Indian view that Cheyenne children were inherently deficient. Thus, the existence of two conflicting approaches within the same group and the sharply different results with the success of one over the other shows that it is the educational approach rather than the disposition of the student that yielded positive results.

Schooling Summary

The BIA mandated local schooling for all Cheyenne children at either Busby Boarding School or St. Labre or at distant boarding schools off the reservation. Because the Birney school was not a boarding school, children were allowed to return home each day, and this was encouraging for their families. However, in large part the Cheyenne educational framework required that children be away from their families and at school for many months and even years at a time.

Perhaps the best way to summarize this experience of the Cheyenne elders is that fond memories were a minority of what was recalled of these early years. Teachers and school authorities were remembered as incompetent, insensitive, and without understanding of plight of the Cheyenne. They were often known to be mean and intimidating. This was particularly true at St. Labre. When these circumstances were combined with an adverse curriculum, isolation, and violence bred outside the classroom, the total picture reveals an appalling situation. Except for the circumstances at Birney, the educational experiences of Cheyenne elders were dismal during the Reservation Era.

Intra-tribal Conflict

In the years that have passed since the establishment of the reservation, several factors have joined to economically and politically impoverish tribal members on the Northern Cheyenne reservation. Throughout the Reservation Era, economic development was continually disrupted and undermined by shifting governmental policies which have caused poverty and underdevelopment to the present day (Campbell, 1987, p. 382). Beginning early in the Reservation Era when the Cheyennes had to rely heavily on government rations to subsist and until the present when the unemployment rate is estimated to be as high as 50% (Ward & Wilson, 1991, p. 17), the Cheyennes have struggled with bleak economic conditions.

Government authorities have controlled Cheyenne affairs at every turn. In response to this oppression, the Cheyenne have acted out their condition in equally negative terms. From their hopelessness, they feel deep resignation, and from their awareness of this reality, they have anger. All of this is reflective of the outside violence which has been internalized and has resulted in an equal and opposite effect now destroying Cheyenne culture.

This violence is represented in numerous ways. Corresponding to the racial treatment imposed on them from others, the tribe is now suffering from racism within.

Cheyennes are now fighting against one another and a schism has been struck between the full-blood and the breed. Now so common, this mindless feud has formed the basis for racial status within the community. (Ward & Wilson, 1991, p. 16)

Perhaps the apex of this intratribal conflict is represented in the continuing debate concerning economic development on the reservation. Because the potential for both good and bad are so enormous and because both can have an equally profound effect on Mother Earth, the Cheyenne have two disparate views on this subject. In the past, the traditionalists or those members associated with being more full-blood Cheyenne have differed with more progressive Cheyenne about the nature of economic development (Campbell, 1987, pp. 378-386). In recent times this is best demonstrated with the heated and emotional debate over coal development in the late 1960's and early 1970's. During this time the traditionalists were against the leasing of land for coal mining because of their religious beliefs. Combined with astute legal representation, the traditional Cheyenne won a landmark Supreme Court decision, known as the Hollow Breast Case, in March of 1973. Although this case represented a victory for those Cheyennes wanting to preserve Mother Earth, this entire circumstance was marked by Cheyennes fighting against themselves. Consequently, tensions between breeds and

full-bloods reached an apex during this time as they differed markedly on this issue.

Again, during the early 1980's, these factions opposed one another when the tribe was debating whether to enter into an agreement with the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO). In this case the tribe entered an agreement with ARCO despite the objections of the traditionalists, but this arrangement died after ARCO opted to phase out its drilling operations in August of 1983 (Campbell, 1987 p. 386).

The continuing strife is drawn primarily on blood-lines and has long wreaked havoc on internal tribal relations. From the view of the elders, the abhorrence of these two factions for one another extend back generations. "Most of my friends at Busby weren't breeds--not very many of them went to school there. Back in those days the breeds had plenty of land and money and were much lighter skinned." To show that not only did breeds go to other schools but also have lived separately from other Cheyennes, one elder said, "Most of the breeds lived out of town, mainly up in the Kirby and Muddy Creeks." For those breeds who perhaps could not attend other schools, an elder stated, "When I was going to school, there were only a few breeds around, and they were low on the totem pole. The full-bloods received more benefits through federal programs like the one they use to call Relief."

The tension and emotion was real between these two groups. "I didn't like the breeds not for what they looked like but for the way they acted. They were smart asses." To show how day-to-day relations were affected, an elder said, "My father wrecked the pick-up one day while he was going to work. He blamed a certain family, who were breeds, for loosening his wheel hubs." In school the tension between these two groups was an everyday reality. "Confrontations between the full-bloods and breeds was ongoing throughout my school years. You had to use your wits and physical abilities to stay ahead." For one elder who is himself a breed, it was noted, "I think I always lived with the fact that I was light complected. In school I learned how to make quick decisions about what crowds to avoid."

Although this racial strife was driving a wedge within the community, the local schools in the area were seemingly oblivious to it. As such, the message was clear: Because there was no discussion of a solution to this racism, no problem must exist. Today the issue of breed versus full-blood is continuing. "Those breeds send their kids to Colstrip and try to act like white folks. They [whites] have their standards and will never accept the breeds either. The breeds are then caught in the middle and take it out on the full-bloods." Education is also being distorted to fuel the rift between the two groups on the

reservation, "Non-members and those people that once left the reservation to deny their heritage are now teaching their children that because they have lighter skin they are better and smarter than the full-bloods."

The issue of breed versus full-blood also has economic implications. "Certain individuals maintain racism, and they are well established. If I was given an opportunity, I would get on their case and try to change things, but they know me." This argument of race has often made politics completely irrational. For example, "they want to get rid of this councilman because he is a breed and not because of the job he's doing. If this continues, they will deny all breeds access to the Cheyenne ways of politics and religion."

To show how the tension between the breeds and full-bloods is commonplace, one elder, who has been highly active in political affairs declared, "The tension between the breeds and full-bloods is due to political maneuvering. You know, I may hold an office and someone else wants it and raises the question of my integrity based on my skin color. This is only a ploy."

Putting into sharp focus the economic bearing of the competition between the full-blood and breed is the relationship the Cheyenne elders had with the whites, who were not in competition for jobs and power within tribal government. An elder said, "There wasn't a problem between

the white and the Indian; there was a problem between the breed and the Indian." This elder went on to say that the expectation the Cheyenne had for the whites was for them to be distant and apart from tribal affairs.

In fact, the accounts of the elders indicate the whites (who were not governmental officials but ranchers and farmers) and Cheyenne have enjoyed a good relationship. "During the early Reservation Era, after the killing of two Cheyennes by the army, relations between the whites and Cheyenne were tense. However, in the years that followed, this tension subsided." Another elder reported how the whites and Cheyenne enjoyed one another's company. "They [whites] used to have box socials whereby the full-bloods and whites mixed. Because of the peril of WWII, everybody got along well."

One elder spoke of deep personal relationships the whites and Cheyenne experienced. "Limon Brewster was a white rancher that my dad said was his best friend. My dad and Limon would help each other work the cattle. He would come to our home and eat with us and visit. It never dawned on me that he was white and therefore different."

A bond was created by having both races work together. "We used to have a lot of visitors from down in the valley [Kirby]. My grandfather knew a lot of white people from Kirby, and they would visit often. They used to help my grandfather harvest his crops." Another elder stated,

"When I was growing up in Birney, the Cheyennes got along well with their white neighbors. The white ranchers would always come to Birney to get Cheyenne men to do the work on their places. When they would come down from their places, the non-Indian ranchers would always bring gifts to give the wives and family of the men they hired." Working with the whites was learned as being desirable at a very early age. "After I finished eighth grade at the Birney school, I started working with my family on the local ranches that were owned by whites. My grandparents enjoyed this because I was making a living, and I also was back home from school for the summer." One elder reported that the sharing between the whites and Cheyenne extended beyond physical labor. "During the summer, I used to work on ranches, such as the 4D, Woodard, and Browns Cattle Company, near Birney. I kind of adopted the Anglo ways."

Understanding the senselessness of the debate between breed and full-blood, one elder stated, "People always say, 'I'm glad I'm not a half-breed,' but they don't know their blood line. Today, I don't think there are very many full-bloods." Another elder added that this sentiment against breeds is in her own family. "I cannot complain about half-breeds because our own family is mixed blood. We're part German and Irish from our great grandmother's generation. But some of my own sisters are critical of half-breeds because they don't understand the family tree."

In recalling the irony of this issue another elder pointed out that "our family has white blood but my dad would use the term 'half-breed' when he referred to those that rustled cattle and horses." To best summarize the elders' abhorrence for the racist bent for this argument, an elder who is a prominent medicine man said, "For me the conflict between full-blood and breed is meaningless. One of these days I may paint a whiteman for the Sun Dance." This elder went on to report that there is one whiteman who has approached him about being in the Sun Dance. He knows that he must help him and is now deciding about whether this man will be in the Sun Dance.

Despite the historical relationship the Cheyenne have had with the whites, the racial tensions that now exist between tribal members could mean the self-destruction of the Cheyenne people if left unchecked. Ironically, the community which survived starvation and warfare from outside now is confronted with catastrophic turmoil within. "During the last 20 or 30 years, the families seem to be growing apart. It has gotten to the point that they don't even acknowledge each other anymore." Another elder stated, "It used to be that you could go to any house. They would welcome you, and feed you automatically. Today someone might peek out the window and say, 'What do you want?'" Another elder pointed out, "Lame Deer is too

crowded, and it seems like they don't have time for one another. They don't have time to talk about good things."

One elder attributed the problems in the community to reservation economics. "Some families and individuals are doing good, and others are not. I hate to say it, but there is now a lot of turmoil in the community because of it." Another elder agreed, "We Cheyenne are a peaceful people by nature and by discriminating against certain ones cause disharmony in the tribe." Another elder added, "There are a couple of dozen people who are from one family that claim to be 'True Cheyennes,' but they will have to be challenged before too long. This is very disruptive to tribal goals." The hypocrisy of some families is pointed out when "some people say they are 'traditional,' but they really don't behave that way in their daily lives."

The problems of disharmony are felt in the family and can also be attributed to economics. "The loss of morality in the past couple of generations can be attributed to the opening up of the reservation and the welfare system. When people did not have to work, the dignity of the whole reservation started to vanish." Perhaps this is best represented in the young. "I think the young ones are losing their respect. I don't think they respect anything anymore. At New Town [North Dakota], the young don't walk in front of their elders. The Crow children still respect

their elders, but now the parents of our young don't seem to be teaching this anymore."

Indeed, Cheyenne parents are viewed as being overprotective of the shortcomings they have imparted to their children. In order to protect the child, a parent "picks on a teacher, a councilman, or the police. The child picks up that behavior and will in turn show no respect for authority." The insidiousness of this pattern was known long ago. "I have seen how destructive it can be when parents take up for their children. The Cheyennes used to say, 'It is difficult to take up for your child.'" This elder was taught that discipline is not easily assumed and that correct behavior is the product of long and difficult lessons.

