

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Mary K. Smith-Nolan for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology  
presented on June 7, 1994.

Title: Imagining Them, Reimagining Ourselves: A Case Study of Cultural Appropriation  
and the Politics of Identity

Redacted for privacy

Abstract approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Joan Gross

Several popular cultural movements emphasizing indigenous spirituality have arisen in the United States and Europe within the past thirty years. Spiritual discourses attributed to Native Americans, among other groups, are borrowed by Euro-Americans in search of alternatives to dominant ideologies. In such a circumstance, Native Americans become part of a constructed and colonized homogenous category of indigenous people, considered by Euro-Americans as naturally close to the earth and essentially spiritual. The so-called New Age movement has, within it, several sub-movements, which are particularly noted for their emphasis on perceived Native American spiritualism. The Red Cedar Circle, made up primarily of white Americans, focuses on the *Si.si.wiss* Medicine of the Pacific Northwest Coast, and can be described as falling under the definitional heading of the New Age.

The suppression and transformation of the heterogeneous reality of indigenous societies by the imaginings of the Euro-American dominant, has many ethical implications, as does cultural appropriation in a situation of major power differentials. Native communities are becoming increasingly outspoken in their opposition to the practice of Indian, or pseudo-Indian, religions by non-Natives. Many consider such practices to be morally suspect. Both Native and non-Native social critics feel that New Age practitioners

involved in appropriated and popularized versions of indigenous religions, are interpreting and using aspects of traditionally subjugated cultures to meet their own needs. What may appear to be a harmless search for enlightenment by Europeans and Euro-Americans might have very real negative consequences for actual Native American lives.

This study is based on participant observation of the Corvallis, Oregon Red Cedar Circle, and interviews with its members from June of 1991 to April of 1994. Analysis of data from New Age literature was also conducted, as well as an historical overview of the 'Nobel Savage' myth in Western cultures. Interviews with members of the local Native American community were carried out for feedback on how a given population of Native Americans perceives the Euro-American practice of Native spirituality. The data supports the supposition that cultural borrowing, or appropriation, is both a cause of, and a reaction to, the instability of cultural identity in late twentieth-century America.

Imagining Them, Reimagining Ourselves:  
A Case Study of Cultural Appropriation  
and the Politics of Identity

by

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A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the  
degree of

Master of Arts

Completed June 7, 1994

Commencement June 1995

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Redacted for privacy

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any study of peoples' lives is a collaborative effort between the researcher and the researched. In order to explore the issues addressed in this thesis, I enlisted the aid of numerous people in the community of Corvallis, Oregon. The main focus group was the local chapter of the Red Cedar Circle, and I am greatly indebted to them for their help, patience, and fortitude in the face of my "anthropologizing" their practices. In addition to the information and insights of the women and men of the Circle, I was provided with further observations by various individuals within the greater Corvallis community, especially local artists. Naturally, all of those I worked with both closely and peripherally must remain anonymous in respect of their privacy. Names, when used, have therefore been changed.

In attempting to balance my discussion of what is considered by many a situation of cultural appropriation with serious ethical problems, I talked with several individuals in the Oregon State University Native American community. I am grateful for their willingness to talk with me in an open, forthright manner, and would like to acknowledge the vital role they played in formulating this thesis. Cassandra Manuelito-Kirkvliet of the Office of Indian Education and Donner Ellsworth of the Educational Opportunities Program were of great assistance to me, both in terms of contacting people to talk with and in giving me valuable feedback on the subject of my work.

My professors have also been extremely supportive and offered excellent guidance throughout the research process. I would especially like to thank Janet Lee of Women's Studies, Ronald Clark of Philosophy/Religious Studies, John Young, Court Smith, Dick Ross, and David McMurray in Anthropology, and Nancy Rosenberger and Joan Gross for their patience in co-chairing my committee. In addition, I am indebted to Bonnie Glass-Coffin of Utah State for her insights on the commercialization of traditional shamanism; Fred Pfeil of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut for his early

encouragement and interest in my research, and his suggestions for looking at 'authenticity' in a new way; Jamie Scott of York University for his insights on the New Age within the context of postmodern religion; and Mary Crain of the University of Barcelona, Spain for her enthusiastic support and helpful advise on how to deal with the gender issues involved in my research.

Very personal thanks are extended to Julie Ling and David Smith for their role in getting me into this situation. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my parents, Mary Lee and Sidney Nolan. Without their guidance and encouragement--welcomed or unwelcomed--seeing my way through my program and research, would have been extremely difficult.

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IMAGINING THEM, RE-IMAGINING OURSELVES: A CASE STUDY OF  
CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

CHAPTER ONE

'THE OTHER' IN THE NEW AGE: AN INTRODUCTION

We are now experiencing a surfacing (in a specifically 'American' incarnation) of the Great Subculture which goes back as far as the late Paleolithic (Snyder 1957:104).

