

SOUNDS FROM THE HEART
NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE AND SONG

by

Diveena Seshetta Marcus

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Arts

in

Native American Studies

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

April 2011

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Diveena Seshetta Marcus

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Dr. Matt Herman

Approved for the Department of Native American Studies

Dr. Walter Fleming

Approved for The Graduate School

Dr. Carl A. Fox

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Diveena Seshetta Marcus

April 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my thesis committee. Dr. Matt Herman for taking on this project and for keeping me on track, and most importantly for the inspiring conversations we had during my masters program. I would also like to thank Dr. Geoff Gamble for his valuable input as well as being an example of what heartfelt work really means to good research. Prof. David Charles I am very grateful for introducing me to the work of Wade Davis and Bruno Nettl. The students in my tribal language class I am very grateful for their willingness to be a part of this research especially my language mentor, as well as the scholars who also were interviewed, Edward Parkman and Shane Doyle. I also would like to thank the NAS department at MSU for supporting me with my independent study courses. Last but not least, I would like to thank my incredibly patient and supporting husband Marcus. I truly could not have done this without him.

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ABSTRACT

Our world is witnessing the rapid extinction of indigenous cultures through colonization. This thesis is presented not to amplify decolonization but to honor the value and meaning of the oral society and its indigenous peoples through their culture's traditional and necessary components of language and song. The basis of this thesis pertains to the author's tribal relatives, the Coast Miwok original people of California known as *Tamal Michchawmu* which literally translates as the *People of the West Coast*. The author chooses to use this work as an advocacy for the worldview of indigenous peoples, particularly to matriarchal societies in which the *Tamal Michchawmu* are included. In this thesis, stories and interviews with scholars and with Native Americans studying their language and singing their songs as well as the author's personal experiences are included as support to the theory that language and song are formed from the foundation of a philosophy that is grounded within a peoples relationship with the land. My thesis question is: If this worldview is resurrected, how can it contribute to its indigenous people in a modern society?

INTRODUCTION

When I interviewed my language class tribal members regarding a question about why more members are not studying our language, this response surfaced:

Personally, I think this may be due to having to live in two worlds. A large amount of our members are not 100% Native American, but are of mixed races and I think this may impact our people as well (TM 2)

For most of my understanding, there are very few tribal members of any tribal community who are one hundred percent aboriginal “Indian,” yet today many are learning and speaking their ancient languages because of the indigenous language crisis. Then again, for Native Americans who have chosen their indigenous status, cultural identity is a principal factor. Hence, from this statement, I find the real dilemma or problem is trying to live in two worlds. Many Indian scholars would immediately equate this issue with the horrors of colonization and its partner capitalism, which occupies so much of a given life in our society, not leaving any room for an identity, or one of our choosing. Since this paper addresses a theory that matriarchal influence in indigenous societies procures a worldview that supports a choice of culture and identity, I would like to offer an insight within a story.

Recently, my husband was reading a collection of Trudeau’s *Doonesbury* comic works and shared with me a strip about some young boys complaining to their teacher about the girls trying to be like them. She replied, “A Great Lady Simone de Beauvoir once said there were two kinds of people, women and human beings. And when women started acting like human beings, they are accused of trying to be men.” I started to laugh because the comic picture of the little boy was one of bewilderment with a caption that

said, “Yeah, but, But ... Um”? Finally a little girl comes into the frame saying, “Simone de Beauvoir got your number Slim.”

Beauvoir’s book *The Second Sex* got a lot of women dialing for her number. It portrayed the segregation and alienation of a people who are part of the human race but were not allowed to identify with it through social constructs. This concept and actual paradigm still exists within our society today and is a very devastating situation. It is increasingly traumatic from an indigenous perspective.

Indigenous “personhood” is formulated from the ancestral connections to relatives and community. North American original peoples’ names, no matter if it is of the Crow, Mohawk, Navajo or Cherokee, mean to each citizen, “people.” For Native peoples there is a deep-rooted connection to the earth and the region of ancestral origins. Most Native tribes are called “people” of some part of the earth. An example is the name of my own indigenous community, the Coast Miwok. This name is its anthropological name founded from the linguistic language group we are categorized by. Our real name in Coast Miwok is *Tamal Machcahawmu*, which translates, *People of the West Coast*. In addition, many tribes have creation stories where their people emerged from out of the earth. Berlo and Phillips mention in *Native North American Art* that the Southwest peoples emerged from within the earth. Artist Roxanne Swentzell of Santa Clara explains the four clown dancers that begin the Kiva ceremony in the Southwest as, “The four *koshares* symbolize the four directions; ...They’re the ones who came out of the earth first and brought the rest of the people to the surface” (37). Scott Momaday recalls a Kiowa creation myth, “For the Kiowa the beginning was a struggle for existence in the

bleak northern mountains. It was there they say that they entered the world through a hollow log” (“Rainy Mountain” 3). Whether it is an emergence or that the people have always been in a place, the physical world and all that inhabit it give identity and belonging to indigenous people.

So what about the women? What do they say about all this? Fortunately, from the ancestral, racial and cultural societies in which Native American women belong to, there were no constructs that excluded them from being a part of their human community. Biological differences were honored and within the culture (notably within the Siouan and in some California languages) there were separate forms of the native language which were designated as a woman’s and a man’s manner of speaking it. Yet, both were recognized and proudly revered. No one was considered superior on a general sense. If an original person of that worldview was approached today regarding gender issues, no doubt the reaction would be very similar to the little boy in the *Doonesbury* comic strip, bewildered.

Art, music, philosophy, religion or history is just as bewildering for original people. Harry Walters writes in *The Navajo Concept of Art*:

The Navajo do not have a word for art. Art is not seen as separate from other cultural components. To study Navajo art, one must study the whole culture. (qtd. in Bonar 29)

Thus, the separation of the many components of the world and aspects of life by European invaders has devastatingly affected indigenous consciousness.

Indigenous communities around the world are making aggressive efforts to revitalize their cultures. Experts today suggest that within a generation, a language and

culture can be resurrected, but it takes the concerted effort of everyone in the community.

Valiquette says:

The community and only the community can preserve a living language. If the community surrenders its responsibility to outsiders, or even to a few persons within the community (such as school teachers), the language will die. Language preservation efforts must involve the total community, and not just a part of it. (qtd. Crystal 154)

Perhaps in a generation many individuals may gain awareness for the needs of indigenous peoples around the world, so that we may come together again. I write for those that seek this awareness, as well as for those few that hold it for the rest of us.

I use the term indigenous because I come from a mixed blood and “breed” heritage of indigenous peoples. I am not representing my tribal community alone. My effort in writing this paper is to acknowledge the value that is instilled in culture. I imply that this is the spiritual force of indigenous potential sovereignty within the primary aspects of its expression in language and song. This instills a land/earth feminine philosophy and the relationships involved with the environment. My ideological basis is founded upon my personal theory that indigenous cultures that are/were structured within a matriarchal foundation contain such an epistemology. As with all the intertwining concepts of what make an indigenous culture, nothing can be segregated from the whole, i.e. the earth, the language the music, the dance, ceremony and all the relationships that are interplayed within the environment and the beings that live upon it. What came first, for indigenous people? It does not matter. What is a more important aspect of the culture from another, is like asking a mother who of her children she feels is more important than the other. From a feminine basis, relationships, and the value of the family, community

and the inclusiveness of the “whole” of a society is primary for everyone’s survival, as opposed to the “Darwinian” selected few. In addition I assert that such consciousness is a direct solution to the healing of our world and humanity.

THE ORAL SOCIETY

A long, long time ago, the Creator,
and who knows how many Great Beings
gave the People language.
At this time stories were born...
Stories mirror our world,
At the same time they are like rays of sunlight
Illuminating the dark places
So that we would not be lost.

Georgiana Valoyce Sanchez (Chumash/Tohono-O'Odham)

One of the most perplexing concepts to comprehend from a colonized ideology is value and vindication regarding indigenous peoples' oral histories or what is referred to as their myths. Paradoxically, the dominant culture has based its legal, moral and philosophical authenticity on the Christian myth. Empirical studies cannot intellectually offer solid scientific evidence or historical fact based upon this myth, but nonetheless it is the foundation of its culture. Likewise, oral histories within Indigenous myth are filled with intriguing hermeneutic elements similar to myths from the Bible. Yet they are perceived worlds apart because comparative elements are not valued equally by western standards. Interestingly, perception comes from different locations as well.

One of my challenges in teaching Native American Studies from an indigenous historical perspective at Montana State University was that my classroom was far from a diverse population, while I, the instructor, am a Native American woman. My ancestral homeland is in diverse California. I moved to Montana to attend MSU after living for five years in an even more diverse Hawaiian population. I could see my challenges with

a long semester ahead of me. How were my students going to grasp an understanding of my ancestral world concepts from text books and historical accounts alone? As Terry Tafoya has stated:

When speaking with people from another culture it often times takes longer to explain the context, background or meaning of a story than it does to actually tell the story. (qtd. S.Wilson 7)

I chose to introduce to my students the foundations of Native American society with oral tradition through the creation story. I had my class of fifty students break up in groups of ten. They were to give themselves a name and chose a leader and a region out of the ten cultural territories of North America with which they would affiliate throughout the semester. In their first assignment, their leader was to find a creation story from their region and have the rest of their clan/group read it and comment on it. It took a couple of weeks of discussion and other assignments to help get some folks on the same page regarding oral traditions.

A difficulty that students had in connecting to the stories was that they felt there were not enough human representations in them. They felt this left out the significant qualification of romance which would hold their interest. Thus, we began our discussion on the inherent relationships Native American ancestors had with the natural world. It took some time for a human “centric” worldview to acknowledge an earth centered one.

To indigenous peoples, oral traditions are comparable to sacred text. For the most part, in order for something to be sacred, it has to be accessible so that it can live in this world. Oral stories contain a vital living element of truth which binds together historical and/or natural phenomena with the spiritual dimensions within the world.

Two significant court rulings benefitted the rights of Native American people through the contribution of oral traditions, *The United States vs. the State of Washington* and *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*. *The United States vs. the State of Washington* was a case regarding traditional fishing rights of the Puyallup, Nisqually, Chinook, Kootenai, and Wasco tribes of Washington State. All these tribes had made treaties with the U.S. government in the 1800's. These treaties required the tribes to cede 64 million acres of land and to move onto small reservations. The tribes agreed to make these treaties as long as they could continue to hunt, fish, and gather for sustenance in the usual and accustomed areas they and their ancestors had always utilized. After Washington gained statehood in 1889, the state government started to break treaties by supporting commercial fisheries which ultimately impaired the tribes' sustenance. These fisheries harvested the salmon before the fish could reach the traditional tribal fishing regions. Contributing to more hardship, tribes also lost lands to allotment and the Nisqually tribe lost seventy percent of their lands to Fort Lewis during WWI. Tribes were reduced to poverty and many had to take jobs at the canneries to survive. Tribes fought back through necessity by fishing in their original lands of subsistence, defying state ordinance. Historical Puyallup sit-ins received public attention in the 60's civil rights era with the help of celebrities Marlon Brando and Gregory Hines, who joined the tribes with their subsistence fishing. After three years in 1974, Judge Hugo Boldt gave the Supreme Court ruling in favor of the tribes. A significant factor Judge Boldt took into consideration was the stories submitted by tribal member testimonies. Twenty-five years later, Pulitzer Prize journalist Alex Tizon, wrote for the *Seattle Times* in 1994:

Testifying at the trial were Indians young and old, like Billy Frank and his father, who told stories passed on to them by their fathers and grandfathers. They talked of the time before white people came, and of the generations of Indian fishers that went back, according to their view, to the beginning of time. "He listened to us," Billy Frank says of the judge, in what may be his highest praise. "He listened very carefully." (Tizon)

The last part of the 20th century such significant strides have been taken for the acknowledgment of Tribal oral traditions and their validity in the 'free' world. Ironically, also in 1994, a case of First Nations peoples of the *Gitksan* and *Witsuwit'en* communities, were reclaiming ownership and jurisdiction on a territory the size of Nova Scotia, *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*. The Canadian Supreme court stated that all land rights were extinguished by the colonial government before it became a part of Canada. In the court of appeals, this decision was overturned. Through the eyes of the court, the aboriginal lands were not extinguished. Oral histories were presented for the case by countless tribal members and the court listened and gave credence to Aboriginal title (Culhane).

At the onset of making treaties with First Nations of the Americas, European powers were not listening to the sovereign peoples. The intent was for the indigenous nations to hear the European demands and needs through European language. Few made the effort of learning the language of the regional original peoples, and even if they did, their intent was to learn how to communicate with the nations to establish commerce and fulfill their monetary needs. World concepts and values held little interest or appreciation as far as actually listening to original peoples validate their history. Hence, the long awaited struggle of civil rights and cultural sovereignty as shown in many cases.

As I mentioned earlier, language is the carrier of these traditions, and those who learn it have the opportunity to understand and step into a world of tremendous historical consciousness. For a non-Indian reader, perhaps this could be a curiosity. For the Indigenous person or person of mixed blood who seeks to restore their culture in this technological society, I hope that my words may offer you more understanding, healing and peace. I offer personal insights I have gained through efforts of advocacy in support of resurrecting the endangered ancestral Coast Miwok *Tamal Machchaw* tongue of the original people of northern California. Cultural restoration is the fundamental basis for all contemporary religious and language revitalization movements for original peoples. Culture is the carrier of traditions that offer hermeneutics as an interpretive framework within the context of any aspect of its practice.

The Story

Stories for indigenous peoples are not just folklore or fairytales that many of us are brought up within the Western society, with storytelling as a basis for entertainment. Indigenous oral traditions are of the living world. This living world exists without radio, television or writing to convey information. All forms of communication were and are in indigenous traditional societies via the voice and the direct and physical presence of the human being. The present place and time was/is the primary factor in life, thus the highest priority. A very enlightening reference to this concept is the basis for the Cahuilla bird singers of Southern California. Their songs are in honor of the wisdom of their bird

ancestors. Birds face the sun and sing in the morning as well as in the evening in honor of the day lived, as well as honoring the day which heralds in a new beginning (Berkeley).