Like the family and community, Cheyenne traditional institutions have come under divisive influences. "I have been told that it must be up to the societies [traditional warrior societies] to resolve conflict in the tribe. It now seems hopeless because the societies are now getting themselves involved in taking sides and not wanting to reconcile the conditions." Moreover, it was added, "The role of the societies is supposed to be for them to talk to people in a good way and make positive suggestions. This has not been the case, and I quit going to tribal councils because I know it won't be any good."

There is no doubt the council for the Cheyenne is ridden with strife. One elder felt that "a system of government that would fit the Cheyenne better would be the business council. Competent people would be doing business for the Cheyenne people. Even if it was hierarchical in structure, it would be less likely to superimpose itself on the people as it is doing now." Another elder may have summed it up best:

> I have seen people really caring for one another, but unfortunately it was not in the context of tribal authority. This occurs informally because the government is a corporate system that pits brother against brother. If things continue the way they are going, I see the sense of homeland completely destroyed. We should feel secure here on the reservation, but when you go out, all you feel is fear. We are oppressing ourselves with our courts, government, and social agencies.

In addition, fundamental parts of the tribe are now under scrutiny. "Those Cheyennes living on the Rosebud came here from South Dakota. When they got here, they were given all kinds of material things to make a living. From this they got it in their mind that they were better than the rest." Another elder succinctly put it that "Tsistsistas means 'Cheyenne' while Suhtai means 'real Cheyenne.'"

Violence is also evidenced by self-destructive tendencies of self-abuse and withdrawal. Alcoholism and drugs have become a detriment to the Cheyenne community.

Withdrawal is depicted in the sense of uselessness, and apathy is pervasive in the community.

Although the Cheyenne reservation has always been "dry" and alcohol is prohibited, there is no doubt that alcoholism profoundly affected the Cheyenne way of life in recent times. In remembering experiences of Cheyennes who would drink, an elder stated, "The Cheyennes used to 'gulp drink' in order to drink what they had before anybody arrested them." Another elder confided, "When the liquor came everything changed in the family. I once had 150 head of cattle, but I sold my cattle to booze." Drinking and the problems it caused forced one family to move their home. "My folks got tired of having drunks come and disturb them out at the homestead. They finally moved into Lame Deer."

Drinking was a legacy in some families and is associated with how well the family was coping in the reservation community. "Some of my own relatives and others are well known for their drinking. It wasn't uncommon to have drinking problems in whole families." This elder noted that those individuals and families who were drinking did not work. In this regard, another elder said, "In Lame Deer, some families had good jobs and looked out for themselves while others had problems with drinking and did not work."

Regardless of the cause, drinking has had a grave effect on Cheyenne interrelationships. In an account of how drinking disrupted a Cheyenne social engagement, an elder stated, "My uncle pointed out a place between Busby and Lame Deer near the Two Moons area where the Cheyennes used to have dances. He said nobody used to drink, but one time a person showed up drunk. When this happened, everybody left." Alcohol has also changed expected behavior. "My mom would tell me not to put anybody down. However, alcohol and envy has changed this in people." The role of the elders has been adversely affected by the abuse of alcohol. "It is hard to live as a Cheyenne today. The elders are taught to give, but because of problems with alcohol, the elders are now being taken advantage of by the younger ones."

The abuse, continual failure, inept policies, and control by the BIA which nurtured little or no opportunity on the reservation has resulted in a legacy of withdrawal and hopelessness by the Cheyenne people. One elder stated, "When I got into politics, I would try to get my dad involved. He would say, 'I have lived here all my life and have seen everything tried two or three times. They have not worked.'" Another elder added, "Apathy almost completely permeates this existence on the reservation. Most people have just given up." This apathy may have been caused by the inability of Cheyennes to apply skills they

learned off the reservation when they returned home. "William Little Head was a good typist and graduated from Chemawa, but when he returned home he never used his education. Another friend of mine was an excellent mathematician, but when he came back to the reservation he couldn't work anywhere but at the BIA." Another elder added, "I think everybody in my age group started either work or training but did not finish."

This repeated failure led to apathy within the community and began early on. After having served in WWII and upon his return home to the reservation, one elder said, "When I returned home, I began to see possibilities of what could be done, but I was idealistic and soon ran into a wall of apathy."

The Cheyenne understand that projects are short lived at best and have learned not to make commitments to them. "If someone wants to do something they can do it. But if someone says something, it throws them off and they quit." Anger fueled by frustration takes the form of criticism which has become prevalent on the reservation. "People will use another person's past to nail them down with it. I drank, but now I am trying to be a role model for the younger ones. Even now some Cheyenne my age and older still remind me of what I did when I was younger." One elder argued that no Cheyenne is immune from being criticized. "Failure is expected if you are not educated.

If you are educated, however, you are more highly scrutinized by others."

Summary

All of the strife put on the Cheyenne has a culminating effect of threatening the existence of the Cheyenne way of life. In the traditional way, the acquisition of knowledge was intimately tied to the purposes foreseen for the community. By having outsiders take away the purpose of society, the Cheyenne are now experiencing a disintegration within their communities and are thus having great difficulty acquiring proper Cheyenne knowledge. Due to apathy, distrust, and racism, the legitimacy of the teachers is now in question, and the result is that there is no system now in place that has the respect or support to pass on vital Cheyenne knowledge to future generations. In addition, because this system of knowledge acquisition and transmittal has been rendered useless, it is becoming increasingly meaningless for many Cheyennes who are having a difficult enough time providing for their own immediate needs.

Because the Cheyenne turned the violence inward on themselves, they are no longer asking questions concerning who they are; they now ask who they are not. For example, on the point of race, too many Cheyennes know they are not white. They know this not by trusting in their own

integrity and teachings but by judging others simply by skin color.

However, despite all of the turmoil and the formidable problems that need to be addressed, the elders feel strongly about the strength of spirituality and the revival of the culture. "After becoming involved in the ceremonies, I now speak Cheyenne to my grandchildren more than I ever did to my own kids. In turn my grandchildren have become interested in the culture." As a final note, one elder feels optimistic that others are now beginning to appreciate the Cheyenne ways. "During the past 5 years, I have been asked by the schools in Lame Deer, Birney, and Ashland to talk about Cheyenne stories and plants and how to take care of the environment." This elder was especially pleased that she has assumed the role of teacher to others and is now an active part of the community.

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATION: A WEAPON OF SURVIVAL OR DESTRUCTION

Introduction

The testimony of the elders in this study was collected with the utmost respect to the social, cultural, and linguistic factors of the Northern Cheyenne people. In this regard, the most appropriate data collection method was the semi-structured interview process which provided an effective means to examine the educational perspectives of Cheyenne elders by exploring perceptions of knowledge, the environment for learning, and their ideas about the role of the teacher and student. These perceptions were comprehensive and reflected a stark contrast between the rich and beautiful memories and experience of what the elders had been taught about the Cheyenne traditional ways versus their personal experience within the narrow and culturally destructive formal educational institutions on the reservation.

The Cheyenne Holistic System

The elders strongly support the traditional Cheyenne view that knowledge and learning are integral parts of a

holistic system. Within this system all living things including the earth and sky are related to each other in one system and live harmoniously. In this system certain plants and animals have been given medicines and knowledge by the Creator to help the Cheyenne. These life forms are capable of instructing those who are sincere and want to learn about leading a good life.

All things of the Creator are sacred. Because of this, individuals may go on vision quests or pray alone for help from other living things. Spirits or animals may help families find a lost one or whole communities may be helped through tribal rituals and prayers. Additionally, the cosmos is an intimate part of this reality. The journey of the sun across the sky and the changing seasons determine how the Cheyenne home will be placed in physical space as well as describing the purpose and direction of life's journey.

Moreover, the elders emphasized that the spiritual and physical worlds are interrelated. One travels in physical space under to the guidance of the Creator in order to transcend this plane to move within the spiritual world. Consequently, those Cheyenne who have passed on may return to communicate with those living.

The elders believe that the Creator provides life and direction to all of creation. In times of great need, the Creator may act through other life forms to help the

Cheyenne. Lessons from the Creator may be provided instantly and without forethought to the Cheyennes who are being taught. Or, one may act deliberately and demonstrate sincerity of mind and spirit to receive help through fasting, vision quests, and tribal rituals. Throughout this milieu, the elders view of the Creator describes a charitable being who provides for the sustenance of life for the Cheyenne people.

Thus, the purpose of life is known by the Creator, and life is one interrelated whole. The intervention of the Creator, the power of life forms, and the importance of wisdom and experience all act in concert to help the Cheyenne along the path of life.

The sacredness of the system and the reverence the Cheyenne held for education cannot be overstated. Therefore, any plan or project carried forward from the recommendations herein must have the blessing and guidance of elders.

Cheyenne Education: A Mechanism for Tribal Regeneration

Like other tribes, the premise for Cheyenne education held that everyone had a purpose in life, and a good part of this was to contribute back to the community in which one lived. According to the elders, this potential manifested itself in dreams, visions, and lessons provided

to each Cheyenne in order for them to understand and provide others with a greater revelation of the Journey of Life. In order for this to occur, keen observation and interaction with the environment was necessary to truly understand the meaning and relatedness of all creation.

The Cheyenne exhaustively examine and systematically include events and interrelationships in order to maintain balance and harmony between all living things. The elders' experiences indicate that knowledge is not set apart as an entity unto itself but rather is infused throughout all of reality and provides meaning for the spiritual and physical worlds. From the fundamental belief that all life forms have a purpose and are sacred, the structure of tribal knowledge assumes a moral quality and is essential to life. By virtue of this, knowledge is necessary to help the community of living things along the path of life.

Because knowledge can be imparted to living things sometimes without them readily knowing why or how it will be used, the elders understand the direction and purpose of the Cheyenne journey is not entirely known. In such cases knowledge may be spontaneous and sometimes bewildering, but it is always assumed that there is a reason for having it. Likewise, other tribes had similarly held beliefs. "Indians believed that everything that humans experience has value and instructs us in some aspect of life. . . . Therefore, in some instances we can experience something

entirely new and so we must be alert and try not to classify things too quickly" (Deloria, 1993, p. 65). In addition, "knowledge was derived from individual and communal experiences in daily life, in keen observation of the environment, and in interpretive messages which they received from spirits in ceremonies, visions and dreams" (p. 64).

Because of this, the Cheyenne believe that nothing happens by accident. If something happened out of the ordinary, prayers were said in order for it to be good and supporting of the path of life. From this vantage all risks were opportunities, and all opportunities had risks. However, both risk and opportunity were defined in the context of the greater good of the community. No event was discarded. Instead, it produced serious contemplation about one's destiny and the well being of the tribe.

Within the educational setting, the "accidents" or anomalies in society as they are represented in institutions, behaviors, and beliefs now must be seriously considered in order to grasp a greater meaning which is otherwise not apparent. In this context, current internal strife and disfunction of behavior are indicative of anomalies to the Cheyenne Way and must be understood within the context of the reservation setting.

Furthermore, lessons may be prompted by taking part in prayers and ceremonies, or they can be provided by Maheo

without having to be induced. This is particularly true in times of great need when one's personal safety is being threatened or someone in the community needs help. Because of this, the path of Cheyenne education must be prefaced and buttressed by spiritual guidance.

