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American Indians in Philosophy

Anne Waters, Editor

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ARTICLES

Global Indigenous Research Contexts for Bio-Propecting: Sacred Collisions of Ethnobotany, Diversity Genetics, Intellectual Property Law, Sovereign Rights, and Public Interest Pharmaceuticals

Anne Waters

I. Introduction

In Tanzania, Africa, the government once created natural habitats to preserve some lion species. The problem, as Navaya ole Ndaskoi, Coordinator of Indigenous Rights for Survival International, tells us, is that the lion population was protected and grew rather large in numbers, but the lions are now poaching the human species who live nearby. When we come across conservation programs analogous to this, whether in our own nations or some other part of the world, we need to ask, "What has gone wrong?"

In the context of things going wrong, we need to raise questions about who benefits from the use of global resources when things appear to go wrong. Ndaskoi raises issues as important to Africa as they are to Australia, to the Americas, and to Asia. Lions in Africa today may be kangaroos in Australia tomorrow. Resources growing in Australia today may be resources used in the U.S. tomorrow.

Why is it that countries like Tanzania with immense wildlife resources are the ones faced with abject poverty? The United State of America has set aside less than 4% of her land for conservation (Adams & McShane, 1992: 103)...Disturbingly, rich countries use the vast majority of Earth's available resources. They, with 25% of the world human population, use up to 75% of energy, 80% of all commercial fuels, and 85% of the timber. In one year, a single American uses the same amount of energy as 300 Africans. Coupled with greater life expectancy in the USA, this means that each child born in USA will be as great a burden on the environment-as represented by energy use-as 500 Africans. It is thus very unfair to demand further sacrifices from Africans, given these figures (ibid: 232).¹

Theoretically, international localized indigenous bio-propecting projects carry political potential to dethrone current capital monopolies that humanly acquire, produce, sell, and consume pharmaceutical products (usually at the expense of local indigenous people/s). Practically, indigenous bio-propecting projects can exemplify an alternative to the

exploitation of public resources by first-world populations (which have long operated toward the purpose of filling stockholder pockets). Indigenous bio-propecting activities provide opportunities to render international cautionary reminders in favor of human economic and environmental restraint.

But this counsel may well come with a gift. Some indigenous groups can put into practice local indigenous values of sustainability, interdependency, and respect for all our relation, in governing bio-propecting projects. If so, then we may hold a fertile kernel of the larger global indigenous movement in our hands. Indigenous bio-propecting projects can walk alongside ongoing struggles to teach colonial settler nations how to respect indigenous sovereignty. Indigenous bio-propecting programs can carry agendas that pursue global indigenous rights on the local level, reaffirm indigenous sovereignty, and preserve an environment ecologically safe for all our relations, while preserving an organic balance to benefit everyone.

Equally possible, however, indigenous bio-propecting agendas could result in disaster for indigenous people; resources may be co-opted, taken against our will, sold, depleted, and made unavailable. Because each plant species, just as each animal species, is unique, each has a role to play in the balance of the organic atmosphere that the human species requires for survival. Disaster or tragedy, following human arrogance and greed in bio-propecting practices, could play itself out against the human species.

Academics, researchers, public policy makers, and most important, local traditionals, have critical roles to play in the already ongoing political struggles of bio-propecting. We must continue to respect traditional methods of human nurturance and healing for survival among both plants and animals, which compliment our complex environment. Knowledge of how to heal and nurture human environmental balance can be shared, or given. But in the sharing, or giving, the gift must remain with the giver (as Laurie Ann Whitt reminds us). And, since without respect for the sovereignty of the giver to give, without respect for indigenous sovereignty there can be no giving, and hence, no gift of sharing.

Commercial pharmaceuticals perceive themselves to have a huge financial stake in the politics of bio-propecting. Public education could bring about a public awareness to the differences indigenous perspectives and concerns have toward bio-propecting plans. Bio-propecting for financial gain in indigenous communities could strike a mighty blow of backlash against pharmaceutical corporations. Many ongoing global environmental practices have already destroyed sacred places, medicine, peoples, and the environment.. When these acts are done merely for the sake of amassing personal property assets (resulting in control over others), the balance of power and interdependency relations in the universe are disturbed. Under the guise of "promoting healing" for humankind,

unethical corporations can traumatize entire ecosystems simply in order to harvest their goods. Indigenous peoples may have an open window of opportunity to turn bio-prospecting practices around, and create nurturing and protective environments for the study of traditional healing, and ways of traditional living on the land.

II. Conditions

Bio-prospecting offers one of several strategies to build local economies, and preserve indigenous lifestyles in environmentally protective ways. If the “prospecting” aspect of “bio-prospecting” can be shifted from prospecting knowledge for financial gain, to prospecting information and allies to assist in the healing of human beings and maintaining our environment, indigenous communities may be more willing to take on the needed indigenous leadership roles to protect local traditional environmental knowledge about our flora and fauna, including the human species. As precedent to such an undertaking, corporations and academic institutions would need to recognize the sovereignty of indigenous peoples on indigenous lands, as caretakers and caregivers of the land, to self-determine all aspect of such a project.

In Australia, for example, such an undertaking as indigenously self-determined, can use the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* (May 2000). Other similar indigenous documents exist, and still others can be created.

At least one indigenous bio-prospecting project currently underway in South America is self-determined; it respects the inherent rights of sovereign decision making among aboriginal people, and spells out guidelines for project management of ethical research that respects indigenous peoples and indigenous sovereignty. In this project, information and practices remain in the community, for the benefit of the community, and all decisions to share them are local community decisions.

Indigenous communities historically shunted by colonial settlers to the sidelines of state cities and marketplaces of commerce may have creative roles to play in sustainable bio-prospecting developments and practices. Creating an epistemology of indigenous medicine and a knowledge base of genetic resources, in the context of traditional indigenous values, may be part of this agenda. Colonial settler states and nations have a significant imperative of moral (and in some cases legal) obligation to respect indigenous peoples’ sovereignty to operate within the context of our own indigenous systems, including in the marketplace of bio-prospecting.

Minimally, responsible obligations of colonial settler nations to colonized indigenous nations includes respect for indigenous intellectual and patent rights, and sovereign control of materials. A sovereignty statement from the International United Nations posturing indigenous rights to traditional bio-prospecting materials, patents, products, research, and interpretive analyses would enhance this undertaking.

Important benefits of sovereign indigenous bio-prospecting endeavors could include: protecting traditional fauna and flora through holding genetic information important to humans and all living beings; promoting traditional learning, research methods, and knowledge bases that operate as a shield against past harms of colonial educational systems (that tended to denigrate traditional knowledge bases); raising the bar of international respect for indigenous systems of knowledge, epistemological belief, morality, science, sovereignty, and diversity in the world; articulating bio-

agricultural challenges, benefits, and risks of preserving sustainable development in local communities; developing human talent and ability to work with organic and inorganic offerings of nature; appreciation for the intellectual base of indigenous understanding of earthly cyclic and cosmic events; and gleaning a perspective of how humanity may act within, rather than upon, any order anthropomorphically imposed upon the universe.