Stories are the context of the language; they hold a blueprint of the people. History is embedded within memory, thus the remembering of the story is highly valuable. Wade Davis, renowned Canadian ethnographer states, "Writing, while clearly an extraordinary innovation in human history, is by definition brilliant shorthand that permits and even encourages the numbing of memory" (175). Thus, it is within the integrity of the story teller wherein a culture can survive. To most people of the indigenous past, the word of a person was more important than a piece of paper. Hence, the discomfort tribal elders had conforming their traditional manner of compact making, to the European signed treaties.

Since the beginning of the world, Indigenous myth and storytelling have been believed as sacred and true to the community. The wisdom the stories contain has built the overall ethics, principles and character of the people. It is within the living testimonial presence and enactment of the oral tradition that this can happen. Such is the traditional ceremonial value of the person on the court witness stand in contemporary jurisdiction. Here one's personal account is considered (hopefully) honorable and true. For the most part, the only time a person's physical presence is valued for authenticity sake is within the legal confines of the court system. Unfortunately, our dominant society governs our world through the constructs of policy and legislature throughout a bureaucratic process. Thus, the living presence of an indigenous world cannot exist within these confines. I again emphasize my tribal member's sentiment, "having to live in two worlds."

There are a couple of ways I have experienced and understood my ancestral connection to oral traditions. I have been blessed with relationships with my matriarchal Native American Grandmother and from my Filipino father. Both left this world within thirteen months of each other as I had been preparing this thesis.

Both of my father's parents died unexpectedly when he was eight years of age. He went to live with an older brother. His brother's wife was an alcoholic whose actions forced my father to run away and live on the streets in Manila until WWI. He then returned to the jungles to fight in guerrilla warfare and unfortunately witnessed his brother's execution by the Japanese. Eventually, he enlisted in the U.S. military and became an American Citizen. He immigrated to the United States and while stationed in San Francisco he was welcomed into the Native American community and married my mother.

When I was five years old, my father was transferred to Clark Air force Base in the Philippines. We only lived in the Philippine Islands for four years, yet I remember that experience very well. We lived off the base in a rural area where there was a water buffalo hole that the *Katabau* frequented daily. A Filipina woman name Yuling lived with us and through her I was learning Tagalong. We even ventured into the village of Santa Magdalena in Sorsogon Luzon, the province where my father was from. For a summer we lived in a stilt house without any electricity or running water, with pigs and chicken loose in the yards. My mother fit in well as I remember going to the river and helping wash laundry. Though my mother learned to cook many wonderful Filipino dishes, those short years were the only authentic cultural wisdom I remember from my

father's heritage. As many Filipinos from WWI revered the U.S. from their relationship with General McArthur, my father wanted very much to be an American. Though some indigenous aspects remained with him, he always spoke broken English, and for the most part would always share stories with me about his life in the Philippines. I remember when I was a Girl Scout. One of the requirements to earn a certain badge was to interview a person about their past, so I asked my father. It was that one time where he made it emphatically clear that he would not talk with me unless I was truly interested from my heart, and not for selfish reasons. From that time I never forgot that premise as it shadows over me when I write this paper.

My father had an uncle living in San Diego. When we returned to my mother's homeland in California (after living away many years in Europe and in other states such as Montana), we would visit my father's uncle every summer. Those times were very impressionable in my life. I have not thought of those times for many years, but I remember them since my father's death. Days were slow and we spent so much time with relatives visiting the sea, since my great uncle was an avid fisherman. My brother went with him and my father to catch fish on a boat, and at night we all caught surf fish on the shore. We ate the most delicious fish for the most part of our stay in San Diego. The most memorable of moments was when Uncle told stories. He did so after every evening meal (except when other excursions were planned). We all gathered in the living room to listen to my uncle's fascinating world. His stories involved cultural archetypes and his own spiritual encounters. Such subjects in his stories were spirit beings, creatures like centaurs, seductive ghosts and what he would call "witch doctors." I remember

glancing around the room at my cousins and my brother and sister and everyone was sitting cross legged on the floor, spell bound and wide eyed. We did not want to retire to bed because we wanted to hear more or we were afraid to fall asleep. There was a time I heard my father chuckle now and then in the recesses of the room. Finally my uncle put my father on the spot and asked him to share a story.

When my father was placed at center stage, he actually took the role and shared a riveting story that still mystifies me. It possessed all the elements that my Uncle would include in his stories. My father was stone serious (not a public persona), transfixed and spoke as an eyewitness. When he was through telling the story he affirmed that he was there. We all were in silence. That was the only time my father ever opened up to share a cultural/mythic experience between worlds. Sometimes I still wonder if my siblings remember it even happening... But I know.

The feelings I experienced were a mixture of fear, excitement, wonder and disbelief, and I have kept these feelings buried in those long ago memories. It is interesting that as I have aged I am completely accepting of such stories today. My maternal Cherokee grandfather's annual family gatherings are similar. After evening meals we would gather around the fire and share stories about the year gone by, and the elders would bring up old genealogical family stories. There was always so much laughter.

I tell this story in honor of my father. I was reminded of him when reading about David Harrison's visit to Luzon, Philippines in his book *When Languages Die*. Harrison accompanied Professor Harold Conklin who had worked forty years with the Filipino rice

cultures helping them to write their language so that it will survive (161-166). The Ifugao people live in the remote mountain regions of the Luzon landscape and preserve their traditional rice culture. Their language has an extensive vocabulary on rice technology, and their entire existence revolves within this culture. Today, their cultural survival issues revolve around genetic engineering and modern fertilizers and pesticides. They struggle to sustain traditional wisdom which is kept and held within specific human beings who were given this ancient knowledge.

Before my father died, he returned to Luzon and built a rice mill in the village as a support to this culture. His province is in the south of the island close to Mindanao, and his mill supports and benefits the entire region. This entire culture is sustained by each member of a family from the parent to the little children. They are still growing rice in the traditional manner. My brother returned to the province to be with my father before his death and was touched by my father's efforts. My brother is now focusing his personal interests for future assistance with the Santa Magdalena community.

My grandmother never told me stories or spoke the language though she did carry it with her and never forgot it. She told me she had to speak Spanish and not her language after her mother died because there was no one else to speak it with, as well as it was outlawed (when she was young). She recalled one time when she was in church and saw a couple sit in front of her who she first thought were Mexican. When she overheard them, she found they were speaking her mother's language. She said she never let on that she could speak or knew her language to anyone, but she never forgot.

There were subjects about our culture that she would not talk to me about, especially spiritual things, though she never told me I should not try to know about such things. If she did not know something about our culture or could not answer any of my questions, she told me where to go or who to talk to. There were times when she would have me take her to get sea weed when she would get a hankering for it. My mother remembers my grandmother taking her to the forests and fields to show her how to pick teas for healing and plants that were good to eat. Most importantly, grandmother showed me how to treat others in her living example. Her home was always open to all people, Indian and non-Indian, Spanish, Mexican, or Asian. She prepared food every day in case someone came by to visit. When I was little, she would take me on excursions to visit her Indian friends in Tamales Bay and up in the mountains. They were always very mysterious and intriguing.

I remember this one time; I was about six years old, when my mother took a nap with my little brother and sister. I could never take naps so I was up with my grandmother. She decided to go out for a drive and took me with her. She drove on the old back roads along the coast and it seemed that it took all day to get where she wanted to go. We finally ended our drive in a wooded area dimmed by the thick forest. We came up to a small cabin almost buried amongst the redwoods. A tall Caucasian man opened the door and invited us in. A small Indian woman was his wife and offered us food. I remember how happy they were to see my grandmother. The most interesting thing to me was that there was not much furniture in their home, but on every wall were paintings and sketches of this Indian woman. It was obvious that my grandmother had

been there many times before because she did not comment on the pictures or even pay much attention to them. I felt really strange looking at those pictures because they were of that little old Indian woman. I realize now she was not that old then, but she was not as young as she was in the paintings on the wall. I felt really strange because not only were they all about the Indian woman but she was nude in all of them. I also realized that her husband was the one who painted them. So I went outside and felt better looking at the paintings from outside looking in. That way they did not know how long I was looking at them.

Looking back on that visit I realize how very diverse my grandmother's social world was. I also realize how much she has influenced me in my own artistic life. I have been unafraid to create some interesting work because of these types of experiences at such a young age. Stylistic nudes have been a series of my own artistic work in the past. To this day my mother does not recall this forest couple. My mother does not doubt my adventure with my grandmother because she knew of my grandmother's spontaneous excursions and her ever expanding social life.

It is also interesting that in our culture our elders never told us what we had to do with our lives. In the past I used to get so annoyed because my mother never pushed me in any given direction. I also did not do so to my daughter as well. Now I know it is a very Indian or California Indian way of doing things. Dr. Geoff Gamble Professor Emeritus, Linguist and mentor shared with me a Yokuts legend that I will share later, *Kadadimcha and Chuchunkin*. There is an insert within the text that states that Kadadimcha let Chuchunkin do whatever she wished so as not to disrupt her true way.

This is a very indigenous trait, as well as the adopting or taking in of homeless children.

This literally happened with my own mother and grandmother.

For elders who were alone, children were even given to be adopted for companionship. In Frank Linderman's *Pretty Shield*, a biography of a Crow medicine woman, Pretty Shield reminisces of her childhood and how she was given by her mother to her childless and widow aunt to keep her company. This even happened to one of my uncles who went to live with a great aunt who was alone, but who could care for him quite well. Linderman wrote *Pretty Shield* to offer a woman's view of the Crow people. Some may even say *Pretty Shield's* recollections are those of an "indigenous" woman's view.

Through my grandmother's life example, I know my Indian culture. She took a wealth of wisdom with her when she left this world, but she has never left me. As I continue to support and learn my language and culture, she has come to me in my dreams and she is alive within every connection I make with my heritage.

Matriarchal Culture

Little has been documented regarding the existence of matriarchal societies. In fact, if one was to actually diverge into a North American worldview, there were no such concepts as patriarchal or matriarchal ruled cultures. Some scholars who have looked into documented journals and other archived materials concerning early colonizers on North American soil (i.e. Spanish conquistadors and missionaries) became intrigued by the absence of women and began searching for their existence.

Virginia Marie Bouvir, author of *Women and the Conquest of California*, illustrates the gender specific attitudes placed on the lands of the “new world” as the metaphor of the male patriarchal conqueror to the female matriarchal conquered. An early contributor to this attitude was Christopher Columbus who on his first trip across the Atlantic chronicled an island east of Jamaica, “...an island where there was nothing other than women by themselves” (Bouvir 5). A few years later he even recorded sighting three sirens. Such reports fueled immense curiosity amongst the monarchs where they requested explorers to find these “Amazon” women. Cortez solicited support for his excursions with his tales of islands abundant with gold and pearls. His conquered Aztec rulers told him these islands existed somewhere northwest of their empire. Again, he was told these islands were inhabited only by women. It was also said that there were times when these women allowed mainland men to have sexual relations with them. In other tales, these women were regarded as white goddesses and ruled over magnificent epicenters much like the Aztec and Inca empires, suggesting a highly advanced civilization of women. In addition these goddess/amazons were said to hold desires towards men much like European males had for women; e.g. consorting with the opposite sex only for sexual relations and reproduction (Bouvir 3-17).

There is documentation regarding De Soto’s march near the Savannah River where he was met by an Indian queen of the province of Colitachiqui:

She crossed the river in a canopied canoe, her attendants following in other canoes. Meeting De Soto, she presented him with shells and shawls, then took off her beautiful pearl necklace, and placed it on De Soto's neck. Afterward she told him where he could find a great many more pearls. Yet this generosity did not save her from being taken prisoner and led away on foot. A month later she escaped. (Florida).

De Soto was initially fascinated by the chronicles of Cabeza de Vaca's explorations of the Americas in the 14th century. Cabeza was intrigued by the tales of the Amazons prior to his travels. In the early 1500's California was given her name by the popular novel *Las Sergas de Esplandian* by Garcia Ordonez de Montalvo. In the novel the land was an island ruled by a Black queen called Calafia who wore gold and pearls and governed in the lifestyle of the mythological Amazon (Bouvir 11). Not only did these tales excite the treasury of the monarchs, but they also enticed many soldiers to venture to the New World. Thus, such propaganda was used to instill conquering and taming heathen pagans and lascivious communities as the duty of all Christian men.

It is assumed that the conquered Indian leaders knew what the Spanish were looking for, women and riches. Perhaps being directed elsewhere, the conquistadors would leave them alone and keep marching along. It is interesting that the Colitachiqui queen stepped right into De Soto's fantasy. At the time it seemed to the European mind, that myth and legend were purely directed towards fantastical entertainment that engendered a hopeful reality through its wishful thinking of these adventures. Truth and ethics did not seem participants within European myth, especially in regards to the Americas.

What is truthful is rewriting Native Women into our history and using the personal testimonies of living descendents who can retell the stories in order to clear away some of the historical fog that encompasses Indian History. These concerns are no different from many women's stories throughout history.

Histories of powerful women have recently surfaced in research within the last century. There is the mysterious Diotima, who is mentioned and honored by Socrates. She is an icon of the silenced and a phantom of notable women in history because there is nothing written under her name. Many have tried to reconstruct such women as Jarrett and Org's *Aspasia: Rhetoric, Gender, and Colonial Ideology*. The authors illuminate Aspasia as a very highly intelligent and political strategist. Plato and Socrates frequented her rhetorical salons. Yet, because of her portrayal by French artist JL Gerome as an odalisque entreating her charms amongst some of Pericles' associates, she is placed not on the rhetorical map but in a harem.

Yes, there were Native American queens and chieftesses. Many Spanish explorers would have encountered them throughout New Spain and Alta California, though not all communities they encountered were matriarchal, or even equalitarian. California in particular contained the densest and most diverse populations of Indian communities with over five hundred nations speaking nearly one hundred different languages. The majority of coastal communities was matriarchal and based their livelihoods in trade rather than in war. Just as in California today, diversity was the main ingredient found in indigenous communities. The newcomers were unable to understand such arrangement. Scholar John Brown Childs calls these lifestyles "transcommunal" originations (qtd. in Prozniak 284). Transcommunality recognizes the fluid complexity of life and is alert to ambiguity and contractions. As Simone de Beauvoir has said:

An ambiguity focused approach recognizes that separate existences can forge their own true laws in ways that totally counteract the dominant structures of elite power. Not surprisingly, those who benefit from tightly

designed doctrines of elite domination, always attempt to suppress ambiguity (“Ethics” 25).