However, because life's experience is a continuing revelation by the Creator, life will often provide supernatural lessons for people to help the community. Those who have acquired great knowledge and have demonstrated this in the community are supremely respected. Therefore, medicine people, who are closest to the bridge between the spiritual and physical worlds, are most highly respected.

The Object of Cheyenne Lessons

Experience provides lessons, but wisdom may also be gained instantly through dreams, visions, and prayers. In either case, the measure of how significant knowledge is depends on the invigorating effect it will have on the community. The elders pointed out that lessons can be learned from those who have experienced life as well as primary encounters one may have with the Creator or a messenger. This act of the Cheyenne being attuned to life-giving messages demonstrates the strength and soundness of traditional ways of learning and is analogous to conscientization which "like education, is specifically a

human process. It is as conscious beings that men are not only in the world but with the world . . ." (Friere, 1985, p. 68).

The essence of the Cheyenne concept of knowledge underscores the belief that being conscious of one's surroundings and taking cues from the environment are the basis for knowledge and may be imparted by the Creator. Although these lessons provide revelations about how life must be sustained, the conscious world is limited in the understanding of the totality of life. No one knew how certain individuals could speak with animals or foretell events, but knowledge provided by the Creator is not meant to be questioned. Instead, it is to be trusted in the purpose it holds to sustain the Journey of Life.

Since the Reservation Era, the outward manifestations of the environment have changed dramatically. Minds and bodies have been lost to self-destructive tendencies in the community; plants and animals have been displaced by reservation industry and farming; and ultimately, the cosmology of the Cheyenne has been demeaned by global environmental degradation. However, the potential exists for all of these things to be reconciled according to traditional moral standards.

By incorporating ancient teachings and modern expertise, development necessary for the health and benefit of the community can be arrived at by examining all of the

environment and by assuming that one part affects all other parts. From this an objective judgement can be made about what elements are conducive and which are negative factors in the environment for the Cheyenne and how they can be reconciled.

In order to grasp a greater understanding of this journey, one must be willing to surrender oneself to the other elements within the greater whole of both the physical and spiritual realities. Because all lessons are to benefit the community, important knowledge is ultimately demonstrated by good works in the community.

The Cheyenne Teacher

Authors such as Farrell (1993) describe how native teachers have advantages of being more attuned to particular learning styles of their charges. Moreover,

> it is very important for native teachers to be from the community. One reason for this emerged from the observation that the Native teachers from the community seemed to be the ones to respond to and aid students in distress and thus had the additional role of assisting and supporting other teachers and the principal in dealing with the students. (p. 10)

Additionally, Connely and Clandinin (cited in Farrell, 1993) suggest "personal practical knowledge . . . is in the person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body, and in the person's future plans and actions. Knowledge is seen and found in our practices" (p. 25).

Modeling behavior and proper conduct is important to the Cheyenne. Moreover, those acting as students, become encouraged and learn better from members of their own tribe.

These members are role models for others to emulate and relate to others in the community by virtue of tacit or intuitive knowledge about the culture (Farrell, 1993, p. 11). As members of the same culture, they understand the beliefs and values needed to identify the content and process imparted within the instructional component. Likewise, elders are in an ideal position to act as the teachers and mentors for the young. By having relatives and community members involved in the educational setting, students can readily see how learning will affect their family and community. By invigorating and showing that the elders have a pivotal role in the instructional process, individual self-esteem and pride in family and culture can be reinstalled among Cheyenne people.

Most importantly, learning has a special sanctity for the Cheyenne people. Because life has purpose, true Cheyenne teachers know it is important to be attuned to all of creation for messages and instructions that may be imparted. In turn, those who are knowledgeable understand the spirituality of life and that the most important purpose for knowledge is to help others. The Journey of Life has a purpose, and learning more about it leads to a more purposeful and good life. To this end, experience is

tantamount to knowing more about life and about what is needed to help the community. Nevertheless, it is important to maintain a sense of humility and understand that certain lessons may be beyond intellectual understanding and may be gained only at the will of the Creator.

The Cheyenne Learner

The birth of a child is a gift from the Creator, and there is nothing more sacred. The elders expressed that both the young and the old are especially close to the Creator and because of this they have special powers to communicate with one another. The community is responsible to nurture the child along the Journey of Life, but it was the duty of the learner to trust in the judgement of their instructors that what was being taught was of vital importance to continue life. Because of this, the elders emphasized that the Cheyenne learner must be a meticulous listener and reverent observer of the sacred knowledge as it is imparted.

According to the Journey of Life, the young like the old, who are on a path to again meet the Creator, are closest to the spirit. Because of this relationship, the two are a pair with the elder as the teacher and the younger as the learner. This bond is very strong, and this relationship is often reaffirmed in prayer because it is

understood by the Cheyenne that without this link the transmission of vital knowledge could be lost.

By observing their parents as in traditional times, the children must learn necessary skills not only to survive but also to enrich themselves on the beauty of the Cheyenne way. That is why the elders expressed that although some individuals are quite old chronologically, they have not yet "grown up." Moreover, the elders reported that these individuals are readily identified by the behaviors they demonstrate in the community and by their ignorance of the Cheyenne Way.

For elders, life is a continuing revelation and nothing happens by accident. As such, keen observation and multi-sensory methods of instruction and experiential learning are essential for learning to occur. Thus, Cheyenne children can be expected to excel in content areas relevant to their needs. Moreover, unlike modern education where students are placed or divided by hierarchical grades, the elders believe all Cheyenne children are gifts from the Creator and are capable of learning both from their teachers as well as from one another. From this, learning must occur inter-generationally and cooperatively from their elders and their peers on a daily basis.

Like other tribes the Cheyenne believe in the preeminence of developing the person first by virtue of the sacred path of life. This journey is prescribed at the

earliest stages of life. It is revealed in the sacredness of the family, in the lesson thereof, in individual dreams and visions brought on by experiences within the greater whole of the sacred complex of life, and in the intervention of the Creator into one's life.

Thus, fundamental lessons in life are learned by the young and never questioned because these lessons are vital to continue the Journey of Life as it has been for countless generations. Essentially, this is an inductive approach emphasizing the understanding of the larger processes of life early in life and is in stark contrast to the non-Indian methods of learning skills and fragmentary knowledge in childhood and not having any idea of the larger forces at work which move people to behave and interact with one another.

The Assault on the Cheyenne System

Tragically, for the Cheyenne their sacred model of life was subject to the intolerance of the larger non-Indian society. Ceremonies such as the Sun Dance and Sweat which were designed to coalesce the community in prayer and publicly affirm the Cheyenne way were reduced to being conducted in secret and out of the tentacles of tribal informants or government authorities. Government and Christian authorities were tenacious in a policy to dismantle tribal cultures and supplant their system with

their own during most of the Reservation Era. Indeed, from the experience of the elders, educational policies imposed by the reservation authorities have meant that at every pivotal juncture the Cheyenne have had to contend with the domineering force of the non-Indian to change their ways in forcible conformation.

Almost immediately after the establishment of the reservation, the Sun Dance, which was the most important annual ceremony for the Cheyenne as well as for many other Plains tribes, was banned by the federal government. On the Cheyenne Reservation, this was no different. This law along with local measures on the reservation tried to render the tribe devoid of their belief system.

The slaughter of buffalo meant more than having the Cheyenne lose a gainful way of making a living; this act was a gross moral violation. Campbell (1988) described what the buffalo meant for Indian people.

> You see the [Native American] didn't think of animals the way we do, as some subspecies. Animals are equals at least, and sometimes our superiors. The animals have powers that the human does not have. The Shaman, for instance, will often have animal familiars, that is to say, the spirit of some animal species that will be his support and his teacher. . . . They [Native Americans] ask the animal for advice, and the animal becomes the model for how to live. In that case [the animal] is superior. And sometimes the animal becomes the giver of ritual, as in the legends of the origin of the buffalo. (p. 95)

Thus, buffalo were long since gone by the Reservation Era. This was more than a loss of a gainful way of making a living. It had a demoralizing effect on the Cheyenne that would be a source of problems to be had later. To compound circumstances, farming practices, which were supported by the government, were virtually impossible to sustain due to the reservation geography and climate. Also, due to the incompetence of government economic policies, the tribe became heavily dependent on government rations of food and materials to provide for their families.

Literally weakened physically with starvation and psychologically with the demise of their culture and way of life, the Cheyenne were in no position to protest the wishes of the church and agency superintendent. With no alternative the cycle of violence initially born on the war fields of the Plains was reinvigorated with the establishment of the reservation.

From this situation the entire educational program was delineated by the government, and the Cheyenne had no role in formulating the curriculum or the goals of learning. In turn, the forced participation of the Cheyenne within non-Indian schools derived a coping mechanism that was destructive to the culture. Under these conditions,

> Submerged in reality, the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the "order" which serves the interests of the oppressors whose image they have

> internalized. Chafing under the restrictions of this order, they often manifest a type of horizontal violence, striking out at their own comrades for the pettiest of reasons. (Friere, 1970, p. 48)

Prohibiting the Sun Dance epitomized the view the white culture had that tribal ways were primitive. However, making it illegal symbolized the ignorance of the larger culture and demonstrated the extent to which it would trample the tribal ways in favor of its own. The BIA and other authorities had until just recently wielded great power over the tribe. It was not until the 1970's that the Cheyenne were allowed to freely practice their religion.

The severing of the Cheyenne concept of education and the discarding of the spirituality and sacredness of learning were a blatant and systematic thrashing of the purpose and process of Cheyenne learning. This was compounded by the supplanting of tribal educational content with that of the non-Indian. Unfortunately, bigotry shows little discretion, and soon the traditional Cheyenne framework of education was quickly overburdened by the racist educational policies imposed by reservation authorities.

Reservation Schooling

If trust and wisdom characterized the traditional tribal teachings, then distrust and ignorance epitomized the non-Indian policies of reservation schooling. This

system was fueled by fear and violence directed at the Cheyenne and imposed itself on families by taking children out of homes and away to distant schools. For the elders, education meant that they were often gone for long periods of time without seeing their families. While at school, these elders were subject to the terror of violence in the schools.

Reservation educational policies started in earnest by physically isolating young Cheyenne children in boarding schools. Having no options Cheyenne children were forced to learn foreign curricula and adopt Christian doctrine. Additionally, knowledge was trivialized to the extent that it had no relation to the spiritual and moral quality of life. Unable to question, the Cheyenne were coerced and had no alternative but to succumb to the will of more powerful authorities.

In this context and in contrast to the natural educational model used by the Cheyenne, schooling was not meant to provide a means by which the Cheyenne could ask for revelations from the Creator. Likewise, schooling did not teach self-enlightenment or lessons about how to care for other members of the community. Rather, these things were denied on the false premise that the white culture was better than that of the tribes. In short, reservation schooling meant the will of others was forcibly imposed upon the Cheyenne not to educate them as they were doing

for themselves for countless millennia but rather to school this "savage" into being white.

The meeting of the Cheyenne and white cultures was marked by an explosion of conflict. Being the lesser of two powers, the tribe had to surrender its liberty to an invading oppressor that understood nothing about the Cheyenne ways. Out of this, all knowledge was kept in secret, and these lessons that in traditional times prompted the good of the community were now reduced to silence. This silence was symptomatic of the freedom lost by the Cheyenne.