National programs to support local indigenous healing may help stop some of the international appropriation and distortion of indigenous resources and traditions. Strategies of bio-prospecting can encompass discovery of innovative ways to protect water, create new energy sources, and develop sustainable methods to protect and preserve a humanly healthy environment.² In this way humanity can take a step forward through bio-prospecting, acting as humans pragmatically ought to behave, interdependently supporting the biodiversity of all our relations. Indigenous bio-prospecting projects can offer a desperately needed alternative path for our youth to follow to sustain our communities for future generations.

III. Assessment

Many indigenous medical practitioners do not currently see a place for themselves in bio-prospecting projects and for good reason. We do not see a place we can occupy without violation of our fundamental values inherent in our very identity as Indigenous peoples. Participating in commodifying terms would be the equivalent of renouncing our faith; certainly this is not a realistic option for participation.

Some critical articles have been published warning against indigenous peoples engaging in bio-prospecting activities. Equally significant articles have engaged in working out parameters of indigenous involvement in bio-prospecting activities. One concern that needs addressing is whether information contained in academic articles provide a realistic assessment about indigenous involvement in contemporary bio-prospecting challenges. What can we glean by pulling together information about indigenous involvement in bioprospecting? Indigenous peoples need a knowledge base of ongoing bio-prospecting projects in order to assess any realistic involvement.

At the Center for World Indigenous Studies, *The Fourth World Journal* contains statements made by indigenous nations and individuals regarding the nature of bio-prospecting. At least one definition, from a Congressional Act of the Philippines in 2002, ties down the meaning to commercial purposes.

‘Bioprospecting’ means the research, collection and utilization of biological and genetic resources for purposes of applying the knowledge derived there from solely for commercial purposes.³

An immediate problem is present in the definition of what bio-prospecting is, and means, for indigenous communities. If bio-prospecting is inherently to be used for commercial purposes, and indigenous peoples are given the sole right to determine issues related to bio-prospecting, indigenous nations are thrust into commercial relationships with colonial nations regarding bio-prospecting, without ensuring that indigenous involvement arises from indigenous self-determination of interest.

In other words, the play, or move, of opting out completely from bio-prospecting projects, under current colonial (and quasi neo-colonial) political conditions, seems at first consideration not to appear as an option on the playing board. If this is the case (and it may or may not be), commerce-like concepts that already play a role in determining the meaning of “bio-

prospecting,” need to be interpreted within the context of indigenous understanding and values of traditional sustainable medicine and commerce. Interpreting indigenous participation in bio-prospecting, within the context of traditional indigenous values of living on the land, shows respect for an indigenous perspective of the world. Most important, learning to see through an indigenous value lens recognizes how indigenous sovereign rights to self-determination operate to interpret linguistic ambiguities to the benefit of indigenous communities.

On the other hand, if indigenous communities have the opportunity to opt out of the bio-prospecting game completely, and decide to do so (possibly due to unfavorable international colonial economic policies already in place), the burden of negotiation through indigenous values shifts to colonial nations. Under such circumstances, successful negotiations would require a respect for the interpretive sovereignty perspective of indigenous nations participation parameters.

I believe indigenous nations do have this option. Moreover, it is fruitful to see how accommodating indigenous favorable interpretations of bio-prospecting language ambiguities might play out in the arena of competing international sovereign rights (to engage in commerce, for example).

In a nutshell, all bio-prospecting projects interpreted as favorable or not favorable for a particular indigenous nation (according to the values and decisions of the local indigenous community affected, as informed and self-determined) ought to be respected by all communities and states of interest. This principle puts self-determination in the hands of those who will be most affected by the decision, employs local values to determine the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of any bio-prospecting projects undertaken, and shows a respect for sovereign indigenous status in all decisions respecting any bio-prospecting projects.

In the context of decision making with indigenous nations, it is essential to determine which principles of meaning should be resolved first: sovereignty or bio-prospecting. There are good reasons why the latter should not go forward without the former. Most indigenous nations are colonized nations within a settler state or united states. Rudolph Ryser says this about the U.S. and indigenous jurisdiction/sovereignty.

Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that “any conflict between a tribe and the United States, a State, a county, or a municipality involving questions about the jurisdictional authority of a tribal government is a political problem which cannot, must not, be placed before U.S. courts for resolution. Where a conflict concerns tribal governmental powers, the U.S. courts are bound by the U.S. Constitution to protect U.S. interests even if by doing so the rights and powers of Indian Nations are diminished or utterly destroyed...”⁴

Are there any academic models for such a proposal (here at Macquarie University or) in Australia? John Hunter and Chris Jones have articulated how self-determination and sovereignty legal policies play out in the context of intellectual property as it relates to bio-prospecting.

Indigenous Peoples and Nations also declare that we are capable of managing our intellectual property ourselves, but are willing to share it with all humanity provided that our fundamental rights to define and control this property are recognised by the international community.⁵

Objections to indigenous nations acting within the context of bio-prospecting projects have included discussions about

concerns of past and present genocide and theft from indigenous nations by settler states. Given that these actions are ongoing, nothing suggests conditions of bio-prospecting projects would preclude similar genocide and theft. The historical difference in ethics and values between indigenous and settler cultures appears to speak for itself as we travel through colonial museums. Nothing similar exists in indigenous nations.

The ongoing wounds of takings expressed in Tanzania, Africa, by Ndaskai, reminds us that settler poachers (legal or not) took many things from indigenous lands. These unethical acts continue today. Some items remain in individual collections, others remain in museums belonging to or governed by settler populations.⁶ They have never been returned. There are no plans for returning them. The United Nations has not made any statements about return of many stolen items of indigenous legacies. Throughout the world we find in museums tribal property that, by indigenous perspective, ought to be returned to tribal nations. It appears that no one but indigenous nations seems concerned about this issue.

Importantly, there is no indication that the United Nations or any other political group is going to address realistic contemporary or future healing for the genocide perpetrated upon indigenous nations globally. There is no talk of land return, and only “little gesture talk” of returning items from global museums. Colonial thinking, as articulated by the lack of United Nations interest, suggests that indigenous genocide can go unpunished, and items and ideology of stolen indigenous legacies become as gifts from and for humankind . . . but only so long as they remain in the possession and control of those who stole them. It seems that there is no basis for believing that indigenous peoples can expect anything different from bio-prospecting ventures.

IV. A Model

At least one model of a self-supporting, indigenous run, locally controlled “ethnobiomedical extractive reserve” exists. It is called the Terra Nova Rain Forest Reserve, and was established in 1993 in Belize, Central America.⁷ Since 1940, large machinery has destroyed two-thirds of Central America’s rain forest. Nonsustainable harvesting of medicinal plants, under these conditions, is not feasible. Hence, at Terra Nova, medicinal plants and resources are sustainably harvested for use at local markets. Mayan healers and students run a clinic that emphasizes empowerment of indigenous peoples. These communally owned and managed resources are deeded to the Belize Association of Traditional Healers, a group representing indigenous Mayan regions and nations. At least 75% of the local people depend on this center for their primary health care.