Ambiguity, can be equated to the derogatory “woman’s prerogative” and the irrational behavior our society pins on feminine acceptance to change and adjustments in everyday life; which is in sharp contrast to empirical decisions, absolute measure, answers, rules, regulations, power and control. Thus, anything that contradicted the “elite” norms of the dominant Spanish and other European conquerors was left out of documentation. An example is in Cabrillo’s journal, where there is a brief encounter of an elderly female chief who came on board his ship, yet according to Bouvir, historians have distorted this encounter and the position of the female leadership (24). Therefore, only tribes with misogynistic practices, i.e. those who traded women, divorced their wives and treated women like commodities, were highlighted in journal documentation. Such lifestyles gave the excuse for the conquerors to mistreat the women they encountered. We must also keep in mind during the timeframe of the European conquest that witch trials and the inquisition were at their height in most of Europe. Therefore, communities that honored elder women’s leadership, shamanism and doctoring leaders who were also women, and also held egalitarian beliefs, were unaccountable, too ambiguous and did not follow the patriarchal practices of the invaders. Hence, their presence was ignored in journals and left out. We have been fortunate within the last century to have had examples of women such as Wilma Mankiller from the Cherokee Nation, as well as writers like Greg Sarris who represents the Pomo/Coast Miwok people and has offered many testimonies regarding his aunties who clearly defy and are removed from the typecasts of European documentation.

Myth

Native American scholars and psychologists Eduardo and Bonnie Duran note the differences regarding worldviews between western and indigenous peoples in order to develop specific therapeutic healing catered to Native people.

History abounds with examples of how Western culture has been dominated by a patriarchal worldview and how the feminine has been all but in exile from the Western psyche. On the other hand, the beginning student of Native American cosmology knows that most tribal groups in the New World were and are matriarchal. Therefore we have a basic difference in cosmology: Western cosmology is masculine and Native American cosmology is more in alignment with the feminine (Duran 81).

The female presence has been a symbolic metaphor for the physical world which is highly respected and revered by all indigenous peoples. “In art, women were Earth Mothers, household goddesses, reproducers, nurturers, chiefs, war goddesses, warriors, and hunters” (Claassen 12). Cultural experiences built upon relationships established with the earth and particular places were translated into stories passed down by elders from generation to generation. Significant artifacts were created to honor these stories and were preserved throughout the culture and used in sacred and secular context.

Earth mounds were being built by early Native Americans 1000 years before the pyramids in Egypt. During the Mississippian period approximately 1000 C.E., archeological discoveries unearthed an abundance of female artifacts, indicating that the early peoples honored a matriarchal presence. Figures from Cahokia, an ancient Mississippian Mound in Illinois, are beautifully depicted in *Hero Hawk and Hand* produced by the Art Institute. Archetypal artifacts in particular, *Corn Mother* and *Cloud Woman/Old Woman That Never Dies*, represent valued feminine indigenous semiotics

that come from the earth, lunar and aquatic realms (134). These artifacts display images of water serpents and clouds that evoke water spirit energy which are the *Great Mystery* and the powers of prophesy, dreams, healing, and the pathway of souls (which would include birth and death). “[These] burials indicate that some women were probably shamans...” (Claassen 69). Shamans have always been known to primarily make their own talismans.

Some well known and very traditional female archetypes that are highly recognized in today’s Native American cultures are *Spider Grandmother*, *Corn Mother*, *Changing Woman*, and *White Buffalo Calf Woman*.

Spider Grandmother, an early archetype revered by the Pueblo people and most emphatically within the Navajo weavers’ guild, holds a predominant position in Native American cosmology. As in most Native peoples’ communities, middle aged and elder women were prominent figures in society. A woman elder, holding the title as mother or auntie was and still is a high honor.

Spider Grandmother is the archetype of this elder position of women. Her aspects are the intermediary force between the physical world and the spirit world. Powers that emanate through the spirit world and the creative expression are her gifts. Her realm is the creative, and her symbol is the spider and its web. Many young Navajo weaver apprentices are instructed to rub their palms with the web of a spider. Wesley Thomas professes, “This act enables me to incorporate the energies of the spider into my being as a weaver” (Bonar 40).

Corn Mother is a central archetype for the Hopi universe as well as other Native peoples. She represents the earth and mother as she gives birth to corn for the nourishment of the people. The natural process of the harvest and the regeneration of the land is her semiotic metaphor of birth and death. She is the earth and her symbol is corn.

Changing Woman, at times known as *White Shell Woman* throughout Arizona and New Mexico, is generally known as an archetype of puberty and healing. She also has very ancient origins. She was considered a representation of the universe for her connection to the planetary seasons and their changes. The feminine cycles of life such as puberty, motherhood and eldership are closely seen within Native epistemology as connected to a larger scheme of the world. *Changing Woman's* gifts are transformation and the unconscious world of dreams and water. Honoring her is through ceremony. Her symbol is the shell.

White Buffalo Calf Woman has origins from the Lakota Nation and a patriarchal people. Her presence became known to her people because they had forgotten who they were. Her youth symbolizes a new sacred beginning. She brings the pipe as a symbol for the people to remember the traditional protocols. If adhered to, the nation will continue to survive. The *White Buffalo* and the pipe are her symbols. "The Lakota are connected to her still, partly because some still keep to the ways she taught them and partly because her pipe still resides with them" (Gunn 17).

All of these archetypes can be found throughout Native American cosmology with other names from different tribes. They reflect very similar representation. The one central female creatrix archetype that stands alone is *Thought Woman*. "Since she is the

supreme Spirit, she is both Mother and Father to all people and to all creatures” (Gunn 15). Appropriately, she is the antithesis of the western concept of God. She symbolizes everything that represents the gifts of life in what the former archetypes embody. She also includes life’s harshness and struggle:

The tribes see women variously, but they do not question the power of femininity. Sometimes they see women as fearful, sometimes peaceful, sometimes omnipotent and omniscient, but they never portray women as mindless, helpless, simple, or oppressed. (Gunn 44)

It is reasonable to assume that many Native American Indians considered the primary potency of the universe as female. Therefore, there must have been an agreement to a power of cooperation and respect of the environment, as well as to the beings that live around them. Such collaboration on relationship allows daily life and living to be the principle concept and understanding of life.

Supernatural and Natural Worlds

In Linderman’s forward from *Pretty Shield*, he lets his reader know that from all the information he gleaned from Pretty Shield’s Crow culture, his book is bound to be a bit of a mutation. As some of her stories he considered were either tribal myths, grandmother tales and dreams, he says:

Trying to determine exactly where the dream begins and ends is precisely like looking into a case in a museum of natural history where a group of beautiful birds are mounted against a painted background blended so cunningly into reality that one cannot tell where the natural meets the artificial. (xviii)

I would elaborate that his concern was that of my students, where the physical melts into the supernatural. Since these are dichotomies in western ideology, these mystifying concerns are understandable.

Scott Momaday confused some non Indian scholars in my first semester Native American Literature class, instructed by Dr. Matt Herman, on his idea of “ancestral memory.” In “Man Made of Words,” Scott Momaday’s journey back to his Kiowa homelands is graced with his grandmother’s memory. Her ancestral spirit, which is tied to his life, fuels him onward in his quest. This “ancestral memory” is also termed “memory in the blood” where the wisdom of story and all that connect to a story lives on for those who know it and who are descended from it. It was very inspiring to me since I had just lost my Grandmother from this physical world and Momaday gave me strength during my grieving process.

Jeanette Armstrong takes Momaday’s aboriginal theory into even more deeply penetrable grounds by connecting this memory from the earth. I am indebted to Joanne R. DiNova whom I recently met at a Native American conference. She introduced me to Armstrong’s work. In DiNova’s book *Spiraling Webs of Relations* she quotes Armstrong regarding her theory “Land Speaking:”

It is said in Okanagan that the land constantly speaks. It is constantly communicating. Not to learn its language is to die... The language spoken by the land, which is interpreted by the Okanagan into words, carries parts of its ongoing reality. The land as language surrounds us completely, just like the physical reality of it surrounds us. Within that vast speaking, both externally and internally, we as human beings are in inextricable part-though a minute part-of the land language. In this sense, all indigenous peoples’ language is generated by a precise geography and arises from it. Over time and many generations of their people, it is their distinctive interaction with a precise geography which

forms the way indigenous language is shaped and subsequently how the world is viewed, approached, and expressed verbally by its speakers. (123-124)

With this understanding our indigenous ancestors considered all beings, plant, animal, mineral and vegetable which inhabit a region to contain this wisdom and to know the ancient tongue.

Wade Davis, in his work with the Penan, describes this concept:

Every feature of the landscape resonates with a story. Every point along a trail, every boulder and cave, each one of the more two thousand streams that run through their land has a name. A sense of stewardship permeates Penan society, dictating the manner in which the people utilize and appropriate the environment (173).Penan perceive the voices of the forest. Every forest sound is an element of the language of the spirit. Trees bloom when they hear the lovely song of the bare-throated Krankaputt. Birds heard from a certain direction bear good tidings; the same sounds from a different direction may be a harbinger of ill (175).

Nana Veary illustrates this “land-speak” communication with her grandfather’s process of seeking wood in Hawaii to build a canoe.

... [he] fasted for three days to become one with Spirit, his teacher. After three days, he walked into the forest to look for a certain bird, having been instructed during the silence which bird would be his guide. It would select the tree out of which the canoe would be carved. Once when my father went into the forest, there was no bird to be seen for two days. He finally saw a handsome, large tree and said to himself, “That tree will make a fine canoe.” Out of nowhere a bird flew to the tree and began pecking on its trunk, a sure sign that the tree was infested with termites. My grandfather spent another three days following the bird as it flew from tree to tree. Finally the bird, a species of flycatcher sang, “*’Elepaio, ‘elepaio, ‘elepaio,*” communicating to my grandfather that this was the tree for the canoe (42).

Finally, I want to add Joseph Bastien’s work with the Qollahuaya Andeans. The Qollahuaya have historically been known to have practiced brain surgery, cured with plants, and employed a wide variety of medicinal paraphernalia as early as seven hundred

A.D. Bastien worked with the Qollahuaya for over ten years. Ritual, pathological and ethno pharmacological data indicate that Qollahuaya Andeans have a topographical-hydraulic model for understanding the physiology of their bodies (395). In short, the Qollahuaya have held an intimate relationship with their region, which consists of their sacred and sustaining mountain and the water systems and valley in which they live. Basiten's principal informant, Marcelino Yanahuaya explained it as:

I am the same as the mountain, *Pachamama*. *Pachamama* has fluids which flow through her, and I have fluids which flow through me. *Pachamama* takes care of my body, and I must give food and drink to *Pachamama*.

For the Qollahuaya, the region and areas of the mountain correlate to the anatomical region of the human body. The flow of the rivers and the winds help them understand how to care for themselves. The system is quite complex and even has some comparison to Greek Humeral Theory. Colonization has impacted the region, and health issues abound. Basiten has discovered that understanding the myths and their association metaphorically with daily spiritual life of the Qollahuaya and their homeland can be applied to modern health work to revitalize their lives.

The Creation Story

In closing this chapter, I offer a Chumash California Indian Creation Story. As with many creation stories, there are many variations. This version is from the book *The Rainbow Bridge* by Audrey Wood. I have fond memories of it as I had witnessed it told by renowned Coast Miwok storyteller Lanny Pinola. In honor of his memory and to my Chumash cousins it is included here.

There are very few California myths that include goddesses. Wood's story contains elements of a matriarchal deity and a peoples' inherent cosmology, I felt it appropriate.

The Rainbow Bridge

The goddess Hutash walked upon the island Limuw amongst her friends, the creatures and beings of the earth. She wanted people who looked like her on the land as well. Hutash went to the highest mountain on Limuw and from a sacred plant gathered seeds. Here she threw out the seeds upon the earth saying, "From these seeds shall be people upon the Earth." The seeds grew and instead of flowers, people stepped out of the plants. This was the first of the Chumash people. Hutash claimed them as her children whom she loved and showed them to her husband the Milky Way. His spirit moved amongst the sleeping people. He saw that they were cold, and with love for them, he created a thunderstorm, and its lightning created fire for them. The people awoke from their cold slumber and gave thanks for all the gifts that Hutash had given them. They learned to use the fire and kept it eternally burning.

Soon there were too many people. There were too many people trampling on the earth, too many people making too many fires and too much noise. Hutash could not find peace nor could the people hear her when she tried to speak with them. She did not know what to do.

In a shaded hut a little boy and girl were silently weaving baskets and saw Hutash. They bated Hutash to come into the hut and offered her acorn porridge and water. Hutash ate with the children and made a decision. She told the children that Limuw had become

too crowded and that half the people would have to leave to the island across the sea and the other half would stay on Limuw. She told the children to tell the people that in three days she would build a rainbow bridge so that those chosen could cross the sea.

The people listened to the children and chose who would leave and who would stay. On the third day the rainbow appeared and the boy's family amongst many others crossed the bridge. Half way across they began to doubt the power of the bridge seeing the roaring ocean below. Many lost their balance and began falling into the sea. Hutash heard their cries and caused the sea to be calm. She did not want to lose any people so those who fell into the sea were changed into dolphins, the first creatures of the sea, so that they would not drown. When the last person crossed the rainbow bridge, Hutash blew it out of the sky and was pleased.

The little girl on Limuw was very sad for she thought the little boy her friend had drowned. At that moment many dolphins began leaping out of the water. One swam up and looked into her eyes. She was not afraid. She realized that it was her friend. This is why the Chumash know that dolphins are their brothers and sisters.

SONG AND MUSIC

*Earth Maker Said
There will be Songs
There will always be Songs
And all of you will have them.*

*William Shipley,
The Maidu Indian Myths and Stories of Hanc 'ibyjim, pp. 290-30*

Reflecting upon my own personal connection to my heritage, I find that the songs, music, and spiritual ceremony are what I hold dear to my heart and which binds my culture to me. Growing up I never witnessed a cultural ceremony. There are many stories, too voluminous to produce here, regarding how I found American Indian music as my cultural base, but one person that introduced it to me, whom I will always be grateful to, is Lynn Fox who was the Native American Indian Museum curator at Santa Rosa Junior College. She took me to the ceremonies that Lanny Pinola used to facilitate in Marin. My grandmother would not go with me but always told me to say hello to Lanny. There was something about Lanny's mannerisms and the fact that he would be touched so deeply to tears when he expressed himself that touched my heart because here was someone just like me. For most of my life, I had been made fun of by being too sensitive by my own siblings and father, as well as many teasing Indian cousins. The spirit of the round house was home to me. For the first several years of listening to the songs, I would become extremely emotional. It was not until I learned some songs that I felt stable and strong from singing them.

