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NEWSLETTER ON AMERICAN INDIANS IN PHILOSOPHY

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FROM THE EDITOR

V.F. Cordova

The articles in this issue bring out a problem that is of a long-standing nature in addressing philosophical concepts concerning Native American thought. The problem is that of attempting to interpret the thought of a culture unlike one's own into a conceptual framework that is alien to the thought that is being addressed.

Ludwig Wittgenstein points to this problem in his, "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*." We cannot, he says, fully understand the reason behind a people's worship of an oak tree *unless we first understand the relationship of that people to the oak tree*.

Vine Deloria, Jr. and Daniel R. Wildcat specifically address the issue of the metaphysical differences that impede literal communication between Native American students and their non-Native American educators. Theodore S. Jojola points to the complications that arise when two peoples, each holding to a different conception of time, attempt to illustrate a cultural history. The Native American maintains a sense of continuity with his ancestors, a continuity that persists despite changes in lifestyle between the ancestors and their contemporary descendants. Deloria and Wildcat point out the importance of place and the relationship between human and place in the making of human personality. Cordova explores the sacred concept of the Four Directions as having some connection with what others would call *the mundane*—what Deloria calls "place."

J. B. Bury, writing in the first half of the 20th century (*The Idea of Progress*), brings out a view that might justify the concept of progress as a means of explaining, or justifying, the suffering of people in contemporary eras. He introduces the term 'palingenesis' and defines it as a belief that "We of this generation...are not merely the sons and descendants of past generations, we are the past generations themselves, which have come to birth again in us." Bury is not speaking here of a sense of continuity between the past and the present of a specific people in a specific area as Jojola speaks of the sense of continuity that the contemporary Pueblo people feel with their ancestors who have supposedly, "mysteriously," disappeared into the dust bin of "past" and "dead" civilizations—the Hohokam, the Mogollon or the Anasazi. Bury speaks more in the sense of how contemporary Euro-Americans feel about past civilizations in other places and other times.

Coursing through the veins of "modern" man (read: *Western man*) are the cultural experiences of not only the

Greeks and the Romans, the acknowledged "forefathers" of modernity, but also the experiences of the Sumerians, the Egyptians, the "cave men." In the theory of Progress, each *modern*, Western human represents the latest stage of a long route from the first human to himself. If each "modern" human has within him all of the experiences of other peoples, and he is the representative of a teleological evolutionary *achievement*, then he has nothing to learn from other peoples—because he *has already had* those experiences. All non-Western peoples exist as mere anachronisms who have either failed in the evolutionary journey or are in the process of beginning the journey. The *Other* represents to Western Man what Western Man *once was*.

A good example of the commonality with which this view is held is in the oft-repeated comment made by well-meaning "admirers" of Native American "spirituality": "You people," the comment starts out, "have *retained* your spirituality." As if—'spirituality' was something "modern" man once held "naturally" and has since *outgrown*, while, we, the anachronistic people, have failed to outgrow this particular stage of evolutionary progression. Another example of this perspective is the notion that learning about people most unlike Western man, those we have grown accustomed to labeling 'primitive,' will lend knowledge to modern man about his own past. One is encouraged to learn about others—not *as others*—but as reflections of our imagined former selves. Yet another example of palingenesis at work is the view of many Westerners that cultures unlike their own are doomed to "die out." No sympathy is required for the loss of cultural perspectives which will fall beneath the wheel of *modernization*. The loss is inevitable—"living fossils" are just something that one has to put up with as the world slowly transforms itself into a modern technological bureaucratic society of monocultural conformity.

What if, asks Jojola, there is no linear progressive process at work in the universe? What if, ask Deloria and Wildcat, we are each the product of a different place and a different adaptation to that place? And—what if—those adaptations represent not "stages" but actually *different* metaphysical explanatory schemes derived from *different* experiences? And, most important of all, what if the American Indian, in actuality, represents an *alternative* manner of living on this planet?

Deloria wrote a book titled, *We Talk, You Listen*; I have heard Jojola say to audiences of well-meaning interpreters of indigenous thought, "We don't need interpreters; we can speak for ourselves"—this issue of the APA Newsletter is just that—we talk, you listen—we have now the tools for interpreting our own thought for the edification of others. In the process of dedicating ourselves to understanding the man who would define us, we have learned to define ourselves.

And, as Deloria points out, "It's all metaphysics."

LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

A Committee in Retrospect

Anne Waters, J.D., Ph.D.

In spring, 1997, organizing began for the APA Committee on American Indians in Philosophy (CAIP). In October 1999 the CAIP was approved and asked to begin work with all due haste, though Committee appointments were not to officially begin until June of 2000. Three members accepted three-year appointments: Anne Waters (Seminole), John Dufour (Lakota), and Iris Young. James Sterba and Scott Pratt accepted two-year appointments, and Lee Hester (Choctaw) and Judith Green accepted one-year appointments. In 2001, Hester and Green were replaced with a three-year appointee, Thomas Norton-Smith (Shawnee) and a one-year appointee, Lee Stauffer (Seminole). In June 2002, three-year appointee Laurie Anne Whitt (Choctaw) replaced Sterba, and Sean Cridland replaced Pratt. Due to unforeseen circumstances, John Dufour resigned and Lee Hester accepted replacement for John Dufour.

In June 2003 Anne Waters and Iris Young will finish our current terms. Although I have only served a three-year term with CAIP, I have been a generating force for both CAIP and the American Indian Philosophy Association (as founding president) since 1996. Hence, it is with a six-year perspective that I report to the APA this year regarding the status of American Indians and American Indian Philosophy within the APA. During this time, great strides continue to be made, as progress in building the academic field of American Indian philosophy, and the careers of American Indian academic philosophers is slow, but steady. Yes, it is true that we still do not have any American Indian philosopher tenured in a public academic institution that grants a Ph.D. in philosophy (my constant barometer), nor is there a Ph.D. program in a public school where graduate students may go to work with American Indian philosophers, or even specialize in the field of American Indian Philosophy. Yet our affiliations with members of Philosophy Departments granting a Ph.D. is constant and progressive. And, at least one Committee member, Thomas Norton Smith, will be Chair of Faculty Senate next year at Kent State University in Ohio. As well, I continue as Research Associate in the Philosophy, Interpretation, and Culture Department at SUNY, Binghamton. Lee Hester, in accepting a position in Native Studies at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, directs the program, as does David Martinez (Pima) at the University of Minnesota.

The APA now recognizes American Indian Philosophy as a philosophical field in the discipline, and the first American Indian Thought: A Philosophical Reader, edited by Anne Waters, is in Blackwell Publishers' 2002 fall catalogue, and will be available for order at the Eastern Division APA. Syllabi for a course in American Indian Philosophy, and several articles by American Indian philosophers have been published in the APA CAIP Newsletter, co-edited by Viola Cordova and Anne Waters. These materials complement others on the horizon, like the articles in *Ayaanwayamizin: A Journal of Indigenous Philosophy*, edited by Lee Hester and Dennis McPherson (Ojibwa), and published by Lakehead University in Canada. As the field of American Indian philosophy grows, so also does

the APA newsletter, as articles continue to be made available to interested faculty. As a collective aggregate these strides in career efforts, and publications, given that we are the first generation of a group of American Indians pursuing professional careers in philosophy, are historical, for both Native Nations and the philosophical profession.

None of us speak twenty-six languages, as did the late Dr. Robert Bunge, the first known American Indian (Lakota) to receive a Ph.D. in philosophy. Nor have we, even collectively, published some thirty books, such as one of our senior most distinguished traditional American Indian philosophers, Dr. Vine Deloria, Jr. (Lakota). But each Ph.D. received in Philosophy, by Laurie Anne Whitt, Thomas Norton Smith, Anne Waters, Viola Cordova, David Martinez, Dale Turner, Lee Hester, John Dufour, and Kathleen Brown, deserves being placed alongside the firsts and bests for our accomplishments (and especially the women in a male-dominated profession). Importantly, our Ph.D.s and graduate students have all benefited these past six years from the support and work of exemplary role models: Ines Talamantez (Apache), who continues to place over thirty Ph.D.s specializing in Native Religious (Philosophical?) Studies at the University of California in Santa Barbara, into academic positions at American Universities (Marilyn Notah Verney, B.A. Philosophy, B.A. Psychology, University of Texas, El Paso, was this year accepted into the Native Religious Studies Ph.D. Program at UC, Santa Barbara, to work with Dr. Talamantez); Annette Jaimes Guerrero (Yaqui), mentoring the American Indian Philosophy Association for the past four years, and coediting the first *Hypatia*, A Feminist Philosophy Journal focusing on American Indian women (with Ines Talamantez and Anne Waters); and Henri Mann (Southern Cheyenne), a traditional philosopher talented in the oral tradition, who sits in the first, and thus far the only, Endowed Chair of Native American Studies at Montana State University-Bozeman, and among the first Indian spiritual leaders to conduct sacred ceremonies at ground zero.

Our successful efforts within the context of the APA suggest we are at the beginning of a renaissance of American Indian academic philosophy in the Americas. This renaissance is being ushered in by American Indians. This is no small accomplishment, and each and every American Indian and APA members who has assisted us in these efforts of moving our philosophies and people forward in the APA, are to be recognized for playing a part in this struggle. In this report, I take a moment to thank individuals who have in the past, and continue, to quietly come forward in support of the Committee's programs, newsletter, meetings, and projects during the past six years. From the time American Indian philosophy was welcomed into the Pacific Division APA by Anita Silvers, the subsequent acceptance of the American Indian Philosophy Association into the Pacific, Eastern, and Central Divisions has presented new opportunities for our membership, and spurred collegiality among APA members working in the intersections of their philosophical specialty with American Indian philosophy. CAIP especially recognizes the networking required to present shared panels with the Radical Philosophy Association, Society for Women in Philosophy, and the Committee on Teaching Philosophy. In the future we hope to work more with the Society To Advance American Philosophy, Philosophy and Law, and other groups to build American Indian philosophy as an autonomous field within the APA, and as an overlapping field of American Philosophy, as American Indians and American Indian ideas continue to play pivotal roles contributing to American philosophy.

ARTICLES

A large part of the work of CAIP since its inception has been arranging for paper and panel presentations and symposia at divisional meetings. These opportunities to present our research and collaborate with colleagues working in similar areas create a context that nourishes our work. This opportunity to meet colleagues working in American Indian philosophy has been invaluable to the growth of American Indian philosophy as a field in the discipline. Recent APA divisional meetings allowed for presentations of our research in areas such as American Indian aesthetics, ethics, politics, metaphysics, epistemology, science, and other academic philosophical specializations as they intersect American Indian philosophy. Philosophical articulations of panIndian ways of being in the world exemplify how American Indians fit philosophically within a context of global indigenous philosophies and struggles for sustainability, while at the same time experiencing the academic reality of cosmopolitanism. Exposing ourselves and our work to the critical analysis of philosophers at APA divisional meetings, and via the APA CAIP Newsletter, assists in the clarification of our ideas, and our ability to communicate successfully across cultural differences. At least two divisional meetings every year, for the past three or four years, have had several sessions of American Indian philosophy. The visibility these programs give to American Indian philosophers and American Indian philosophy assists to develop cross cultural and intercultural understanding. Most important, this visibility lends an authenticity to and recognition to the field of American Indian philosophy and those working in this field. Perhaps most important, it allows APA members and traditional philosophers to honor and interact with one another, in the context of developing the field.

A project undertaken by the CAIP was creating a Directory of American Indian Philosophers for APA members, using as a model the (now outdated) Directory of Women in Philosophy. This directory is small at this time, but it is larger than it would have been a few years ago, and will hopefully inspire more American Indians to consider pursuing Philosophy as a career choice. As well, it will assist in bringing people with some common academic interests and specializations together on paper (and soon on the CAIP webpage), clarifying our similarities and differences, and allowing more access to us for those in the profession. In the year ahead projects to be undertaken include the continuing struggle to assist American Indians entry into the profession. In everyday life, many American Indians gravitate toward long term contemplation and observation of human and nonhuman nature. In these activities, we sharpen our abilities to abstract, and thus to engage in philosophical praxis. Because many humans thrive in an environment of contemplating theory and practice for understanding our world better, and among those many are American Indians, with our own ways of looking at and contemplating all our relations. One task of CAIP for the coming year will be to continue sharing and educating all interested APA members about America's Indigenous thought, through the forums provided by the APA. The chair thanks the APA Board for past support, and hopes that it will continue to support CAIP efforts.