Grassroots health activists work with the healer’s association, scientists, governmental policymakers, and the local tourist industry. They try to ensure that only indigenous community members produce, market, and manage local medicines. In an important article about Terra Nova Rain Forest Reserve, Danielle Elford explains how decisions about marketing need to be considered in an indigenous context.

If trading is to be culturally appropriate, encourage real economic independence, and strengthen indigenous communities against immediate local, regional and national forces, commercialisation must start with the people themselves and the local market (Corry 1993:148-149; IWGIA 1993:9). Indigenous communities have had access to extensive trade networks for centuries (Stiles 1994:106). They can therefore utilize existing relationships on local and

State levels in order to make their own contacts and develop their own systems of control over marketing channels, processing, and transport systems (Gray 1990; IWGIA 1993:9). For this to occur, legal recognition of indigenous rights to land and resources is essential (Pendleton 1992:2).⁸

Elford explains how the harvesting of local resources for commodification is a very different mode of harvesting than sustainable practices of traditional kinship relations. Principles of reciprocity involved in production, distribution, and consumption of goods are inherent in kinship relations, unlike the exploitation inherent in capitalist modes of economics. Potential for domination of smaller, weaker, or differently developed nations by larger, stronger, or capitalistically developed nations always exists. A local economy can be lifted out of indigenous control by consumer demands and greedy entrepreneurs in the face of limited resources. The risk of replacing medicinal harvesting as subsistence value by medicinal harvesting by market value has the potential to disrupt the local economic base, priorities, and value systems of the indigenous nation.⁹

V. Conclusion

The demands of indigenous bio-prospecting programs need to be considered against the needs of indigenous communities. Issues of sovereignty and rights to self-determination need to be resolved in the context of negotiating bio-prospecting plans. By setting out clear guidelines and priorities, as determined through the eyes and values of indigenous peoples, indigenous communities may have an opportunity to participate in the global sharing of biomedical information and healing for all our relations. Before any projects get underway, however, social, political, and legal issues ought to be settled so that informed decision can be made on the part of indigenous communities to partake of the invitation to bio-prospecting, or not.

Paper presented at the Indigenous Knowledge and Bio-Prospecting Conference, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, April 2004

Endnotes

1. Navaya ole Ndaskoi, "Maasai Wildlife Conservation and Human Need, The Myth of 'Community Based Wildlife Management,'" *Fourth World Journal* vol. 5, number 1 (2002): 150-191.
2. For some interesting strategies of change see Ward Churchill's last chapter in *A Little Matter of Genocide*.
3. Republic Act no. 9147 July 30, 2001 re: "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act," Congress of the Philippines Eleventh Congress (sgd) Gloria Macapagal-arroyo President of the Philippines. Information Extracted from the Lawphil Project - Arellano Law Foundation).
4. See Rudolph Ryser, Director, Center for World Indigenous Studies Web page. March 17, 2004.
5. "Bioprospecting and Indigenous Knowledge in Australia: Valuing Indigenous Spiritual Knowledge and its Implications for Integrated Legal Regimes," by John Hunter & Chris Jones April 4 2004.
6. From Tanganyika, England had stolen among other things, the largest ever-recorded ivory. Senoussi, an African slave of the ivory trader Shundi, an Arab from Zanzibar, shot the largest elephant ever recorded with tusks 3.17m and 3.10m long in 1898 at Mount Kilimanjaro. The tusks are in the British Museum in London (*Kakakuona* April-June 2000). There is almost a similar story that states that the longest ever recorded tusks are a pair from Congo preserved in the National Collection of Heads and Horns, kept by the New

York Zoological Society in New York (McWhirter, 1980). When will these valuables and others be returned to their original owners?

7. Citation to the article about this can be found in the *Fourth World Journal* on the CWIS website.
8. Danielle Elford Queensland, "Conservation by Self-Determination in Central America Addressing the Global Biocultural Diversity Crisis from an Alternative Development Paradigm," *Fourth World Journal* (2002): 98-149.
9. Danielle Elford, "Conservation...."

Code Talkers: Who We Are

Marilyn Notah Verney

According to the 2000 official U.S. government census 180,462¹ Diné,² (Navajo people) live on Keyah³ which is land allotted to the Diné Nation by the U.S. government and which spans approximately 270,000 square⁴ miles. Diné⁵ is the word used to designate lands traditionally populated on by Diné, which are located within the four corners of northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico, southeastern Utah, and southwestern Colorado. Although archaeological and linguistic evidence suggests that Diné arrived in the American Southwest between 1000 and 1525 CE,⁶ traditional Diné metaphysics places the Diné nation in the American Southwest prior to this time. From community to community, the traditional story of the how the Diné originated varies. There are stories that are told to us of how our ancestors once lived and traded with other groups of people as they traveled across the land. Through contact with colonial Spanish and indigenous Pueblo People, Diné acquired horses, sheep, goats, and agriculture. Following the indigenous Pueblo Revolt against Spanish colonialism of 1680, many Pueblo refugees began to live among the Diné. This resulted in mutual exchange which brought about parallel similarities between the Diné and Pueblo origin legends, cosmologies, metaphysics, and use of masked figures and sandpaintings in ritual. Diné elders describe this period as one of mutual exchange rather than unilateral influence. In contrast, Western traditional academia uses a comparative approach for studying the culture of the "other" by fragmenting the cultures and comparing "ceremonies" cross-culturally.

It is my aim I propose to demonstrate the importance of the integrated nature of Diné philosophical teachings when attempting to apply the Western concept of religion to Diné culture.

The word that the Diyin Dine'é⁷ (supernaturals of the Navajo pantheon) provided as a descriptor for my people is Diné. Some people refer to us as the Navajo, a Spanish word possibly originating from the phrase "Apache de Nabajo," though it's not known what the word meant.

Among our own Diné, Diné is used rather than the Spanish colonial term. It has been suggested by Peter Iverson that "Nabajo" might have meant "a place name or may have been an Indian term meaning 'planted fields.'"⁸ For the Diné, living within the boundaries of the four mountains is an integral part of our identity and beliefs. For the Diné, there is an embodiment with all living entities in the universe, exemplified by an integrated and reciprocal relationship between the people and this land. These four major mountains are significant land sites that are considered alchini⁹ (sacred) in Diné's myths, prayers, rituals, ceremonies, our creation story, and philosophical teachings of "Sa'ah Naaghai Bik'eh Hozho doo

K'e." (a life of balance and harmony based on kinship with all living things in the universe).

Diné cosmology holds that there are relations between the earth and the large universe. These relations are integrated, interdependent, and reciprocal. Nihosdzáán¹⁰ (earth), is a provider and sustainer of all living entities within the universe. For Diné, to lose our relationship with our land would be devastating because it would mean loss of our being both our physical existence and metaphysical identity. The significance of the land and how it connects us to everything within the universe is a primary foundation of the Diné Nation's philosophy of life.