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Fieldnotes: Friday, January 24, 1992 / Plum Cottage, Corvallis, Or.

*The living room of the modest house on Woodland Street is full of travel worn, but excited, laughing people. The only non-white here is a woman of mostly Seneca descent. I've never before seen most of the faces, although there are a few Corvallis area members, and a couple of the out-of-town faces I remember from the big Red Cedar Circle gathering in June of '91. Sitting in an overstuffed chair in one corner of the room is Marsha, a blond woman in her late 30's. She's talking to a young man from Seattle who is wearing a black scarf on his head and black liner around his eyes. She is telling him about her first cross-country trip from which she has recently returned:*

*You know, it was really amazing. I had such an enlightenment experience on this trip. You know shopping malls? Well, it was really amazing how, everywhere you go, they're all the same, you know? And, like, you can find the very same people in every mall, no matter where it is. And they're even working at the very same stores. And I went to all of these malls and one time, I suddenly saw that every mall was laid out in the form of a mandala. And I realized that all these mandalas were laid out in a connected way all over the country to make one great mandala. And not only are the same people at every mall, but you can even find your own double. I felt so wonderful when I realized this. It's such a beautiful thing, you know.*

This bit of conversation overheard in a crowded room speaks significantly to and about conditions in contemporary American society. For many of us, shopping malls represent the viscera of an excessively commodified and consumerized late capitalist society. Even so, the sociocultural conditions of which they are indicative play a role in the formation of our identities as late twentieth-century Americans. For some, the seemingly shallow identity this frame of reference indicates causes unbearable cognitive dissonance. Faced with the pervasive, omnipresent cultural phenomenon of rampant consumerism which she freely and pleasurably participates in, this woman has spiritualized a symbol of consumption attributing to it acceptable meanings. Perhaps having given up the idea of changing social structure, she has resorted to a change in her personal consciousness which allows for a reconceptualization of what shopping malls are all about. She has successfully grounded herself in a contextual construct within which she can comfortably live.

Marsha's framework for altering the context of shopping malls is based on her idea of Buddhism, probably connected to her concept of Asian culture in general. She's bringing a slightly different perspective to the Red Cedar Circle--a group primarily focused on Native American spirituality as the road to enlightenment and positive social change. But she fits in because, in one way or another, everyone in this group is looking to another culture for solutions to the dilemmas facing Western culture. The Other--the Exotic Other--of the Euro-dominant imagination is providing the key to re-identifying the self and formulating an alternative to the perceived evils of the West. Marsha and the rest of the group are involved in a deliberate attempt to reinvent their identities and their world view along the lines of something they feel is much better than that into which they were born.

Imagining and appropriating from the Other is not a new phenomenon and is certainly not restricted to Euro-dominant groups. Since the 1960s, however, there have been a great many popular cultural movements emphasizing the spirituality of Eastern

cultures, indigenous peoples, and the West's own pagan ancestors. In particular, the "New Age" as it has developed during the 1980's and early 1990's, has had several sub-movements that rely heavily on the perceived ideas of Native North Americans, Mayans, Asians, the Incas, Australian Aborigines, and others. For some, anything that seems different enough from Western cultural tropes can be seen as holding a truth to which we as Westerners do not have access.

The Red Cedar Circle is just one of many manifestations of the Native American Spiritualism branch of the New Age movement. One central issue which has informed much of my work with and analysis of this group is the Euro-American fascination with the spiritualities of colonialism's Exotic or Primitive Other. This is a story of people imagining themselves and imagining others; of people constructing texts--or definitions--of themselves as they construct texts of others. These imaginings and the resultant texts are directly linked, for the Other is always what we want it to be; our sense of the Other reflects and affects our sense of ourselves. As literary critic Mariana Torgovnick (1990) wrote:

Western thinking frequently substitutes versions of the primitive (other) for some of its deepest obsessions--and this becomes a major way in which the West constructs and uses the primitive for its own ends (18).

### Fieldsite and Research Community

Corvallis is, for many of its residents, a utopian space where alternative lifestyles enjoy a run-of-the-mill standing beside the usual American small town tropes. Situated in the Willamette Valley of Western Oregon, it is a college town with a population of roughly 47,000. Alternately described as a conservative "cow-town" because of the traditional image of Oregon State University as an agricultural, land grant institution, and as a haven for 60's leftovers, New Age seekers, and small-scale political activists on the

left, Corvallis has a peculiar standing in the imagination of its people. Living here for any length of time and becoming involved within the tight community of its social life, can lull one into envisioning an entire world that stretches no further than the city limits, apart from some scattered communities in the Coast Range to the west.