Bounded Space: The Four Directions

V.F. Cordova

The fact that the Four Directions have some symbolic importance to the Native Americans is commonly known. What those directions symbolize is not always very clear. There is a general notion of the Directions that seems to grant them a somewhat amorphous character: that is, that the Directions, themselves, are “sacred” and, therefore, out of the stream of ordinary understanding. The fact that, in most instances, there are actually six directions considered sacred, is not so generally known. Aside from the East, West, North, South Directions, included also are Up and Down. The six directional grid is to be seen as originating from the position of a particular viewer.

The viewer in this grid is, in actuality, positioned at the “center of the universe” with a slight twist from an egocentric interpretation: the viewer is only a small aspect of the entire directional system.

My claim here is that the Four Directions have a very definite signification which, in turn, serves to lend meaning to the addition of the other two directions.

Most known North American indigenous groups have a very definite sense of place. The “sense of place” is distinguished by the fact that there are very explicit boundaries to which the people can point in order to describe their “home” or “place.” The sense of place is a sense of *bounded space*. The fact that the Native American sense of place is characterized by very definite boundaries is important to understanding the sanctity accorded to the Four Directions.

When the Europeans arrived in North America there were hundreds of very diverse and distinct groups of indigenous peoples. There were also hundreds of languages spoken by the various groups. In order for the diversity of peoples to have survived the thousands of years of occupancy on this continent there had to be some “mechanism” to allow the persistence of diversity.

Today, each native group knows the boundaries, or former boundaries, of their homeland. Many indigenous groups have been displaced from their original homelands but the memory of the traditional home is not forgotten. A Choctaw gave the following account of his return to his tribe's original home: He traveled with a tribal elder and the elder, upon arrival in the home area, immediately proceeded to point to the boundaries of their former home. “Home,” in a Native American sense is much broader than that of the non-indigenous Americans. In my own case, my father could point to our former boundaries: to the North was the Arkansas River (present-day Pueblo, Colorado); to the East were the plains of Eastern Colorado where the people could go only so far as it took to find the buffalo; the people's “ground” extended as far South as Taos Mountain; and to the West, only so far as the homeland of Utes began (approximately Pagosa Springs, Colorado). These directions and places would, today, be equivalent to pointing out the town in which one lived. The area could be narrowed even further—to the area one might call a “neighborhood.” This neighborhood consisted of a smaller area that straddled the border of Southeastern Colorado and Northeastern New Mexico. The people of the group tended to be born near the vicinities of Folsom and

Raton, New Mexico and Trinidad and Walsenburg, Colorado. The immediate family home was a few miles southeast of Trinidad, near a creek that the Spaniards dubbed 'Romero Springs'.

The recognition of the home area was accompanied by another awareness: that beyond the larger home area was the home area of other groups. To the North and East there were various "Plains Indians;" to the South, the Pueblos; and to the West, the Utes. The home area also included various and related groups of "Apaches."

The Spaniards who first encountered the people of the area mapped out the locations of the various Apache groups. The general area was dubbed the homeland of the "Jicarilla Apache." Within that area the Spaniards also identified various groups of distinct Jicarilla "families." An even finer distinction was drawn in naming the smaller groups or clans. Our group were identified on Spanish records (largely drawn up for the "hispanics" who had married members of the group) as "Romeros." The name was apparently derived from the permanent "rancherías" used by each extended family, in this case the Romeros were those who resided near Romero Springs. 'Romero' also has a distinctive origin: 'romero' is the Spanish name for the aromatic shrub we call 'rosemary'; instead of the Mediterranean shrub, however, what the Spaniards encountered was the equally aromatic 'sagebrush,' which covers the hillsides of the mountainous border of this part of Colorado and New Mexico. The Romeros were people who (through possible centuries of influence from the Pueblo tribes) practiced a "mixed economy" of farming and hunting. Their buffalo products were traded to the Pueblos, primarily of Taos and Picuris, for cloth and pottery.

The Apache people of the area tended to believe that they had "emerged" from the Earth out of a lake on Taos Mountain. When I learned, in later life, that the mythological emergence was actually a myth shared by (borrowed from?) the Taos people, my father skipped no beat in explaining, "They came out of one reed and went to the South; we came out another and went to the North."

A typical picture of the Native American that is drawn up by Europeans is that of "nomads" who appeared to have simply wandered the countryside at will as they followed game and looked for edible vegetation. The picture which the Native Americans have of themselves, however, is one of occupying a very definite and *bounded* space.

It appears to me that the sense of bounded space is the source of the granting of sanctity to the "Four Directions." There were boundaries that delineated the "proper" space in which a specific group could comfortably range. Within those boundaries there were other boundaries that signified "home" to smaller clans within the larger group. To go beyond the designated boundaries was to encroach on the homeland of others, to *trespass* on the rightful spaces of others.

The Four Directions, may not have been, in origin, amorphous religious principles. The recognition of the existence of boundaries may derive from a recognition that all people have a "right" to a specific home ground. The "mechanism" for the maintenance of the continued diversity of peoples on the North American continent could well stem from this very sense of bounded space which survives intact even to this day, 500 years after the disruptions created by the European colonists.

The Implications of Bounded Space

The sense of existing within specific boundaries is not a sense that is easily acknowledged by many European peoples; they do, nonetheless, tend to occupy bounded spaces. There are

within the European group many distinct groups: French, German, English, etc. The majority of wars fought on the European continent have been based on the trespassing of one group on the "homeland" of another. The reluctance of Europeans, in general, to acknowledge the existence of peoples as distinct groups may be the result of a mythology, or *conceptual framework*, that is at odds with the actual existential circumstances of human beings.

The concept of 'mankind,' that is, the idea that all peoples represent a single group that is by accident divided into many groups is a uniquely European, and Christian, concept. The "accidents" that divide peoples, one from the other, are language, location, color, tradition, and belief. The idea of the singularity of the species may be derived from the Judeo-Christian account of a single creation of a pair of humans, Adam and Eve. The idea has certainly been perpetuated by Christianity. During the Middle Ages, when the Catholic Church was the dominant source of a world view, individuals tended to identify themselves as "Christian" rather than as belonging to a specific cultural or ethnic group. The Church perpetuated the idea of a singular identity through the use of Latin as a universal language among its small but powerful group of the educated.

Another factor in the perpetuation of the idea of a singular "mankind" may have been the fact that the royal houses of Europe tended to have blood ties that transcended ethnic or linguistic differences.

Today it is common to hear Europeans and their colonial "modern" descendants speak with disdain about "petty nationalisms" as though the sense of a people as a distinct group is somewhat anachronistic. The fact that people cling to their national language, traditions, and beliefs, as well as to bloodlines, geography, and history is seen as merely stubbornness. It seems forgotten that one of the "advances" made by Europeans in breaking away from the dogmatic authority of the one and "universal" Church was the use of local languages for written matter. Dante, for example, wrote in Italian rather than Latin. The discovery of printing led to translations from the Latin of the upper classes into the languages of the various groups throughout Europe. This "national" self-assertion was a threat to the dominance of the Catholic Church. Today, the contemporary United Nations organization recognizes the existence of diverse peoples and their right to "self-determination." The U.N. Charter forbids the elimination of diverse peoples through what is called "cultural genocide." It is not uncommon, however, despite the willing membership of European or "Western" groups in the U.N. to hear the impassioned plea (usually from a Westerner) for a "One World; One People" outlook.

All peoples have an "origin" story. Most of them accept that their story is valid only for each group and its circumstances and that other groups will have their own stories. In the Christian version of a Hebrew myth, "God" gives to his people the whole of the world; he also gives them the commandment to dominate and subdue this world. Christianity and its subsequent Euro-Christian descendants take the commandment seriously. There is not a section of the planet that has, to date, not heard the message of the one "right" and "true" god. The story of the Tower of Babel can be used to "prove" that originally all people were "one world; one people": The god punishes his people with a diversity of languages to prevent their collusion in plotting to make their way to heaven. It is in this sense that one can speak of Post-Christian Europeans as thinking that all people unlike themselves are merely perversions of Euro-Christian secular man. The original goal of Christianity was to convert the world of non-Christians from their incorrect beliefs to the "one true

way.” The conversion today has taken on a new slant: non-Euro-Christians are encouraged to move from an “undeveloped” stage to a “developed” one—“development” being signaled through adoption of European lifestyles and economic patterns. The term ‘Christian’ is no longer relevant, though missionaries still ply their trade; the relevant term today is ‘modern’.

Under the euphemism of ‘modernity,’ contemporary Europeans (and New World descendants) choose to naively ignore the seemingly natural state of human beings, i.e., that humans are not solitary creatures but rather animals of the herd. The various bonding mechanisms of the herd are several—language, belief systems, historical experience, perhaps a bloodline, and most of all a sense of themselves as being members of a specific group in a specific place. A unique and specific identity is derived from that group and place.

One of the primary differences between Europeans and Native Americans consists of the recognition and acceptance, by the Native American, that human beings are group beings and that, as such beings, they occupy specific locations that are their “rightful homes.” The Native American view is not, however, simply an “instinct” of territoriality. It is commonly known that the Native American found the concept of holding ownership of parts of the Earth quite alien. They did not think of their homelands as something they *owned* but instead as something that they *belonged* to. They thought of themselves as being “created” for one specific part of the planet. In an extension of this view they also included in their belief systems the idea that other peoples, those unlike themselves, were also “created” for their own places. Each group was viewed as having a set of “truths” that pertained to their own unique circumstances and locales.

An awareness of belonging to a specific place carries with it numerous ramifications that have not been thoroughly explored. The idea of being a part of a bounded space becomes the ground upon which a very intimate knowledge and understanding of the homeland is acquired. The people’s goal is to adapt to the place that they see as, not only a home, but an extension of themselves as people. An awareness of the resources available within the bounded area becomes the means of survival. There is not an indigenous American group that did not develop rules for the use and management of those resources. The use and management of resources—rules for hunting, an awareness of proper planting and gathering seasons, an awareness of community in the sharing out of resource availability—is also accompanied by an awareness of how the numbers of the group affect the resources of the area. Most groups in Native America had strict rules pertaining to sexual relationships and most also had natural abortifacients. The need to control one’s population is necessary when the world one inhabits is seen as consisting of bounded space. The entirety of the world is not at their disposal; moving to another place in search of accessible resources is not an easy option—someone else occupies the other places.

There is a common view held of indigenous Americans as being in a state of “war”—each against all. This view, however, is drawn from the Hobbesian view of man in a natural state of competition in a world of scarcities. This is not the view of humankind held by the indigenous American. The world is not a world of scarcity but of fertility and abundance. Human beings are not viewed as competitive animals who consume an area and move on to another to continue the practice of “take and leave.” Each group recites the history of their group within a certain bounded area that has been “home” for hundreds of generations, or, as many say, “forever.”

They see themselves as having “emerged” into a specific area and as having a responsibility to that area—they are a “natural” part of the area.

The various “territorial wars” between groups can be ascribed to the coming of the European: as the Europeans displaced native groups the groups found themselves driven into territories of others who, in turn, displaced other groups. Enmity was not always the only solution—alliances were formed; or assimilation into the cultural mores of the other groups—both became possible solutions to untenable circumstances. The fact that “home” groups were sufficiently accommodating and understanding to the needs of newly appearing groups is borne out by the reception that Europeans received from indigenous groups when they first arrived. It was the Native American that showed them what to eat and how to harvest the foodstuffs which indigenous peoples had “engineered”—they also seem to have granted the newcomers places to which they might adapt themselves. The lack of cooperation and the idea of accumulation of lands which came to be exhibited by the European was an alien concept among the native groups. Given the incompatibility of world views between indigenous and European peoples, alienation between the two became inevitable.