Da'jínii¹¹ (It is told) that it is within these mountains (powerful metaphysical beings) live, and that 'azázi¹² (ancestors) were instructed by the Diyin Dine'é to make the 'azázi home within the boundaries of these four mountains, and to live according to the teachings of "Sa'ah Naaghái Bikeh Hózhó dóó Ké." This is our elders' story and it continues even today to be the foundation of how the Diné Nation originated.

Da'jínii: Our creation story reveals that the Diné were instructed by the Diyin Dine'é to live within the boundaries of the four major Mountains: To the east is Sis Naajini¹³ (Blanca Peak), to the south Tsoodzil¹⁴ (Mount Taylor), to the west Dook'o'oslii¹⁵ (San Francisco Peak), and to the north Dibe Nitsaa¹⁶ (Mount Hesperus). It is said that the Diyin Dine'é live in these mountains. Da'jínii, that the Diné origin myth recounts the Hajínáí¹⁷ (Emergence) of the Diyin Dine'é from a series of underworlds onto Nihookáá,¹⁸ (the Earth Surface). Using a medicine bundle brought from the underworlds, in an all-night ceremony at the place of emergence, First Man, First Woman, and other Diyin Dine'é set in place the "inner forms" of natural phenomena (earth, sky, the mountains, plants, and animals), creating the present world. Upon emergence into the fourth world, the first man was created from yellow corn and that first woman was created from white corn. Asdáá' Nádeehi¹⁹ (Changing Woman) was created in the fourth world and the Diné are her children. The story tells us that Asdáá' Náleehi' was impregnated by Jóhonaa'éí²⁰ (Father Sun), and she gave birth to two sons who became known as Monster Slayers, who fought and killed predators in the previous underworlds. It is said that Asdáá' Náleehi' lives in Tsoodzil, one of the four mountains located in the state of New Mexico.

Walking in beauty and harmony, "Hózhóóji,"²¹ is the basic philosophy for my Diné Nation and is the foundation for our culture. The path of "K'e"²² (relations) is based on a reciprocal kinship relationship with the surrounding environment and the universe. Wilson Aronilth Jr., Diné bá'ólta'²³ (teacher, messenger), explains, "According to our great forefathers' teaching, our clan system is the foundation of how we learn about our self image and self identity...A wise Diné can look back into the values of his clan and see his true self" (Aronilth 76).

History through Da'jínii tells us of the arrival of the "strangers" the Ná káí²⁴ (Spaniards) and the Bila'gaa'nas²⁵ (White Men), and Da'jínii the warfare, imprisonment of my ancestors, genocide, and colonization that followed their arrival.

Colonial Contact

In 1862, the U.S. Government ordered Brigadier General Carlton to remove our ancestors, from our original homeland. The order was "to subjugate the Indians, protect the territory from a Confederate invasion, and open an overland mail route" (Keleher 1952: 229, Roessel 510).²⁶ By September 1863, Carlton developed and began implementation of his campaign policy. In retaliation against the self-defense maneuvers of the Diné, Kit Carson was instructed by Carlton as follows: "Say to them,

'Go to the Bosque Redondo [Fort Sumner], or we will pursue and destroy you. We will not make peace with you on any other terms...This war will be pursued against you if it takes years...until you cease to exist or move'" (Kelly 1970:52, Roessel 511).²⁷

Roessel tells of this journey quoting from the memories of the elders, "The journey was one of hardship and terror. Navajos remembered that there were a few wagons to haul personal belongings, but the trip was made on foot [over a distance of 300 miles]. People were shot down on the spot if they complained about being tired or sick, or if they stopped to help someone. If a woman became in labor with a baby, she was killed. There was absolutely no mercy" (R.Roessel 1973:103-104, Roessel 513).²⁸

The December 31, 1864 census shows a total of 8,354 Navajos at Fort Sumner (Keleher 1952: 502, Roessel 513); and by March 1865 the census shows a total of 9,022 Diné (Bailey 1964: 214, Roessel 513). From that date until the return of the Diné in 1868 via treaty, the number of Diné at Fort Sumner decreased. Diné prisoners, half starved, homesick, traumatized and sick, left Fort Sumner in large numbers..." (R. Roessel 1973: 41, Roessel 514).²⁹

Written documentation of the oral account by Florence Charley recalls "Women carried their babies on their backs and walked all the way hundred of miles. They didn't know where they were headed" (R. Roessel 1973:149, Roessel 514).³⁰ Howard Gorman relates: "The Navajos had hardly anything at that time; and they ate rations but couldn't get used to them. Most of them got sick and had stomach trouble. The children also had stomach ache and some of them died of it. Others died of starvation...Some boys would wander off to where the mules and horses were corralled. There they would poke around in the manure to take undigested corn to be eaten...They said among themselves, 'What did we do wrong? We people here didn't do any harm. We were gathered up for no reason...We harmless people are held here, and we want to go back to our lands right away.' Also the water was bad and salty, which gave them dysentery" (R. Roessel 1973:32-33, Roessel 514-515).³¹

Prior to the colonial taking of my people to Ft. Stanton on the long walk, we were free people on our own lands with sacred mountains and familiar landmarks. We were independent, self-sustaining, and had lives full of living our spiritual relations with our place of being in the universe. This way of being in the world was made safe for us before colonial contact. Da'jínii, only through prayer, ceremony, and determination to survive in hopes of returning home did we survive.

Treaty of Subjugation

Roessel makes it clear that he believes the Diné are to be blamed and imprisoned for their self-defense measures against the encroaching colonials. Carlton sends Carson to fulfill a campaign policy of punishing Diné who resist subjugation. In a letter to Carson, Carlton justifies the Diné enslavement by directing Carson to tell the Diné: "You have deceived us too often and robbed and murdered our people too long—to trust you again at large in your own country" (Carlton letter of 9/19/1863, quoted by Kelly 1970:52, Roessel at 511).³²

The internal colonization was psychological warfare against the Diné while they were prisoners of war. The motivation was to make Diné feel guilty for our acts of self-defense in our own land. The Ft. Sumner POW experience furthered traumatized my people by making them believe that they had done something wrong and were the sole cause of colonial suffering among the settlers. Diné were told they

were responsible for creating their own human suffering, and that these self-defense actions justified imprisonment by the U.S. Government. This created generations of guilt among my people and generations of post traumatic stress syndrome. By treaty, in 1868, Diné people subjugated to the U.S. Government because we never wanted to be removed from our land again or to suffer ontological separation from our place of being and our metaphysical identity in the world. By treaty we gave up all rights and all property to be allowed to return to our land among the four sacred mountains and live in our place given by, and according to, instructions from the Diyin Dine'é.