Carl Starkloff writes that there is a power of music that opens the heart. Indians experience singing as power which is “the” communion with the spirit world. Music pleases the power as well as human beings. A special force is created, and this is performance.

Experience bears out how much traditional music means to Indians when one sees how they can listen or sing for many hours on end caught up in a near trance, where most whites, even music lovers will grow tired of their most favorite music after two or three hours (111).

Music in modern Euro-American society is valued by its marketable value based on capitalist consumption. For most of my life, I have gravitated to and have not lived without participating in creative venues in our society. While holding down a fulltime occupation, I studied classical singing. In the early years I was coached by Robert Austin of the San Diego Opera and performed in musicals and operettas. As motherhood claimed me, I shifted to performing jazz in the club circuit. Yet, when I found the sounds of my culture, it became difficult for me to perform secular music. It had to come from a spiritual foundation or it was not music for me anymore.

Traditionally, Native American song comes into being when it is dreamed. In addition the only way one can really utilize this song is when you do have this dream. The dream offers the gift of the song, its power, its wisdom and how to use it.

Again, this is another aspect of living in two worlds, the world of the Spirit and the world of our environment. When we stay in the integrity of both these worlds, we acquire this balance or as the Dine call it *hozho*.

Lois Duncan illustrates this example in her book *The Magic of Spider Woman* where she tells the story of a Navajo legend about a young shepherdess who is constantly

cold until Spider grandmother comes to her and teaches her how to shear her sheep and to spin wool and to weave blankets. Spider grandmother claims this shepherdess as her own when the shepherdess becomes a weaver. Spider grandmother warns the shepherdess to keep a covenant of *Walking the Middle Way*, the *hozho* path of balance and harmony. When one loses the middle way, one's life and world become distorted and filled with anxiety and torment. In order to stay in *hozho* and balance is to sing the songs that are from the heart and the songs given for each part of life. The Diné were not the only Native People who adhered to *hozho*, for most of Native American cultures who practice weaving, the adherence to the concept of *hozho* is intact.

Barbara Ortiz's article on Miwok People shares similar ideas as well as additional methods for achieving balance back in life:

Supernatural sanctions, ritual, ceremony, and cultural rules served to control and stabilize a potentially unstable world. They provided an affirmation of, and check on, natural forces. So it was that Miwok peoples kept the world harmonious (balanced) through prayerful thoughts, actions, and offerings, adherence to rules of proper behavior, fasting, and the observance of spiritual dances on a seasonal cycle. The most sacred dances, as visual prayers, gave thanks to the Creator and served to maintain the world's spiritual balance, thereby ensuring the health and well-being of the group, protecting people from natural disasters, and creating the conditions necessary for an abundant harvest. (qtd. in Taylor 1095)

The art of weaving heeded prayer and ceremony as a connection to the supernatural for the assistance prior to proceeding to the task. Greg Sarris writes about his auntie Mable, renowned Pomo basket weaver in *Mabel Mackay: Weaving the Dream* and how she sang for spiritual guidance in order to begin her basket weaving and throughout the entire process. To know this process is to understand Starloff's statement that Natives could be

caught up in a near “trance” for hours. As most artists understand, playing music in the studio keeps one alongside the “muse” when painting. Even contemporary musicians can jam for hours on end once in the “zone” of the act. Yet, I doubt most artists, unless one is a traditional Native American artist, can grasp the intensity of the process or the depth of the power that one is working to join with.

The agent to help a traditional Native American artist “see” is ritual and ceremony. In his book *Native Science*, Cajete considers the first shamans as the first artists and illustrates the formal principles in a traditional Native American art apprenticeship.

Yet, it is of paramount importance to find ways to ensure that the process and meaning of traditional tribal arts are not forgotten, because these are a unique and irreplaceable way for “seeing the voices of our hearts” and accessing wholeness through the creative process. (Cajete 52)

Perhaps this is derived from my Native American ancestry, but “speaking from the voices of our hearts” is how I personally relate to song and singing. As a singer, I feel that deep within the heart there is a longing to express something of significant yet intangible meaning which expands once released into the world.

Bruno Nettle, ethnographer and author of *Blackfoot Musical Thought* says, “Music for the Blackfoot is the language that is used by Spirit to speak to humans” (Nettle 129). Nettle goes on to say that the traditional views of the Blackfoot on music is that music is the cosmos, and it is real and it is spiritual. Music has relationship to the rest of life, humans, nature, spiritual entities and the supernatural. For the Blackfoot the supernatural comes as a vision to speak to humans and to give instruction on specific things of great importance, and to teach things in order to survive, which is very similar

to what Ortiz wrote about the Miwok people. Music validates the connection that the supernatural gives as songs in visions and dreams. In Nettl's research he found that from the period of 1890-1915, Blackfoot songs were derived specifically from the vision quest and the medicine bundle cults which were central to their religion and ceremony. In support to this process Smithsonian ethnographer Frances Densmore states, "Native Americans [on a vision quest] wait for the mysterious power pervading all nature to speak to him in song" (220).

For Nettl, songs can come from the supernatural, plants or animals but only for human beings. Not for each other. I have pondered on this assumption for some time, and I have come to the conclusion that the intelligence of the universe has no need to have to instruct itself on how to live or find balance. It already is *hozho*. It seems we humans are the most in need of instruction.

Wade Davis elaborated on this "need of instruction" in one of his fascinating public discourses "Belief and Ritual." He stated that South American shamans have been formulating indigenous pharmaceuticals in traditional healing for centuries. Davis assumed that their knowledge would have had to evolve through millennium to have the intelligence of precision doctoring. Yet the shamans informed him that the plants sung to them letting them know what needed to be put together for application.

Prayer

For those who pray, their wisdom always lets them know that they do not know. Such an insight puts little faith in record keeping and documentation and more on relying

on the unknown, the indefinable and in something greater than oneself. For indigenous people, prayer and supplication are continually sought to invoke the intelligence of the supernatural. As ethnographer Densmore states, “The chief function of prayer is for the communication with the supernatural, where they can secure aid within any undertaking” (221). For traditional Indians, prayer was predominantly done in the form of song.

Bruno Nettl states that myths of human cultural origins have played a major role in anthropology providing fundamental insights about a society’s view of nature and culture. A musicological concern with the origins of music is based on the classification of historical components of culture through the use of science and scholarship and as Nettl says, *The Bible*. He also suggests that music was developed after a culture was established in order to find a mate, communicate across distances, communicate with the supernatural or aid in labor. These “western” ideas position music as a tool to help humans do things. Nettl refers to the Bible as to say that music had its origins referred to in the Bible by Jubal who invented it (91).

In regards to tribal people, Nettl says music has no noted origins and from its conception is when a society actually begins. Many musicians call music the universal language. I would also add that perhaps music and song always were, just as the Blackfoot believe that music is the cosmos.

For humans to communicate with the cosmos or the Creators, prayer is the universal language as well. In the Native American manner, it is done in song. The idea is that prayer would be the pipe line or channel to get the connection of power flowing to

the supplicant from the supernatural. The actual pipe is used as such a symbol and tool for the plains people. I have no doubt that most Native peoples worked creatively this way. Yet there are times when we have more immediate and more dramatic concerns, in other words, personal desires. One fascinating account is material documented on the *Seven Visions of Bull Lodge* that give insight on this “way.”

Bull Lodge was the last Medicine carrier of the feather pipe belonging to the *Gros Ventre* Plains tribe in Montana. Pipe carriers for the Plains people held an esteemed position. The pipe was the conduit to initiate visions in dreams which brought forth the magic for the doctoring and practicing of medicine. It also gave the carrier the wisdom for inspirations too draw forth from. Bull Lodge’s medicine life documentation was a narrative delivered by his daughter *Garter Snake Woman* about his initiation as a medicine man which took place through a process of seven consecutive visions. This vision took over ten years to finish for Bull Lodge. Through these visionary initiations, he was given the complete “course” in being the true practicing pipe carrier for his people. He could not administer to his tribe until he completed these journeys. To illustrate the significance of the power and importance of song as prayer, I offer an example of Bull Lodge’s story.

From my understanding of medicine people, especially from the knowledge I have gleaned from my own Tribal people, a Dreamer, or medicine person, does not seek out the “profession,” the supernatural comes to the appointee. For Greg Sarris’ auntie, Mabel Mackey, before she had any dreams indicating she was directed to be a dreamer, there were elders who already knew from dreams of their own that she was chosen. With

Bull Lodge's "calling" to the vocation, he had the desire, and initiated the process himself, by going off to petition the supernatural.

He did this after waiting for the signs which let him know it was alright to begin the process. The significant sign was the presence of thunder and rain. The rain's purification prepared him to go to a sacred area. Here, he would call out, or as *Garter Snake Woman* told the story, he cried out to the Creators. This crying was the petition for the supernatural to take pity upon him. The crying was actually a melodic wailing in order to cause the environs and the supernatural to be affected towards his concerns. My thoughts are that even if someone did not start out with a sincere heart, after some time crying out in the rain and fasting for days until a vision came, you would be. Thus, this process was a constant with all the vision quests in Bull Lodge's journey as the medicine caretaker of the feather pipe.

As he continued upon his vision quest journeys, he was instructed through the visions he acquired to make artifacts to be used as instruments of aid in his medicine profession. These items are referred to as sacred medicine artifacts because they have been given by the supernatural and were made by the shaman/medicine person and kept safely guarded. Together, they are called a medicine bundle. For Bull Lodge his medicine bundle consisted of a wand with feathers, a pipe, a whistle that was used like incense to create conducive atmosphere for healing and to softly call out to the supernatural in the immediate environment, and a sacred image which was only known to the shaman. Only the hands of the shaman are used with such instruments in order for the power of its purpose to be kept intact. Another important factor for Bull Lodge's

medicine work was to continually honor all artifacts in his medicine bundle through its individual medicine story in song through a ceremony. An example is whenever Bull Lodge needed an artifact from his medicine bundle, in order for him to use it; he had to give each piece a ceremony. This was done through a process of purification and to help awaken the artifacts' power. A given song from a dream was also sung to it. In reference to the many accoutrements of the medicine way i.e. incense, tobacco that accompanied prayer, *Garter Snake Woman* says, "Now the most important part of these super natural gifts is the song" (Garter).

A reference to this type of invocation may have been used by the California Indians who were confined in Missions. In an interview with Edward Breck Parkman, Senior State Archaeologist California State Parks, he spoke of the conditions that Native Americans had to endure in the Petaluma Mission. Men and women were separated and tied together at night to sleep in a sitting position on the floor under lock and key. Many Indians died while trying to endure this unventilated and torturous environment or died by trying to escape it. A curiosity that was found (in an archeological dig) in a room that contained the men, was a cougar femur bone which was made into a whistle. Both of us assumed that this bone whistle was used as the instrumental pipeline to appease the supernatural for deliverance from such conditions.

From a less desperate manner yet using the same principles as Native American medicine people, are the Hawaiians with their use of song and blessings. I understand this concept of the word blessing because Coast Miwok use the term quite often. It is the

form of always keeping the lines of communication with the supernatural present in the immediate environment for good outcomes and experiences.

Song for most indigenous peoples holds a cultural poetic view through stories and myth. In Hawaii this glue comes in the form of proverbs called *'ōlelo no 'eau* that resonates with a deep value for the environment and with the identity of the people. Singing these chants shows respect for that relationship. When an event or experience is to be undertaken, such as a gathering, or to begin a meeting or conference, the incorporation of the names of stars are then included and thus turn the respectful chants into *pule* or prayer. The *pule* is used to open and close any coming together of people in order to empower and guide all concerned.

Educator, friend, and author of *Ho'oulu: Our Time of Becoming*, Dr. Manulani

Aluli Meyer says of the *pule*:

Saying *pule* is like knocking on the door before one enters. In a Hawaiian context this is seen as good manners and necessary for continued safety in all adventures. Although controversial in Western society, saying *pule* is a natural extension in Hawaiian ways and thinking (38).

For all peoples prayer has been best facilitated in song. Western religious culture uses song to support prayer with the use of hymns in their congregations within the church service. Unity is a word that comes to mind when thinking about music in our western society as well as how lovely and beautiful it can be presented when it pertains to religious matters.

In singing Native American songs the singer must be genuinely sincere and must be in touch with his/her most primal and organic self as much as possible. It makes no difference what culture a singer is from. When they have found this place, anyone in the

vicinity will feel the source of this connection and will physically respond with goose bumps. For a Dreamer or shaman, if one does not reach deep within to sing out with spirit, as did Bull Lodge, the Creators will not pay attention. How it sounds is not as important as that it comes from the place of the heart.

Healing

In almost all indigenous cultures, song has been used as a prominent factor in healing. Among the Navajo, ceremonial life centers on curing. In Navajo myth, a healer is a tribal member who must separate themselves from the people in order to be cured by the supernatural. Once cured he/she returns to the tribe to teach them the secrets and ceremony of healing. For the Navajo and also for the Californian Natives, all life is the process of being in balance and harmony, and the ceremonies of healing are ever present in the life of the people.

For many California Indian communities, doctoring and the dreamer cult have prevailed in most historical documentation pertaining to healing. Some experts profess that these cults have evolved through the *Ghost Dance* movement, perhaps from the earlier version in 1870 and becoming more prominent after the well known documented movement in 1890. There is prolific literature researched on the Ghost Dance movement. In particular, Smithsonian writer James Mooney has written extensively on the subject that primarily pertains to the Sioux nation in *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak*. Since his study, there has been an array of scholars who lent their hands in research regarding other tribes besides the plains people who have participated in the

Ghost Dance religious movement. Through their work they have illustrated that the movement did not begin or end in 1890.

No other author has written as extensively as ethnographer Cora Dubois on the lesser known movement that took place in the west coast region of Oregon, Washington and throughout the state of California twenty years prior to the 1890's plains event.

Ironically, when I was working in the corporate world, I managed a crew of film makers. Eventually, I struck up a friendship with one of the crew who had actually done some early film documentaries on elders of my tribe as well as a series on the *Ghost Dance*. When he found out I was a tribal descendent of the filmed elders, he gave his films to me, unbeknownst as to whom else to leave them with. Back then I was confused about the necessity to film a *Ghost Dance* documentary for my tribal region. I only equated the dance with the historical context of the Plains people's famous movement. Though I was intrigued with the film and watched it for years, I never did gain an understanding of it.