How relevant is the view of bounded space for today’s world? If one looks at a map of the world and traces the expansion of European peoples and their descendants one sees a tremendous disruption of “natural boundaries.” The “Age of Discovery” ends with the populations of Europe in control of three entire continents—North and South America and Australia. There are serious inroads into other continents as well. No other population has equaled the movement of the Europeans. China, the world’s most populous nation managed to hold itself together as “the center of the universe” but only in the latter half of the 20th century did it manage to force a single language (Mandarin) upon a diversity of peoples within its boundaries. We are taught that the “swarm” of peoples is a simple matter of superiority in a sense of “might makes right.” We learn also that it is “natural” for a people to scour the planet in search of needed resources—so long, that is, as the people doing the scouring are ourselves. The inhabitants of the “developed” world, have a “right” to go where they please regardless of the desires of the inhabitants of other occupied areas. The entirety of the planet’s resources goes “naturally” to those with the desire and capacity to mine the surface and depths of the Earth. The actions toward others are justified under the guise of “bringing democracy” and “modernity” to the world’s peoples. We ignore the fact that once self-sufficient groups, any where from two-thirds to three quarters of the world’s people, now suffer from malnutrition and disruption due to the elimination of ancient means of adapting to specific areas.

The relevance of the Native American perspective of seeing humans as social groups (“herds”) rather than as isolated individual beings and as beings “made for” specific areas is as important today as it ever was. There has always been trade between peoples; on the North American continent the trade routes of native peoples can be traced through objects found in ancient sites: coral in the Southwestern United States; turquoise where none is native to the area; copper beads from the Great Lakes region are found in areas far from the waters; agricultural products, corn, beans, and squash are found throughout the region and none of them are “natural” products gathered from the Earth. No traces can be found of populations harnessed by others for the sake of producing “goods” for the needs of others. Surplus in one area becomes the tradestuff in others. North American peoples seem not to have been “contaminated” with the germ of thinking

themselves “owners” of the world. One of the highest values held by North American native groups is respect for the other *as other*, with all of the rights and privileges one holds for one’s own.

There is something lacking in a people who do not recognize boundaries: there is no intimacy developed between a people and their homeland, there is, instead, an obsession over ownership that is easily given up in the name of profit or a better deal elsewhere. There is no need to consider the effect of too many people in a specific area—no need to consider the “carrying capacity” of a particular land base. There is no need to consider the biological ties between a people and their land base—“natural” immunities to a place can be acquired through medical technology. The movement of individuals from one area to another is seen as “natural”—an idea that is prevalent in a people who all came from some place else.

Yet there is a sense of place in the hearts of immigrant “Americans,” though some would argue that it is less the place that holds their hearts than the ideals that they share, one of them being the ideal of unrestricted movement and occupation. When in the late 19th century the nation of Italy finally reached an accord of unification, one of its founders made the comment that “having now made Italy,” it was necessary to proceed to the next step of “making Italians.” There are more “native” Americans today than merely the indigenous peoples by virtue of having been born on the continent for many generations. We have yet to focus on “making Americans.” Here and there we hear the professed loyalty and attachment to a certain place and a slur against those who do not recognize this sense, we call them “carpetbaggers.” But, overall, the place that is called “America” is viewed largely as an “open space”—available to all. This idea was brought out in a rather strange manner: I worked for a program that was geared to helping youth avoid becoming gang members in a city. An important part of the program was teaching the youth the consequences of their actions on their own neighborhoods, teaching them that there was a responsibility that accompanied occupation of a place. Most of the youth were immigrants. They balked at the talk of responsibility to a place. “This is a *free* country,” one of them reminded me, “anyone can come here and do as they please.” One need only “pay taxes” and avoid breaking the laws. “That’s what everyone else did—they all came here from some place else to do what they wanted.” “It’s a *free* country.” Which sounded oddly enough like “free pizza.” Boundaries and borders were minor irrelevancies and, unlike in the nations of their origin, there were no responsibilities other than “paying taxes” and “not breaking the laws.” That, in their estimation, was the attitude of the other “Americans” who came here from throughout the world. These youths were simply the latest arrivals in a long exodus from over-populated and wasted lands—they had as much “right” to be here as anyone else. America as the world’s “commons”: *Free Pizza! Free Country!*

“We can go anywhere we like,” chimed one student. “Except,” said another, “for the Indians.” They all agreed—the Indians, as original inhabitants, had a particular claim to the land, “It was theirs.” “We can’t go to the places where they live.” Can I go to Vietnam, I asked? Or Mexico, or China? Places where they had come from? “Yeah, you can go there,” they agreed, “but not to *live* there.” Those places *belonged* to someone else.

The sacredness of their own “four directions” was inviolable. To be an “American” was to give up the sense of belonging and being *of a place*. Was their membership in a gang, specifically a gang defined by ethnicity, a substitute for being-of-a-place,” I asked? “Yeah, man,” they agreed, “we’re

brothers.” “*We have to take care of one another.*” How much more strongly could I have put it? To feel the sense of place, of a bounded and definite space, involves a sense of *relationship* with that place, of a very specific *responsibility* toward that place, as a unified whole—people and place together.

A couple of decades ago the idea of humans as “territorial” creatures was popularized through Robert Ardrey’s “territorial imperative.” The notion there, however, was a sense of territoriality driven by an acquisitive desire—humans were perceived as “naturally” wanting to expand their sense of “territory.” Whether that was the intent of Ardrey’s theory is lost in the bin if popular trends—the idea did, however, undergo the usual transformation of many new ideas. A new idea, at first, poses a challenge to the status quo; the challenge is diminished through assimilation of the new into the existing ideas. What began as a description that explained how or why humans defended particular territories became another justification for expansion into the territories of others. There is no sacredness accorded to one’s own space or place; one is not standing “in the center of the universe” looking out onto definite boundaries that define who and what one becomes. And if one grants no sacredness to one’s own space and place there is certainly no recognition of the sacredness of other peoples’ places. The “modern” perspective has no sense of bounded space, this view, like that of the potential gang members in an American city, is a perspective of a “free” planet. ‘Free’ for the taking. No responsibilities attached.

Like *free* pizza.

Toward a Cyclical Model of Indigenous History¹

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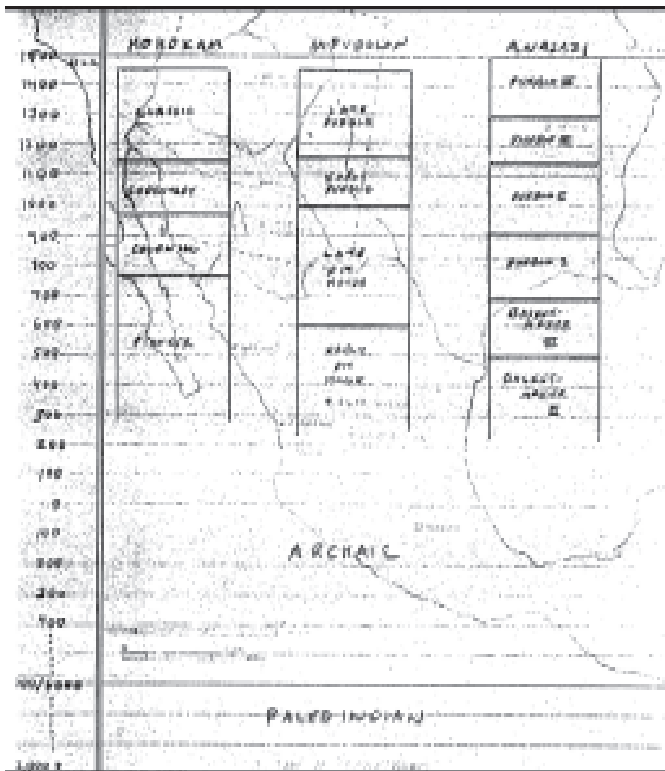
Introduction

In Euro-Western ideology, time is characterized as a linear function. This, in turn, has reinforced the concept that history is “progressive,” with events being superceded by later ones. What is implied in this concept is a notion that human history, and events as staged in history, are narrow in scope, singular and isolated. No where is the application of such principles more evident than in anthropological museum programming.

This brief paper will examine the attempts of a museum exhibit committee to deconstruct and apply a cyclical model of Southwestern history as applied to the portrayal of Native American artifacts. The committee consisted of archeologists, museum curators, and cultural specialists. Just as important, the group was equally represented by Native and non-Native members. Its task was to develop a museum program to be used for constructing the permanent exhibit of the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico.²

A Western Approach

The task began with the issuance of the traditional historic timelines as typifying the emergence of distinct cultural patterns among indigenous peoples of the geographic Southwest. [see inset 1] Under this scheme, distinct proto-Pueblo-Indian cultures did not emerge until 300 AD, principally due to the evolution of distinct technologies that are tied to the locations where artifacts were excavated. When examined under widely accepted anthropological paradigms, patterns that explain theories of cultural diffusion can be reconstructed.



Based on this scheme, three divergent proto-Pueblo Indian cultures are indicated for the periods 300AD and ending in the 16th century with Euro-Western-Spanish contact. They are the Hohokam, which is generally associated with the middle Arizona region, the Mongollon, which is associated with the Southeastern New Mexico, Southwestern Arizona and the Northern Chihuahuan and the Anasazi, which is located in the so-called 4-corners region of the United States. Prior to these distinctions, the cultural patterns become monolithic with Archaic (5000BC–300AD) and Paleo-Indian (12,000BC–5,000BC) periods. The latter conforms to the earliest archeological evidence of human habitation thus far found in the Southwest.

The limitations of such a schema to the indigenous worldview becomes immediately apparent. First and foremost, is the abrupt break in continuity that occurs with the advent of a new cultural classification for tribal groups that existed at the time of Spanish contact (c. 1540AD). The Anasazi, for example, are suddenly replaced by linguistic counterparts as are those of the multiple Pueblo Indian villages as denoted by their mutually intelligible Tewa, Towa and Tiwa languages. Of course, this schema was subsequently informed by linguistic research with the benefit of living peoples who have retained their Pueblo culture. With that admission, physical artifacts took a secondary seat to language as the basis of classification with little or no attempts to link the contemporary post-contact tribes with those of the pre-contact era.

Secondly, the ancestral lineage of the pre-contact groups became inextricably fixed. This is particularly the case with the Mogollon classification that has no postcolonial cultural counterpart. To put it simply, their communities simply vanished shortly around Spanish contact and are now considered to be extinct. This is in spite of the fact that these peoples were likely subjected to the Spanish *reducción* (reduction) and assimilated in a manner that radically transformed their lifeways away from self sufficiency and toward Spanish mission subjugation. In any event, the

Mogollon schema does not account for any cultural continuation from one epoch into the other.

Thirdly, there is no way to interrelate the influences of each group upon the other. Rather, they exist independent of one implying that little or no interrelations or cultural contact occurred among them. Instead, although each group branched out of one common trunk and therein shared a common origin, no consequent interrelations can be attributed except that of cultural diffusion within the group. This leads to the rather circumspect concept of cultural isolation.

And, finally, the rise and fall of material culture within each respective group cannot be adequately portrayed as a linear progression. In the instance of the Anasazi culture the succession of the Pueblo I to Pueblo IV periods belies the fact that there was both a rise and a decline in the material accomplishments of the region. 1200AD was considered the high point of Anasazi culture as exemplified by the settlements that emerged in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. After this century, what can only be described as a cataclysmic event—attributed to a sustained drought—resulted in the abandonment of many large towns in favor of smaller river-edge villages. In fact, this period of history did not represent progress, per se, but cultural decay. As such, the rise and fall of these cultural groups behaved more cyclically than linearly.

All of the above, therefore, clashed with indigenous concepts of origin and transformation. Since the goal of the consultancy process was to construct a decidedly indigenous point of interpretation, this Euro-Western paradigm of time and place became problematic. And whereas the Museum of Anthropology's collection of Southwestern artifacts—from which MIAC would draw its exhibits—was extensive, much of it remained hidden from public view. At the core of this predicament was the inability to display an anthropological collection except in a disassociated state. Artifacts become "objectified," devoid of any overarching worldview and, by default, represented by an oversimplified timeline. This was precisely what the exhibit planning committee began to wrestle with.