The articles in the Treaty of 1868 between the Navajo Nation and the newly created U.S. government set a precedent for the Diné People to be recognized as “wards” of the U.S. government. We were to be governed by the newly created U.S. Constitution, although we were not recognized in the Constitution by the government. The Diné, like many other Indian tribes, were forced to submit to the physical power, and hence, legal control of this new U.S. government. We were forced to accept any and all conditions set by the rich, white, male property owners who were the citizens of this newly created government they created. Beginning with the General Allotment Act of 1887 and including the Reorganization Act of 1934.³³

During colonialism, many American Indians ceded much of our land in exchange for tribal sovereignty. Some of us recognized the U.S. government as the trustee of our land, enabling the U.S. government to manage all the mineral resources on our land; the Bureau of Indian Affairs created Indian agents that were assigned to oversee our care. Our children were to be educated by the settler government, forced to learn the English language, forced to lose their own language, and instructed to allow Christian missionaries to work among our people. In an attempt to break up traditional tribal government kinship systems and to gain control of the title to Indian reservation land (thus weakening the indigenous nations), land was allotted to individual Indians for private ownership.³⁴ Owning land forced some Indians to be recognized as U.S. citizens, even though they were denied to vote until 1924 (when all American Indians not hitherto made U.S. Citizens were forced to receive citizenship). The primary goal of these colonial government acts was to acculturate (not assimilate) Indians to the dominant European-American culture.³⁵

Four Code Talker Values

After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, war was declared by President Franklin Roosevelt on Japan and its Allies. As the war progressed, many military codes were intercepted by Japanese who were highly skilled in the English language. The U.S. Government needed to change the code. Philip Johnson, a Bila'gaa'nah, (WWI veteran) and son of a former missionary, approached the U.S. Marine Corp with the idea of using the Diné language for military operation in the war; Johnson who was raised on the Diné reservation, knew the language fluently, and he knew the Diné language was an oral language (unwritten) and that it was held by Bila'gaa'nah's to be a difficult language to learn. Our Diné language is said to have different syntax and tonal qualities from European language, thus making it difficult for some people to learn. Johnson's proposal was accepted.³⁶

The first 29 Diné men selected and asked to join the Marines had attended BIA schools. They were the best-educated American Indians in the European ways. They already knew through BIA school experience how to enact the disciplined military behavior and the protocol to follow instructions from superiors. As well, they must have felt their

traditional tribal duties to protect Diné homeland by assisting the U.S. Government. The Diné Marine Corp Radio Operators were instructed to develop a code that could not be broken. They were selected because they were the first generation to attend BIA government schools, and thus they were bilingual. They had never left the Diné reservation, except for those who attended BIA schools off the Diné reservation. When they enlisted, the 29 Code Talkers were unfamiliar with military weapons, equipment, and supplies used in the war. As Radio Operators, they were responsible for transmitting information related to military movements, orders, and battlefield events. They were instructed to develop terms that were brief and accurate and to relay all the messages without any errors. Two hundred terms were created and eventually 600 more terms were added.³⁷

The values underlying the willingness of Diné men to use their language to protect the interests of the U.S. government can only be understood in the context of Diné colonial experience. I will call the value principle upon which (I believe) they might have acted, a Principle of Generations (PG). PG is a principle by which Diné live our lives in the context of being an internal colony of the U.S. Government. Our principles of action arise from traditional values of living with our land. In order to protect Diné homeland from invasion we must protect the external colony outside our borders. Diné life is based on a relationship with our land in a reciprocal, contribution, sustenance, and harmonious balance within the universe. Imprisonment brings the separation from our land, which is the ground of our being in the world. We must never be removed from our homeland or we will not be able to live with all our relations or fulfill our obligations. We must always remain on the land designated to us by the Diyin Dine'é (among the four sacred mountains). This is our purpose and the basis from which we gather meaning and strength of who we are as Diné. Living within the protection of the four mountains will allow us to live by our own Diné values, beliefs, and traditions with all our relations. It will allow us to fulfill our Diné responsibilities to our relations and accept the Gifts our relations present to us.

One of the important values of being able to live the Diné life as we are instructed is having the freedom to choose the Diné life, and once chosen, to follow the Diné path of all our people. In choosing to cooperate with the U.S. Government, the Diné chose to exert their freedom to choose as Diné. Choosing for Diné means making decisions that are based on the knowledge passed from previous generations to our people. It means putting the wisdom of our people into practical action for our people. Choosing as a Diné is to make a choice based upon what Viola Cordova has identified as “Ethics: The We and the I.”³⁸

Cordova tells us that Native Americans (unlike the Greeks) add to “the ‘We’ definition of human beings the idea of quality” that extends to all forms of life. Because a Native understanding of life extends to all that is, the entire universe participates in the life process. Hence, a Native American philosophy recognizes equal respect for all living things as interdependently being both parent and child of the Earth and Universe. Being a part of all things, everything is one process. Thus, argues Cordova, a Native view embraces equal difference, whereas the “Western” European view embraces hierarchical otherness. Cordova asserts a difference between teaching Native American concepts of autonomy, responsibility, and self-sufficiency versus teaching shame and guilt. Offering examples from her life, she shows us, rather than tells us, the meaning of these ethical concepts.³⁹ It is from the sense of “We” that our code talkers came to a decision to assist the U.S. government.

Notes

1. Jenny Notah, U.S. Department of Indian Health Services. Interview by Marilyn N. Verney (University of California Santa Barbara, April 17, 2004).
2. William Morgan, Sr. and Robert W. Young, *The Navajo Language: A Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary* (New Mexico: UNM Press, 1987), 321.
3. *Ibid.*, 493.
4. Jenny Notah, U.S. Department of Indian Health Services. Interview by Marilyn N. Verney (University of California Santa Barbara, April 17, 2004).
5. William Morgan, Sr. and Robert W. Young, *The Navajo Language: A Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary* (New Mexico: UNM Press, 1987), 322.
6. Peter Burchard et al., “*Navajo Prehistory and History to 1850*”, vol. 10 of *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution 1983).
7. William Morgan, Sr. and Robert W. Young, *The Navajo Language: A Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary* (New Mexico: UNM Press, 1987), 340.
8. Peter Iverson, “Indians of North America: The Navajos,” Edited by Frank W. Porter III (New York: Chelsea House Publisher. 1990), 18-19.
9. William Morgan, Sr. and Robert W. Young, *The Navajo Language: A Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary* (New Mexico: UNM Press, 1987), 996.
10. *Ibid.*, 875.
11. *Ibid.*, 489.
12. *Ibid.*, 140.
13. *Ibid.*, 688.
14. *Ibid.*, 947.
15. *Ibid.*, 99.
16. *Ibid.*, 312.
17. *Ibid.*, 398.
18. *Ibid.*, 875.
19. *Ibid.*, 123.
20. *Ibid.*, 490-491.
21. *Ibid.*, 459.
22. *Ibid.*, 502.
23. *Ibid.*, 148.
24. *Ibid.*, 576.
25. *Ibid.*, 221.
26. William C. Sturtevant, editor. R. Roessel, “*Navajo History, 1850-1923*,” vol. 10 of *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution 1983), 510.
27. *Ibid.*, 511.
28. *Ibid.*, 513.
29. *Ibid.*, 513-514.
30. *Ibid.*, 514.
31. *Ibid.*, 514-515.
32. *Ibid.*, 511.
33. David E. Wilkins, “The Navajo Political Experience”. (Diné College: Tsaile, AZ). 58.
34. David E. Wilkes, 58.
35. Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navjos*. Text by Peter Iverson, Photographs by Monty Roessel, (University of NM Press. Albuquerque 2002), 201-203.
36. Adam Jevce, “Semper Fidelis, Code Talkers,” U.S. National Archives & Records Administration. Winter 2001, Vol.33, No.4. <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/winter_2001_navajo_code_talkers.html> (17 April 2004). 2-3.
37. *Ibid.*, 3-6.
38. Viola Cordova, Introduction, “*American Indian Thought*,” editor Anne Waters, (Blackwell Publishing, 2004). xxx.
39. *Ibid.*, xxx-xxx.