I moved here in January of 1990 after nine years of residence in West Germany, leaving as the Germans were first waking up to the realization of what was happening in their country. To go from what seemed to be the very thick of world events, to a small, quiet, self-contained, and self-absorbed community in America's West was disorienting. Perhaps due to the nature of reverse culture shock, I found myself particularly attuned to the nuances peculiar to Corvallis, and of the fads which were, on some level, sweeping the entire country. While I had been aware overseas of the popularity of the South Western motif in home decorating, fashion, and even food which enjoyed American consumer frenzy during the late eighties--thanks largely to a gift subscription to *Sunset* magazine's Southern California edition--I was struck by the level of passion for anything 'ethnic'. Everywhere I turned were quasi-primitivist prints with coyotes howling at the moon, geometric designs on clothing and furniture upholstery suggesting ambiguous indigenous origins, pottery and other craft forms with borrowed 'Native' motifs, and boutiques selling both cheap and astoundingly expensive clothing and 'folkart' manufactured in third-world countries. In fact, for several months, one could hardly avoid being clothed in pseudo-ethnic garb, whether shopping was done at one of the several local stores specializing in the look or at J.C. Penny's, much to the elitist chagrin of long-time connoisseurs of proclaimed authentic ethno-chic.

Via research among Corvallis' art community, I became increasingly aware of the spiritual attributes individuals assign to certain types of ethnic representations and consumer goods. It is not a matter of merely getting pleasure from 'primitive art', but viewing it as a source of spiritual access. One local owner of an ethnic goods shop explained:

People shop here because they want objects with meaning. Everything here is significant. To the people who make these things, they aren't just things; they're very profound objects with spiritual power. My customers are sick of the meaningless plastic crap that you get here (the US), and they're searching for something that's real (Fieldnotes 09/90).

As I looked around at the embroidered jewelry boxes from India, the ultra-stylish garments manufactured in Indonesia, yet with American labels, the painted wooden fish made in Mexico hanging from the ceiling, the ikat placemats the owner had picked up in Bali, brass incense holders, decorative chimes and gongs, "antique" African carvings, beads, bangles, earrings, and Birkenstock sandals from Germany, I wondered what she could possibly mean. Despite the rather extensive traveling she had done throughout third-world regions of the world on her buying trips, she seemed to be completely unaware of the lively manufacture of just such objects not for 'spiritual' use at home, but for the Western market; objects made for sale in shops just like hers throughout North America and Europe; objects made for the purpose of monetary acquisition; objects made for livelihood, not spiritual attunement or atonement.

It is very easy to ridicule this kind of misinterpretation of third-world objects of which Western popular culture is so often guilty. What is not as easy, but significantly more fascinating, is trying to untangle the threads of popular awe and understand what it may be saying about the structure of Western cultures. I saw a task before me, which would not be concerned with exposing the beliefs of this shopkeeper and others with similar sentiments for their supposed ludicrousness, but which would seriously question the reasons for these beliefs, the importance of them for understanding the way in which certain domains of American culture form an image of self.

Eventually I came into contact with the local chapter of the Red Cedar Circle. Through the practice of a Native American spirituality, the individuals involved in this group are coping with their own dissatisfaction with the "plastic crap" of Euro-American

culture. They are mostly white, mostly women, mostly from working and middle-class backgrounds. They, however, are not looking for the solution in the acquisition of 'things with meaning'--though material objects with indigenous connotations do play a role in their lives and practices. For the most part, however, the men and women of the Circle have immersed themselves deeper than that. Marsha may have found a way to accept shopping malls, but the general sentiment of the group--whether successfully practiced or merely preached--is to move away from such things altogether. Appropriating consumer goods is not enough. True enlightenment requires the appropriation of whole cultural milieus:

I think, actually, that capitalism is a corruption, or it's taking one aspect of white culture to an extreme, a deadly extreme. That's why this is not just an experiment. It's crucial. I see it as a crucial shift of consciousness. And that's why I'm in the Red Cedar Circle. I need a community of the Spirit, 'cause I know the Spirits are alive; they're real. I know that we must start doing healing work in the songs, help in the teachings, and acceptance of the notion that there is a Spirit world and that prayer makes a difference (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

### Research Parameters and Methods

Cultural appropriation and New Age Native American spiritualism are phenomena of broad scale and are difficult to approach without a specific and clearly defined population. The Red Cedar Circle provides a small, local, and manageable case study of a largely non-Native group involved in Native American spiritualism as an alternative religion. Because Circle members have had a number of interactions with the Native American community at Oregon State University, they provide an ideal opportunity for an anthropological study of inter-ethnic contact in the context of New Age appropriation. There is much debate within Native American communities as to the appropriateness of New Age cultural borrowings by whites. Although some Native

Americans are themselves involved in New Age interpretations and practices of Native American spirituality, others view it as cultural appropriation with serious ethical and political complications. These varied points of view must be seriously considered in any examination of the phenomenon. The OSU Native American Long House provides a well-defined, specific community involved with issues of concern in this study, and serves as a point of contrast to the Red Cedar Circle. I hope this research will be of use to both communities as they attempt to reach points of compromise and mutual understanding.