When my tribe became federally recognized, I felt I needed to hand over these films to the tribal council. It wasn't until I stumbled upon Dubois' work that I've come to realize that the *Ghost Dance* was very significant to my ancestors as well as many others who were not in the plains or even in the Great Basin (where the prophets were professed to originate). Many *Ghost Dance* scholars glean from Dubois's research findings in *The 1870's Ghost Dance*. Dubois suggests, as does Greg Sarris in *Telling Dreams and Keeping Secrets*, which the early movement of the 1870's helped to create the *Bole-Maru* Dreamer cult practices which are still practiced today in northern

California. Interestingly, prior to this movement, Geoff Gamble acknowledges that in California for centuries Indians had no leaders to teach them religion because everyone knew they had access to supernatural power. Cecile Silva still lived by such principles when Gamble worked with her until her death.

Not all Indian communities participated in *Ghost Dance* movement, either. Especially in the diverse landscape of California, it can be hypothesized that there existed as many different religious/spiritual practices as well. E. Breck Parkman, California ethnographer researched on women's secret societies of the Coast Miwok. One in particular was the *Máien*:

Prior to colonization in addition to the male chief, the Coast Miwok had two female leaders. The first was called *hóypuh kulé (·) yih* ("woman chief"). This woman took charge of the Acorn and *Sunwele* Dances, and was greatly involved in the Bird Cult. (Parkman 2)

The second leadership position was a *Máien* who facilitated a women's secret spiritual society within each village. It seems these (usually a few older) women held control over ceremonial practices and also chose the chiefs and medicine men. In his research he found other tribes that had the influence of the *Máien* as well, i.e. the Bay Miwok, Hill Patwin, and Ohlone. He suggested that the Coast Miwok along with these other three tribes created an intertribal alliance that spread throughout the San Francisco area which was a central economic trade region. Through the female *Máien* spiritual and political presence, Parkman saw the peoples living in a long peaceful exchange until the onset of the missionaries.

E.M. Leob suggests that elements of the *Bole-Maru* and *Kuksu* practices have ancient South American connections long before any *Ghost Dance* activities in his

documentation *The Religious Organizations of North Central California and Tierra Del Fuego*. If this is the case, present day practices in California, i.e. the *Big Head* and *Earth Lodges* (which have elements of the Ghost Dance in them), indeed have very ancient origins. The *Kuksu* referenced to was a male secret society cult that was transformed into the *Bole-Maru* dreamer religion which supported the Ghost Dance movement. In regards to secret societies, Loeb believed that the ancient focus in the New World was either at or near what later became the centers of higher civilizations in the New World (Loeb 538). The mound builders were also connected to these similar practices, such as the Natchez. Cultures which practiced these dances and cult practices held basic religious contexts: a belief in a supreme god, emergence stories, or stories of periodic destructions and reconstructions, i.e. the Quetzalcoatl culture hero myth of the dying and resurrecting king, sun and moon worship, and fire walking (Loeb 538).

The *Ghost Dance* has been described as a religious cult that was a catalyst to appropriate a spiritual and revolutionary/political voice in reply to the apocalypse of the American Indian culture. This reply resonated to the wisdom of the prophetic elders and medicine people who spoke for generations of the coming deluge between foreigners and a destruction of the Native peoples and the earth. In previous traditional Native culture, only the Shamanic Dreamers or Medicine men were privileged to obtain or share visions with the public. Through the diasporas of the Americas, rules were altered and the power of the people became the main ingredient to enable the medicine of the movement to take place, everyone's vision was valid again. In particular, California resonated with shamanic cult activity generally with groups of medicine practitioners congregating for

healing and for vision. These practitioners, as mentioned earlier, were people who came together in secret societies and worked with the supernatural. No one was designated as spiritually special; it was believed that everyone was connected to the supernatural and the societies worked collectively to be in consortium with the universe. In addition, they also respected the wisdom of elders who remembered the ancient prophecies.

By an intertribal joining together for the *Ghost Dance*, American Indian people regained a power of unity that was lost through the cession of land and resources. Many of them traveled long distances to be a part of the movement. Without culture, which is the primary basis in American Indian spirituality and religion, the introduction of the *Ghost Dance* resurrected a communal spirit by reform through the merging of Christian ideology. As previously mentioned, prophecy was and is a traditional ingredient to Native American history as well as spirituality. In the shamanic cults of the west, visions were a primary substance to most of Native people's life and activity. Johnson Willard's article titled, "Native American Prophecy in Historical Perspective" puts in perspective the wisdom most Native Americans had through prophecy about the coming changes by the visions that were given to the elders. Many examples come from many different tribes and noted medicine people. The elders of the past spoke as those of today of the coming deluge to our planet caused by natural catastrophe brought on by the disconnection of our true relationship with the world and each other.

Here I find a relationship with the Christian ontology regarding another world after death and the transcendent rapture at the end of the world for those who have adhered to the professed ways of the religion that comes together with the prophecies of

Native Americans who advocate traditional culture and sovereignty to help ease the dilemma the world faces in the coming future. Most Native American prophecies regarding “after the deluge” of European encroachment state that the world will be wiped clean of the greed and vices of the human being. This would include those Native people who lost their culture and succumbed to the western ways of life. The world would then be made new so that the righteous would come once again to live together in peace, joy and love on earth. Written in “The Revelations of John” from the Bible, this is similarly stated, that the righteous (who adhere) to Christian disciplines will be given the kingdom of heaven on earth in Chapter 21.

And I saw a new heaven and new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea... and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall no longer be death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain, the first things have passed away. And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new. (Rev. 21:1, Rev. 21:4-6)

Likewise, for Native *Ghost Dance* practitioners, this would include all that hold the “spirit” of the movement, even for the non-Native Christian Mormons who also participated with and helped Native Americans in the *Ghost Dance*.

Benjamin R. Kracht, like Dubois, extends the *Ghost Dance* movement with the Kiowa, and Shoshone in his article, “The Kiowa Ghost Dance, 1894-1916: An Unheralded Revitalization Movement.” He accentuates the significance of the movement to more Native American peoples. As mentioned earlier, not all tribes literally participated in the actual movement, such as the Crow and eastern peoples. For those who participated in the movement, the *Ghost Dance* reinforced the momentum of Native identity and cultural sovereignty.

Meighan and Riddell, through a very ethnographic account, describe a pole erected in the Big Head Dance in the *Maru Cult of the Pomo Indians, a California Ghost Dance Survival*, which illustrates the similarities of the typical round dance with the *Ghost Dance*. Through their intricate diagrams and sketches, the layout of the dance held the foundations of a larger ceremonial structure such as the *Sun Dance* and the *Prophet's Dance*, which were said to be predecessors of the *Ghost Dance*. In addition, many dances connected to the ancient South American sun and moon rituals have a very similar structure. Likewise, the *Big Head* practiced in Northern California was derived from the *Maru* cults where the general Dreamers were women. These dances incorporated both women and men dancers dancing together, which was not a typical tradition within the plains dances. In traditional tribal community festivals in the Coast Miwok culture, this also applies; women and men do not dance together. For transformational purposes, the intermingling of the peoples seems to be an important ingredient. Perhaps in a matriarchal society, it was not difficult to endorse. It might have been a necessary emergence for a charismatic medicine man like Wovoka to help the movement sweep across the more patriarchal plains regions in order to incorporate these non-traditional and new ideas.

Alexander Lesser's *The Pawnee Ghost Dance Hand Game: Ghost Dance Revival and Ethnic Identity*, illustrates that the spirit of the movement is preserved and transformed into a cultural celebration just as the hybrid powwow celebrations have kept many sacred and powerful dances intact though changes. They are still here. Such transformation, though not entirely traditional, holds a cultural intelligence that Robert

Allen Warrior advocates in *Tribal Secrets*. Through *Tribal Secrets*, Warrior juxtaposes the concerns of mixed bloods and their individual journey back to their heritage within all the changes brought by colonization, while also being haunted by the spiritual undercurrents that prevail. Native American scholars keep searching for the link to that mysterious realm. Scholar and educator Taiaiake Alfred polemically advocates in *Peace, Power and Righteousness* the need for tribal communities to recapture the power of indigenous cultural secrets and traditions. I find these highly political pieces that voice advocacy for intellectual sovereignty to be a strong support to the ideology of the *Ghost Dance* movement, which is a performing voice advocating cultural revitalization. Warrior advocates that intellectual sovereignty can evolve whereas Alfred advocates that intellectual sovereignty must remain traditionally intact. I find that the *Ghost Dance* can metaphorically address the two concerning voices.

Vine Deloria Jr. in *God is Red* depicts the multifaceted politics of the Native American derived from movements since the *Ghost Dance*. The *Ghost Dance* moved out from the west in the 1800's on peaceful terms. Subsequently, almost one hundred years after this wave, other movements emerged out of the west via Alcatraz in the San Francisco Bay with Native Americans again in an intertribal joining together, as well as the *Trail of Broken Treaties* with yet another intertribal convergence in the west. These peoples then journeyed together in a movement towards the east where the foundations of the Native Cultural deluge was historically documented. Unfortunately, this journey did not end on peaceful terms and the return to *Wounded Knee* came again with painful heavy hearts. Perhaps since the demise of "real" medicine people, the movement will

come again as it started, in peace. Ancient prophesy of the California Chumash people have said that the people of the west will be pushed out into the sea and there will be nowhere to go but to stand up and turn around and face the east, to face the sun, and to dance out to the rest of the world through the great wave of the heart.

Bruno Bettelheim, Jewish author and psychologist, shares his story in the *Informed Heart* about the atrocities he endured at the Dachau concentration camp in WWII Germany. He believes that those who held onto the wisdom from within the heart would not lose one's spirit to the ravages of society and would survive and live on into a new life and world. No one says this new world will be better than the one lost. This is most perfectly illustrated with the western movement across the North American "New World." History depicts this movement as glorious adventure. Looking back, can anyone honestly believe it has been better? Perhaps we can honestly say it has been different than the one left behind. The hope of survival and to continue on a journey that is filled with integrity and balance, and to pass on strength and faith to others, is what the *Ghost Dance* movement and spirit can be as a most valuable tool of healing for everyone.

Our ancestors tried to survive through the clash of two worlds through the song and dance of the *Ghost Dance*. Initially, it was not a dance so that the whites were wiped off the earth. Most California Indians walked between life and death filled with grief and sorrow as the sole survivors of their community. To receive a glimpse of a loved one in a vision fueled the visionary to go on living. Some wanted to dance until they collapsed in order to rejoin the rest of their loved ones away from the world which was devoid of all the spirit and life of their ancestors. What evolved for the California Indians was the

Dreamer cult that produced visionaries to keep inspiring their surviving community members to live on. Now even they have gone. A new movement is upon our people. It is to reach back toward our culture where the song or spirit of our creative past must come once again to each individual in order to grow back together in strength.

Other communities have begun to do such restoration. Estonia, a tiny European community in the Baltic region of Northern Europe, struggled for centuries to hold onto their identity and their heritage. Under Russian domination, and forced to speak only Russian, the Estonians continued to sing their “outlawed” songs in their own language which united the people. (“The Singing”)

One thing is for certain; music crosses cultural barriers and brings us together. We see this phenomenon in many ways. Leanne Hinton writes in *Flutes of Fire* when she journeyed to visit the Kiliwas of Baja Mexico with a group of Diegeños:

These two tribes shared no language in common, and most of the individuals who were at this gathering had never seen each other before. Yet they all knew the same songs. And the songs that weren’t known to both tribes nevertheless belonged to genres known to both, so singing along was easy. (41-42)

This is what the healing intentions of the *Ghost Dance* did for so many peoples who came together from many tribes without speaking each other’s language. In spite of seeing everything vanish in their lives, our ancestors were compelled to come together even in pain of death to sing together and find healing as they danced.

The Singers and Singing

As previously mentioned, most traditional singers in Native American communities have received their songs through dreams. There are also very ancient traditional songs that have been preserved through ritual and ceremonial practices.

In revitalization efforts today, new young singers like Mike Marelles from the Southern California Desert Cahuilla Native American community are retrieving their traditional songs and singing them again out of context from their original spiritual practice. Well known songs from the Cahuilla community are the Bird Songs. These songs are a mixture of many stories and tell of the migration of birds from the beginning of time. Throughout Southern California many tribes, though speaking different languages, come together to sing the Bird Songs today at powwows and ceremonial gatherings. The Deerskin Song is sung amongst tribes in the northwest of California, as the Bear Dance is shared by Eastern California tribes. The songs I had learned were songs done by the Pomo community, though not to be sung out in public.

Marelles shared his thoughts about Native songs and singing at *California Indian Songs and Stories* presented by the Phoebe Hearst Museum. He said the songs were all lost. They had no singing or dancing in his tribe. Three elder men from different communities decided to teach the youth. When Marelles first heard the songs, he knew he had to sing. “It was all I wanted to do, not for recognition but to do it.” Marelles and a group of other youths practice every week and sing the songs at tribal social functions. He says, “Now we connect to the music. We don’t understand what we are singing but

hopefully in the future it will change” (Berkeley). Before the songs came back, Mike said that the community was basically held up by the church and non-Indian intervention. The people did not talk amongst themselves about their culture and they were jealous of each other. He felt that if it were not for the songs, he would have been more exposed to drugs. Now through the song restoration, he feels his tribe is its own people again. Mike shared his thoughts on being an Indian taught to him by his mentor and elder Mr. Levi:

Being Indian is not wearing the long hair and dancing in powwows. This is what being an Indian is, taking care of each other. This is what makes you an Indian. This is what makes us a tribe. You don't give up. (Berkeley)

Charlie Thom, Karuk elder, was another guest singer/storyteller presenter at *California Indian Songs and Stories*. He opened the presentation with a prayer in Karuk and was the closing presenter. He told the story of how he was found after his mother had died when he was three months old and was raised by the elders of the tribe. He was the only child in the tribe since all the tribal children had been removed and taken to boarding schools. His exuded the spirit of an individual who indeed had walked from within a different world. Between telling a story, Charlie would spontaneously sit down and sing out a powerful Karuk song as he beat his square drum. Charlie also added that there was a time when there was much controversy up in the mountains on tribal lands from outside interests. AIM people came to the tribal community to talk them into letting them blow up the heavy equipment that was parked on their land. Charlie told the AIM folks to go away. He added at one time he was about to lose his sight and found that his heart needed the healing instead. He said his eye sight was better because his heart was better. Charlie is the elder that helped his community revitalize their culture and their language. Today the Karuk are

the largest California Indian community with over five thousand members, most who speak their language. Humboldt College offers Karuk as a foreign language academic credit.