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Native Intelligence: The Jewish Bible and the Appropriation of Another’s Religion

Jack D. Forbes

Christians have attempted to lay claim to the Hebrew Bible as much as modern-day “New Age” people lay claim to Native American ceremonies and other practices. Appropriating someone else’s religious traditions is not new!

The Christians who invaded America after 1492 offered “the Bible” (Protestants) or the “Sacraments” (Catholics) to the American nations in exchange for their lands, their freedom, and their wealth. Usually the Europeans refused to discuss the controversies surrounding their religious traditions, but instead presented their “holy book” or “holy mass” to the often unsuspecting Americans as proven truths with no questions allowed. Often children were taken from their parents and indoctrinated without having any way of determining the validity of what was being presented.

This process still goes on today, with well-financed missionaries presenting “the Bible” to tribes everywhere as “the word of God.” It seems important that First Nation peoples become acquainted with scholarship surrounding the texts currently known as “the Bible.”

“The Bible” is not one single book at all. It is made up of many different books or writings and often each one of these is, in turn, a compilation of several texts or sources, often derived from different time periods and geographical areas. The main division is between texts written by Christians after about 40-50 CE (AD) and the Hebrew or Jewish Bible, put together for Israelite use between about the 600s BCE (BC) and 200-300 BCE, with older material as well.

What Christians term the “Old Testament” is actually the Jewish or Hebrew Bible. It was developed by Jews for Jewish use (although some material, such as parts of Genesis, may have been borrowed from the Jews’ Canaanitish relatives or other Semitic peoples). In the earliest days of the Christian movement, when there were many different opinions and no powerful hierarchy had developed, the Christians’ only sacred writings were the texts of the Hebrew Bible, known to them primarily in a Greek language translation, called the Septuagint. This gradually changed between about 50 and 300 CE, as the Christian leadership began to develop “official” compilations of their own writings, now known as the “New Testament.”

The Hebrew Bible was, however, put together by Jews for their own use and not for the use of those who eventually

departed from the Israelite fold. I believe that we should respect that fact and not attempt to appropriate the Israelite legacy, even though both Christians and Muslims, as well as others, might respect the information therein. Above all, we must remember that the Hebrew Bible was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, two closely-related Semitic tongues, and that the Hebrew-Aramaic text must be seen as the authoritative one, not an English translation, and especially not the so-called King James Version.

It is strange to see fundamentalist Christians arguing over some passage from the Hebrew Bible, using the language of “jolly old England”! If one cannot read Hebrew, then the next best thing is to go to a modern Jewish translation of the Bible (since new manuscript versions of the Hebrew Bible have been found in the caves along the Dead Sea, versions much older than any previous manuscript and perhaps more accurate than the Greek version which the Christian church depended upon for many centuries).

In short, we need to see the Hebrew Bible in the same way that we might look at traditional Navajo, Lakota, or other texts, texts which must always be primarily interpreted by speakers of the appropriate language, except where word-for-word linear translations are available. Of course, some Christians have argued that “God” has guaranteed that all translations of “the Bible” are absolutely accurate, thus making it unnecessary to study the original languages. However, the many discrepancies between different manuscripts and translations proves that humans have been in charge all along, I would argue.

It is a marvel to see how some Christians often misuse the Hebrew Bible, as when they might quote a passage which states that for one man to lay with another would be an “abomination.” What is peculiar about their usage of passages in the older books of the Hebrew Bible is that they will completely ignore nearby passages which require that land be allowed to rest fallow every seven years, and that all debts must be forgiven, and that gleanings must be shared with the poor, and countless other equalitarian injunctions which modern-day “conservatives” abhor. And, of course, they also ignore the popular Christian belief that the “Law” of the Jews was set aside by Yahshua (Yeshua, or Jesus).

The first five books of the Hebrew Bible are called “Torah” (Law) and ultra-orthodox Jews believe that they stem from Moshe (Moses) and through him from Deity. In actuality, Moshe’s death occurs in these writings and thus he could not have been the author. Also two separate texts (an “E” text using the term Elohim for Deity, and a “J” text, using YHWH as a symbolic name for Deity) along with other material make up Torah.

One fascinating thing about the two versions of Genesis found in Torah is that the Elohim version points towards a theological view identical with many American nations, since Elohim is the *plural* form of El and Eloy (Deity) and points towards a Spiritual Plurality of Creative Power or a male-female, Grandfather-Grandmother Creative Power! There are many other things to be learned about the Hebrew Bible! I cannot claim to be an expert, but I have been researching the subject for years because it has played such an important role in American Native history.

(Jack Forbes is the author of ONLY APPROVED INDIANS, a collection of stories published by University of Oklahoma Press, and other books, including RED BLOOD, APACHE, NAVAHO AND SPANIARD, and NATIVE AMERICANS OF CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA).

Native Intelligence Religionism: The Moral Equivalent of Racism

Jack D. Forbes

A strange tradition appeared in the Middle East, specifically in Kanaan (Palestine), almost 3,000 years ago. This tradition is what I am calling “religionism,” an equivalent of racism. In the latter, a person or a group is judged primarily on its physical characteristics and/or ancestry and discriminated against on that basis. In religionism, a person or group is judged according to its form of worship or belief and is discriminated against for that reason.

From an American perspective, religionism is a very new phenomena, brought over here only since 1492 by Europeans. We are all familiar with the manner in which Catholics, most Protestants, Mormons, and others have attempted either to suppress traditional American spiritual values (often with very bloody pogroms), or to convince First Americans that they must “convert” exclusively to a single Middle Eastern-European sect, with no mixing or combining. The willingness to murder, torture, punish, discriminate, and “high pressure,” all for conversions to this exclusivity is not merely perverse, but in a very real sense, insane (from the Indigenous perspective).

It is safe to say, I think, that Native American peoples have generally believed that the Creator or Creative Power (“God”) and other sources of spiritual knowledge have been communicating with human beings for tens of thousands of years and that Grandfather-Grandmother have given us many prophets, messengers, teachers, guides, and elders with gifts of ceremonies, songs, prayers, rituals, ways of healing, et cetera, all of value, all to be respected, and all offering paths of spiritual knowledge. Thus each nation, clan, group, family may have its own messages from the Creator and all are equally to be respected, since all people are “signs” of the Creator’s work and all have had messages from the Creator. The only exception might be if a message has been misinterpreted so as to justify aggressive acts against people or animals (as when Abraham believed that he had to sacrifice his son or an animal substitute to please the Creator).