An Ideational Model

Migration and cyclical time are integral to understanding the Pueblo Indian worldview. Anthropologists have tended to characterize Pueblo society as comprised of a homogenous people who have organized complex interrelated groups such as moieties, societies and clans. Essentially, this interpretation puts "the cart before the horse." Rather, what they have failed to recognize is that clans existed long before any villages did. The fundamental organizing units at the village level are the clans, each one of which has its own unique history and identity. And it was the consequent migration and resettlement of clans over millennia that became the basic building blocks for creating a village. In actuality, a village is governed by theocratic rule but, physically, is comprised of interrelated matrilineal clanships that meshed over time and space.

After much deliberation, therefore, the exhibit planning committee struggled with finding a model that could help portray such a concept. It eventually resolved this by adapting the "Ideational Model" of Western civilization as developed by sociologist Pitirim Sorokin during the mid-twentieth century.³

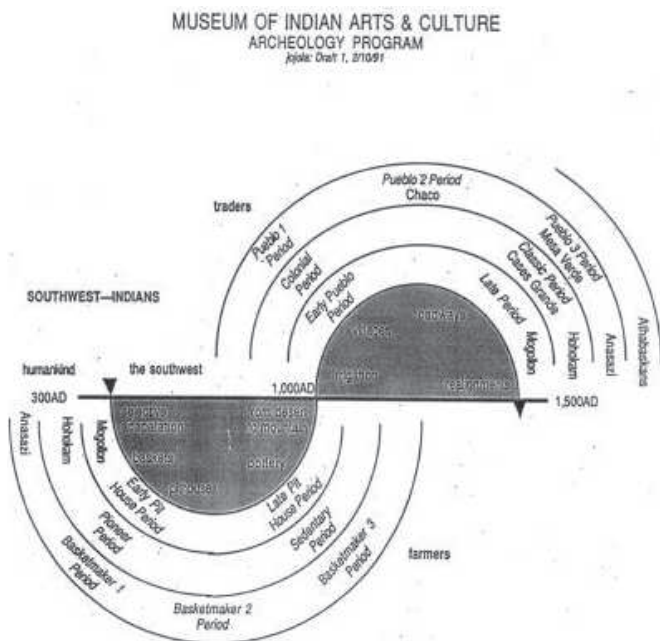
The ideational model essentially divides progressive events into two realms. A linear timeline continues to measure progress, but its departure from classic advancement is how correlating events are staged as either ideational (representing abstract symbolic principles and therein lying above the

timeline) or sensate (representing principles based on literal physical meanings and lying below the timeline).

The continuum of such events are mapped in a curvilinear line that resembles a mathematical sine function. The function indicates whether the events are in an ideational or sensate phase, while the positive or negative slope of the line indicates a rise in or decline of a concept within the civilization construct of a society. Most importantly, where the curve intersects with the timeline denotes a singular incident that serves as a defining moment in the history of a given society.

Furthermore, events lying below the timeline are considered to be latent within the stream of consciousness in a society's evolution, whereas those events above the timeline are manifested in a causal sense to the defining moment. Within this continuum, therefore, no human event exists of itself. Instead, a defining event in history can be attributed to the sum accumulation of those minor events that preceded it or in terms of how events afterwards continue to reflect its cause and meaning. Eventually, all such events wane in the collective consciousness of society and a decline explains the seemingly inevitable fall of civilizations over time.

The adapted Ideational Model for the MIAC exhibit is given below [see inset 2]. The timeline depicts the Southwestern social evolutionary period from 300AD to 1500AD and coincides with the earlier nomenclature given by the anthropological model. Unlike the latter, however, each curvilinear shape depicts the rise and fall of each respective culture and the corresponding defining events that helped to shape its identity. In particular, the shaded regions denote the physical events that figured significantly in the adaptive behavior of the cultures.



As such, 300AD became a defining moment exactly at the point when tribal groups began their transition from nomadic hunting to sedentary agriculture practices. A decline is portrayed basically because of climatic changes that made it necessary for humans to adapt to the retreat of migrating animal herds. This, in turn, led to selective adaptation as characterized by the riparian water basins that they settled upon. Hohokam culture became centered around the lower Gila river and its Salt River tributary.

Mogollon culture occupied the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau and its small tributary headwaters, while the Anasazi occupied the San Juan and Little Colorado tributaries

of the vast Colorado River basin as well as the Middle Rio Grande River basin.

The next defining moment in their evolution occurred precisely at a point in time (1000AD) when clans began consolidating themselves into villages. This was largely the result of advances in irrigation practices. As crops flourished, habitat densities increased and new building technologies necessitated the construction of multistoried centers. Advances in irrigation practices led to surpluses and eventually a region-wide interdependent trade economy surfaced. At its apex, the trade network extended into Meso-America by way of the Baja California coastal area and into the Great Plains. Advances would have doubtless continued except for a major drought that forced the abandonment of large settlements and forced the retreat of clans toward stable water sources. Hence the decline of Pueblo Indian civilization.

The third defining moment occurred in 1540 with the first entrada of Francisco de Coronado into the Southwest. The tremendous impact of this contact upon Pueblo Indian culture is well documented through subsequent Pueblo oral narratives and Spanish documents. Villages were routed and with the colonization of New Mexico in 1598 by Juan de Oñate, Pueblo Indian populations were decimated.

The cyclical model was similarly applied to the epochs preceding and following the above period. Exhibit floor plans were developed and the museum exhibit space was programmed in accordance to the historical patterns that were discerned by applying this type of cyclical timeframe. Of particular note were the circulation patterns designed for museum patrons that essentially modeled the river basins from which each culture evolved. Given these schemas, the exhibit programming committee had essentially concluded its task.

The consensus among the committee was that it had developed a representation that was consistent with an indigenous historical worldview. Although there were limitations to the application of this model—especially as it applied to the more complex contemporary legacy of the Southwest tribes—it nonetheless broke through the ideological limits imposed by the linear progression of a rigid Western timeline. In particular, it allowed the history of Pueblo societies to be modeled in a cyclical pattern that explained how settlements and distinctive identities evolved over time and space. It broke the artificial constructions of progressive linear time and cultural isolation by portraying the adaptive geographical context from which the cultures doubtless interacted and influenced their patterns of development.

Epilogue

Unfortunately, when the permanent exhibit was finally assembled, the original design was significantly compromised. The exhibit was curtailed due to shortfalls in fund raising and the original program space was reduced by a factor of two-thirds. The circulation patterns were retained in their form but the lack of volume no longer gives the patron a sense of time, space or place. In fact, fundamental indigenous concepts are subsumed by an overriding feeling of disorientation and disconnection. Efforts to convey concepts are hampered by a rambling, albeit factual, interpretive narrative. All in all, the exhibit could have been breakthrough. Instead its intent to model the Pueblo worldview is suspended somewhere between Euro-Western values and its Indigenous counterparts. It is effectively tangled in a historic web.

Endnotes

1. Theodore S. Jojola, Ph.D., is a Professor of Planning in the School of Architecture and Planning, University of New Mexico. He is a member of the Pueblo of Isleta where he resides with his wife. He

was Director of Native American Studies for 16 years and is currently working on community development concepts pertaining to Indigenous Planning.

2. The exhibit was entitled “Here, Now, and Always.” Work commenced in 1990.

3. Pitirim A. Sorokin (1889-1968) was a major figure in social thought. The Russian-born sociologist was author of a number of major treatises on social mobility and change. He became the founding Chairman of the Department of Sociology at Harvard and his conflicts with Talcott Parsons became one of the great ideological battles of the early 20th century.

Indigeneity, Self-Determination, and Sovereignty

Anne Waters, J.D., Ph.D.

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Introduction

1. A Need to Decolonize. Allegations exist that nation state, church, and corporate colonizers of earth’s resources have no inherent or created morally justified right to the takings of local resources from land based indigenous peoples. Yet legal and religious institutions purport to justify past colonial takings that were backed by a brute power force of militarized institutions. Who has a moral right to determine the outcome of global material, spiritual, and communal resources? Is the United Nations, now comprised of nations held over from an era of colonial theft an adequate place to bring challenges to colonial powers? Although it may be helpful to investigate historical grounds of colonial takings, to see what peoples might otherwise be sitting at that great table, it may also be helpful initially to analyze the meaning of a few terms being used by Indigenous Peoples of the Americas in our indigenous struggles. The purpose of this analysis then, is to dispel some of the key rhetorical terms of colonial rights discourse.

In what follows I investigate conceptual meanings of three terms: indigeneity; self-determination; and sovereignty. My context of discourse for relating these concepts to one another is American Indian Sovereignty issues. In the Americas each of these concepts has a multicultural history and tradition unique to specific cultural land based groups. Similarities of PanIndian historic experience and cultural meaning of our ontological and environmental being in the world, however, are enough to talk about a PanIndian or American Indigenous experience(s), concept(s), and value(s).

My purpose is to develop a theoretical account of sovereignty common to Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, that would ground principles of indigenous sustainability. One such principle of sustainability is self-determination of cultural creations and continuance. This paper constitutes a theory about grounding indigenous rights to self-determination. I argue that self determination, in the context of America’s historic indigenous sustainability cultures, requires a principle of valuing equal moral worth among individual human beings, and all our relations, and rejecting as moral principle that “might makes right.” This latter principle, that the strongest has a right to prevail, or of might makes right, has historically presented itself to indigenous peoples of the Americas in both our historic and contemporary experiences. It continues to operate covertly as landowners conjoin with corporate and governmental power bases to pursue personal economic interests to the exclusion of other humans and human interests.

What is needed is a thorough historical analysis of America’s Indigenous relations to an historic colonial government as it created (and continues to create) legislative statutes and supreme court interpretive decisions of those statutes, as it appears from the eyes of the colonized. This history needs to be explained in a context of an indigenous perspective of self-determination, and methods of indigenous reasoning employed in the struggle against the colonial powers of Europe. Because American indigenous notions of societal self-determination and individual self-determination are interdependent, it is important to look at the history of how American English law impacted (and impacts) this interdependency among indigenous nations, on both an individual and society level. Fallacious reasoning practices by the colonial government by way of legal decision has worked, and continues to work, to benefit colonial power, and against the rights and power to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples.

This paper is not intended as historical documentation, but rather as analysis of deeply held philosophical notions of about concepts of Indigeneity, Self-Determination, and Sovereignty in the meaning context of America’s Indigenous Peoples, with special attention given to a Pan Indian understanding of indigenous ideas, and the need to decolonize colonial relations with hegemonic powers.

2. Clarification of Terms. These concepts, *Indigeneity, Self-Determination, and Sovereignty*, bear meanings particular to indigenous experience in the Americas. *Indigeneity*, self-determination, and sovereignty are ideas people hold about ourselves, and about social, economic, religious, and legal communities. To be indigenous to a particular geographical area is to have origins in a particular place, as distinguished from other places.

Indigeneity is an attribute. A person has indigeneity by virtue of holding indigenous status. People inhere indigenous status to particular places of the earth. Indigenous people of the Americas share indigeneity with all others who find their place of origin to be on turtle island, that is, in the Americas, as geographical place distinguished from other places. Indigeneity also comprises an aspect of personal self-identity, and as such, carries special meaning about particular places. Identity of an indigenous person or communal indigeneity to a particular geographical location may historically be controversial. But indigeneity as self identity is a matter of personal self-determination and self affirmation in the context of a particular community. It is only because who can do the defining of indigenous persons may be a political issue, that there can be, by definition, degrees of, or limited political and legal definitions of indigeneity.

Self-determination is about having the ability to make decisions by, for, and about a particular person or community, without undue limitations on freedom. Just what constitutes an undue limitation or restriction is of philosophical, cultural, and legal interest. A person or group may employ a form of restricted self-determination based upon social, economic, religious, or legal rationale. Coming from a different geographical place, having different social, economic, religious, spiritual, legal, or ontological values, worth, or traditions, may cause some individuals or groups to exist peripherally to a hegemonic power axis that permits self-determination for only some individual nations.