Likewise, for the Crow people, The Little Big Horn College on the Crow Agency has a Crow Studies program and classes on Crow music and dance, and one particular music course on Crow lullabies. The Crow have also kept their traditional government and only speakers of the language can sit on their tribal board and hold office.

I had an opportunity to interview Shane Doyle, a Crow educator as well as Powwow drum singer. He shared with me his singer's story. Shane had grown up in the Crow Agency and has lived there all his life. He would attend Powwows with his family but did not participate in them until his aunt married a man who was a singer and got him involved. Shane said he was a teenager when he first went to listen to his uncle. He remembered that he was invited to sit next to his uncle at the drum and even though Shane did not know what was happening or the words of the songs, he got so 'into' it that he told his uncle he wanted to sing as well. His uncle responded by laughing at him. He did not take Shane seriously, though Shane felt it was a lucky coincidence that his uncle and mother were returning to school at MSU and moving to Bozeman. So his uncle invited Shane to attend the practices with his Bozeman drum group in 1989. At the time every tribe was represented in this particular drum group that consisted of about sixteen to seventeen members. His drum community is what hooked Shane into the culture. He was committed to their practices every Wednesday evening that lasted past midnight.

The powwow is show time and Shane professed that performing at powwows is very addicting. Those were wonderful days for him. Many members of the drum group

after graduating moved away. No one moved in to replace them. Today, Shane says there are no singers here that really sing at MSU, perhaps three or four people but it is really hard to get them together.

Traditionally in Crow culture, if the family is a powwow family, they will teach you the songs. There are also ceremonial songs for the Sundance and the peyote ceremonies. These songs are based on the Kiowa foundations. Other Plains tribes have sweat songs but not the Crow, though Shane does know the Sioux and Cheyenne songs.

Shane is related to five hundred people, and out of these people, there are connections that lead to many other avenues of cultural experiences. The peyote ceremonial singing came about for Shane by a Crow man that adopted him when he finished his Masters Program. Shane did not know anything about the peyote experience, this initiation brought him more in depth about the culture, and he tried to teach the misconceptions of this ceremony in his NAS classes at MSU. Presently, Shane is finishing his Doctorate Degree in Education.

One of my questions was on the issue or idea of a traditional singer's quest to receive dreams to make new songs. Shane did comment that there are many singers that are traditional that are performing and perhaps do dream songs, though he added, not enough. As for Shane he doesn't recall any dream songs. His songs are from other people that he has practiced with, especially his uncle. Shane feels that if he practiced more he may be more in tune with that world, but now his world is too involved with academia and his family. Though when his uncle comes through from Missoula they will get together and meet with a couple of others who will want to practice.

Shane also educated me on the powwow songs. One cannot just play at a powwow and “jam” if one is representing the drum group. One has to practice and know all the songs. All your drum people must have continually practiced together and all must make a commitment to the powwow. You must be there the entire time. The lead singer carries the entire drum group. For an example, Shane could attend a powwow and go to the drum area and could sing as long as there was a drum group with a lead singer that would carry the songs. He could sing along with them then. His uncle told him long ago if you set up at a powwow it is a serious thing. You must do a good job, as well as know the song extremely well for it affects the dancers’ performance. Shane’s uncle, who is Northern Cheyenne, has instilled a sense of integrity in Shane’s own performances.

An additional element we talked about was women singers. Shane says that Crow women at times do sing with the men. They actually bring in an additional dimension since the women will sing an octave higher than the men. Shane actually commented that the addition of women gives real power to the songs. As far as peyote songs, he did not recall women singing in the ceremony. To Shane, being a Native singer is more than a profession. Singing is about the energy of timelessness and a spiritual experience. To be on the same page as other people in the same moment is what the power of the “zone” is. Shane says you can pick it up if you are standing around the drum group looking in on it; it will pull you in and shake you to the core as well as give you peace. In addition, it is a public experience that is not competitive and not a performance, i.e. a concert. It brings everyone together to experience that “zone.”

I asked Shane if being a Native Singer was a part of his identity, and he said

Yes, I feel comfortable when I sit down at the drum...even if it is not my drum group and I don't know those guys because you're on the same page. Just like a violinist or jazz musician who never practiced with a group before, they can still jump in and be on the same page. "You know it's the music because it's the structure you are familiar with. Like you have about a 1000 songs in your head and you can know you can join in.
(Doyle)

I replied, "It's like jamming with a 12 bar blues structure?" "Exactly," was his reply.

Shane told me that when he taught at MSU, he did share his songs at a rare but appropriate time. He felt that his students then got a feeling or understanding that he really was an Indian. Shane says you can bring 'them' out in the right context. He mentioned a Lakota saying *Wongani Tonka*, meaning, "You are trying too hard to be something. Songs or language is never used to make others think you are a real Indian. That is for my family and relatives."

It was a great pleasure to spend the hour with Shane. I greatly respected his convictions and direction for such a young man who is also quite responsible for his family and culture. He continues on with his singing because as he says he has to.

Living here amongst the plains communities, I see the vast differences tribal communities hold in regard to songs and their expression. In our cultural restoration process, we all know our songs are very precious to us.

In closing, I would like to touch on an element in Native American singing which most non-Indians do not understand. Most Native American songs do not have literal translations. I will offer a couple of explanations from Leanne Hinton. One explanation is

taken from a linguistic and musicological perspective, while the other is simply Indian. Hinton equates non sense syllable, or no word singing in the Native American song style, to something like scat singing in the jazz world, or a style used in a fluctuating pitch technique done in southern gospel music. But Hinton says these names are problematical:

Non sense implies something silly and unimportant and songs without real words are far from being either “nonsensical” or “meaningless.” So I prefer to borrow a term from musicology and call these syllables *vocables*, a word that doesn’t carry those negative connotations. (145)

The Indian explanation would be:

Some songs whose words appear to have no meaning are said to be in spirit language or animal language, which humans don’t know. Among the Atsugewi, if a spirit liked a person, it sang to him, and then the person could sing the song under appropriate circumstances. (148)

Sergei Khan reiterates this idea in his studies with Tlingit society potlatch ceremonial songs.

Among them were the so-called “spirit imitating songs” (*yéik utee daa sheeyi*). Their words often unintelligible were believed to be the voices of the shaman’s spirit helpers... (356)

Joanne Shenandoah, noted Oneida Singer from the Wolf Clan, explains non-translatable songs thus:

These songs are not meant to be literal. They are meant to transport you or take you to a sacred place. Therefore the meaning is very simple in many cases ... There are songs just for healing; there are songs that can quicken your death. There are some pretty powerful songs out there. The words are above and beyond what I could ever imagine saying.

Hinton goes on to say that some of the sounds are real words but changed over time and/or else the meaning literally lost and forgotten.

Sergei Khan writes in “The Sacred and the Secular: Tlingit Potlatch Songs outside the Potlatch,” that an elder, Charlie Joseph Sr. taught children the old songs and dances against tribal rules and protocol. Traditional elders felt that since there were no medicine people who could teach the children the deeper significance of the songs and dances, plus the lack of mature wisdom needed to communicate with the spirit world, performing the ceremonial songs and dances could cause harm to the tribe. Yet, today there is culture again for the Tlingit people even though the elders complain that there is no understanding of the shaman’s power or spirit when performed. Even so, many of the elders, though concerned, are so proud of their grandchildren who they feel have given them emotional and physical strength by bringing back the memories of the performances.

Powwows are very similar. So what is wrong with such activities? It gives the youth some kind of pride and recognition to hold onto in our intangible world. To revive old songs, dances and ceremonies or to keep them buried is not an easy issue to come to terms with when a people are striving to revive their culture and reestablish their identities. As Mike Marelles says, the more you sing, the more you remember, but the most important thing was to take care of each other. Khan observes that the Tlingit elders are more involved now with interpretation for the youth. Since the secularization of traditional songs and other genres are on the rise, Khan says “we anthropologists have our work cut out for us” (364). I would say we all have that responsibility.

The Quest Story

In closing this chapter, I offer a Yokuts California Indian Story. I was fortunate to obtain an interview with Dr. Geoff Gamble, professor emeritus at MSU and linguist of the Yokuts language of California people. He shared a story he was told by Cecile Silva in 1974, *Kadadimcha and Chuchankin*, and is published in *Yakut Texts* edited by Dr. Gamble. Dr. Gamble initially said it was a story of a young woman's spiritual quest. Generally, for most Native American communities, pottery and basketry were within the domain of women's art. Here, the cycle relating to women of sacrifice and transformation and the value of elder wisdom is strong. In addition, the power of the supernatural that is imbued within the designs of the ancient pictograph rocks is kept alive within the daily life by the baskets themselves. A question I asked of Dr. Gamble was if he thought that the Yokuts were of a matriarchal society. He acknowledged that he felt it was. He also added that spirituality was not a status attainment, it was an objective open for any member of the community. Dr. Gamble and Cecile Silva remained friends for twenty years until her death. He was welcomed into the Santa Rosa Rancheria community and though he possessed massive field notes, his respect for the wisdom he gained and friendship with Cecile has kept them all unpublished except for few like this story.

I chose this legend because it illustrates the deep need for our mother culture for which we Indians desperately search for.

Kadadimcha and Chuchunkin

Kadadimcha had a pregnant daughter who liked sweet clover. Her daughter decided to go out and pick some clover. Kadadimcha told her daughter not to pull up the clover by the roots for there was a bear that liked to eat pregnant women in the area and could find her if she did so. The daughter did not believe her mother and sure enough she did not return home. Kadadimcha went out looking for her daughter and did not find her, but saw the bear that had already eaten her daughter. Kadadimcha was a wise woman and heard something from within the clover and found a leaf with a drop of her daughter's blood on it. She took the leaf and put it in her basket.

The next morning she found a crying baby in the basket and named her granddaughter Chuchankin. Chuchankin was always crying for her mother, though she lived happily with her grandmother as Kadadimcha let Chuchankin do as she pleased. Chuchankin observed her grandmother and learned to weave baskets.

One day Kadadimcha could not find Chuchankin. Chuchankin had left to find her mother. Kadadimcha went out looking for Chuchankin. All along the mountains by large rocks with paintings on them Kadadimcha found a basket that Chuchankin had woven. Chuchankin had not found her mother but along the way as she waited for her grandmother to find her, she wove baskets with the designs of animals from the rocks.

This is how the people found their basket designs.

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

My name and yours,
 and the true name of the sun,
 or a spring of water,
 or an unborn child,
 all are syllables of the Great word
 that is very slowly spoken by the shining of the stars.
 There is no other power.
 No other name.

Ursula LaGuin (qtd. Hinton "Flutes" 61)

I remember introducing myself to a fellow colleague at MSU, and their reply to my heritage was, "Wow, you know I don't have a clue about California Indians because they were exterminated a long time ago." My reply was, "How can we be exterminated, I am still here?" My fellow colleague is not alone. Most non-Indians as well as Indians are very unfamiliar with California tribes. We were not exterminated. In the 1950's, Congress passed legislation terminating thirty eight California tribes and Rancherias. Many were descendents of about sixty California Indian tribes. In 1988 litigation proved that all termination in California was illegally promulgated and executed, yet some California tribes today remain terminated. My tribe was reinstated in 1998 at the end of President Clinton's term; hence, our struggle for cultural survival. Our language is classified as extinct because there are no fluent speakers alive.

Because remote California was considered an island in the mythic novel *Las Sergas de Esplandian*, perhaps those far west isolated peoples (as if living on an island) were out of context with other Indian Nations. The facts are that many early explorers

i.e. Drake, Russians and the Spanish explorers on the Manila galleons initially diminished populations by disease alone. Spanish conquerors enslaved Indians, forced them to build the Missions and then held them captive within them. Once the Mexican government took over California from the Spanish, the California Indians could leave the missions, but they had nowhere to go. Their lands were confiscated by the Mexican regime and the only way for the California Indians to survive was to serve the new culture with their labor where the possibility of room and board could be part of the living arrangement. Many men and women lived and worked on the Mexican Rancherias. The men labored as rancheros and the women as domestics.

When California was claimed by yet another power, the United States, the onset of the Gold Rush was perhaps the worst for the California Native Americans. Greed filled miners and the new settlers with gold fever and land acquisition required Native California people out of their way. The California Indians were literally massacred, hunted, and slaughtered upon sight. Entire tribes of people were annihilated. If it wasn't for the new American landowner's need for laborers, all the California Indians would have been annihilated, but instead the Indian slave market took precedent. Slavery was still in effect for the California Indian five years after the Emancipation Proclamation. The sorry state of the California Native American was basically a homeless poverty-stricken people. When the U.S. instated California, agents did make approximately eighty treaties, but when they got back to Washington, they were shelved. "Survivors of the holocaust of the 19th century found themselves without land and were often unrecognized by the federal government and thus unable to receive aid" (Hinton 217).

Historian Jack Norton observed, “The displacement of the Indian tribes in California went far beyond the comprehension of most people today” (42).

It was not until the Civil Rights movement in the 60’s where the California Indian would start to begin the road to recovery. In addition, because of the interests and concerns of ethnographers i.e. Kroeber and Loeb, and linguists, i.e., Harrington, Leanne Hinton, Callaghan, Dr. Applegate and Dr. Gamble, there is information to be found on the culture, language and history of California Indians.

The difficulty in regaining a California ancestral tongue is that there were approximately one hundred languages spoken by smaller groups of people as in comparison to the larger well known Indian Nations. There were many linguists researching the California Indians, but one that was very possessive of the people was J.P. Harrington. Hinton reports Harrington would try to pay off other linguists as to not research a particular tribal group in California. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it did not. Harrington, it seems was an eccentric, for after he died there were manuscripts resurfacing for years after, some even found in barns. It took groups of scholars to categorize and make sense of his notes (“Flutes” 194-209).

Another factor that has stood in the way of California language recovery is that the living speakers would not speak their language because of the harsh treatment in boarding schools and even in the Rancheria schools.