There are limits to how much generalization is possible from a small-scale case study. While this thesis may shed light on how given communities might react to similar inter-ethnic conditions, this study is specific to a localized situation. There are also limits to how many specific issues within each community can be discussed. The Red Cedar Circle displays a wide variety of possible points of significance and interest, only a small number of which can be covered within the scope of this study.

Included in this work are an historical analysis of orientalism, the myth of the Noble Savage, and Western colonial and post-colonial construction and use of the Exotic Other. A discussion of the New Age movement is necessary for understanding how the Red Cedar Circle fits into that larger domain. Certain comparisons are made with other groups and activities, as well. These include cultural revitalization movements, alternative religions as social movements, and gender issues within the context of women's struggle against oppression.

An ethnographic description of the Circle is presented largely through excerpts from my fieldnotes. This allows readers to view my own position as researcher/participant. It is important that the subjective, highly interpretive nature of such research be clearly manifested and acknowledged both for the sake of academic integrity, and out of respect for the private lives that make up the study's subject.

The sociopolitical climate in the local Native American community is extremely complex. I can only superficially touch on it within the context of local reactions to the New Age and the Red Cedar Circle as a concluding discussion on the ethics of appropriation.

I collected data on the Red Cedar Circle and other members of the Corvallis community using the ethnographic methods of participant observation of gatherings, workshops, and ritual activities, unstructured and semistructured interviews of individual participants, and reading of material generated by and for participants of the New Age movement<sup>1</sup>. Every Wednesday evening, the Corvallis Circle gathers in a converted garage at the home of one of the members. These meetings take on the character of group counseling or sharing sessions more than anything else, but with a ritualized structure and degree of formality. I attended many meetings over the course of two years, along with several major gatherings of Circles from other towns that were held in this area.

Interviews with individual practitioners yielded rich results. Each person was asked for basic background information on age, place of origin, occupation, education, religious background, and ethnic/cultural background. The main focus of these interviews was on individuals' feelings regarding the Circle, and their own interpretations of why they do what they do. The process of 'doing ethnography' hinged on an interpretive, working partnership between myself and the interviewee. Interviews were either major events lasting several hours over the course of many days, or a series of more informal chats over the course of my acquaintance with the person.

There is a great deal of literature generated for and by practitioners of Native American New Age activities. Several journals, books, and particular authors seem to figure prominently in the formation of New Age Native American spiritual belief systems. These have revealed significant information on the general climate of the phenomenon and aided me in clarifying concepts referred to by individuals in the Circle

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B for examples of events announcements.



and the greater community. Of particular importance are books and articles directly referred to by practitioners.

I took advantage of several opportunities for participant observation in the Native American community at OSU. Attending meetings of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) and the Native American Student Association (NASA) proved useful for introducing myself and the topic of my research. During the school year, a drum circle meets at the Long House once a week. Few Native Americans are actually involved in this activity, however, as the group is mostly made up of whites. Like the Red Cedar Circle, their presence has caused some controversy within the Native American community, and observation of their meetings revealed issues that also pertain to the Circle.

Several Native Americans who agreed to give individual interviews were videotaped for a program on Indian experiences at OSU for the Office of Indian Education. Although most of my questions for them were concerned with student activities, campus life, classroom environment, and issues concerning the Native American Long House, my project dealing with Native American spirituality as practiced by whites fit well within this larger project. Many issues of spiritual borrowing or appropriation are directly connected to issues concerning the Long House.

Prior to the videotaped interviews I met with interested participants individually. It was critically important that steps such as this be taken to make participants feel as comfortable as possible before actual taping, because the camera added an extra dimension of stress to the interview situation.

In the initial meetings with the Native American participants, they were given a copy of the interview protocol (see Appendix E) so they could have time to think about the issues to be discussed. This is not a normal procedure in conducting ethnographic research, but these were not normal circumstances. Since the goal of the interviews was a tidy video production, more preparation than usual was called for.

Throughout the text of this thesis, I have relied strongly on anecdotal fieldnotes and quotations, all of which can be interpreted in a number of different ways. The analysis I provide in any given circumstance should not be construed as a fixed interpretation, but rather one of several possibilities. Fieldnotes are presented in italicized print. Most of the following chapters will begin with an excerpt from notes taken during or right after Circle meetings, workshops, and gatherings. I also make an effort to break up my more formal, academic writing with additional fieldnote selections which relate to the topic of the chapter and subheading.