> The oppressed who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires. Moreover, their struggle for freedom threatens not only their oppressor, but also their own oppressed comrades who are fearful of still greater repression. (Friere, 1970, p. 32)

If preparedness of Cheyennes to assume productive roles in the community is any measure, schooling on the reservation was a dismal failure. Inept, insensitive, and loathsome teachers left a legacy of students poorly trained and repelled by the formal educational systems.

At the government boarding school on the reservation at Busby, academics were virtually non-existent. Students attended school but while in class did little if any work. This was not by virtue of lack of materials. The elders reported that many times their teachers sat in class and

did nothing and that the students in turn spent most of their time visiting or looking at the pictures in the books.

In addition, that which was taught was intended to assimilate Cheyennes into the white culture or was misguided. It resulted in such efforts as promoting an agrarian economy although the land and climate on the reservation was not fit for this type of economic initiative. Although adept at raising cattle and horses, the Cheyenne were discouraged from doing this in favor of agriculture (Campbell, 1987, p. 382). For the elders, these circumstances were intimately felt, and they described how policies continually changed and how many Cheyennes simply gave up and moved off their land into nearby towns.

In town, the education from reservation schooling did not prepare the Cheyenne to deal with life's necessities. The elders pointed out that the failure of the reservation system was sharpened by the fact that all the businesses were owned by the whites in congruence with those policies supported by the government. One elder noted that the Cheyenne were silent during all of this because they were scared and the government took advantage of this.

In order to enforce compulsory education, Cheyenne children were taken from their homes and instructed in school. Moreover, BIA police were dispatched in order to

insure that these children attended school. If families did not comply with sending their children to school, they were threatened with having their rations discontinued. As a result, families were disrupted and displaced by boarding schools, and the elders were rendered useless by not having a role in the teaching and learning process of the young. With few if any options, the bond between the young and old, which was an integral part of the Journey of Life, was almost severed by virtue of the establishment of formal schooling on the reservation.

The cumulative effect of all of this adversity was that education was a mechanism which the main culture used to undermine Cheyenne culture. By striking at the young, who were most vulnerable, whole families and communities were subjugated to the will of the government. Clearly for the Cheyennes, education was never neutral.

> It is not important whether educators are conscious of following a domesticating practice, since the essential point is the manipulative dimension between educators and learners, by which the latter are made passive objects of action by the former. As passive individuals, learners are not invited to participate creatively in the process of their learning; instead they are "filled" by the educators' words. Within the cultural framework of this practice, educators are presented to the learners as though the latter were separated from life, as though language and thought were possible without reality. In such educational practice, the social structures are never discussed as problems that need to be revealed. . . . It would be extremely naive to expect the dominant classes to develop a type of education that would enable

> subordinate classes to perceive social injustices critically. (Friere, 1970, p. 102)

Thus, children were taken from their homes and kept away for many days, months, and even years to be "filled" with lessons by the non-Indian and to be treated as if they had nothing inside to contribute. To compound this situation, the elders experienced while at school the young being subject to violence by other children who themselves were coping in an environment over which they had little control. Moreover, they were forced to speak only English and told that their culture was heathen; they grew angry and resentful. Physical and mental abuse by staff members against the students as well as violence by students against themselves were commonplace and marked the frustration and anger born out of this system.

Reservation Teachers

From the experience of the elders, the teachers were naive at best and incompetent and ill-intended at worst. They explained that as the enforcer of rules and the administrator of penalties, the teacher did not hesitate to use violence.

It was agreed that teachers at the Catholic mission were no different in that few good memories can be recalled by the elders about their treatment there. If anything, the mission had a personal stake on the assault on tribal

values and culture. By tolerating Cheyenne culture as it is expressed in experiences, behaviors, and customs, the primary mission to civilize and Christianize Cheyenne people would be undermined. Thus at the mission school, the role of the teacher was to painfully implant the doctrine of Christianity.

Aside from learning that ostensibly was taking place in school, the teachers were apparently aloof to the events occurring outside the classroom. If any real learning was occurring, it was in the form of a violent student backlash to the hostile surroundings of the boarding school system. Pecking orders were quickly established, and the younger students who were at the mercy of their older and more experienced counterparts were forced to steal and lie. Tragically, the nature of the boarding school environment is marked by violent outbursts between students and by the forced adoption of antisocial behaviors in order to cope.

Regrettably, the elders recalled nothing to suggest that violence at Christian schools was any different than that at their secular counterparts. Ominously, after having attended reservation schools, the violence of reservation schooling became a factor contributing to elders leaving the reservation to attend school elsewhere or to find work in lieu of getting an education.

For the elders today, these experiences bring back painful memories. They were humiliated about their culture

in front of other students and were punished for speaking their language or using the culture. Although little was learned in school, plenty of violent anti-social behaviors existed outside the classroom. Children were pitted against one another, and fighting to survive was common. Students were displaced from their families for extended periods, and they were lucky if they could go home at Christmas.

In light of this tragic experience, the students of past generations have a painful legacy. In order to help alleviate what has already been done, efforts must begin to have these elders share this experience with others not only to inform people of the miscarriage of education that is evident but also to allow these individuals to share this information in a therapeutic sense.

Each elder has unique experiences and knowledge about oppression and about how it has manifested itself in daily life. It is necessary now to gather each individual's perspective, to glean a more complete picture of oppression from it, and to develop strategies for dealing with it.

A secondary effect of getting people to dialogue about oppression is that this will not only demonstrate to the community the stark image of a violent past but it can also form the basis for the educational curricula. This can show fundamental ways in which traditional Cheyenne

concepts can work to rebuild individual, family, and communal relationships.

As opposed to violence, the elders and their families must learn new coping strategies of non-violence and constructing dialogue with others to solve problems. Weakened and susceptible by the fragmentation of the community, the regeneration of knowledge through the elders will have a transformative effect for community empowerment which can ultimately lead the Cheyenne to a community of hope (Conti et al., 1991, p. 35).

Finally, the elders must be shown that they can become a viable and necessary part of the Cheyenne educational system. By doing this, it will be possible to reinstall the elders' trust in education as a necessary tool for the survival of the tribe.

By having elders as mentors for Cheyenne teachers, such things as Cheyenne learning styles, traditional practical knowledge, and non-verbal acuity in the instructional process can be investigated and developed (Farrell, 1992, pp. 2-3). This will be vital in the reconstruction of the educational process to accommodate holistic practices such as inter-disciplinary and inter-generational learning and participatory research projects.

The elders described how lessons come to individuals and how the Cheyenne have little knowledge of how or when this might occur. Because of this, the Cheyenne believe

each child progresses and grasps the meaningful things in life at their own volition. In this context, it is important for those who teach the Cheyenne to realize that they will not be "teachers" per se but will be facilitators who view students as viable sources of knowledge and as each progressing at their own rate. These teachers will understand that instead of pushing students along, they must implement the individually tailored inductive and discovery techniques for teaching that the tribe used in traditional times. Further, native teachers know the families and communities in which each of the students reside and works within this network to best accommodate the needs of the student.

In addition, to counterbalance the heavy hand of outside authorities during the Reservation Era, the Cheyenne must now be fully involved in the purpose and direction of their educational initiatives. The elders should be at the centerpiece of present and future educational discussions and plans. Tribal elders are repositories of many years of experience. Lessons from them are never questioned because life has a purpose and because every life form plays a role and may serve as a teacher. Like other tribes, the Cheyenne believed that

> there is a proper way to live in the universe: there is content in every action, behavior and belief. The sum total of our life experiences has a reality. There is a direction in the universe, empirically exemplified in the physical

> growth cycles of childhood, youth, and old age. . . . Nothing has an incidental meaning and there are no coincidences. (Deloria, 1993 p. 65)

Further, and akin to the Cheyenne Journey of Life, Deloria states,

> In the moral universe all activities, events, and entities are related, and consequently it does not matter what kind of existence an entity enjoys, for the responsibility is always there for it to participate in the continuing creation of reality. (p. 65)

Thus, due to the lessons that have been taught to them, their observations in the community, and their encounters with the spirits in vision quests and prayer, the elders have experiences to understand what is important to teach the young. Although vital lessons are imparted to the youth, life itself is a process of learning. One must be constantly aware of the instructions that may be forthcoming from other life forms and the intervention of the Creator to correct life's journey. By doing this, the elders can have a cohesive influence. By working constructively, this long neglected part of the Cheyenne community can regain the respect and stature it once had. In this way, Cheyenne people can be provided an opportunity to discuss in a non-threatening environment and to act on sensitive issues associated with oppression. This can lead to the development of a network of help and therapy which in turn can strengthen tribal commitment and ownership of tribal mandates.

The Immediate Effects of Violence

Coercion by reservation authorities to force the Cheyenne to abandon their way of life and the systematic thrashing of families provided the first onslaught against the Cheyenne. With this the bond between instructor and protege was broken, and the family, which was the support mechanism for learning, was fractured. The environment which was a vital link to Cheyenne revelations from the Creator became a place from which authorities dislodged Cheyennes to herd them to school.

However, violence bred out of the schools and oppressive reservation setting today is a latent, yet destructive, residue of the earlier era. The change forced upon the Cheyenne was more than the outward practice of making a living a different way and adopting the white culture. This process meant a fundamental violation of the Cheyenne moral framework. No longer learning lessons to sustain the community and by the will of the Creator, learning was trivialized to a political agenda to assimilate the Cheyenne like all other Indians across the country into the main culture.

This was particularly painful for the Cheyenne. According to the elders, behaviors and actions are the outward manifestations of internally held moral understandings, and they must coincide if a good life is to

be led. Moreover, individual and tribal conduct toward other life forms were of tantamount importance. In this context, hypocrisy in terms of what one espoused to believe versus how one actually conducted their life was a profane act not only against the community but also against the path of life as prescribed by the Creator.

Not surprisingly, the moral violation, coupled with incompetence and unrelenting ignorance by the non-Indian, led to failure and hopelessness among Cheyenne people. Ultimately their condition would worsen to resignation and self-destructive tendencies. Rather than check this process of degradation, schooling was a vehicle to enhance the oppression on the Cheyenne. For the Cheyenne little good came of education. From this, achievement in the whiteman's school was lacking. In regard to this condition,

> No one elects to be illiterate. One is illiterate because of objective conditions. In certain circumstances the illiterate man is the man who does not need to read. In other circumstances, he is the one whom the right to read was denied. In either case, there is no choice. (Friere, 1970, p. 13)

For the Cheyenne, the "reading" that must take place is in every aspect of reality. All things including plants and animals are capable of communicating. This text was torn from the Cheyenne. This negatively disposed them to education for everything that followed and made them more

susceptible to the violence generated within their community.

The Present Dilemma of Cheyenne Education

Cheyenne elders believe that good lessons resulted in proper behavior and one's daily actions reflected a sound understanding of the Journey of Life. However, due to government restraint, the Cheyenne beliefs have been repressed and never were they fully instituted within the educational context of the reservation. Presently, by virtue of recent tribal council action to support the establishment of a public high school on the reservation, it appears that the elected leadership has now turned to public education as a legitimate model to educate Cheyenne children. Due to the stark contrast in philosophy of Cheyenne versus mainstream education models, it is necessary to bring into focus what public education represents and what implications this has for the Cheyenne.