Essie Allen was born in Santa Rosa, CA but went to school in Hopland, CA and the boarding school in Covelo, CA. She said this:

I was eleven years old [when I went to Covelo], and every night I cried and then I’d lay awake and think and think and think. I’d think to myself,

If I ever get married and have children, I'll never teach my children the language or all the Indian things I know. I'll never teach them that, I don't want my children to be treated l, like they treated me.' That's the way I raised my children. (Hinton 176)

My grandmother was fortunate, she was never sent to boarding schools. She was orphaned at eleven or twelve years of age. Luckily, an aunt who was a nurse boarding in Angwin, California took my grandmother and her four sisters with her, but the girls could not stay in the house. They had to stay in a shed in the back yard, and being the oldest, my grandmother had to care for her sisters. Eventually, she was sent out to do domestic work for a family in Berkeley, and then she became a nurse through the Seventh Day Adventist church. There were no Indians to speak with in her world after her mother died. She survived and prospered by speaking English and Spanish and eventually was able to have property for her family to have a place to call home.

At a conference I recently attended in Albuquerque, New Mexico, those of us who were interested ventured to visit a couple of elders in a Pueblo community. Two elderly men spoke to our group about the past and the concerns of the future for their people. Observing the quiet and deserted surroundings, one would even wonder if anyone presently lived at the pueblo. A deep concern of the two men was for their children's future. "We did not teach our children to speak our language and now there is no interest in learning our language" (elder). In addition, many of the young folks choose not to live in the pueblo.

Sadness came over me when I heard their words. Here they seemed to be blaming themselves when most of us in the group knew that the indigenous languages of the Americans were outlawed and silenced. Even after the Self-Determination and

Educational Assistance Act of 1975 took affect after the civil rights era, most of the people were struggling just to survive and their children were schooled by nonIndians in the English language. Many times I blamed myself because I did not ask my grandmother to teach me our ancestral language, yet we were all caught up in the whirlwind activity of the colonized industrial life. W. Wayt Gibbs says:

One factor that always seems to occur in the demise of a language is that the speakers begin to have collective doubts about the usefulness of language loyalty. Once they start regarding their own language as inferior to the majority language, people stop using it for all situations. Kids pick up on the attitude and prefer the dominant language. In many cases, people don't notice until they suddenly realize that their kids never speak the language, even at home.

Another obstacle I saw for the Pueblo community was that their pueblo owns a very affluent casino. It would make sense that many of the younger community members would want to live in more luxurious surroundings, and have all the modern conveniences. The homes on the pueblo were all adobe, flat, on arid ground, no street lights, and had outdoor adobe ovens in the back yards. I could see it in the future as a historical monument and a tourist spot. On the other side of the casino business, successful casino tribes have utilized profits to support cultural revitalization, particularly language programs and facilities. Such tribes have regained strength within their culture and sovereignty.

It was in 2007 I returned to academia. While I was attending the University of Hawaii at Hilo one beautiful paradise Monday morning, I heard the most angelic sounds coming from a Hawaiian prayer/chanting, or as Dr. Meyers would say, *pule*. Everyone I asked could not explain the lovely chants. I had to find out about the intriguing music. I

had the opportunity to interview Dr. Kalena Silva, founder of the Indigenous Studies program in Hawaii. He explained that it was the beginning fall semester of a statewide Hawaiian language emergence program. I was fortunate to be a witness to the events that progressed Hawaii to a bilingual state with English and Hawaiian languages. The five years living in Hawaii gave me the experience of what could happen if an ancestral tongue were revitalized. Hinton acknowledges the success of the Hawaiian language as the only language that was spoken in Hawaii amongst her aboriginal people, whereas in North America there were hundreds of languages, not including the one hundred spoken in California (“Flute” Hinton 235).

Hawaiian culture is embraced by most that come to live upon the islands. As people flock to mainland U.S.A to be American, folks from all over the world leave their old lifestyles to be Hawaiian and to learn the language. The spirit of the goddess *Pele* is alive and well. Hawaiian myth says the goddess *Pele* lives within the active caldera of *Haulemaumau*, ensuring those who do come to Hawaii to embrace the spirit of aloha or leave if they cannot. The Spirit of the culture is what is sought and I believe the spirit of the culture is why we study our language.

Lawrence Gross, Native Anishinaabe scholar advocates that:

Along with language, it could be argued that cultural sovereignty has to start with religion...It is a generally accepted proposition that there is little to no significant difference between the culture of a given Indian nation and its religion (130).

Dr. Gross goes onto explain that myth is the starting point for directing and instilling the culture. The direction and interpretation of its value is a lifelong enterprise of hermeneutics and enforces the sacredness and cultural sovereignty of the people.

Many of such myths illustrate this concept in *The Dawn of the World: Myth and Tales of the Miwok Indians of California*. The creation stories of my ancestors reveal that the first people manifested our people from the feathers of birds. Thus, birds of all kinds have always been sacred to our communities. Our ancestors understood that animals were sacred intelligent older brothers/sisters cloaked in earthly personages who looked after us younger human beings. In addition, *Tamal Pais* is the original name of Mt. Tamalpais, the sacred mountain of our people northwest of San Francisco Bay. It translates to the Mountain of the West Coast as *Tamal Machchawmu* translates to the People of the West Coast. I was told by a spiritual elder that our people would make pilgrimages to sacred mountains and would sing for the entrance into them. Perhaps this is the idea that some ‘New Age’ folks get when prophesying that there is a city, *Telos*, inside Mount Shasta, inhabited not by Indians but by giant angelic white people.

This is so very interesting, that a story or aspects of Native American culture is used in this new pseudo science “new age” subculture. Many Native Americans are angered by culture stealing by such groups. Even historian Richard White even admits of historians, that the few historians who do write about Native people know anything about their languages and [culture]:

Preserved in the language are conceptual frameworks, categorizations of the world that structure how a speaker perceives and organizes the world. In them are potential insights into worlds we do not know, but to follow them we need linguistic skills most historians do not possess (94).

Thus linguists such as Sean O’Neill who wrote *Mythic and Poetic Dimensions of Speech in Northwestern California* on studies of the Hupa, Yurok and Karuk languages of northwestern California demonstrate the importance of vocabulary in conveying

pervasive cultural ideologies such as those associated with mythology, religion, folklore or geographical systems of spatial orientation. O'Neill comments on the thoughts of the original architects of the linguistic school of thought, Boas, Sapir and Whorf who all realized the central role that language plays in human life. With Boas he makes note to pay attention to storytellers for they draw a conceptual view within their own language similar to the exegesis of religious documents, where even the subtlest linguistic nuance can hold profound implications for the interpretation of a text (305-306). Thus understanding the meaning of a story from a given culture is not done by merely learning the language. One must learn to know the culture. O'Neill follows with Whorf's ideas that vocabulary and perception are connected most importantly in the reference of everyday life (306). Hence the relationship regarding the world views of Native people and their identity with the environment. O'Neill adds Sapir's concept of symbolism in vocabulary in particular to poetry which adds a full comprehension of the whole life of the community as it is mirrored in the words or as it is suggested by their overtones (308). David Crystal also adds that westerners are infants in regards to knowing their environment and how to behave towards it. He says indigenous peoples have a "mosaic vision". It is the language that unifies everything, "linking environmental practices with cultural knowledge, transmitting everything synchronistically among the members of the community, as well as diachronically between generations" (47).

Thus, the meaning of retrieving a mother/culture which is embedded within its language is survival and is paramount for indigenous peoples as well as Native tribes who are now seeking to recover their identity. The importance within the U.S. is that one does

not have access to such field notes or artifacts on their people unless they are from a Federally Recognized Tribe or if they are a scholar who knows about such archives. As I visited the Peabody Hearst Museum at Berkeley as an Indian scholar, I was admitted (by appointment) to view artifacts out of the public view with tribal ID in hand. If there are no living speakers in a community and there is no Federal Recognition, then the language will die.

When I was in Hawaii, I tried many times to get hold of material to study our language, and I felt that because I was far away, obtaining material was a political issue. Yet, as I have been learning the language, I have been informed by my mentor that there was no material then. I feel very grateful right now to be learning the language of my mother's heritage. This would not have happened if it was not for a few dedicated and concerned individuals who have been diligently working on reviving indigenous languages back in the 60's. This group of language revivalists met in New Mexico in 1988 at the *International Native American Languages Issues Conference* and wrote the provisions for the *Native American Languages Act of 1990*. That Act declared that it is the policy of the United States to:

preserve, protect and promote the rights and the freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages and to fully recognize the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies, States, territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of conducting their own business. (Hinton 45)

The passage of the Native American Languages Act of 1990, officially addresses the fundamental rights of the Native American peoples by highlighting the uniqueness of

their cultures and languages and the government's responsibility to work with Native Americans to preserve them. It recognizes that traditional languages are an integral part of Native American cultures and identities for transmitting literature, history, religion, and other values necessary for the survival of their cultural and political integrity. It acknowledges that language provides a direct and powerful means of promoting international communication by people who share languages. Since its enactment, motivated language communities have been supported legally and financially, although the amount of financial support is limited. In addition, it is up to the individuals and communities to seek out the funding in order to acquire it. The benefits of this enactment have also initiated institutions to enforce the study of regional languages in the curriculum within such degree programs as Native American Studies and Indigenous Studies.

Many successful immersion schools today were started by a handful of devoted individuals who developed language nests (centers for all day immersion for infants and children), especially *The Pūnana Leo* Movement in Hawaii. Here in Montana the *Blackfeet Piegan Institute* or *Nizi Puh Wah Sin* began this same way. Funds for Language Revitalization were not available until 2006 through the Esther Martinez Language Revitalization Act. It has been a race because many Native Communities are competing for the limited funds in order to try to regain their heritage before they are all lost.

Revitalization Efforts

Coast Miwok people were the second largest of California communities before Euro contact. The largest group was the Chumash peoples. Today, the Chumash as a whole are not federally recognized, and the Coast Miwok have lost most of their culture. There are presently four committed students in my tribe who have been studying Coast Miwok since 2004. I feel extremely fortunate that one of these tribal members is my mentor who I converse with once a week in a long distance Coast Miwok language program.

I was fortunate to meet Lori Lewa, a Pomo woman at a conference I attended at Arizona State University, and I realize that she was the main reason I went. She is from the Kashia tribe and is a PhD student at UC Davis. She told me about the *Breath of Life* conference and so I applied. I knew my grandmother was guiding me. My language has become the backbone of my work here at MSU.

During June 2010 I had the opportunity to attend *The Breath of Life*, a conference for California Native Americans who wish to learn their critically endangered and extinct languages. The conference is sponsored by the *Advocates of Indigenous California Language Survival* and is partially funded by the *Endangered Language Fund*. I obtained a travel grant from the NAS department at MSU, and the *Breath of Life* gave me a scholarship to attend the conference. Funding I had applied for a year prior to coming to MSU came through, so it was very clear that I was to attend the event. Linguists, language scholars and eighty student tribal members from thirteen California Native

communities came together to immerse themselves into critically endangered language and culture. We were introduced to our language advocates, i.e. Leanne Hinton (a founding member), Dr. Weigel and Dr. Wes Leonard, as well as our linguistic mentors. My linguistic mentor Adrienne who is an undergraduate linguist major at UC Berkeley devoted her time to me every day and still writes to me. She is Chinese and has not learned her language yet, (no doubt in the future). Besides the linguist mentor, each student had a speaker from their tribe as a language mentor. I had no one from my tribe as a mentor for me so Adrienne was it. From this experience I found that there is very little archived documentation on our culture. I have come to surmise that because of our traditional practice of cremation of the dead, including all the possessions of the deceased, there would be very little ancient artifacts available. Those that have survived are in museums in Europe. Ironically as I write this, basket weavers from my tribe received a grant to visit Europe to see our ancestral artifacts in Germany, France, Switzerland and England. They leave at the end of this month April; 2011.

The first morning at *Breath of Life*, we were to present something in our ancestral tongues. Two kinds of presentations emerged within that event. Each member chose to either present a prayer or a song from their language. Not only were there struggles to say the words, but the struggle was also to say the words through the tears. The singing of many Native Californian Indian songs has been prohibited out of strict political/spiritual protocol as well as the silencing of them by the dominant culture. Many songs are prayers for the California Native communities. The main obstacle that arrested the use of songs in many Californian communities was the respect paid for the

Bole Maru protocol. Once a *Dreamer* died she took everything with her (“Keeping” Sarris 177). The songs can be sung only if a new dreamer resurfaces whom the elders had dreamed about. In addition, though songs are not copy written, they are in the Indian way. If they are introduced by a singer/dreamer, it was theirs alone, unless they had given them to someone else.

The other issue regarding the tears was in speaking the words for me. It was something I had wanted to do for years and to be able to actually speak the language was extremely emotional. It was like when I first heard our music sung, something buried deep within had been touched. My mother gets very touched when she has the opportunity to speak the words. When I asked why the tears, she would start crying again and said she did not know. When she was composed, she said, “We could not speak our language for so long it is like something so treasured and lost that is found piece by piece.”

The gift of attendance at the *Breath of Life* opened a door to an entirely new world which is extremely vast and quite complex for me right now. David Crystal writes about the complexity of indigenous languages:

This point is usually a source of surprise to people who have not carried out some study of linguistics: the fact that indigenous communities have languages which are as full and complex as English or French is simply not widely known, and traditional western belief assumes the contrary.
(55)

He goes on to say that in contrast to the technological advances between the cultures, it is assumed that indigenous languages are animallike and as primitive as what the culture

looked like to Western analysts. Marianne Mithun, a specialist in Native American language, states otherwise:

There is not a language in North America that fails to offer breathtaking beautiful intricacy. For descendants of speakers to discover this beauty can profoundly enrich their lives, much like the discovery of music, literature, art, if not more (crystal 55).

I am learning that indeed the language is the blueprint for the culture. Everything in the language is part of traditions and the world in which our ancestors lived. I see my grandmother and my mother and all their foibles stemming from their heritage. I also see them new, for the first time in appreciation because of who they are. I want to know more and learn more. Dr. Gamble, my mentor at MSU has said, “I see you gaining more and more of who you are.” For someone as old as I am, I did not think that there would be more to know, but learning my ancestral language tells me differently.