The concept of self-determination can be intimately linked with indigeneity by understanding self-determination practices. Traditionally, in the Americas, many indigenous people held large amounts of self-determination, until a dominating outsider community exerted colonial power (passive or active)

over the group, thus vanishing the Peoples ability to protect communal self-determination. Colonial practices however, has not usurped individual indigenous self-determination as understood in many American Indian communities. Partly this did not happen because the duty to safeguard the culture and landbase for future generations was a duty held largely by individuals of the community, rather than the group as a political entity.

Sovereignty is about having political power to exercise community or individual self-determination. Notions of indigeneity and self-determination intimately relate to ideas about sovereignty. Sovereignities outside a sustainable community can invest colonial hegemonic powers in social, economic, religious, legal, political, land based, historical, or other framework structures of a community, thereby surrepticiously removing forms of sovereignty among a peoples. Sovereignty however, can also mean extending a respect to other persons and/or communities as equal to one's own, based upon a principle of equal self-respect. Sovereign nations may extend to others a respect equal to oneself or one's own community, based upon a principle of sameness or different, but nonetheless, equal. Even though something may be different about the other, equal treatment prevails, grounded in a notion of respect.

When sovereignty does *not* extend equal treatment to others, this unequal treatment ought to be justified by some principle of nonequity based upon a difference that matters morally with respect to the exercise of freedom. A requirement to treat others differently in the exercise of freedom might be morally justified by a prediction of great harm if one were to do so; or that equal treatment will eventually bring about a serious injustice. (Note here that equal treatment does not imply same treatment.)

In the context of colonialism, an important question about removal of sovereignty, is how one comes to hold a view that a particular differential treatment is justified, whether "paternalistic" or "colonial." Colonized individuals (and communities) can be convinced that a unequal treatment (same of different treatment) is justified. When this occurs, the colonized learn to see the world through the eyes of the colonizer. It is suggested that when an agent of removal (for example, in the context of American Indian, Australian, or South African history), is able to convince a colonized victim that unequal treatment is justified, the victim learns to see from the eyes of the "other." This process is termed "internal colonization", and means that the difference principle is integrated into an individual, and sometimes a communal consciousness. Internally colonized persons and communities can exercise only limited freedom, or self-determination.

Internal colonization differs from external colonization in that the mechanism of the former is to create a victim that willingly participates in subordinating itself to the other. External colonization generally means an appropriation of material and/or economic resources. Internal colonization is seen by many to be more vindictive than external colonization, because internally colonized people cannot imagine fighting for full sovereignty. The first step toward decolonization (self-determination, or sovereignty) is to imagine freedom. Only upon imagining freedom can one begin to believe one can be free, and hence a community can be free.

In a society of equal respect for self and others, individual sovereignty (over one's own affairs and and equal respect for all) can mirror community sovereignty over affairs of the community, as that community engages in relations with individuals and other communities. For just as individual sovereignty can be manifested in actions of self-determination,

out of respect for individual autonomy, so also communal sovereignty can be manifested in actions of communal self-determination, out of respect for community autonomy. When individual self-determination is not exercised by individuals in community, lack of personal freedom diminishes the entire community, by making the sovereignty of the state greater than that of the individuals. Hence individual sovereignty, exercised on behalf of the individual and community, makes a communal sovereignty strong.

Familiarity with decision making processes in a particular community can permit insight into values that operate within that particular community. In a society entertaining high degrees of personal and communal self-determination, individual and communal self-determination may be grounded in, among other things, a value of respect for human decision making processes in relation to all life, whether similar or different from human life. This appears to be the case for at least many indigenous communities in the Americas, as seen in indigenous understandings of metaphysical and ontological relations with all living beings. Most especially this respect for all living beings is played out in environmental politics with the struggles to protect landbases and life on those landbases, including the waters. Making a decision to resurrect or continue indigenous practices that respect nature, in a struggle against economic corporate and governmental intrusions that fail to respect nature, is to make individual and communal decisions about values worth holding.

A community that views itself as a sovereign entity, and that does not permit its members to exercise high degrees of self-determination, might be based on a fundamental belief in an inequality between the sovereign entity and individual members of that entity regarding decision making practices. This is frequently the situation in economic theft of natural resources.

The U.S.A. government and corporations operating in the Americas has a long history of disregarding indigenous rights when economic gain is at stake. In the Americas, mobilized institutional military powers sustain a situation where some persons, and not others, acting on behalf of institutionalized entities, are permitted to exercise high degrees of autonomous personal decision making power. Those persons exercising higher degrees of decision making as backed by a militarized state, manifest practices of fundamental inequality among different groups, and unfairness with those who cannot exercise such degrees of autonomous decision making.

Extending an equal respect principle for self-determined decision making to all persons in a community, could manifest a communal valuing of, *ceteris paribus*, individual equality, regardless of, or because of, difference.

Either way, what may be essential to a community that permits equal autonomous decision making among individuals of that community (whether understanding difference as a factor or not), is the warranting of equal respect as manifested in self-determined decision making by individuals. A community not entertaining an equal respect principle among individuals of a community (perhaps manifesting a negative value respecting difference), would affirm unequal exercise of individual self-determined decision making. Affirming a justified unequal exercise of individual personal self-determination would manifest a devaluing of individual human experience over the valuing of sovereign self-determination, whether colonial or not.

Understanding how self-determination and sovereignty are related to principles of equality and respect, and how they both exhibit values of autonomous decision making by individuals and groups, can enable us to ascertain some

important features of hegemonic colonialism, with respect to self-determination, as practiced against indigenous peoples, and in the instant case, against American Indians. Understanding hegemonic relations is essential to recognizing hidden power structures that inform how beliefs about indigeneity, self-determination, and sovereignty reinforce one another. What follows is a further explication of how notions of indigeneity, self-determination, and sovereignty relate to one another.

A. Notions of Indigeneity

The meaning of the word *Indigeneity*, according to common usage, is to have origin in a particular geographical area or place—to be ontologically tied at least, to a landbase. What constitutes a contemporary geographical place, however, as laid out by legal borders and/or social territorial lines of nation states, is very different from what constitutes a traditional geographical place for sustainable communities, that is communities surviving through interdependence with a land base and other peoples. Thus the meaning of ‘indigenous’ as it relates to an area or place of origin, differs in connotative meaning for indigenous American Indians, than it does for nonindigenous people of the Americas.

Specifically, when particular indigenous areas/places of long term association by cultures indigenous to the area, come into question regarding a particular community, boundaries of nation states created by abstracting lines of demarcation onto a geographical spacemap, may not match the area or place as articulated by people indigenous to that area or place. Quite simply, articulations of areas and places by people indigenous to those areas and places are neither connotatively nor denotatively similar to those of one who has politically colonized the region. Among other reasons, indigenous places connote, for indigenous people, the sacred.

An example of connotative difference is what the phrase “Indian Country” means for different Indian and NonIndian groups. The phrase can denote a geographical region of “Indian Country,” which for American Indians, extends throughout the Americas. “Indian Country” sometimes denotes a particular geographical locale (e.g., North and South American continents), or large concentrations of indigenous populations (for example, in the Southwestern USA). Still, at other times it connotes a mind space-place occupied by an American Indian orientation—something like a shared ontology of being.

I know of no similar terms used by those nonindigenous to the Americas that have similar connotative meaning in relation to the American continents. The English countryside is of course, in England; the Sacred Mountains of the Himalayas are in Asia; the religious site of Jerusalem is in Israel; the Holy Church in Rome; the Great Pyramids in Egypt, etc. There are no sites sacred to these groups in the Americas. With nonindigenous groups in the Americas, the geographical denotation of homeland shifts, though the connotative meaning remains “the land of my people”. Newcomers to the Americas may admire the Grand Canyon, but it is not sacred to them; they may admire Niagara Falls, but it is not sacred to them; they may admire many mountains, but they will not be sacred to them; and so also even burial grounds will not be sacred in the same way as they are for indigenous people.

Hegemonic relations between the colonizers and the colonized pervade discussions about how to care for Americas land. In the Americas colonized indigenous people share the having of historical memories associated with our land. These memories include stories about sacred places, and the need to protect these places, as definitive aspects of who we are in the world. A person manifesting values of an indigenous

identity to the Americas will readily be accepted in Indian Country. Such acceptance can change however, depending upon whether an individual self-conceives as having ontological powers associated with being a member of a community with a history of being colonized, as distinct from powers associated with being a member of a community with a history of doing the colonizing.

The history of colonial America allows definitions of who is or who is not to be counted as indigenous or nonindigenous to the Americas, to be a political issue. Any contemporary academic assessment of this matter emerges from a framework of contemporary hegemonic power structures that continues to disadvantage particular individuals and groups of individuals identified (or not) and identifying (or not) as members of indigenous groups.

Are we caught then in an effort to connotatively, and hence denotatively identify indigenous people and peoples? Are we like philosophers mulling which came first, the chicken or the egg? In an effort to connotatively and hence denotatively identify indigenous people and peoples of the Americas, is it important to assess shared characteristics? If we cannot know with clarity certain identifiable characteristics about whom we speak, then how can we possibly talk about this difference making a political difference? I believe we can identify indigenous values, and that identifying these values may be a first step in articulating indigenous nations politics.

Only if we can clearly articulate what indigeneity is, can we say that the BIA either does or does not have it right. And getting it right is important politically! Some individuals and groups hold (as I do) that indigenous matters (including definitions of indigeneity), out of a respect for self-determination, can only be properly resolved by indigenous individuals and groups. Others claim however, that since indigenous people or groups can only be identified by first articulating abstract notions of what indigeneity is, and then applying those definitions, resolving matters of indigeneity must wait until we can agree on a definition of who counts as indigenous. Because colonial hegemonic relations would inform presumptions of abstract definitions, however, questions of indigenous politics may require pragmatic approaches to resolution. Whether one adopts the more practical method of identifying indigenous people and groups via a commonly held value system, or via an abstract definitional system, indigenous politics are on the international scene, and bring with them ontologies and values that deserve philosophical analyses.

Pragmatically speaking, there are important differences in land relations depending upon whether one is engaging with an indigenous ontology or not. And with ontologies, come values. Some lines of demarcation are going to have to be had, if only for pragmatic reasons, about what it means to engage in indigenous relations with land and all our landed relations. By using the word ‘land’ here, I now mean to refer to all living things in a space-place area of the earth, where all human sharing of metaphysical and ontological understanding and resources, inheres in landed relations as communally absorbed.

In order to draw cognitive lines of demarcation about what it means to indigenously relate with a landbase, we must be able to articulate what those relations amount to. Articulating a particular type of respect for all our relations will identify those who practice an indigenous ontological way of being in the world. I propose that indigenous being with the land (being of the land, or landed) is a way of being that survives interdependently with the land, in all its physical, spiritual, and sociological ways of being. Ways of being that indigenously

interacting with the land, can be distinguished from ways of being on and acting on the land. The former type, being with the land, understands what is important about itself, is knowing that intimacy and interdependence of all our relations with the land is as important (to human survival) as the air we breathe. This type being understands what is important about itself and the land to be a difference that justifies different treatment of humans with other beings perceived as living with the land, but that this difference does not justify an unfair, or unequal treatment of beings unlike ourselves.

As seen in the histories of confederacies in precolonial America, indigenous being is also political. Nonindigenous communities traditional political, colonial, and legal lines of geographical demarcations among nation states, countries, or even continents, that define where any particular place begins or ends, are merely historical abstract lines drawn (on a globe) and enforced by militarized nation states. To reflect upon currently established international (and national) global borders (lines) is to reflect upon a history of hegemonic and genocidal colonial self-determination exercised by historically ruthless monarchies of church and state against indigenous people/s. It is to reflect upon artificial separations of land use that bear no relation to sacred ontological place, nor the place of humans on the land.

When newcomers came to the Americas, indigenous peoples were seen as lacking any rights to self-determination. This was held to be so based upon hegemonic religious and political theories of manifest destiny they brought with them. King Ferdinand's speech to the Arawak upon arrival in Americas in 1492 clearly articulates the allegedly justified psychological, political, and physical powers of taking (see note at end of paper).