Like the Cheyenne Journey of Life, such concepts as praxis (Friere, 1970) believe thought and action must be interlocked in order to maintain just and right societies. Regrettably, this has not been the case in American society and education.

> If teachers make a botch of it, and an uncomfortably large number of them do, it is because it never simply occurs to more than a handful to ask why they are doing what they are

> doing, to think seriously or deeply about the purpose or consequences of education.
>
> This mindlessness---the failure to think seriously about educational purpose, the reluctance to question established practice---is not the monopoly of the public school; it is diffused remarkably throughout the entire educational system, and indeed the entire society.
>
> If mindlessness is a central problem, the solution must lie in infusing the various educating instructions with purpose, more important, with thought about purpose, and about the ways in which technique, content, and organization fulfill or alter purpose. (Silberman, 1970, p. 11)

The entire schooling process, including public education, is steeped in a Positivist tradition that extends back to the medieval times in Europe. According to this theory, universal laws were defined according to conceptions of the natural world. In educational practice, Positivism holds that the researcher is separate, objective, and autonomous (Brieschke, 1992, p. 173). Removed from the reality of the object of research, Positivism

> legitimates a sense of unconnectedness, encourages privatization, or the exclusion of women and other groups from the construction of knowledge, and creates a political structure of domination, exploitation, and oppression---dirty, emotional vocabulary to describe a science that some want to believe is clean and value free. . . with no possibility for considering moral questions in society. (Brieschke, 1992, p. 173-174)

As an indicator of the failure of public school education for Indian students, the 1969 Kennedy Report entitled "Indian Education: A National Tragedy - A National

Challenge" found that efforts to assimilate Indian children had unwholesome results reflected in absenteeism, high dropout rate, negative self-image, and low achievement. Students from the Cheyenne reservation drop out in a higher rate than their non-Indian counterparts from each of the schools in the surrounding area of the reservation (Ward & Wilson, 1991, p. 62). Moreover, social and cultural factors have a negative impact on school performance for students from the Cheyenne reservation in school (p. 53).

However, the performance of students is often measured in grade point average and attainment which does nothing for the Indian community considering the present status. Indeed, it now appears that Indian students who are engaged in public schools are actually being drawn toward the assimilationist ideology and into the mainstream of society (Pewewardy, 1992, p. 214). If this is indeed the case, then good performance in school means being disassociated with the home and community.

Some may argue that the dropout and poor achievement of Cheyennes and other Native Americans can be attributed to other factors such as poverty and single parent homes. However, meaningful and true education such as that of the Cheyenne in traditional times was engaged in the community. By virtue of this system a primary purpose of education was to promote the welfare of the community. The failure of this fundamental purpose as it has been the case on the

reservation today is symptomatic of a foreign and oppressive educational system functioning at full strength against the Cheyenne people. Indeed, rather than pointing to an inherent deficiency of Native American students, this behavior could be read as the success of Native resistance to cultural, spiritual, and psychological genocide (Hampton, 1993, p. 267).

Beyond the deleterious effect public education has had on individual tribal members is the scourge it represents to the Indian community at large. Public schools and these institutions are responsible for alienating Native American students not only from their tribes but their families as well (Pewewardy, 1992, p. 211).

Although Indian tribes and the Cheyenne in particular were tormented by the obtrusiveness of alien educational policies, the mainstream of society has also suffered.

> If pain, failure, and alienation have become the predominant experience of American schooling . . . then we are morally obligated to overthrow the despotic rule of value-free thought and method. As long as a single human being remains imprisoned in the dominating structure of American schooling. (Brieschke, 1992, p. 175)

Rather than value free, Cheyenne education was a moral quest, and it was by virtue of this system that a beautiful and highly complex view of the world was maintained and balanced. Thus, the Cheyenne decision to choose public education is indeed a grave circumstance.

> I have concluded, based on my experience and understandings, that traditional [tribal education] and modern education as it is practiced in the United States schools today are virtually incompatible. . . . This incompatibility has led to failure, and until Indians define for themselves in their own way within their own communities what education is and how it should be designed and implemented, then the possibility will exist for education that is truly educational for Indian children. (Campbell, 1991, p. 101)

Moreover, in addition to the foreign element that American education represents for Indian people is the insidious nature of its aggression toward tribal cultures. Public education serves to maintain the present class structure in society (Pewewardy, 1992, p. 214), and as a mirror of society Indian education

> has been built upon the premise that the Indian had a great deal to learn from the white man; the white man representing the highest level of achievement reached in the evolutionary process. The white man's religion was best, his economics superior, his sense of justice the keenest, his knowledge of history the greatest. The Indian's task was to consume bits and pieces of the white man's world in the expectation that some day he would become as smart. The totality of the white man's knowledge was supposed to encompass the wisdom of the ages, painfully accumulated by a series of great men. In the old treaty-signing days, many Indians came to feel that perhaps this superior knowledge gave the white man his right to do what he did. Bows and arrows were useless against guns. Ponies could not outrun trains. Iron kettles were superior to earthen pots and hides. So education provisions were written into treaties, and from tribe to tribe people began to slowly change their ways to conform to the white man's way of doing things. The expectation that one day the fuzzy picture would clear and the Indian would stand as equal to the white man grew over the generations. Today, when we are asked what our problems are, we continue to reflect this ancient belief. "Give us more education,"

> we cry, "and we can become self-sufficient." But there is a real question that we have failed to examine when we talk about education as the answer to our problems. What is education? What is it we must learn if we are to adjust to the society in which we find ourselves? (Deloria, 1978, p. 11)

It is also false that by having Indian people serve as teachers and administrators that the goals of the system will change. This is wrong. Even if Indian people are empathetic and caring for their charges, which in turn will likely affect performance and achievement by their students, the process of instruction and the focus of the curriculum will remain within the purview of the non-Indian culture. The net outcome will be to have Indian people take charge of their own cultural death by virtue of a process of "parallel assimilation." This will happen even if 100% of the staff, students, faculty, and school board are Native American (Morrison, 1993, p. 9). As a "system" schooling is not neutral because there is no such thing as a neutral educational process (Shaull, cited in Friere, 1970, p. 15). Public education serves the larger purposes of an oppressive society and is designed to resist change (Pewewardy, 1993, p. 215). Thus, by staffing schools with Indians, the goal of public education will remain the same by virtue of its fealty to the state and of the mission of the system and its commensurate certification, licensing, and curricula requirements. It is therefore simplistic to think that by having Indian people controlling public

education that there will be any different outcome for Indian students.

Moreover, from a systemic perspective, establishing a public school on the reservation will not only lead to the demise of the culture through white educational methods, but Indian control over non-Indian educational systems will only result in having the names changed in the positions of authority and those coming to power will become nothing more than oppressors themselves (Friere, 1970, pp. 29-30).

Assimilation, or the attempt to make Indian people culturally homogenous with other Americans, will be cultural genocidal for the Cheyenne people. Tragically, this is characteristic of oppressed communities where "tribal cultures and knowledge are stigmatized and simply replaced by the dominant culture. Seldom are traditional tribal values acknowledged or are attempts made to perpetuate them" (Goodland cited in Wilmer, 1993, p. 124).

Moreover, the effects of self-destruction in Native American communities which have suffered oppression are described as:

> These are the effects on indigenous peoples who, as communities and individuals, survive extended contact with modernizing nation-states. This is the fate of those not murdered by the private violence of the miners and settlers on the frontiers of the expanding modern state. This is the fate of those not destroyed slowly by the self-destructive behavior---alcoholism, suicide, and economic independence---that follows from the displacement of self-esteem with self-hate. This is the fate of those not destroyed by the

> indirect violence of assimilation and relocation ---policies that assume that cultures can be destroyed without really harming individuals. (Wilmer, 1993, p. 125)

Government and Christian boarding schools were a main factor in weakening the Cheyenne family structure. Forced removal from homes and the fragmentation of the traditional tribal structures for learning was augmented by a process to resocialize Cheyenne students against the culture they were derived from. Public education is now in the hands of the tribe, and this will have far-reaching implications for generations to come.

This may not mean that Cheyenne children will be removed to some distant place away from the community, but removal will happen. This will be in the form of the removal of tribal dreams and aspirations to be replaced by non-Indian, state approved curricula. This will also mean a removal of the elders and traditional teachings back into obscurity for the daily affairs of the Cheyenne people.

Thus, public schooling is steeped in both purpose and convention which is very much unlike the ideals present within the Northern Cheyenne community. Such issues as Cheyenne morality and the relationship of praxis, assimilation, and aggression by the mainstream society toward the Cheyenne within the educational context are fundamental considerations that need to be reconciled in order to effectively implement a coherent educational

system on the reservation. In order to critically examine these questions a comprehensive view of these matters can be derived through discussion and examination from such segments of the community as the tribal council, tribal education commissions and boards, and public and tribal school and college representatives.

If not careful, public schooling can very easily take on an assimilationist bent (that is what it is designed for in American society) and the schooling scenario could be a repeat of the cultural suicide experienced by the current elders. In order to avoid this, several critical elements are worthy of consideration for the construction of a Cheyenne educational model.

Tribal Education Versus Reservation Schooling

There is an inverse relationship between the non-Indian concept of education and that which is held by Indian people. This dichotomy rests with the separation between personal and professional growth assumed by the white culture and the blending of these two elements in Indian culture. For example, in white society one commonly accepted purpose for education is to train people to function within the institutional setting to support the larger aim of society (Elias & Merriam, 1980, p. 87). By good work and promoting the system, individuals then gain status and power. Only after acquiring a certain degree of

professional standing is one allowed to express an opinion about the practice within a given field of expertise. However, in Indian society there is a reversal of this process; personal growth is assured first and is then followed by professional expertise (Deloria, 1990, p. 16).

Moreover, in terms of decision making and problem solving, this holistic approach by tribes,

> the analysis of a problem from the point of view of the larger system that encompassed it, is an inherent process. . . . Generations of careful observation of the system and patterns of the natural world evolved into an understanding that symptomatic solutions do not address the fundamental nature of the problem. (Masters, 1993, p. 3)

This is a fundamental point that contrasts tribal views with the non-Indian world where western science is founded on experimental deductive approaches. For example, for the Sioux the implications of this would be to discard almost all of the basis for their belief system.

> If the Western Sioux obtained their knowledge by accepting everything they experienced as grist for the mill, Western science has drawn its conclusions by excluding the kinds of data which the Western Sioux cherished. Western science holds that ideas, concepts, and experiences must be clearly stated, and be capable of replication in an experimental setting by an objective observer. (Deloria, 1994, p. 64)

Tragically, Euro-American education has a long history of trying to remake the Indian into white.