### My Other, Myself: the Researcher/Subject Relationship

This research has been a relationship in which the identities, positions, and power of the researcher and the researched were constantly negotiated back and forth. In academia, we tend to view ourselves as the objective outsiders: the experts who really know what's going on. One of the things I've learned through the course of my study, however, is that everyone is an expert, and the researcher is often easily put in a position of inferior status to her subjects due to her misinterpretations and lack of insider cultural knowledge. I have had some rather humbling experiences as a researcher who assumed she could pinpoint the theoretical heart of the matter at hand. Although my involvement in the power domain of academia puts me in a position of relative privilege when it comes to defining knowledge, this position is not a given in field situations.

I went through a definite evolution as a researcher of the Corvallis Red Cedar Circle, and as someone who has a relationship with the people involved. The topic is a very personal one for the subjects. It is complex, full of raw nerves, high emotions, and potentials for misunderstandings. I originally went into this study with an image of the people involved as aging flower children either unwilling, unable, or unready to grasp reality. This was an image coming from my own innate cynicism and to a large degree,

the influence of mainstream societal attitudes. While that image still exists for me, it has been transformed, or rather, new images have arisen in contrast to it, due to my personal interactions with the group.

My stance at the time of initiating this study was one of the distant outsider; the formal, objective academic who stands outside of the experience being analyzed. I intended to somehow maintain that observer's distance, and wished to forget about the 'participant' end of participant observation. This was not a stance that could be maintained. I thought I had made it clear to the group, or certain individuals in the group, that I was a student doing research, but it was not long before I was expected to fully participate in the necessary ritual conduct if I wished to continue attending meetings. Over time, it was evidently forgotten by the group why I was there, without my knowing that they had formulated their own image of me as a member, though a rather quiet, retiring, and perhaps marginal one.

Late in the summer of 1992, a crisis occurred which caused a major shift in positions, ultimately for the better, although it seemed at the time to be ruinous. I had not been attending meetings for several weeks when, in August I had the opportunity to take a class in shamanism and traditional medicine at OSU. Many of our class discussions turned toward an examination of the phenomenon of neo-shamanism and New Age appropriation. Excited by ideas that were coming to me, I called up a potential key informant of the Red Cedar Circle, and said I would like to get together with her to talk about some of these things. Her response was a long pause and a stricken sounding, "I thought you were a member." This is when I discovered that my image of myself in the group and their image of me were drastically at odds, and I was literally panicked. My informant's tone was quite hostile, but she did agree to possibly talking with me.

A few days later, I called her again to ask her if I could bring over something for her to read. Earlier in the year (1992) I had written a research proposal for my study of the Red Cedar Circle, and I decided that it would be an important gesture to share that

proposal with the group. She sounded significantly more welcoming this day, and told me to come on over.

It turns out that earlier on the day I had first called her, she had just arrived back from visiting friends and former in-laws on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. While there, an outcast from the community got a cover story as a "Native American Medicine Man" in *New Age Journal* (Wagenheim 1992). The Native Americans on the reservation with whom my informant was staying, were upset by this selling of a warped version of their traditions. They were worked up by New Age appropriation, and this hostility spilled into the old animosity they've felt toward anthropologists for quite some time. My informant, as a white woman, found herself identifying with her friends, but probably at the same time she realized her own precarious position as a possible New Ager due to her participation in the Red Cedar Circle. And no sooner does she get back, but an overly enthusiastic anthropology grad-student gets in her face about neo-shamanism. It is no wonder she reacted to me as she did, particularly since she had believed that I was a fully participating and true believing member of the Circle.

Fortunately, she was willing to examine her animosity towards me and my position as student, and agreed to look over the proposal. For the next several weeks, I stayed away from Circle out of fear and out of a sense that the members needed to sort out their feelings about me on their own. I kept in contact with my key informant, and sat down with her to go over my proposal. I don't think I have ever had a paper more closely critiqued--indeed thrashed. This was very hard for me to do, and extremely humbling, but it allowed to me take a great leap in establishing rapport, and in soliciting information on how the group members see themselves.

During the time I was keeping my distance, the group was keeping my proposal on their altar during Circle meetings, praying and singing to the spirits for guidance on what to do with it and what to do with me. Finally, after discussing the paper with my informant, I screwed up my courage to go back to a Circle meeting and get the verdict.

At that meeting I was given a song called "Neo-Native," which had been my term for them, and was told that they would accept me and my study as "an opportunity to explain themselves to the academic community," as one member put it. However, I must make it clear that they chose to see me as a member, which has the potential for putting me in some awkward positions, as I am certainly not a true believer. I sympathize with them, and in many ways I respect their intentions, but I do not see myself as one of them.