If we look at Americas' historical colonial backdrop, we see the results of practices exercised by the newcomers' hegemonic groups that reenacted and aggregated their hegemonic power relations in the Americas to create types of political divisions, and people (and hence ontological frameworks) that were permitted to exist upon American soil. What person or what value has counted as indigenous to a particular place or area has been, without exception, recorded according to European eyes gazing upon peoples that the Europeans had no ability to understand or know. An example is the textbook European denial of Asian and African presence in the Americas prior to European presence. For Europeans to admit nonEuropean presence in the Americas prior to European presence would be to acknowledge a superior naval force. Now, in the 21st century, the historical gaze of Europeans turns back upon newcomers to the shores, as indigenous now people share our stories and our historical worldview, that differs from the dominant culture's history. This sharing of indigenous worldview will hopefully bring about a respect for indigenous cultures and sovereignty in the Americas.

Because contemporary problems of colonization of people/s, resources, and landbases have come about as a result of unjustified colonization, a special accountability ought to exist from newcomers to the Americas, to ensure that there is a turn around of ideology in favor of more fair and equitable indigenous worldviews. The current historical global and political indigenous movements are being directed by people from traditionally disenfranchised indigenously oriented nations. This disenfranchisement by church and nation states, as well as the United Nations Assembly, bonds indigenous people/s in a common struggle to ascertain basic rights of self-determination. These struggles strive for an equal human dignity and respect in decision making, and embrace long-term political struggles that engage co-existence of particularly different ways and ontologies of being to exist in the world on

an equal footing. Many nonindigenous people are also engaging this global indigenous movement, so powerful is the morality and ontology of its being.

Because histories of colonization have disrupted indigenous people/s' self and communal sovereignty, a new global indigenous political movement emanates a message of returning to traditional local values regarding ontological, spiritual, economic, political, and cultural ways of being in and with all our relations. ['All our relations' here means all animate beings of the universe as understood by communally created ontologies, including animated ontologies of creative thought.] Moreover, industrialized nations that have lost base with their indigenous communities, are now being asked to investigate their cultural indigenous roots living as community members prior to the rise of the church/nation states. One of the problems with newcomers to the Americas, as suggested by Vine Deloria, Jr. (*God Is Red*), is that they have lost their sense of place, their sense of being rooted in a communal space, where all aspects of that geographical area are interwoven with personal and communal identity.

The global political indigenous movement is a human rights movement because the issues of the movement arise from what is perceived by many to be unfair discriminatory applications of racist colonial doctrine. As a simple example, discriminatory colonial practices demand unequal value placed on religious belief. Indigenous people have been and continue to be denied the ability to practice our cultural beliefs. A government backed by a militarized prison holds brute power over anyone attempting to change this situation. One can only wonder what fear of native spirituality rests in the hearts of those who would deny spiritual practices to others.

Given the long history of ineffectual law enforcement against European settlers, when compared to the use of the law system to break down indigenous being, it is inviting to think that it is easier for a European American to engage in serial murder in this country, than it is for American Indians to practice traditional spiritual religions. For when colonizing actions encourage religious practices of the colonizing culture, while at the same time deny the colonized a right to practice their own religion, an insidious arrogance manifests itself on our continent. These types of religious inequities operate as breeding grounds for horrendous racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and other oppressive behavior of the colonial culture against the colonized. Yet for indigenous people/s, everything must eventually turn its tide, such that the laws that enable commodity traders to try to leech the spirit of America's natural resources may in time be undone.

In the meantime however, genocidal and ecocidal practices of government supported corporations engage in the commodification of all valued natural resources, including indigenous people. New global commodity classes continue to enforce and create discriminatory institutions of social, economic, legal, political, and spiritual global injustices among nation states and fourth world people/s. Because these unfair discriminatory practices operate as breeding ground for racist and ethnocentric genocide and ecocide of the world's resources, including all her people, it is in response to this fear of destruction, that indigenous nations are joining forces and operating globally against these despicable and intolerable commodity practices.

The use of the word 'racism' here is especially appropriate because the actions involve using theories of alleged race differences among humans, and using species difference against nonhuman beings to justify inequalities. There seems to be a general failure in popular culture to see, much less recognize, the existence and reality of indigenous peoples

political struggles. Even when these struggles are recognized in print, they are not linked to an overall global indigenous movement. Moreover, the dominant global political powers, themselves products of vicious colonization, almost totally disregard indigenous political actions that address inequalities of colonial regimes. Such actions are generally reported as isolated incidents, having no bearing on dominant global economics.

In the Americas, 'indigenous', denotes many different ways of being among those whose origins are in and near the North and South American continents. Yet common to these ways of being is acceptance of human interdependence with all world being. Contrary to popular appropriations of native cultural images, there is nothing romantic about a way of being in the world that understands human interdependence with land and all our relations of the land. Rather, indigenous ways of being are based in sound scientific principles held to be true about the universe. As indigenous groups communicate with one another, and articulations about ontologies of belief and value systems that conserve natural resources are shared, it becomes obvious that sustainable ways of being on the earth may in fact be evaluatively superior to the consuming industrial ways of being that continue to deplete natural resources. Following in the footsteps of Vine Deloria, Jr., Annette M. Jaimes Guerrero and Ward Churchill, is the indigenous echo to that resounds against global colonial powers that usurp indigenous land sustainability: I am an indigenist!

B. Notions of Self-Determination

There are at least four indigenous notions regarding the meaning of the term *self-determination* (or free will) that are rooted in an indigenous metaphysics; they operate as metaphysical context to understanding indigenous notions of self-determination. Once these concepts are articulated, it will become more clear what self-determination is and is not in the history of colonial government imposed American Indian tribal activities.

An American indigenous metaphysic is a metaphysic of *change*, of nondiscreet boundaries, of nonbinary dualisms, and of *constant interdependencies*. (Robert Bunge, Lakota philosopher, suggests such a metaphysic in his work. See *American Indian Thought: A Philosophical Reader*, ed. A. Waters, Blackwell, 2002.)

Whereas European Western thought might distinguish between a mental and physical world, in indigenous thought there is no such distinction other than for pragmatic reasons: mind is not emplaced outside of or behind nature, but is nature exemplified. Consider the following characteristics of an indigenous metaphysic.

1. Changing Nature. Rather than staticized nonchanging gaps demarcated by discreet boundaries between physical reality and human mind (where human mind is determined by laws of nature), in indigenous thought human mind is part of an always changing nature, and hence is subject to all laws of nature, including those of self-creativity interacting interdependently with, and sometimes changing, the laws of nature.
2. Nondiscreet Boundaries. As subject to the principle of change, an indigenous conception of free will would view all nature, which encompasses material and ontological being as interdependent, nondiscreet, and continuous, to be constantly changing, and thus having nondiscreet boundaries.
3. Nonbinary Dualist. This conception of free will would view all nature as being of nature herself, and existing

interdependently with all of nature; it rejects any form of binary dualist metaphysics which would require discreet boundaries, in favor of nonbinary dualist metaphysics having a nondiscreet ontology; this metaphysic and ontology would reject notions of free will that could be inferred from a binary dualist metaphysic and ontology. Notions of a nondiscreet, nonbinary dualist metaphysical and ontological understanding of free will would be informed by and be interdependent with a free universe.

4. Finally, an indigenous metaphysic and ontology embeds an assumption that all of nature is always engaged in constituting and reconstituting relations of constant interdependent changes. This constancy of interdependency in the context of change, nondiscreet boundaries, and nonbinary dualism, creates an ontology that is always composed of combining new creations while at the same time, combining the old creations in the acts of self creation, that fill the otherwise empty gaps of meaning. Because of the constant creative blending, any ontological and metaphysical gaps and boundaries that might otherwise exist, are always interdependently in flux and change. This interdependence mirrors the interdependence of human beings with other beings of the universe.

A self-determined indigenous politics would hopefully be interdependent with an ontology of indigenous metaphysics; and an indigenous metaphysic would lead to an acceptance of self-determination that allows for free will, within the confines of an ontology of the laws of nature. Accepted laws of nature are such that it is believed that humans will operate according to these laws; this would include the ability to engage in creative aspects of human intention that may ultimately change the laws of nature, including laws of consciousness, as consciousness IS nature exemplified, and an ontology of consciousness IS an organization of nature as exemplified. In indigenous thought there is no creation from nothing, no *ex nihilo* creation, because everything always is, and is animate in its constant creative meaning brought about through thought, through consciousness. Thought is creation amplified, and coming into being, as thought creates the universe and all things in it; nothing can be which has not been first thought. (An example from southwestern indigenous culture would be thought woman/changing woman.)

A fundamental principle of indigenous ontology, in consonance with a nondiscreet nonbinary dualist metaphysical understanding, is that nothing comes from non-being, or rather, everything that is, including thought, already exists interdependently with phenomenal reality. Interaction among nondiscreet energies, not binary, though perhaps dualist, operate in tandem. To think is to have existence of something (ontology), which is being (relational); and because it (the being) is relational with the thinking, it is alive. This ontology explains a fundamental assumption of a nondiscreet nonbinary dualism: that everything that is in relation must be alive, i.e. animate. And, since all things are in relation, all things are animate. Hence a universe manifesting relations is a live universe.

This understanding of what is in the universe means that in order for indigenous nations to attain autonomy and self-determination, it must first be thought into the world among all its relations. Only then can self and political autonomy and self-determination interact with the phenomenal world. The thinking being of self-determination for indigenous peoples must first be thought into the world.

In this context of thought, an indigenous, though still colonized metaphysics and ontology, could hold only a limited notion of communal self-determinism in the context of

colonialism. Self-determined decision making cannot occur in a communal sense outside the context of colonialism, unless it is first thought. Hence, to realize itself in the phenomenal world, a visionary would first have to think self-determination outside the colonized context of limited freedom.

Thinking thoughts come from the world itself, from the dream world, which is interdependent with the phenomenal world. Thinking, which is of the world, interacts with the world, and with world possibilities of coming into being, via continuous interdependent animated changes and interactions, among nondiscreet and nonbinary dualist notions. Once an idea about freedom is thought, only then can it come into being as being, and interact with phenomenal being as communal world reality.

Thought comes from the social milieu of ontological and metaphysical beliefs about the world that individuals are born into and hold. This milieu is a social world of thought that always creatively operates interdependently with the phenomenal world. Thinking self-determination then, is the first step to making it real; or, when it is thought, it becomes, and when it becomes, it is creatively thought into real being. This is the first step of a self-determined individual and communal freedom becoming manifested in human action. (Laura Cornelius Kellogg imagined self-sustaining indigenous communities that would reflect and be reflected by autonomous, yet interdependent, indigenous nations.)

Because we humans are of nature, we cannot be different from, nor stronger than, nature. Hence, all of our human thinking is both empowered and limited by our human abilities as humans to engage in creative thought as human nature creating itself, or, thinking ourselves into being. There is nothing that comes outside of nature to reveal to us the meaning of freedom, autonomy, or self-determination. Humans, as part of nature, cannot think into being ideas of autonomy and self-determination outside of our human thinking abilities. Yet once thought, such ideas can become shared, resulting in an imagined communal reality. The ability to exercise this imagined communal reality however, becomes a political issue, and subject to phenomenal hegemonic control by others—most especially individuals representing church and nation states.

An American indigenous theory of human action respects individual (communally inspired) human choice, because what makes human beings unique individuals is our ability to undertake unique intentional human actions of creative human thought. Human action is action we understand to be of nature, and hence interdependent with all things of the universe. Because humans are of nature, all human action is natural action. Yet thinking humans, being of nature, have the capacity to change nature, including human nature.

Thus we see that thinking thoughts about communal action that can be autonomously self-determined, or thought into being by a community, is also the first step toward bringing about an equality of autonomously self-determined communities or nations. Such self-determined creative thought actions, to exemplify freedom, must be accompanied by the ability to be manifested in the world of being, ontologically, metaphysically, and in visceral reality.