> The dual inheritance of the assimilation policies of education and land allotment had already given some indication of their potential ability to damage if not destroy a majority of the Indian

> people. During the next three decades (1900-1930) the unchecked pursuit of these policies led the Indian to a point of no return. By the end of World War II he was suffering increasingly from disease and a short life expectancy, malnutrition and starvation, a diminishing land base, and a stagnant, unrealistic school system. (Szasz, 1977, p. 12)

In light of the dark legacy of past systems of education which attempted to change the Cheyenne, instituting a holistic model on the reservation will be a major undertaking. However, Deloria (1978) provides an insight by saying,

> We need not, in Indian education, concern ourselves with much subject matter previously considered important. Instead we must have basic courses in reading, writing, and arithmetic, which serve as tools for the real educational experience of learning the traditions, customs and beliefs of the tribal community. We have no use for the knowledge of the names of the Presidents of the United States, and the sequence in which they held office is certainly abstract to us. We must substitute for them a listing of great chiefs, headmen and the leaders of our communities. We must know about their lives as accurately and intimately as we know about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. We must understand that we stand in tradition and have a responsibility to carry it forward. If we can change our concept of education to include the specifically Indian things of life, we have only to wait and soon we shall see that we are in many ways far ahead of the rest of society. (p. 26)

There are now opportunities to study other models of tribal education that have been successful elsewhere. The Mounds Park All-Nations Magnet School in St. Paul, Minnesota, combines its curriculum and mission to match the tribal worldviews. This magnet school takes a holistic

approach to the student's experience in school and considers the physical, psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental factors affecting the child's learning (Pewewardy, 1992). For the elders this approach is more appropriate considering the Cheyenne belief in such things as modeling behavior, observing intently, and the interrelatedness of the learning environment which itself extends beyond one place or time.

Today there is a growing appreciation of such a holistic approach, and this is being recognized by scholars in a growing number of disciplines. In education the Cheyenne approach to reality is analogous to the theory of "praxis" or the blending of theory and practice as forwarded by such educators as Friere (1970). Friere argues that oppressed peoples, or those who have choices imposed upon them by others, need to approach reality by first objectifying their experience through reflection and then to act upon their assessment with action (p. 36). This practice is analogous to a holistic Cheyenne model which involves acting within the framework of careful consideration (reflection) of the moral path and behaving accordingly.

Education For Empowerment

Thinking little of themselves and having been assailed by the reservation system and schools, the Cheyenne are now contending with several generations who are suffering the latent effects of this violence. Overt controls and coercion have led to a self-destructive pendulum which is now swinging from apathy and withdrawal on one side to intra-tribal violence on the other. Throughout the process, symptoms of alienation such as alcoholism are working insidiously.

Although the past Reservation Era for the Cheyenne has been marked by religious persecution and repeated attempts by the non-Indian to dismantle their culture, this has not been totally successful in suppressing the Cheyenne Way of knowing. The Cheyenne have always continued to practice their sacred ceremonies, and now the testimony of the elders offer renewed hope that tribal spirituality will replenish the Cheyenne community.

To reaffirm the Cheyenne approach, all learning ranging from the earliest moments of childhood to the latter stages of old-age must now be reassessed in the context of Cheyenne morality. Each decision that has implications for the tribe should be reconsidered by asking such questions as "How is this going to benefit the tribe?"

and "What is its relationship to the spiritual and physical existence of the tribe?"

Education for the tribe means,

> The Cheyenne person aged with the whole season rather than a certain day of the year. From the four stages of Cheyenne growth, a person slowly emerges as a Cheyenne person. The time element of each stage is in long years. As each of the stages unfolds for the Cheyenne person, his vision of life as well as the responsibilities of life deepen. Each of the stages offers a new beginning of life for the Cheyenne person. . . . They [Cheyenne] don't rush their people into anything, but patiently wait for the years of the individual to bloom and be filled with the meaning of the journey. (Sooktis, 1976, p. 5)

This process is buttressed by the experience and knowledge of respected elders within the community. For too long the Cheyenne system of thought has been looked on as an anomaly or at best a curiosity. The Cheyenne "patiently wait for the years of the individual to bloom" (Sooktis, 1976, p. 5) and by doing this, life is marked by the path along the journey as opposed to years lived. By doing this, the tribe effectively struck a blend of thought and action which represented "praxis" (Friere, 1970, p. 36). The Cheyenne system epitomized this process as the Cheyenne made daily decisions based on the beliefs represented in the Journey of Life.

The imposition of the white culture on the Cheyenne was devastating for the tribe, and this situation was born out of mindless action by the non-Indian. Now the Cheyenne need to engage their belief system within the practice of

education and begin to rebuild their community with the "praxis" they employed in traditional times.

Until now the Cheyenne have been forced to function in Euro-centric economic and social systems that are foreign to them and subsequently have been marked by failure for them. Those now within the reservation infrastructure, regardless of their intent, must be cognizant of the oppressive aim of past practices and of the central role education played in the oppressive process, and they should begin to consider ways to change. In this context, it is dangerous for those working to solve problems in the community to believe that meaningful change will occur by fixing the system when what will occur is an oppressive system might work more efficiently in destroying the culture. It is time to break free of the oppressive constraints of obscure and insensitive government regulations. Like 100 years ago, the Cheyennes are still captive; although it is not physically, but psychologically and socially, the tribe is caught in the web of self-destructive behavior born on the reservation. Although their condition may not mean immediate death, the demise of the Cheyenne will surely come in the form of cultural genocide from the outside and tribal ignorance and naivety from within.

According to the testimony of the elders, fundamental elements such as sharing and respect have deteriorated in

the community. In terms of community cohesiveness, bitter relations between tribal members grew out of distant experiences in school. Moreover, the inability of Cheyennes to grapple with their current problems can be attributed to schools that ignore their plight or fail to realize there are problems.

Supplanting the System

Because the reservation system is fundamentally flawed by its repression of the Cheyenne way of knowing, all institutional elements must now be under the scrutiny of tribal philosophy and action. Conventionally, education treats students' minds as empty "accounts" into which educators make deposits of information from didactic lectures and commercial texts (Shor, 1992, p. 31). In contrast "problem-posing" education

> focuses on power relations in the classroom, in the institution, in the formation of standard canons of knowledge, and in society at large. It considers the social and cultural context of education, asking how student subjectivity and economic conditions affect the learning process. Student culture as well as inequality and democracy are central issues to problem-posing educators when they make syllabi and examine the climate for learning. (p. 31)

To move in this direction, whole systems must be placed under the scrutiny of tribal philosophy and long range development schema. Problem-posing which assumes no premise is correct unless it is a product of critical

examination and reflection on moral and ethical standards must become the rule for tribal reorganization and development. By doing this, the Cheyenne can start to look proactively at the future.

Because the Cheyenne model of reality holds that all things are interrelated, it is absolutely necessary for them to be free to use their system to grasp such issues as the implications of the rapid onset of technology or the commensurate degradation of the environment. According to the Cheyenne, beliefs and actions were intimately linked. Now the survival of the planet is contingent on viewing the environment this way. All disciplines must become integrated to form the basis for future decisions regarding education, business, and other ventures affecting the environment. This approach has growing support in parts of this country and throughout the world, and the Cheyenne are now in an enviable position to use their belief system to develop environmentally safe economic strategies on the reservation (Rayl, 1994, p. 48).

Forbidding questions always arise in times of turmoil. Whether it be the founding of the Council of Forty-Four or the trek back from Oklahoma, the elders described how prophets and visionaries led them out of crisis and could foretell events in the future.

In both figurative and literal terms, the Cheyenne must now reapproach this part of the community to find

clues about what is needed for the tribe in the future. This is important in that prophets have always played an integral role in the destiny of the tribe, and their presence insures that the path to the future is morally correct. To accomplish this the elders must take the lead in reconstructing the Cheyenne way. According to Belah (cited in Conti et al., 1991) by invigorating the "community of memories," such procedures as brainstorming, focus groups, and participatory research, the most oppressed segments of the Cheyenne community can be proactively engaged in the reconstruction of the Cheyenne Way from the very onset. This process will be from the bottom up and will be built on consensus as it was traditionally. By empowering those who have been traditionally disenfranchised, this phase of Cheyenne renewal will be the first act against oppression. In turn, the community must dispose of the cultural baggage left by oppression. By trusting in the traditional ways the Cheyenne can relearn their culture and destiny and be free of the ignorance and fear that is needed to sustain their oppressive condition.

Rebuilding the Moral Path of Life

The Cheyenne Journey must now be given life by showing how individual actions and pursuits are a point of reference for the moral good of the community. By

providing a standard of thought and behavior, hypocrisy can be revealed more readily and a sense of direction and hope in life for each Cheyenne can ensue.

To insure Cheyenne students are taught properly by well-trained and culturally-oriented teachers, an infrastructure for tribal academic excellence must be established. This can only happen when the Cheyenne realize that they must teach their young and that they themselves are capable of being teachers.

Since research indicates that Native American students learn better by being taught by Native teachers from their culture, culturally relevant excellence will prevail in the classroom. Moreover, the Cheyenne model for decision-making is built on consensus and the understanding that each individual is capable of providing unique insights into tribal issues. Because of this, teachers can have full input into the design and purpose of curriculum. This is both complementary to the free exploration of learning and cooperative nature of this endeavor as believed by the Cheyenne as well as the fluid nature of praxis. Therefore, the blend of theory and practice (which in education is analogous to administration and teaching) has implications for professional development and an institutional setting that is not hierarchical. Thus, educational practice has the potential to identify the long-term needs of the tribe and the strategies appropriate to accomplish them.

In turn, the tribe will groom students and can more readily make a commitment of support to specific areas of discipline for future cultural and technological needs. From this vantage point, the human resources represented in the student population will be assured that what they will be learning will not be in vain but more relevant to the needs of the tribe. With this each student can be confident that the expertise they gain is more relevant to a professional career helping the tribe. Additionally, by making long-term commitments to education the tribe will be in a position to leverage what they foresee for themselves with various institutions of higher education throughout this country and the world.

In order to reinvigorate the Cheyenne language, it must be understood that it is a vital link between the spiritual and physical realities. It must be emphasized that language and technology are also congruent and that with the development of the tribe the language will play a vital role.

Re-establishing the Traditional Institutions

The testimony of the elders indicated that there is a great deal of political tension and hostility within the communities on the reservation. Perhaps most discouraging for the elders was the admission that even the traditional

societies (whose traditional role is to mediate disputes) have themselves been mired in conflict among themselves.

For the Cheyenne the most highly respected quarters of the community are the Chiefs and Soldiers Societies. These groups are made up of individuals that are respected for their sound judgement and even temperament. In recent times, however, the elders view both of these institutions as also being riddled with strife. As opposed to trying to reconcile the troubles of the community and talking reasonably to solve problems, these agencies are now taking sides and reservation is riddled internally in vile and hurtful ways. A sad irony exists in that the contemporary institutions of traditional Cheyenne leadership are now also struggling with their own membership being hypocritical by using their personal stature as a source of power for political gain.

Like the communities and families, the knowledge of the Cheyenne Ways is also fragmented, and the input of all segments of the community, particularly the traditional elements of the tribe, is of utmost importance. In order to generate more knowledge, the initial circle of elders should be expanded to incorporate others in the community in order to elaborate on the ideas suggested in this study. By doing this the full tapestry of Cheyenne culture can provide the framework for tribal education.

In order to objectively approach this situation, an inventory of all the problems and their sources must be developed. By conducting a thorough study of the traditional Cheyenne concepts and techniques of mediation and consensus building processes, culturally relevant and meaningful resolutions may be reached within the framework of traditional military societies and chiefs councils.