My role as the academic member has been an interesting one. A few members have approached me wanting to discuss my impressions as a supposed expert, making them seem more my colleagues at times than my informants. At other times I am the complete novice, who knows virtually nothing. My key informant speaks as a voice of authority on Native Americans and the Native way, because of the fact that she was once married to a Native American and lived for 12 years on a reservation. She and other members also have done quite a bit of independent research in the ethnographic record on Native cultures, which would make their understandings and perceptions of indigenous groups hard to argue with. However, here is an interesting interchange in which my key informant seems to be undermining her own self-constructed authority:

Diana: It was the women that were actually doing things. They didn't talk much; they just decided, 'well, we can't stand this, that has to go'. And it went, whatever it was, like a district chairman, or some intolerable situation. And, so I found that the women was where the strength was and the action was, and the real knowledge and the real wisdom.

Mary: So, it being a patriarchy was kind of a veil?

Diana: Yeah, yeah. But there are a lot of cultures where men have all the talking functions, the sacred functions and everything up there. But they don't actually hold things together. And, like....oh I don't know....I'd hate to venture into other cultures; you're in anthropology. You could do that.

Mary: (laughter) I mean, yeah; there are so many different ways of doing things.

The funny thing about this--and I did realize this at the time--is that she'd probably read more texts on 'traditional' indigenous cultures than I have, or possibly ever will. I am studying her culture--whites--and my particular concern is with the way Native cultures have been constructed and represented by Western societies.

Through the course of my fieldwork among the Red Cedar Circle, I re-negotiated myself continually; I went in as the authoritative, distant academician, but was not recognized as such by them. The crisis in the summer of 1992 transformed me into a humbled authority; an authority I felt I needed to share with them by handing over my proposal for their evaluation.

As they choose to view me as a member, I have found that I must act and talk appropriately, though it may not be strictly speaking in my nature to do so. I started saying things in Circle, but mostly about school or vague concerns over social issues, and avoided expressing truly personal feelings beyond, say, being worried over an upcoming mid-term.

It is the truly personal, however, that opens up doors in this kind of setting. At one meeting I finally opened up and "brought out" a very personal part of my life, sharing a concern over my family with them. Here is the real key to establishing trust, but one that I feared, perhaps because I fear 'going native'.

What I had to realize, though, is that telling them a concern I have over a family member and receiving their compassion was not going to turn me into a ritual obsessed neo-animist. Rather, it was a necessary step I needed to take to bridge gaps of trust; their trust of me, my trust of them, and even my trust of myself.

None the less, the reader should perceive notes of skepticism, cynicism, and even distance in the tone of many of my fieldnotes. While I opened myself up to the group a great deal over the course of my work with them, I see in hindsight that the notes were something of a refuge for me. Through them I could continue to maintain an outsider's posture and affirm to myself that I wasn't becoming one of them. As I look back on the

experience, I realize that in many respects, I was unwilling to relinquish the power associated with academic authority and the supposedly objective observer's remoteness. The fieldnotes are important gauges of my internal negotiations over my positional relationship with Circle members. They should be read not as pure statements of facts concerning events, but for my private reactions to my surroundings.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONSTRUCTIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS

Industrial society indeed appears to be finished. Many of us are, again, hunters and gatherers. Poets, musicians, nomadic engineers and scholars; fact-diggers, searchers and re-searchers scoring in rich foundation territory. Horse-traders in lore and magic...A few of us are literally hunters and gatherers, playfully studying the old techniques of acorn flour, seaweed-gathering, yucca-fiber, rabbit snaring and bow hunting (Snyder 1957:111).

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Fieldnotes: Saturday, June 1, 1991 / The Unitarian Church, Corvallis, Or.

*9:00 am-- There are perhaps 50-60 people gathered here: men, women, children. We're in a large congregation hall, seated on the floor in an oval. In the middle is a long, flower print table cloth with candles at each corner, flowers strewn about it, cedar boughs and twigs, a bowl of water, plates filled with smudge sticks, and I don't know what else. Some people have drums with them, all circular of varying diameters, and about three to four inches deep. One person has a cylindrical drum that looks vaguely African in origin. Most of these drums have designs drawn or painted on the face; there's one with a tree, one with a buffalo in a plains landscape, one with a bear of quasi-Zuni design, one with little bird-feet marks all over it. Johnny Moses seems to have the largest drum. It must be about two-feet in diameter.*

*Johnny begins by singing a chant and ringing a bell. Everyone joins in. He then instructs Sister Liz to "drum in the four directions." She gets up and repeatedly drums, first slowly, then faster--ta-ta-ta-ta, ta-ta-ta-ta-- facing east, north, west, then south. She's very solemn. Her eyes are closed.*

*Sister Liz is white. In fact, almost everyone here is white. I suspected this would be the case, as the Red Cedar Circle table at the OSU Spring Pow-Wow was presided over by three white women. There are a few Native American looking people here; two men, definitely, Johnny Moses being one of them. The ages represented range from*