The notion of valuing individual exercise of choice, is consistent with a notion of valuing free will that respects autonomous self-determination as essential to the well being of communities and individuals. Hence, we may surmise that an individual exercise of self-determination, for indigenous people, is a health issue, and in the context of communal self-determination, is a communal health issue. (To exercise self-determination then, in the context of community, is to struggle

against community depression in favor of healthy communities).

I claim the ability to exercise self-determination to be a health issue because once thought into being by a human nature given at birth, to be manifested and retained in the phenomenal world, self-determination must also be activated to think into being a pragmatic exercise of its communal being in the world. However, if the communal thinking into being, of a particular pragmatic exercise of self-determination, first requires a visionary, then the purpose of the vision is to heal the community, so that we will be able, or have the capacity, to think in a self-determining way.

To do anything less is to relegate the notion of self-determination outside a community, and outside thinkers of a community. Only the sincere and devoted thinker, thinking in consonance with seeking genuine assistance from the universe (because the thinker understands interdependence with the universe, including interdependence with any quasi-universal laws of nature, and being that informs these laws), can envision communal self-determination. An ability to manifest such a self-determination into being becomes an active exercise of self-determined human activity. To think this way is to engage in self-determined, and communally inspired, practices of human creative thought.

C. Notions of Sovereignty

To clarify the meaning of the term *sovereignty*, we can look to the interdependence of individual and community sovereign relations. Consider the example of the interdependence of individual self-determination, and community self-determination. Self-determination can be thought about by considering the practice of an individual person making a decision to go along, or not, with, for example, tribal policy, or a declaration of war. Individual self-determination is interdependent with communal self-determination. If not enough individuals decide to support a communal decision to go to war, there cannot be a self-determined communal decision about the policy.

Yet still, it is only within the context of understanding the ontological and metaphysical importance of individual human choice, arising from a social milieu of value, that a political theory of self-determination for a community can make any sense. Hence, for indigenous thought, the metaphysics, and hence ontology of self-determination of individuals and communities are interdependent and causally related. As indicated above, it takes cooperative individual thought of many members of a community to crystalize an ontology of common thought, or in the instant case at hand, to institutionalize the policy of going to war. From this perspective, it is only among a majority of similar thinking individuals that a tribal decision making process can be brought to life, or, made a creative possibility in the world. Thus it requires many similarly oriented thinking individuals, to creatively think the possibility of a tribal consciousness of individual self-determination and decision making to come about in the world.

This system of ontological checks and balances in decision making regarding political activities, can ground a human political democracy in a metaphysic of self-determination and communal autonomy. These checks and balances can ground us in a sense of from whom and to whom we are accountable for creation and affect in the universe. The Anishinabe word, “Ayaanwayamizin,” frequently uttered as a type of “goodby” when one leaves a premises, loosely translates to “Beware, Tread Carefully.” The reason this is said is to always remember that all things are connected and interdependent, and so it is of individuals in community, that

one ought to beware that all actions have further consequences in the universe, and thus one ought to “tread carefully” even in one’s thinking about the universe, and in so doing respect autonomous creation and existence for all our relations. This principle of treading carefully can also be grasped as a moral principle of accountability to and for an awareness of how one is affected by, and affects all things in the universe.

Return now to our example of an individual contemplating the decision whether to follow a tribe or community into war. America’s indigenous communities frequently reserved the right to this decision making process to rest solely within an individual, rather than a group. If the tribe successfully brought about a personal accountability of each individual to contemplate these things in the best interest of both self and community, then the best of tribal thought and the best of tribal decision making would come about, as a result of each individual member participating in the decision making process. Checks and balances of individual and communal action could be had, along with a unique role of participation for each individual tribal member. In this way, respecting the interdependencies of (1) individual personal autonomy in freedom of decision making affecting a community, and (2) communal survival to meet the needs of individuals, would manifest the tribe’s decision as grounded in its members.

This way of understanding how community decisions are made was radically different from anything known anywhere else in the world at the point of colonization of the Americas (see Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World* 1988). This way of understanding oneself as interdependent with, and in relation to, the community, as part of the community of decision making and decision makers, was not borrowed from America’s indigenous cultures at the time of the drafting of the United States Constitution (though much else was!). And yet, in this notion rests the perfection of balancing individual and community accountability, and the theory of preserving individually confederated tribes. For what was applicable to the individual, would also be applicable to each tribe, and what applied to each tribe, would be applicable to the confederacy, creating a moral consciousness toward unified decision making.

If a tribal member could persuade another or many that it would not be in the best interests of one, and perhaps many, to go to war, then it might be accepted as not being in the best interest of the group to go to war. If a person had such persuasive tendencies, that person might be seen as a visionary. As a tribal visionary they would have an obligation to the telling, and would become a leader and effectuator of tribal decision making. In this way leaders would not be chosen by the people, but would rise to a leadership occasion on behalf of the people and all of our relations.

An example of this type of visionary in American Indian history can be understood in a careful reading of the oratory of Tecumseh in the late 18th century, as he tried to create a new confederacy that would stand against the recently created confederacy of American states. Another example of this balancing of visions among communal leaders can be seen in Pushmataha’s response to Tecumseh when he says that it is not in his tribe’s best interest to break promises to this new American confederacy, for he had only recently gone into treaty relations with them. Pushmataha wanted to give the new American Confederacy an opportunity to show a new good will. However, Pushmataha’s vision had not experienced the devastation Tecumseh had of the Great Lakes Tribes, when they became divided among themselves in the French and

English wars that engaged the Plains and Northern Woodlands tribes. Nor had he experienced the strenth of the successes of Confederacy, such as used by the English against the French. Pushmataha had not known the strength of American Indian Confederacies, for the Confederacy of the Five Nations had not been able to keep his people safe from the colonial powers. Pushmataha chose to join forces with the new government, the government of ammunition.

This example of how the individual fits with and is engaged in interdependent relations with communities shows us how an unlimited sense of freedom and autonomy to self-determination cannot be had among human beings. For we are, as products of our communities; and as thinkers we are projects of our community of thinkers. That is why the role of visionaries is so important to American Indian traditions.

The visionary embraces the best of creative activity in human thought that exists in a tribal group. The visionary exemplifies freedom of tribal thought, and its interdependence, as enabled by a community of human thought, that exists interdependently within all of creation. Indeed, the visionary is led to solitude, to the being of the outdoors, of nature, in seeking a vision. The visionary, among nature, is led to contemplate examples of nature that manifest organized activity, and apply these organizing principles to human activity.

American Indian visionaries manifest tribal values and insight, and are the leaders of, and healers for, political change. Visionaries hold no special status, for they must remain among people as equals to maintain balance. Yet without such visionaries we cannot think our being, as self-determining nations, into being in the world. And this is what colonial governments understand clearly: visionaries play a central role in organized community activity. Witness the killing of people like John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Wowovka, Geronimo, and so many more American Indian visionaries during the rise of colonial power. For when visionary activities threaten the commoditized organizations of economic capitalist structures that support the new global economy, it is visionaries who become targets of extermination. Indigenous people have learned this lesson well throughout the past 537 years of European colonization.

In this context, it is very difficult for American Indians to have public visionaries, or to share visions. Our experience at Wounded Knee, Sand Creek, and Bear Butte, etc., have shown this clearly. There appears to be no place for spiritually balanced decision making and moral accountability for self-determined existence for American Indians, so long as we are thought into being dependent nations, who must be governed, even on our own treated landbases, as inferior human beings.

If the American Indian indigenist movement is to succeed, we must think beyond our colonized borders of decision making. We must think ourselves into being as autonomous economic, social, political, spiritual, and cultural entities that enter into confederacies with other nation states, as interdependent, but never solely dependent, in our relations with them. Mutual self-respect and self-determination are the key principles of a sovereignty that is enduring, and that can last for so long as the grass grows and our children eat. This is the promise of an American Indian sovereignty, and this is the promise of American Indians to our continued struggles against the colonization we have encountered.

If the United States of America had known more about the metaphysics of the Confederated Native Nations, they might not have been so quick to disregard our political being in the world as inferior to theirs. But New nations will arise within the global indigenist movement, and with these nations will come autonomy and self-determination. They will teach

those who have colonized the logic of cooperation and interdependence. Hopefully indigenous people of the world, everyone, will come with a sense of balance and accountability with and to the well-being of the Confederated, or United, nations. But if not, we will still come, and we will be self-determined.

D. Conclusion

In summary, having clarified the ontology and metaphysic of self-determination in the context of indigenous sovereignty, this conclusion considers what it might minimally mean to exercise self-determination, for example, in the context of the recent challenge in South Dakota to tribal sovereignty, as against the sovereignty of the state and sovereignty of the federal government, to determine use of tribal lands. In this case, for environmental reasons, a real estate holder sells his land (which the government wants to take) to the tribe for minimal monetary value, in a show of solidarity with the tribal decision to protect the lands against governmental intrusion.

If we were to sit in a court of International jurisdiction, which included representation by all indigenous nations of the world, to make decisions about tribal sovereignty, four important questions would need a genuine response: (1) was the tribal decision autonomous and self-determined, or did it have contours of a decision made under the stress of colonial attack, where decision making was being limited by colonizers?; (2) was the decision made in a context of meaning as appropriate to the tribal experience and needs of individuals and members of the tribal community?; (3) has jurisdiction of the matter, to decide the instant case, been in consonance with decolonization measures of colonized peoples, as being subject to a colonial state court, a colonial nation court, or a global united nations indigenous court?; and (4) has the tribal action arisen from a “will of people” that is recognized to be in the best interests of the tribes collectively and individually?

1. Autonomy and Self Determination. We have already seen how the principle of autonomous self-determination operates interdependently among individuals and their community, and among several communities in a united confederacy. In the instant case, the tribes are united not only with one another, in a confederacy of unity, but are also united with decisions made by those standing outside of the tribes, to support the tribal decisions.

One of the biggest fears of a nation may be the dissolution of fealty to that nation; in the instant case we appear to have the situation of the real estate holder who sells his land which the government wants to take, to the tribe, in a show of solidarity with the tribal decision to protect the lands against governmental intrusion. I suggest the requirements of autonomy and self-determination are met by the united tribal decision.

2. Context of Meaning of Action or Community. It seems to me that minimally any notion of self-determination means the ability to exercise decision making in a context of understanding the meaning of the action. Adopting this notion of self-determination allows for the analysis of particular actions in search of this criteria. The meaning of this recent case involving the government taking of lands in South Dakota, is one of intrusion upon the landbase of the tribes in unity. This intrusion does not appear to be justified by any principle of sovereignty over indigenous peoples, even if it met, which it doesn't, a criteria of survival need for colonized entities self-survival.

The self-determination of the indigenous community (most directly affected player) is being disrespected, ignored, and ultimately disregarded in any future decision making processes alleging to be “fair” decision making processes of the land. The meaning of the proposed colonial act of taking reflects the historical militarization of land based takings. This intrusion by military force is not justified by any act on the part of the indigenous nations. The meaning of the need to exercise self-determination among the peoples whose homeland is being affected must be respected. Disrespect for the autonomy of the indigenous nations would affect individual and communal health of the nation, psychologically, socially, politically, and as representatives of a free and self-determined human species. Disrespect for these concerns of the indigenous communities undermines federal obligations to respect survival health needs of indigenous people/s.

3. Jurisdiction Respecting Decolonization. In a court of fairness, upholding principles of decolonization to intentionally undo the genocide and ecocide of indigenous peoples must be a political reality. Any protective status applied to the situation in the instant case would not support principles of self-determination and sovereignty for indigenous peoples. Global sovereignty for indigenous people/s must trump commodification decisions regarding indigenous based lands. This is in accord with United Nations sovereignty principles. *Ceteris paribus*, these principles must apply to indigenous nations as against corporate and alien government intrusions.

There is need to dissolve the contradictions inherent in the alleged protective status of indigenous peoples in the Americas, in favor of respecting indigenous nations rights to autonomous and self-determined decision making in accordance with traditional tribal principles of unity and confederacy. Dissolving these contradictions, and healing the interdependent relations between indigenous nations of the world and their colonial governments must trump the calling card that asks for special privileges to extract and benefit from the worlds global resources. The welfare of the indigenous nations must trump any concern with the welfare of commodifiers if self-determination principles are to be respected. So long as the alien forms of government, on previously indigenous land bases, are engaged in militarily upholding protective principles with respect to indigenous peoples, fair decisions about world resources cannot be had in any court of law. The protective status must dissolve, and with it, the paternalistic arguments of self serving commodified cultures. Fair jurisdiction would be an international court for indigenous peoples.