Generally, Americans did not believe in a great evil power (such as Satan/Lucifer) capable of challenging the Creator for human allegiance, until after Europeans brought in this Middle Eastern idea. Evil deeds certainly existed but they were either mistakes, the opposite side of good deeds, or the result of selfish, greedy thinking or even stupidity.

In any case, people were probably never persecuted for their spiritual beliefs, and there was a willingness to share religious ideas. Thus we find ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance, spreading from nation to nation, over a very large area. We usually find similar religious art, and ideas, over large regions, but often with variations even from village to village. By means of dreams, visions, and prayers people were in constant touch with the Unseen World and with the Great Creative Power.

As in many other parts of the world, Indigenous Americans were willing, very often, to incorporate new ideas into their spiritual lives. They saw no conflict in respecting and recognizing Yahshua’s (Jesus’) sacrifice into their thinking for, after all, Yahshua was very much like a Native American in his emphasis upon sharing meals and food, healing the sick, living simply, going to Nature for visions, being an adversary of the rich and powerful, and praying in private.

Certainly, Yahshua can stand with all of the other great teachers and healers who have come before and have been here since, beings like White Buffalo Calf Woman, Sweet Medicine, Quetzalcoatl, and countless others. This ability to respect and perhaps to incorporate, and not to seek exclusivity or domination over others' beliefs, is a sign of civilized behavior, in my judgment. It is what distinguishes those who wage war for religious sameness from those who respect the Creator's many voices. It is what avoids hierarchy and the power of priests and those who seek secular power by means of spiritual slavery.

The Hebrew Bible (the "Old Testament" to Christians) sadly provides us with many examples of how "religionism" evolved in the Middle East. For example, there is the case of Elijah (Eli-yahu) who challenged 450 prophets of the Canaanitish deities to a religious duel. In the story, Eliyahu won the duel and immediately ordered the Israelites to capture the rival priests, whom he proceeded to slaughter in cold blood. Similar bloody, murderous deeds are, unfortunately, often characteristic of the evolution of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Eliyahu's objective seems to have been to deny any form of worship within the Kingdom of Yudea (Judah) except that which he approved!

Tragically, the Christian Church, when it acquired secular authority after 300 C.E., began to follow Eliyahu's example, suppressing rival interpretations of Christianity and eventually outlawing all non-Christian worship, destroying all ancient shrines, temples, schools of philosophy, and holy places. Eliyahu's descendants, the Jews, were persecuted by their ungrateful offshoot!

Still later, the Muslims, although generally tolerant of Christians and Jews, took an extremely hostile attitude toward Zoroastrians (the "Magi" of Persia), Hindus, and all followers of Indigenous or traditional religions. The latter, called "unbelievers" have been the victims of Islamic hostility, as well as of Christian imperialism.

The followers of the often beautiful ancient "tribal" religions of the world are, to many Middle Eastern-derived sectarians, simply "heathens," "pagans," or "unbelievers" with no rights except the right to be converted and to have intolerant and sexist Middle Eastern cultural norms forced upon the people. In my view, "religionism," "religious exclusivity," and "sectarian supremacy" are diseases, infectious maladies, which can be challenged, and are being challenged by all lovers of freedom and human dignity. A truly spiritual path depends upon sincerity and freedom of choice.

(Jack Forbes is professor emeritus of Native American Studies at the University of California, Davis. He has over 500 published works, dealing with interethnic history and international relations, including ONLY APPROVED INDIANS).

REVIEWS

**Anne Waters, *American Indian Thought*.
Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
xxxviii + 306 pp. \$64.95 hardcover, \$24.95
paper.**

Jerome A. Stone

Meadville Lombard Theological School

Here is a highly successful and important collection of essays by indigenous American philosophers. It is (probably) the first major appearance in print in full academic garb of Indian philosophy by Indians, other than the articles in the *APA Newsletters*. These are essays written by philosophically astute writers (eight with Ph.D.s in philosophy), with varying degrees of rootage in native ways, able to stand within two changing cultures and reflect philosophically about each one and on the issues of bridging them. One finds standard philosophical topics and references to familiar philosophers in the Western repertoire (from Aristotle to Wittgenstein).

One great value to me, a non-Indian, is that it helps me gain insight into the cultural matrix of my own philosophizing. Philosophy is sometimes like trying to create a set of axioms for a specific purpose. One finds that there are hidden assumptions which need to be articulated. This book can be a resource and a challenge to both Indians and non-Indians.

Overarching questions, with varying answers, include: What is philosophy? How distinct is it from other aspects of cultural? Is there a distinctive Native American philosophy distinct from traditional Western philosophy? Would these two overlap in perspective? Are their significant tribal differences? How do you do philosophy when you have roots in a culture where the oral transmission of insights and worldviews is relatively important? Must American Indian philosophy be taught orally? (Which leads me to ask: Are we now in a predominantly electronic post-literate culture? What does this mean for a philosophical tradition which has focused on printed texts?) Attention is given to issues and possibilities for both the native and the non-native teacher of Native American philosophy.

Naturally, there are differences between the contributors on the degree of the Indian philosopher's immersion in an intact tradition, for example. Topics covered vary widely, but all with philosophic import. Shawnee and Ojibwa numeric language is used to show that difference from the Western norm does not mean inferiority. The distinction between the metaphoric mind and the rational mind is taken as a clue to indigenous science, this by a writer obviously adept in both scientific styles. Some fundamental assumptions of the Western tradition are challenged by a proposed distinction between the epistemic acceptability and the ethical acceptability of a belief as well as what it means to achieve knowledge ceremonially. Other topics include a model for teaching logic to classes of both native and non-native students. Stories are told which illustrate how to educate while respecting the student, how to create learning situations without putting the student in an inferior role. One article develops a philosophy of "interstitial being" and "nonbinary dualism," very valuable in our age of increasing diaspora, cultural hybridization, inter-marriage, multiple religious identity, and non-traditional sexual orientation. A very thoughtful and

disturbing study of biocolonialism and critique of the Human Genome Diversity Project raises the issue of whether knowledge (genetic, pharmaceutical, agricultural) is a commodity or a gift. The jurisprudence of Chief Justice John Marshall's three decisions concerning the Cherokee's (surely a civilized people!) to create the legal concept of "domestic, dependent nations" raises serious questions about the Lockean basis of democracy. This study continues in the analysis of *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, *Balzac v. People of Puerto Rico*, and *Rice v. Cayetano*.

With eighteen contributors and a uniformly high level of philosophically interesting contributions, I hesitate to draw attention to individual pieces. However, if the reader wishes to sample this feast, the articles by Deloria, Waters, Cordova, and Turner would surely whet the intellectual appetite. The last's "Oral Traditions and the Politics of (Mis)Recognition," drawing out the implications of the Canadian Delgamuukw case, asserts that "our survival" as indigenous peoples "depends on an American Indian intellectual community...finding creative, critical ways to assert and defend how tribal sovereignty is recognized and put to use in American law and politics. However, the question of what the "American Indian intellectual community ought to look like, and what an American Indian intellectual is, remains elusive and controversial" (231). Turner continues: "the pendulum-like nature of federal Indian policy over the last two centuries ought to drive home the point that, when it comes to American Indians, the Congress can, and does, do as it pleases." But this power can be understood in two ways. Congress has brute physical power. But it also believes that its power is exercised legitimately. It is to understand and challenge the latter that native Americans need philosophically trained "word warriors."