*babies to some women who could be in their 60's or 70's. Most everyone looks very 'crunchy': back-to-the-landers, alternative lifestylists, folks who made the 1960's alternative ideals their way of life. There are a few who could be your average middle-class Jane or Joe on the street, and a few that look positively affluent, judging by their chic pseudo-ethnic garb. One woman is wearing a dress that I saw in the Golden Crane which sells for over \$100.*

*Johnny is now explaining what we'll be doing the rest of the day: a song and talking Circle, lunch break, new member initiations, "teachings", another break. Someone will be having a "give-away" later this afternoon, then tonight we'll be having a "healing ceremony." I have no idea what any of this means. After laying out our day for us, Johnny puts his right hand to his heart, then lifts it to the sky and back to his heart as he sounds "ooooooWAAAOoooooo"--or something to that affect.*

*Now he starts drumming and singing a chant. Everyone with instruments--drums, bells, dew-claw rattles--joins in, and all chant along with him. After this is over, Johnny says that we are encouraged to think of our "brothers and sisters" while we sing. Another song, this one in English: "Help one another, heal one another...."*

### 'Authentic' Natives in the Western Imagination

...as free as Nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.  
(John Dryden, *Conquest of Granada*, 1672)

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Representations of Native Americans--if not all indigenous groups--are largely confined to the standards of the Western popular narrative of the Noble Savage (Clifford 1988, Clifton 1990b, Torgovnick 1990). This narrative has long been seen as a product of the Age of Enlightenment and closely associated with the eighteenth-century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Cultural analyst Gaile McGregor (1988) has pointed

out that the idea of noble savagery, in fact, greatly pre-dates the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries. Idealized primitivist themes can be found in the works of Shakespeare (*The Tempest*), the sixteenth-century Franconian poet Hans Sachs (*Lament of the Wild Men about the Unfaithful World*), and has antecedents going back at least as far as the Roman pastoralist poet Virgil (*The Eclogues* and *The Georgics*).

Any European and Euro-American representation of the Native, the primitive, the indigenous/exotic Other has a history which can be linked to these and many other precedents in Western literature and popular imagination. Whether denigrated or idealized, the Native story stands for something quintessentially Western. Though the narrative has altered over time to suit the needs, expectations, political ideologies, and self-image of the West, and varied according to audience at any particular moment in history, it stays within some basic parameters. What is considered 'authentically Native' has certain characteristics which have powerful social and political implications: without reference to the narrative, claims to Native authenticity are suspect, even if made by those of Native heritage (Clifford 1988). The model of a late twentieth-century version of the factitious Indian Story might go something like this:<sup>2</sup>

*Before Columbus, hundreds of separate nations lived in North America, walking at one with the Earth* (Martin 1992, McGaa 1990, Sun Bear 1992). *They were peoples with a profoundly deep spiritual base rooted in their Mother, the Earth. Although their cultures might have had some superficial distinctions, they all had an underlying and overarching commonality based on this primordial relationship with nature. Because of this commonality, they not only lived in peace and harmony with the Earth, but also with each other. And unhampered by 'civilization' as proscribed in the West, Native peoples were capable of true wisdom* (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* 1690).

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<sup>2</sup> This discussion is based primarily on Clifton (1990b), but has been tailored to incorporate a variety of sources reflecting very common sentiments in Western literature and popular thought.

*Knowing themselves to be of the Earth, they recognized the sacredness and interconnectedness of everything. Their primordialness was a kernel deep within them of the eternal oneness. Divisions between men and women, plants and animals were only of a superficial nature. Everything was fundamentally complementary and equal, though often manifested as opposing forces:*

*So, too, are other beings--animal beings, plant beings--inserted into this wheeling landscape of potentiality, where the 'I' knows how essential it is to become part of it--all the dimensions of categories of place. Thus do these people plug themselves into the powers of the place... (Martin 1992:2).*

*Within distinct nations, there was harmony between individuals and equal distribution of power. They were tolerant and respectful of one another, and the freedom to be who you were was a given. People had ultimate control over their own lives, bodies, sexuality, and power. Power was not hierarchical, and tribal decisions were reached by consensus. Reciprocity on a noncompetitive, open-heartedly sharing level was the norm: "The Native Way is profligate, it's prodigal, if you will, because it says 'spend time, give. Give'," (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).*

*But with the coming of the white man, the primordial Native ways came under attack, and much was lost, or went underground and lost coherence and cohesiveness. Europe introduced violence, hierarchies, patriarchy, destruction. The Indians were made mute and their ways dissipated.*