4. Will of People is in Community Self-Interest. Traditions of indigenous self-determination coincide with notions of how a will of the people is preserved. It is healthy for individuals to feel a part of a community that is thought to count as no less than, and is respected as no less than, other world communities. Oppressive colonial actions do not contribute to the health of indigenous people/s. The ability to freely determine community values, traditions, law, in essence, culture and survival, is necessary for autonomy and self-determination of a community. A community cannot exist without a landbase for physical, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and economic self-preservation, respect, and recognition of mutual autonomy with other nation states, and human beings.

The question remains then, what are we to make of the South Dakota decision with respect to efforts of decolonization and fairness of decision making among all nations?

REVIEWS

Challenging the Status Quo: A Review ***POWER AND PLACE: Indian Education in America***, by Vine Deloria, Jr. and Daniel R. Wildcat. Fulcrum Resources, 2001.

V. F. Cordova

Historically, Indian education in America has been less about education than about attempts to assimilate the Indian into the mainstream of American society. The oft quoted, “Kill the Indian in order to make the man,” has been the unspoken goal behind government attempts to *educate* the Indian. The methods included taking children away from their parents and homes; depriving them of the use of their native language as well as the companionship of anyone who spoke the same language; and, finally, subjecting them to religious indoctrination.

In *Power and Place*, Vine Deloria teams up with Daniel Wildcat, a faculty member at Haskell Indian Nations University, to offer a series of essays aimed at probing the essential differences between the world views of the Native American and his Euro-American educators. Both authors agree: the problem with the educational attempts stems from the existence of two distinct value systems and metaphysical descriptions of the universe. The fact that the Native American comes to the educational institutions with an intact and different metaphysical view is not a subject that is ever directly addressed by his would-be teachers.

A Native American student, child or adult, is taken as a blank slate waiting for the inscription of his mentors. He is viewed as having no organized methods of describing the world, no methodologies of learning, nothing, in other words, to offer to his mentors as a means of intellectual and cultural exchange. The Indian comes with a mish-mash of superstitions, folk tales, tribal loyalties, quaint customs—items all of minor curious interest but of no relevance to his embarkation into the educational journey. Deloria and Wildcat quickly put this view to rest.

Wildcat states, “we do not fit comfortably or conveniently within Western civilization;” “This is not,” he emphasizes, “a regret. It is an affirmation...” “A living testimony,” he says, “to the resiliency of American Indian cultures.” The Native American has been the victim of 500 years of coercion by his European conquerors. It is not enough that the land is taken from him, the very ideas that grant his life meaning are targets for eradication. All of this is granted justification as a means of bringing the Indian into the *modern* world. The fact that a very distinct world view has managed to survive all of the methods of coercion is actually a very remarkable achievement. The question rises, “How is it that the Native American has managed to preserve a world view—despite an increasing loss of the languages in which the conceptual notions were formed, despite the loss of the original homelands that made the concepts *true* and *real*?” This is a question that neither Deloria nor Wildcat specifically address—that such a view has managed to survive is taken for granted. Most importantly, that such a view is worth fostering is the point of their essays; they speak of “indigenizing” educational practices—not on the basis of maintaining an archaic metaphysical perspective out of some sort of sentimentality for the “old ways,” but on the basis that the perspective is more

realistic than what the West has to offer. Their argument is well informed, challenging, even exciting.

Deloria is well known for his critique of Western science, religion and methods of acquiring knowledge. Wildcat, a lesser known but welcome intellect, is an excellent partner for their venture in proclaiming the superiority of “Indian metaphysics” over Western concepts which, says Deloria, quoting Alfred North Whitehead, commit “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.”

The major difference between the metaphysical views of Native America and contemporary Euro-Americans lies in the experiential grounding of Native American understanding. One could call this view a form of *existentialism* if one were willing to grant to that philosophical form a strong emphasis on the empirical and take away the quantum of existential *angst* of life as meaningless, of humans as “bits of cosmic dust.” In contrast, the Western metaphysical view of the world comes across as, in Deloria’s words, “a grievous sin”: “a desire to absolutize what are but tenuous conclusions”—to make concrete what began from faulty premises.

And what are these *faulty premises*? According to Wildcat, and Deloria concurs, the West views the universe as a static place simply lying “out there” waiting passively for the disinterested, objective, but superior viewer to describe it. A Native American view is that the universe is dynamic and alive. There is no superior viewer—the Western perspective simply chooses to ignore the “conceptualizer” when formulating its logical imperatives. The authors lay the blame for this dual description of the universe and its viewers (“experiencers” would be more accurate in a Native American context) on *metaphysics*.

Metaphysics, Deloria defines as, “that set of first principles we must possess in order to make sense of the world in which we live.” He sets out two dimensions of great importance to the Native American world view: Power and Place. *Power*, he describes “as that living energy that inhabits and/or composes the universe;” “a spiritual power or life force” similar to “the energy described by quantum physics.” *Place* is not merely a spatial location, though it is that, it also involves a familiarity with the *person-alities* of objects, the entities of the natural world in a specific place; it is about “the relationship of things to each other.”

Power and Place are not abstractions derived from hypothetical premises but concepts derived from the experiences of human beings. Human beings *exist*; the universe, in its entirety, *exists*. These dimensions of human understanding offer, according to Deloria, “a greater understanding of reality” than a Western metaphysical stance which “fixes upon a few basic concepts which explain the experiential world.” These “few concepts” of the West consist largely of a reductionist perspective which forces experience “into predetermined categories” in a search for “common denominators which can be covered by general terms.” All else, says Deloria, are tossed into the bin of “anomalies.” What is anomalous turns out to be anything having to do with human needs; emotions; relationships and dependencies upon “others” (in a much broadened sense of “community”); and moral sense. Humans, in a Western context, would be best “acting like machines”—predictable, perhaps, and easily manipulated. The “predetermined categories,” the “common denominators,” comprise the unquestionable truths of Western metaphysics. In a Native American context there is nothing “unquestionable”—the methodology consists of “suspended judgment”—everything, experience included, “is held to be subject to further acquisition of data” and that data must be coordinate with the relationships of the objects of the world.

Wildcat explores the difficulty of teaching Descartes to Native American students. The dualism which Descartes explores, so much taken for granted by the Western student, is merely divisive for the Native American student. How can one “imagine” that one has no body, that one is merely a *mind*—thought thinking itself—or as later construed, “the ghost in the machine?” Or that one is divorced from the relationship between human and world? The “mind/body” distinction, as well as the “fact/value” distinction is absurd in a Native American metaphysical view. The metaphysical doubt required for Descartes’ stance, and that of David Hume, require more imagination than experience—it goes contrary to the Native American experience of BEING HERE and BEING HERE IN THIS PLACE AT THIS TIME. Feeling and hearing and breathing and understanding and doubting and knowing are all of a piece in a Native American context. It is in this context that the concept of ‘person’ and ‘community’ expands beyond anything the West is willing to allow.

Humans are “of a place”—they become who they are and what they do based on the place they inhabit. Cultural diversity, a term so much bandied about of late, takes on a different role for the Native American. The West has grown accustomed to defining Europeans and their descendants as the acme of evolutionary and intellectual development—they find no fault in demanding that the rest of the world join in their developmental model. Other cultures exist as *errors*, or as Ortega y Gasset describes them, “nerveless arrows that have missed their mark.” Deloria and Wildcat contrast this view with the notion that Power and Place equals Personality. We *are*, not only *what* we are, but *where* we are: each cultural perspective is developed as an adaptation to a specific place. No monotheistic entity has given to each of the diverse peoples a mandate to “subdue and dominate” the entirety of the planet. The West, according to these authors, “unconsciously carries a considerable amount of baggage from its early roots in religious institutions.” Which brings us to an important point made by Deloria and Wildcat: People often ask Native Americans about their “religion”—the proper response put forth here is, “For whom? And, where?” Native American, as well as all other indigenous religious beliefs are, first of all, difficult to separate from the “rules for practical living” and, secondly, difficult to summarize because they are “place dependent”. The religious beliefs are “based on real ecosystems, real environments.” Native Americans, despite all of their diversity, do not come together to argue over whose “religion” is the “correct” one—they come together and discuss the uniqueness of their views—each of these diverse views is “true” for each of the discussants because each derives from a different environment, or, experiential circumstance.

The Metaphysics, unlike the religious beliefs of the individual tribes, is, however, a shared experience; except among Christianized Indians, there is little disagreement over the importance of Power and Place in the lives of Native Americans. Oddly enough, Deloria and Wildcat do not appeal to esoteric sayings of ancient intellects nor even to equally esoteric logical constructions as *proof* or *example* of what they say, they offer the findings of modern science to bolster their argument. The scientists are viewed as having finally “caught up” with Native American descriptions of the world. We truly are “emergent qualities” of a “self-organizing” *something* we call the “universe.” The fact that we consider this process due a certain amount of reverence is not even outside the realm of modern science: Einstein, when asked about whether he believed in God, stated that he believed in the God of Spinoza: Spinoza’s “God” was *Nature* writ large.

I am reminded here of a dream that an acquaintance recounted to me after having a discussion with me about my “religious beliefs”. She was on her way to her Episcopalian Church and saw my family coming to church but she did not see us at the service. When she left the church, however, she again spotted my family and we were coming out of the basement of the church. What, she wondered with good humor, were we doing in the *boiler room*? Probably, I responded, worshiping the *Generator*. She was stunned for a moment and then replied, “Oh, I get it now...it’s the *Process!*”

And it is the Process that entices our youth into a study of the sciences, into the educational process itself. The metaphysical implications of Western Science turn us off. I encountered a very talented native student in one university who had been sent by a company she worked for to get a degree so that she could more easily move up the promotional ladder. She was an expert as using computers and teaching other native employees how to work with them; she was a valuable employee. The educational system, however, proved her downfall. She sat at a table in the cafeteria and tried to explain to me what was going on: “I keep trying to put things together,” she said, and she brought together all of the items on the table, “And,” she continued, “they keep taking things apart” and she flung the items to separate corners of the table. She could not adapt to the Western method of “identifying parts” and “pieces” and “things” in the world. Deloria describes this as part of the educational system’s emphasis on “training professionals” rather than “shaping responsible and respectful persons.” Science is divorced from the curriculum developed by the “humanities” and the sciences do not speak to one another. The Indian student comes prepared with a methodology of holistic relationships as granting meaning to what one undertakes. He or she keeps “trying to put the pieces together”—how intelligent is it to divorce progress in technology from progress in social relationships or from our effect on those pieces that are left out of the laboratory?

It is in this latter sense that Deloria and Wildcat offer a challenge to the status quo in educational institutions: Knowledge, they claim, “arises from a place, an experience in the world,” and this is very “different from that derived from laboratory experiments and dissection.” There is also a moral dimension that is left out in the educational process: the emphasis on knowing the consequences of all of our actions toward “the world.” The authors quote Chief Seattle: “We are all related...whatever befalls the earth befalls man.”

It is difficult to do full service to the work that Deloria and Wildcat offer: they offer an intellectual challenge, a solution, and an optimistic venture into the educational process for Native American students. We are not wrong, they say, nor are we simply laboring under an archaic or superstitious view of the world. The Native American has something to offer to the world. Their delineation of Western and Native American metaphysical perspectives offers a ground which will help the student, perhaps even the educator, understand the different bases upon which the “mainstream” and the Indian speak to one another in the classroom, in the laboratory, in the workplace. Perhaps, at most, with full awareness of the place that the mainstream has reserved for itself as disseminator and guarantor of “real” knowledge, we might do as the Navajo student I met who saw a study of nuclear physics as an exercise in “Navajo theology”—we can take what the university has to offer on our own terms. The educational experience should be a means of acquiring new tools for our own methodology, our own metaphysical perspective, of knowing and understanding that Place we call “Home.”