A tangible gift that I received through attending the *Breath of Life* was information on the *Master Apprentice Program*. The *Master Apprentice Language Learning Program* (MAP) was designed and implemented by the *Advocates of Indigenous California Language Survival* in 1993. It was specifically designed for the needs of California Indian language revitalization. Hinton has proclaimed, “California may have more dying languages than any other place in the world” (217).

The program brings native speakers and those who wish to learn the language together so that the non-speaker can develop conversational proficiency in the language. It is designed to be a one-to-one relationship with the speaker (master) and the learner (apprentice) as a team. Generally, the teams sign up for at least six months of immersion work of approximately twenty hours a week in conversation. Preferably, the team signs

up for a year which can be renewed up to three years. There is a stipend offered to those selected so that they can take the time to spend together. The apprentice has to be someone that is studying the language and has some background of the language. Also, the two have to be living within meeting distance. The main goal of the program is to pass down the mentor's language wisdom onto the apprentice so that the apprentice will be able to teach the language in the future as well. The program has been quite successful and has branched out into other Native communities outside of California.

During that conference period, I was able to attend some of my own tribal language classes and met my present mentor (tribal member 1). I tried to apply us as a team to the MAP, but since we are too far apart to really immerse ourselves in the language, we were ineligible. Yet, they recommended I apply for a grant for my mentor to assist her in helping me study the language. Hence I did, and with the help of the NAS program and Dr. Gamble, I created a course to study my language with (tribal member 1) at MSU. I have hopes to apply for the MAP after I finish at MSU while also working on grants for our language group since there is no designated facility within our tribal community to store materials or hold classes.

I have only been concertededly studying my tribal language for six months, but I find it very different from studying other languages. I remember it even when I take a break from it. As a youngster I lived in Spain and had to take language classes every day for three years. I even took Spanish throughout high school and in early college years, but I do not have the interest to speak it. I took Russian as well when I attended UC

Davis, and it is still not the same as learning Coast Miwok. When I look back, ironically both languages were from the tongues of my peoples' conquerors.

Most importantly, I look to the philosophy that Joanne DiNova stresses, that dominant western languages are dead. "... present-day "standard" English will immerse its speakers in a certain reality, a reality radically different from that of indigenous languages and one that tends towards a conceptual disembodiment and decontextualization" (125). They have no life line to the earth. The indigenous languages are channels to the earth because they were created from the earth. As so many of my *Breath of Life* attendees reiterated, "It comes from here" as they point to their hearts.

Revitalization brings back more life into something cherished and almost lost. Thus I choose to step away from the emphasis of decolonization and focus on the efforts of restoration or renewing who we are as people. Sean Wilson, Cree Scholar, in *Research is Ceremony*, says that an indigenous view in research is very different from the normal academic approach of developing a theory which is personally vindicating so that others have a chance to argue against it to prove their own vindications. For Indigenous people, research is sharing so that the people are revitalized and inspired as to who they are. It is not about proving anything, it is about restoring what is good and valued, and that is our cultural integrity, which is the foundation to any peoples' sovereignty. Thus, my approach is to show my people and anyone else how beautiful, valuable and intelligent our people are.

Angela Wilson, Dakota scholar and activist, implies that embedded within the words and dialogue of a language is revealed the ideology of the people. She interviews her adopted grandfather Eli Taylor in *Remember This*. He tells her there is no word for being sorry. In the Dakota world view once you have done or said a wrong, there is no retrieval to that incident, thus no apologies for being sorry are accepted (65).

In Coast Miwok there are no words for being sorry either, but it is very different. There are the words, *Ka Wuskin Sawa*. “My heart hearts,” is not about what someone did, but about how someone feels. Coming from the place of the heart changes everything. Wilson says:

Within Dakota culture, we are taught that we must also learn to think with our hearts, and that those who can only think with their minds are not only seriously lacking important understandings but whatever they produce will also be lacking important understandings and will ultimately create an undesirable outcome. (37)

All the prayers in Coast Miwok I have learned are addressed to the *unnunni michcha* (great person) to help us have good hearts. Without good hearts, the Great Person can never find us or be able to reside with us, and that is what we ask for most of all.

Something recently occurred when I joined the Coast Miwok tribal language students online for a group session. The first Coast Miwok words said were for our language prayer. The word for prayer is *hawusna*. As I am not used to saying the word prayer or hearing it said, it threw me off although, I do say my Miwok prayers every day. For me *hawusna* has a close resemblance to a word I say everyday, *hayusa*, which is the Coast Miwok word for dog. I still was puzzled about my imbalance of the moment until I

found out about a myth that Sean O'Neill shared about the dog pertaining to California Indians. Dogs were originally angels sent to watch over human beings. They use to speak but when they came to live with the people they could only bark. The day they speak again will be the end of the world (314).

Paul Langenwaller, a professor of archaeology and anthropology at Biola University in La Mirada, has examined dog skeletons dealing with central valley California Indian communities dating back to the 1700s. He has found that people and their dogs were found buried together, and feels that the people had very warm relationships with their dogs. Langenwaller's research focuses at burial sites in Calaveras and Merced counties that were home to the Central Miwok and Yokuts people. Dogs accompanied their owners when searching for herbs, hunting, and were also gifts for women which were believed to give them special powers.

I found that, prayer and the dog connect within the sounds of our language and the myth. It connects to me and my world. I use Coast Miwok to speak to my dogs and to train them. They respond to the Coast Miwok language more readily than to English.

The efforts of revitalizing a language awaken a worldview as many Master Apprentice Students have professed. Native American concepts of being in the world which contain nurturing and loving "feminine" elements of gratitude, and a quality of holding onto humility, keep us in check with our hearts. Revitalization efforts are necessary to help those of us that hold such a contextual view of the

world to regain the balance and peace that most of us seek. Coming home to our language is the connection to this life force.

CHAPTER FOUR OMISSIONS

In compliance to the Institutional Research Board's policy of confidentiality, and for the respected requests of tribal interviewees, the last half of this chapter will not be included in the publication of this thesis.

Tamal Machchaw Language Class is excluded, as well as the tribal language student's answers to a *Questionnaire* which the author created pertaining to their language study. The *Story of a People* and the closing Coast Miwok legend *Sun Girl* is omitted as well.

CONCLUSION

What I Want To Be

What I want to be is something that I don't want to
 be and at the same time I really don't have much choice,
 After all, who would like to be three different persons at the same time?
 What I mean is that I have to choose what kind of person I have to be
 at certain times of the year.
 Like in the summer time I have to be a completely different person than I am now.
 Then when I get off the reservation I have to change again.
 The way I change is in manner and speech.
 I seem to be just like the character in [*The*] *Enemy Gods*.
 I have to live in two different worlds
 to be able to blend into both cultures without creating the smallest ripple.
 I like both cultures and I think there won't be much said
 if I don't go out and fill in every way how I feel.

Eddie Dehija (Being Indian Again) Special Collections Wellington 16:7

Many contemporary Native American authors address the issues of identity. Two
 very well known authors, Sherman Alexie and Louise Erdrich, come to mind. There is
 not one piece either writes that excludes the issues related to Native Americans "split
 personalities." Yes, names and some tribal words are thrown in here and there, but for
 the most part, their works primarily address a non-Indian audience. Because when we
 really look at things closer, we find that our entire society is missing connections as to
 who they are. Alexie and Erdrich are not the only authors who make a good living on
 confused characters. Our bookstores are ubiquitous with popular self-improvement
 manuals and techniques for us all to be whole healthy people again. Many of these ideas
 and techniques, are taken from indigenous cultures. Healing techniques through the

wisdom of the Native American *Medicine Wheel*, inner power through meditation on East Indian *Chakras*, and bringing harmony and peace in your life and environment through Chinese *Feng Shui* aesthetics are a few examples. Marketing suggests that through the book purchase (endorsed by influential celebrities who are utilizing the techniques) or attending a special retreat (also endorsed or even facilitated by celebrities) the process and wisdom can be acquiesced within a relatively quick time frame. Whereas it takes a lifetime of dedication and practice for any of the techniques mentioned within its original culture.

As a Native American, I truly believe our peoples actually have a better chance of finding the strength of who we are. Is it not interesting that in spite of all that indigenous people endure, they still hold as tight as they can to any remnant of their culture to continue on? We choose not to forget because we know our own mystery. That mystery is the beauty of having good hearts and listening to them when we walk upon our homeland. Alright, so now who sounds romantic?

I am not trying to be romantic; I am only reassessing that when I am home upon my homeland, I know what to do. My dreams return. My spirit or energy is strong. No other place that I have been to do I experience this. The entire time I lived in beautiful Hawaii I never had any dreams, or if I did, I could not remember them. I truly do understand why our homelands were so very important to our ancestors. The land our history is centered upon has so much wisdom for those who want to “remember.”

Momaday’s “ancestral memory” is controversial in literary criticism for it brings up a potential problem with its other reference as “blood memory.” Dr. Matt Herman

NAS professor at MSU says, "... it conjures racist notions of blood essentialism." I prefer not to use the term blood memory but "ancestral memory" because it shares a link to oral traditions and their wisdom. This memory or wisdom cannot be found in a physical concrete tangible manner, but it exists in the culture and in the environment.

The Gaelic culture holds similar conceptual views. I spent a month visiting the British Isles and the folk who were very connected to their culture and ancestral languages from the land were the Welsh, Irish and Scots. There were many landscapes and ancient monuments (older than the Egyptian pyramids), i.e. on the Shetland and Orkney Islands, as well as caves and seascapes which hold stories from oral histories that keep the people connected to the land. The place names in the original language contain multidimensional cultural wisdom. I find this for myself in studying my own ancestral language that it is an amazing thing to know that a name inherently offers an intangible substance that is very real to its original people.

I recently conversed through email with Joanne DiNova and asked her a question since we seemed so in line with each other on Momaday's concepts, and we seem to understand the power of the land and language. I asked her if the massive destruction of our planet has some connection to the loss of our peoples' culture, and if all indigenous peoples regained their languages today, did she think that there would be a chance that our world could change to a better attitude towards the planet because of their strong revived spirit.

In response to your question about the loss of indigenous languages and the demise of the planet, yes, I think there definitely is a connection. Actually, that is why we're doing this work. We think that if we can find a way to reconnect enough people to the earth, the imminent destruction

might be averted. This includes reconnecting indigenous people who have lost their languages (including me and Lila) to their ancestral speech as well as finding a way to reconnect English speakers to the earth through their own language.

I'm hoping that we can continue to correspond and maybe we will find a way to collaborate on some aspect of what we are doing.....Migwetch, Joanne (DiNova)

Perhaps I am an idealist, but Joanne's words made my spirit sing. Joanne's work with her collaborator Lila Pine, both from Ryerson University in Canada, is technologically connected to my thesis. Lila has developed a software program that images the voice with colors and waves. They are working on a documentary, recording information on indigenous people who speak their language and taking them back to their homelands to see the image that land has on the person through speaking their ancestral tongue. They are trying to show the balance or harmony in the voice when language is used in its original place as well as when language has a connection to the earth as opposed to when it does not.

I had a junior high school English teacher, Mr. Lovejoy, and he was impassioned with the old English language. I realized that it was a language that sounds nothing as it does today. The sounds were exaggerated, primal and very mystifying. Perhaps during that day there was still a love of the land with the people. I have no doubt it being so. Somehow, somewhere, language was created from the earth for all of us. Since the earth is sacred to our people, our mother language is a sacred spiritual language. Hence I do see that we need to work together, everyone. Linguists are more important than they have ever been before, not to lead us but to work with us a team much like the *Breathe of Life* example.

My grandmother knew the “mother.” She embraced everyone. As the goddess Hutash could not bear to have any of her children perish, she made arrangements to keep them going within her realm as the beautiful dolphin brothers and sisters of the Chumash. There is another version of this same creation story that I heard years ago told by a Chumash grandmother elder. I do not remember her name and could not find any written data on this version. She said that it was a prophesy story as well. The people were from the Pleiades and traveled too close to the earth and fell into the sea. They changed into the dolphins as the first people. Eventually, some came to the land and became the people of the land. The people on the land became divided, some still listened to their hearts, and some only thought about technology and the mind. But there will come a time when there will be no alternative but to listen to the heart because the seas will overcome the world again. As the little girl in *The Rainbow Bridge*, she had to look closely into her dolphin brother’s eyes to know who he was.

Looking closely with our hearts guide us to what is right for our lives as well.

At other times as Chuchankin, we have to seek out our mother culture no matter what it takes to find it. I find that for the last fifteen years I have come to understand Chuchankin and the value of such a journey. Like Chuchankin, if we continue to search for our mother culture, even though she may not be living here and now, she can be brought back into life. Perhaps there may be pieces as my mother has said, but they will be precious to all our *‘inniiko*.

Mike Marelles, Cahuilla bird singer, said we must keep going, and the more you do the more you remember. *The Ghost Dance* crossed between cultures and provided the

basis for cultural renewal. Among the Pawnee, the visions of the dancers made possible the revival of old ceremonial activities that had fallen into disuse because knowledge of their correct performance had been lost (Lesser 106). A Pawnee cultural renaissance of creativity resurfaced in ceremony, performance and with an abundance of artifacts for sacred bundles which came through the visions. Like the Pawnee between cultures, we find our own way in the world towards our heritage and identity, and then we help the people. My father and Chuchankin come to mind when I think of this.

Language is the power link to the earth and to the culture. History has shown us what happens when we lose our language. Now, through history, we will discover what it can do for us as we relearn it. It is not an easy process. Perhaps at the beginning it is not too hard to learn simple common phrases to get by. When we progress so that we can really converse and connect to more of our world, it takes much more effort. Yes, we must work more together. There must be more of us joining the forces, and we must act aggressively as Old Man Coyote when he ordered many men to go get Sun Girl. The situation for cultural survival is too urgent with no other tactic left but aggressive effort. As the information and the complexities may be so overwhelming as it was to the people when Sun Girl arrived, we must learn to deal with the situation when it comes as they did with the abalone shell, so not to take it all at once.

Hermeneutics is the translation of Spirit wherever it comes from. From a Native American perspective, it starts with the oral tradition which brings to the people laws, codes of ethics and principles. It is very similar to the western doctrines of Christianity. The difference is knowing one's path vs. willing one's path.

Through the language everything on the path is familiar because everything on the path recognizes the seeker as well. For the Coast Miwok the ancient redwoods, pictographs and the ocean, which have been around since the dawn of the world know their true names and when addressed from the heart, in the familiar tongue, they will respond.

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