Furthermore, the demonstration of behavior conducive to community support is supremely important for the Cheyenne. By readministering these procedures on present day problems and institutions, a proactive role can be gained by traditional leaders in the community. By reincorporating traditional ways the Cheyenne institutions of leadership, represented in the Chiefs and Military Societies, can show the community that they are a source of tribal pride and strength and that these individuals will no longer have to endure a token or cosmetic role in daily affairs and planning for the tribe.

Dismantling Bureaucratic Controls

To begin the process of giving control back to the Cheyenne, the entire community must now learn about the sources and process of controls that have played such an oppressive role in ruling the Cheyennes daily existence. In this context, all elements including government policies and church actions should be examined within the framework

of historical and present day control over the daily lives of individual Cheyennes as well as influences on tribal institutions and government. After identifying these control sources, the Cheyenne will be able to reconstruct a positive relationship with these parties on their own terms.

In terms of religion, the Cheyenne will be able to discuss in theory and philosophy their system with that of the non-Indian and discuss parallel beliefs. The net effect of this will be to legitimize the Cheyenne belief system in tribal terms. Since the influence of Christianity has had an impact on the Cheyenne community, tribal beliefs must now supplant this arrangement and strategize ways in which the disruptive trends associated with the conflict of belief systems in the past can be reversed.

In addition, a reconciliation must be struck between those who have been a party to oppression and those who fell victim. In doing this the Cheyenne and their adversaries may be able to redefine their relationship on truthfulness and forgiveness and thereby develop constructive relationships based on the will of the tribe in the future.

Resignation

According to the elders, there is a general sense of despair on the reservation. Even when in positions of authority on the tribal council, Cheyennes have little hope because of past efforts and failure and the ultimate role of the BIA in dismantling constructive ideas and actions.

For those who have succeeded in school, the elders understand that there is little on the reservation for them to return to. Those that do return have limited ways of applying their skills. There is a general sentiment that many Cheyennes have started training but only a few ever complete their education.

For those who have ideas, the apathy of the community stall any efforts that could otherwise go forward. If not apathy, harsh criticism by other Cheyennes and internal chaos force those putting forth effort to quit. The net effect of all of the above has led to a self-fulfilling prophesy of failure.

By virtue of this, Cheyennes who would otherwise be role models and sources of wisdom for the younger are caught up in a cycle of violence toward others within the community. Because of this, a potentially rich source of information about the Cheyenne Way is now deadlocked in internal strife.

Alcoholism

Escape in the form of drinking to excess has been a pattern for the Cheyenne people. Whole families have been known to drink with abandon, and drinking within some parts of the reservation has forced people to move elsewhere. There is a sentiment among tribal members that those drinking cannot find work and that when they do, they lose their jobs due to drinking. In any case those drinking have withdrawn and see little reason or hope to be engaged in the community in a productive manner. The severity of the problem is such that many elders now believe that the Cheyenne belief in sharing is being taken advantage of by those relatives and friends that drink. The elders say that respectful relationships by the young toward the old have broken down. By virtue of this phenomenon, families and communities are now being driven apart as alcoholism becomes more and more prevalent.

The Cheyenne have suffered many forms of violence associated with living on the reservation. Of all of the self-destructive tendencies demonstrated by tribal members, alcoholism may be the most pervasive. In light of the oppressive Reservation Era, the Cheyennes should reflect upon the Journey of Life. Such actions can lead to an understanding of the implication of oppressive social, economic, and political factors that have contributed to

their demise. In addition, Cheyennes must understand and begin to assume a proactive stance against the latent effects of a diseased environment of racism, bigotry, and violence.

Like other tribes, the Cheyenne are victims of circumstances that were once beyond their control. In the unrelenting attempts to assimilate the Cheyenne, the non-Indian tried relentlessly to indoctrinate tribal members in the beliefs and values of the main society. This in turn had far reaching effects on the daily existence and identity of the tribe. Alcoholism is a symptom and not a cause for the tribes current state of affairs.

> Some cultures within larger societies may use intoxicants to excuse or embolden violence and other behaviors that are unacceptable for the larger society. For example, the high rate of violent deaths and alcohol abuse among the Native American has been interpreted as a coping strategy to deal with problems that arise during acculturation into white society. (Westermeyer & Brantner, 1993, pp. 749-752)

This is understood when one considers the Cheyenne believe that both the spiritual and physical entities are intimately bound. One cannot be subverted without weakening the other. Rather than coping negatively as a result of the spiritual violation from the past, the Cheyenne can find traditional tribal ways to help themselves escape 100 years of oppression from the white culture.

Likewise, the Cheyenne can substantiate a cure for alcoholism by using traditional methods such as the Red Road approach developed by Gene Thin Elk of the Sioux Nation. According to this approach, all elements including the emotional, physical, moral, and spiritual are interrelated. By doing this the Cheyenne will be able to replicate this program with their own beliefs and experience and begin to use their culture as a mechanism for healing.

Intra-tribal Racism

Perhaps the most divisive event now occurring on the reservation is the hostile relationship that has developed within the tribe based on an exclusionary definition of tribal membership based on blood quantum. In this situation the full-bloods, who are those Cheyenne with Cheyenne parents and with a darker complexion, are in contention with the breeds, who are those Cheyennes who may have one parent who is white and subsequently with a lighter complexion. This relationship has been longstanding on the reservation.

The elders recall that generations ago the reservation was segregated in that the breeds usually attended school off the reservation in towns like Hardin and Colstrip. It was also recalled that the breeds lived on lands apart from the Cheyenne in places like Muddy Creek and Kirby, Montana.

Not surprisingly, the elders recalled little interaction in school with breeds and said most of their friends were either other full-bloods or were white. However, hostilities in school could many times be traced to the tension between the full-bloods and breeds.

In terms of problems today, the elders resent those who now are teaching their children that they are somehow better than others within the tribe by virtue of the schools they attend or the complexion of their skin. Regrettably, the turmoil between the two groups is fueled by economic self-interests and has become institutionalized in tribal government. By virtue of political maneuvering, both groups have acted in their own interests to gain jobs, stature, and political office (Moore, 1974, p. 131).

Within this context, teaching about being Cheyenne is dichotomous to the present situation. Being Cheyenne meant not only what language you spoke but also how one treated others and one's relationship with the Creator. If anything, the teachings of the Cheyenne are being violated on a daily basis, and this is unwittingly being condoned throughout the community. Whatever the cause, contending with the violence of intra-tribal racism must be the first task of any educational program designed for the tribe on the reservation.

In traditional times being Cheyenne was a belief demonstrated by a way of life and how well one travelled

the Journey of Life. All lives born along this journey were sacred, and the path back toward the Creator did not differentiate individuals by blood quantum. In fact, the Cheyenne band system was designed upon the premise that it was morally and ethically wrong to marry within the community of the band. Subsequently, the Cheyenne made it a practice to marry outside the band, and the resultant effect is that many tribes and white blood are now represented in the tribe.

However, due to the competition for tribal power and authority and intertribal hostilities, an increasing number of tribal members are using blood quantum as a basis for behavior and treatment against one another. This is not only a clear violation of tribal taboos, but it also represents a missed opportunity for the more traditional Cheyennes to share their insights with others within the tribe. In order for the tribe to get a clear grasp of the Cheyenne Way, it must be realized that all tribal members are precious for the gift of life they represent from the Creator and for the knowledge they can provide to help the tribe find its way into the future.

The Cheyenne must begin to understand the divisive role oppression has played in having the tribe adopt these destructive definitions of tribal identification. Indeed, the Cheyenne must understand that such things as blood quantum are foreign elements that are culturally

insensitive. Such destructive attributes from the forces brought on the reservation at one time had to be tolerated. However, to sustain and institutionalize such divisive and culturally abhorrent elements now stands in the way of the full realization of the Cheyenne Journey of Life and the passing of this knowledge to future generations.

In addition, oppression and self-hate can lead individuals to take on the characteristics of their oppressors (Alport, 1982, pp. 150-151). In the case of the Cheyenne people, these individuals have become the stalwarts of government blood quantum policies of tribal definition. This is literally breaking families apart. In order to contend with these sensitive issues, the Cheyenne must critically reflect on the rationale for the band system and the implications of tribal intermarriage. Moreover, the effects of oppression as it has manifested itself in the individuals who have become "super oppressors" of their own people needs to be dealt with in order to stop another form of violence that at first was imposed from outside the tribe but now is sustained from within.

Tribal Renewal

In order for tribal renewal to have any chance at all of success, the disruptive forces of oppression must now be dealt with openly and honestly by the community at large.

From dismantling the mechanism of overt and strenuous control by the government to contending with the apathy and alcoholism in the community, the Cheyennes must deal with the cause of their current demise if there is hope to rejuvenate the spirituality of the people.

In traditional times the sanctity of the teacher and what was being taught was understood as absolutely necessary in order to stay true to the Journey of Life. In recent times this path was wrought with danger and calamity. However, in order to reconcile the morality of life and provide a reference point for reflection on ideas and actions, as indicated by the sacred Journey of Life, the spiritual teachings of Cheyenne prophets must be held as a standard for individual and community conduct. The first leg of the journey must include spiritual cleansing and a rebonding of families and communities as it is required according to the Cheyenne Way. This can be accomplished by having the elders take the lead in educating other Cheyennes about the Journey of Life and impart those ideals that are absolutely critical to leading a good life according to the tribe.

The Cheyenne have a rich and beautiful philosophy that successfully guided them for centuries prior to the arrival of the whiteman. In her eloquent account, Sooktis (1976) described this philosophy in terms of the proper behavior the Cheyennes must demonstrate in the community in order to

lead a moral life. To begin the Cheyenne educational journey anew, the Cheyenne must embark on a path to reinvigorate their culture through education. A culturally relevant system of tribal education should have the elements as they are described in the next section.

Primary Components of Cheyenne Education

Essentially, Cheyenne education must be divided into three parts. First and of primary importance is an internal mechanism within the circle of elders that delineates the Cheyenne Way and serves as a guide for what needs to be taught. Free of bureaucratic constraints, this group must be autonomous to work together to use their combined knowledge to reconstruct the sources of knowledge for the tribe. By being a source of "community memory," this component will be the reflective source to insure that the instructional component remains true to the spiritual and physical needs of the tribe. Also, it will be tantamount that this component of Cheyenne education answer such questions as "How can education serve the Cheyenne community?" and "Are we living the Cheyenne way?" By providing this element in the model, educational practices will not only reflect the Cheyenne Way but will also provide an opportunity for tribal constructs of morality to frame the necessary economic strategies needed for continued life and prosperity. This will provide a

tangible connection between Cheyenne beliefs and their application in the daily affairs of the reservation community which in turn can provide motivation for students to learn.

The second and most visible component will be the instructional program. In order to provide a conduit into the Cheyenne system of culture and glean vital lessons from the elders, it is absolutely necessary that all instructors be aware of and in tune with the Cheyenne Way. This includes an appreciation of the native language and an intimate knowledge of the place of the Cheyenne Journey of Life. This component will receive guidance and involvement from the elders and will be used to form the basis to direct their personal training and career path.