American political thought, for example, is often based on a contract theory, which usually places indigenous people in a pre-civil contract state. Further, democratic theory, of either end of the liberal-conservative spectrum, assumes a fairly homogenous cultural basis and hence overlooks the importance of tribal enculturation (which communitarian theory should recognize), not to mention cultural hybridization.

A detailed study of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act takes on incredible poignancy set against the history of grave looting in the name of science. Perhaps humiliation of Iraqi prisoners is not an aberration.

I was struck by the notion that the role of a native artist is that of a healer, not a disrupter, as the Western artist has become. Does this apply to the Lakota story-teller? (See Julian Rice, *Before the Great Spirit*, University of New Mexico Press, 1998.)

The section on aesthetics includes a study of George Morrison's paintings. Three points were clearly made: (a) the importance of here in our perception (and intellection), (b) the sense of the world as full of spirit(s) is not a primitive survival, but the effort to speak of it in metaphoric language can be blocked by linguistic dogmatism, (c) an Indian can often be refused recognition, as Morrison was by a major art center, for not being "authentic" enough.

The essay on the nature of philosophic discourse is a fitting conclusion to this study.

Mention should be made of the assistance of Lucius Outlaw, Leonard Harris, and Nancy Tuana and of the cover illustration by Jeanne Rorex Bridges. I trust this collection is a sign of more to come.

***Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World*, by John C. Mohawk, Clear Light Publishers, Santa Fe, 2000, 287 pages, paperback \$14.95**

Reviewed by Richard Simonelli

Every culture, every society on planet earth entertains utopian or idealistic dreams and visions to some extent, John Mohawk argues in *Utopian Legacies*. But in Western civilization, he says, this leaning is carried to an extreme. Starting at least from the ideal of Plato's Cave in ancient Greece, Western people seek to find a utopia born of imagination and mental concepts; they have lived chasing ideals and "the one right way."

Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World is a short history of Western Civilization looking through the lens of utopian and idealistic thought. These are like a subtext guiding many Western outcomes. As ideals and utopian visions become almost sanctified within the culture as archetypes, it then follows that unspeakable acts of conquest, oppression, and genocide are easily justified by perpetrators in pursuit of the various ideals. "*The pursuit of the ideal has provided a stream of rationalizations that justified plunder, racism, and oppression in the name of a better future,*" says Mohawk. "*The fact that conquests and their reward were acceptable and continue to be celebrated in Western history is a key to the story of how the world came to be the way it is.*"

Utopian Legacies is a philosophical analysis of Western history, but it is also a book that takes the reader through a factual historic journey from ancient Greece to the present. The reader gets the sense of what happened as well as a glimpse at the utopian and idealistic "hidden text" driving the actors. The author points out that Western history is usually written by people within the worldview of the victory. As a modern Native American of the Seneca nation, Mohawk looks at Western history from both within and from outside its sweep. Inside, because as a professor of history in the State University of New York at Buffalo he participates in the dominant or mainstream culture as much as any of us. But as a descendent and active practitioner of the Peacemaker tradition of the Six Nations, he is not tied to the Western view as Euro-American colleagues might be.

Some of the Utopian visions of Western civilization include the Garden of Eden, Plato's Republic, the Kingdom of God, or heaven on earth, the Worker's Paradise, and even the popular scientific "Theory of Everything" spoken of today. The underlying idea is that we can have a perfect life if we just work hard enough at it. The "perfection," of course, will be an expression of the ideal. One of the articles of faith is that the Western way is the one true way to achieve this perfection, all other ways eventually yielding to the Western view if they struggle long enough within their own systems. "*The history of ideas in the West is dominated by a certainty that an ideal world is possible, that such a world will be in the best interest of all human beings, and its conception and production will inevitably be the product of Western thought,*" says Mohawk.

An outcome of the utopian/idealistic basis of the Western worldview is the need for, and proliferation of revitalization movements. Social thrusts are constantly petering out and finding themselves in need of revitalization. Judaism (through Abraham) is at the root of Christianity and Islam, which are in great turmoil today. How will all three be revitalized? The European Enlightenment is a revitalization of Church domination throughout the Middle Ages. Hitlerism was a

revitalization of the broken German spirit following World War I. The list goes on.

Another outcome of the pursuit of the ideal is the *progress ethic* that plays such an important role in Western history. Like the image of the donkey, the carrot and the stick, there is a constant compulsive drive to move away from one situation and towards another that offers more promise of realizing the ideal. The utopian ideal causes people to live in the future, neglecting perhaps the present. “*People who are engaged in utopian projects tend to envision the world in a state of being that precedes another state of being,*” says Mohawk. “*The common wisdom among the converted is that things are progressing in a positive way toward the realization of the utopia. Inherent in true utopian thought, therefore, is a notion of progress. While the members of the group are awaiting its arrival—sometimes over very long periods of time—they are urged or coerced or terrorized in myriad ways to continue to believe that it will in fact arrive.*”

Utopian Legacies is filled with well-known historic facts seen through the viewpoint of utopian ideals. There is one chapter, however, that presents a fascinating in-depth look at the Conquest of Mexico by way of Cortez’s victory over the Mexica (Aztec) people in Montezuma’s capital city of Tenochtitlan, now Mexico City, in 1521. This chapter presents intriguing information about the dynamics of Cortez’s victory—how he was able to defeat the Mexica empire with a relatively small force, and the relationships that existed between Montezuma and the nearby indigenous tribes that made victory possible for Cortez.

Utopian Legacies reveals the role that clear philosophical thought can provide in understanding history. By contrast, the study of Western philosophy reveals how excessive dependence on ideas can go wrong. Mohawk says: “*It is not difficult to understand that few contemporary students are attracted to the study of the history of Western philosophy because it is a discouraging study of a series of bad ideas that have gone wrong. There have been no powerful new ideas in Western culture for several generations. Because philosophy has limited itself to ideas that find their way into Western discourse through a traditionally Western path, and people from other cultures have not historically had access to that path, Western philosophy has not had the benefit of the ideas of people of other cultures. That is and has been changing for some time, however. Philosophy, anthropology, and history all have advocates for pluralism within their disciplines.*”

What’s the way forward into a happier, survivable future as offered by this book? Tolerance and pluralism. We must learn from history that excessive idealism and seeking “the one right way” has unhappy consequences in the world. But help is close at hand from other outlooks on life that exist separately from the main line of the Western view. Allowing diverse thought and peoples back into the history of the world as equal partners offers one strong ray of hope for the future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Submissions are requested for the *APA Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy*, email as attachment to brendam234@aol.com, or snail mail to Anne Waters, 1806 Arizona, NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87110.
2. *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*, edited by Anne Waters, is available from Blackwell Publishers.
3. Proposals for upcoming 2005 APA conferences are requested. They can be sent to Dale Turner, for the Committee session(s) and to Anne Waters for the American Indian Philosophy Association session.