The final part of the Cheyenne education model will gauge the external environment and give advice to the elders about what opportunities and impediments may lie ahead for Cheyenne education. By gauging the social, political, and economic climate, this component of the model will provide the reconnaissance for the Cheyenne educational program. Like the scouts of old, this component is of utmost importance particularly in times of peril. For this reason the prompt establishment of this component is especially important at the present time. This study can function as this part of the Cheyenne model

by lending recommendations to the tribe about both impediments and opportunities in the learning environment.

Summary of Cheyenne Education

It is of tantamount importance that the Cheyenne regain control of their lives and the proper path of life to follow. For this to happen, the Cheyenne must overcome the weight of more than 100 years of oppression and its by-products of fear, cynicism, and violence. Only after contending with oppression in all of its forms can the Cheyenne look objectively at the present and plan for the future.

Within the present reservation system, the process for Cheyenne knowledge must now be free to help alleviate the conditions the people are now enduring. This framework understands that it is necessary for each person to speak from the heart and to have something of importance to say from experience or revelation. Consequently, individual insights are cherished and are potentially enlightening, and education must constantly be practiced as a system that exists to benefit the community. This must now be at the forefront for educators on the reservation in order to objectively examine the past, to heal the wounded spirit of the people, and to look with hope to the future.

Tribal Colleges: A Source of Praxis

In traditional times the Cheyenne led a moral life by using ancient teachings as a basis for important decisions. Reflection and action are fundamental to the Cheyenne learning process and are exemplified in the Journey of Life. This process was supplanted by governmental policies that prohibited tribal beliefs and enforced bureaucratic mandates that controlled the daily lives of Cheyenne people. Due to the oppressive nature of the reservation, reflecting on the Cheyenne teachings has been difficult in the expediency of daily affairs and nearly impossible within the framework of reservation schooling. However, tribal self-determination and the role of tribal community colleges to sustain and enhance tribal cultures have heralded a new beginning for Indian people. Although many years of governmental policies have alienated the Cheyenne Journey of Life from the daily affairs of the reservation, Dull Knife Memorial College (DKMC) is now in an unprecedented position to reinvigorate the tribal culture within the institutional life of the college and the Cheyenne community. This process can begin by having DKMC support the ongoing and systematic examination of the moral tenets of the Cheyenne people as they are personified in the voice and spirit of tribal elders. As a community college, it is morally and ethically tantamount that DKMC

be receptive to the legitimate leaders within the community. This is all the more important because the Cheyenne past has been tragic and because the testimony of the elders was sometimes painfully imparted. Now the Cheyenne belief in honoring lessons provided by the elders and in the inherent tribal conviction to share and help the community needs to be observed. By assuming such a role, DKMC can be in a position to lead the social transformation of the Cheyenne community.

Transformative research engages people in an alternating and continuous process of reflection and action related to the knowledge which people create within their local context and the action taken to solve pressing social problems; this research can be conducted on three sequential levels: awareness, active involvement, and social reconstruction (Conti et al., 1991, p. 31). The knowledge and perceptions of the elders provided an awareness of the framework for Cheyenne educational practice on the reservation. In this first phase of the transformative process, "those involved at the level of awareness move from a stage of helplessness to one of realizing that they have choices in their lives. Through dialogue and discussion, they [the Cheyenne people] become aware that they can control the process of change affecting them" (p. 32). In order to enhance awareness of the

Cheyenne educational model, the following types of strategies can be undertaken:

1. Discussions among tribal college staff, administration, and board members need to be conducted to sensitize the educators within the college about the Cheyenne way. This can also provide an opportunity for college personnel to understand the proactive role tribal higher education can have in dealing with the oppressive forces on the reservation.

2. Promote the rationale and purpose for the Cheyenne way to the student body and public at large.

The second phase of the participatory research paradigm is active involvement. At this level,

> people get actively involved in carrying out the research. In this process they interact as a group and share ideas. They form "circles of learners" in which each person is able to contribute a piece to the total knowledge base. By sharing in conducting the research, the group members develop skills, take ownership of the information gathered, and clarify their reasons for participating in the group. This phase has a nurturing aspect in which group discussions help build individual confidence in sharing information and develop a feeling of camaraderie. (Conti et al., 1991, p. 32)

This phase can be accomplished by having DKMC integrate the elders into the institution. Discussions with the elders can be initiated concerning their thoughts on the traditional framework of Cheyenne education and on how to best educate the community about the Cheyenne way. By virtue of DKMC's stature and potential to reach out to other institutions of higher education for advice and help, the college can become actively involved in making the

school experience meaningful for the tribe by assessing how current educational practice fits into the values and beliefs of the Cheyenne system. To implement this, the college can do such things as:

1. Use strategies such as small nominal group techniques, talking circles, and community forums to foster discussions among Cheyenne people about the traditional ways. This can increase the depth of traditional knowledge and will coincide with access and input from the community.

2. Provide opportunities for the Cheyenne to share with other tribal communities that have suffered oppression and are also having the task of reconciling tribal beliefs within contemporary life.

Coincidentally, this phase of development will also identify any further developments that are needed within the institution and community to make learning conducive and supportive of tribal culture.

The final component of transformative research is social reconstruction. This level is

> marked by burning commitment of community members for change and by a strong confidence of these community members in themselves and in their ability to create change. Here community members expose societal and cultural illusions and use this exposure as a basis for reconstructing society. Participants are deeply committed to community problem-solving and have a strong feeling of who they are as a community. They are willing to put forth the necessary efforts to bring about change because they believe that they are in a better position than outsiders to know what is good for their community. Because of these common bonds, group members often find working together fun and satisfying and are able to facilitate both short-term and long-term community action. (p. 33)

This component of transformation on the reservation can be achieved by the college establishing mechanisms for action by the Cheyenne people. These need to be carefully and intelligently organized and should reflect the college's expressed mission to support the culture. Just as the first two phases of transformative research coincide with the reflection process of praxis, the third phase can be the action portion. Here the ideas of the elders, the community, and educational theory can be vigorously combined to transform elements in the reservation community into the vision supported by the testimony of the elders and the cultural mission of the college. The following types of action can help accomplish this.

1. Establish a permanent cultural committee composed of elders. These elders then can be involved in the construction and implementation of curriculum and in the identification and training of present and potential faculty for the institution. This is a common practice in tribal colleges today and may be best represented by the model established at Little Big Horn College.

2. Provide the resources to delineate traditional Cheyenne concepts relevant to the teaching and learning process and identify how they can be incorporated within the college.

3. Charge the college's curriculum committee with a cultural responsibility. Courses at the college should be examined within the context of the college mission and compatibility with the tribal traditions of the community.

4. Provide staff development training to new and existing staff at the tribal college. Teachers within the college need to be

sensitized to the Cheyenne culture and the opportunities it provides for instruction as well as the adverse circumstances that may detract from learning. To create change, the college should not assume that the staff automatically have an in-depth understanding of the Cheyenne way. Instead, positive actions are needed to assure that the staff know and acquire this critical element for teaching in the Cheyenne community. This could include starting mentorships between elders in the community and faculty and staff at the college.

5. Organize training for teachers and board members of the new public school. The new school is an unprecedented opportunity for the Cheyenne people to have input into the development of the curriculum for their public school. However, in order for the Cheyenne ways to be integrated into the curriculum for the new school, the teachers and those making policy need to be intimately aware of intricacies of the Cheyenne model of education. If the tribal college develops its potential relationship with the elders, it can be in a position to provide leadership for this instruction to the public school personnel.

By taking such actions, Dull Knife can position itself to be the catalyst for social action. Like community agencies in the other Montana town of Conrad, the tribal college can spark "an invincible spirit of confidence in their [the Cheyenne people's] ability to overcome obstacles. This spirit and enthusiasm [can] beget action" (Counter, Paul, & Conti, 1990, p. 5). The college can function as "an organization for learning and doing. In a rural society, it was [is] difficult to develop and focus ideas while in isolation" (p. 6). Through bonding functions, learning activities, and projects, the tribal

college can reinforce community members' sense of accomplishment and provide collective action to give the people voice for expressing, honing, and implementing their ideas (p. 6).

Summary

Fortunately, the period of religious intolerance is passed for tribal people. However, the long period of repression certainly has caused spiritual leaders and instructors to have been exiled in their own land. As a result, during this time many Cheyennes have missed being a part of Cheyenne ceremonial ways.

Now the knowledge and wisdom of these elders need to be included within the structure of Cheyenne education. This will provide the young with the necessary moral understanding of the universe and with the relationship and respect each child must have for other living things. For the curricula, important lessons can be identified for various stages of growth. Rather than being graded, which sets artificial and dehumanizing boundaries between learners, individual students will proceed through each phase of the curriculum with proficiency. At each juncture the children will be judged by how well they understand the moral and physical universe and how it can be sustained by actively engaging in discussions and activities with their mentors.

Also, because Cheyenne reality makes it impossible to separate the physical and spiritual worlds, the Cheyenne may now consider the well-being of the Earth and how it has been affected by reservation economic policies that have been imposed by others until recent times. By using holistic approaches in curricula and by combining such disciplines as science, history, and economics the reinvigoration of Cheyenne spirituality as well as material growth can be discussed openly. In order to achieve matters such as this, the Cheyenne have the opportunity to learn how other models of tribal education have worked elsewhere and thereby begin to understand how their system can be prosperously reimplemented in today's world.

It is less difficult to lead a good life when one's daily practices affirm one's moral convictions. However, for the Cheyenne the path of life has been blurred by a miscarriage of federal policies that have existed for more than a century. Within this milieu, violence has been internalized and the effect has desecrated the beauty of the Cheyenne Way.

It is often heard that getting an education is important for the survival of the tribe. This, however, is naive and dangerous when education is disengaged from the philosophical and symbolic meaning of the sacred Cheyenne Way. By virtue of white schooling, many Cheyennes today are well-educated but know little about the implication of

their cultural legacy to the modern world. Conversely, there are well-educated Cheyenne who simplistically argue that being a tribal member is a matter of blood. Sadly, both continue to defile the Cheyenne Way by virtue of their thoughtless actions.

In the end, meaningless schooling and aimless lives have little to offer the Cheyenne for the future. However, education is power and can be used to strengthen or destroy cultures. By carefully blending the total experience of the Cheyenne, a reconciliation based on the tribal model can now be struck to help enlighten the path toward the future for Cheyenne education.

Pressing internal and external events on the reservation mandate that the Cheyenne begin their educational journey by joining together in mind and spirit to overcome the barriers that have been so destructive on the reservation. Out of this collaboration, a collective tribal philosophy can re-emerge. In turn, this can spark the generation of the Cheyenne educational mission and curricula. In such a way, Cheyenne education will be constructed not according to obscure and meaningless ideals of others but rather on the needs and aspirations of Cheyennes themselves.

Cheyenne elders are ready to see change in their communities to restore the cultural legacy of a proud people. Ironically, change will not occur unless there is

a shift to have education serve the people rather than having the people serve at the whim of someone else's idea of education. However, if this is not to take place, it will be only a matter of time before all is lost and the Cheyenne take their place as another tribe beaten into assimilation.

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