This model recognizes no inequalities, no hierarchies between and among Indian groups. Gender differences are largely erased or made superficial. 'Indian', 'Native', 'Tribal' become universal principles, rather than actual distinct cultural groups and individuals, and this very mytho-poetic narrative could be said to have done as much to mute or hide the Indian as any amount of literal violence (LaFarge 1973). In short, this

model represents not Native peoples, but a utopia of Western construction.<sup>3</sup> Whether we speak of it as being "a precapitalist utopia," a pleasurable world of erotic abandon, heathen and "mired in false beliefs," or essentially connected with the Earth as Mother, we are used to using it for our own purposes, having it mean whatever we want it to mean (Torgovnick 1990:8-9). It is in our power to grant it power which we can, in turn, reappropriate. In this sense, the primitive is more a reflection of ourselves than it is of any indigenous peoples:

The real secret of the primitive in this century has often been the same secret as always: the primitive can be--has been, will be(?)--whatever Euro-Americans want it to be. It tells us what we want it to tell us. We decide whether what we have heard is a golden confidence or a nasty bit of scandalmongering (Torgovnick 1990:9).

### A New Age for Old Ideas

We recognize ourselves as part of the universal unity--and the universal unity is our true self. Nothing is "foreign" to us any longer. We ourselves are everything. We are freed from the confines of our human bodies and feel that we are boundless. When we look at the universe, we are looking at ourselves (Haid 1992:36).

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Fieldnotes: 06/01/91 continued

9:45 am-- Johnny now "opens" the Circle for others to "bring in words, songs, prayers, and teachings important to them, from any other tradition." I fleetingly wonder what would happen if I started singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers.'

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<sup>3</sup> Much of this is similar to the romanticized and exoticized image of 'deep' Eastern spirituality described by Edward Said (1978). In fact, the 'Noble Savage' and the spiritual Oriental meld into each other in the New Age, forming what could be described as a transcendental Native American spirituality. See Diem and Lewis (1992) for a good description of an imagined East--particularly Indian--used by Westerners to contemplate their own defective navels in the New Age. In the case of many New Ageisms, including at times the Red Cedar Circle, it is difficult to say which utopian image is being used at any particular time due to the high degree of syncretism between images of indigenoussness and images of Orientalism.

*One older woman begins to drum and chant, then the group joins in. Afterwards, she explains that this is the "Going Ahead" song. She does the thing with her hand from heart to sky to heart. There are a few people who don't do this, myself included. I must not be the only new-comer. Johnny explains that gesturing like this sends the song, words, prayer, whatever up to the spirits. They give it their blessings, and then we bring it back down to ourselves. He gestures, "ooooooooWAAAOoooooooo."*

*Another woman sings:*

*Circle round for freedom,*

*Circle round for peace.*

*For all of us in prison,*

*Circle for release.*

*Circle round the planet,*

*Circle round each soul.*

*For the future of our children,*

*Keep the circle whole.*

*"ooooooooWAAAOoooooooo," everybody says. I do the hand gesture, but I'm not quite ready to make the sound.*

*A very morose looking man with dew-claw rattle begins a chant, then is joined by the group. After we finish, he explains that this is "a healing song for the uncried tears." He's quite hang-dog himself, and looks as if he has more than his share of "uncried tears" stored up inside. He seems weak and hunched over, like he might be suffering from a back injury. He has cotton stuffed in his ears. He looks to be in his mid-thirties.*

*Everyone is explaining the meaning of these songs after we finish singing. Does everyone already know them? How do you know what to think of as the music is sung? Or does it matter? Are the chants believed to have a power of their own, beyond thought?*

*Another song is initiated by an older woman. This one is for the "Medicine Woman's Basket Society". "ooooooWAAAOOoooooo."*

*Now a woman is explaining a song before she starts to sing. She says that this is for the "healing we give and receive. It's in the Si.si.wiss language; we may not know what we're saying, but we're sincere in our hearts." She says that this is the "Cedar Tree Song" and tells us to all join in. We don't need to know or understand the words, she says; "We just sing to release."*

*What perfect timing.....*

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The amorphous American experience of the New Age has provided an addendum to the Indian Story which is peculiar to the general character of the movement. It goes something like this:

*When the European white men came to this country, they were called 'wachita' by the Sioux....Crazy People. People who are disoriented, who don't know where they belong....And they were just restless spirits who would wander around and destroy everything in their path. Not necessarily because they were mean tempered people, but because they were lost. They had suffered a spiritual disconnection, and so become lost (Artist Interview: Paul 02/91).*

*Now, however, the time has come to bring out the Old Teachings. The time has come for the Native Ways to reemerge and inform the lives of everyone in order to heal human relationships with each other, all other beings, and the Earth. The emergent Native will "softly and gently teach the whites how to achieve connection with the Earth, how to find their Mother, which was lost to them so long ago," (Fieldnotes, Mar. 1992). Thus, Utopia is not just achievable; it is an inevitable millenarian event.*

The New Age has been evolving for several decades, with antecedents going back to the nineteenth-century New Thought, Theosophy, and other meta-physically based spiritual movements (Alexander 1992). References to an approaching new way of life

suggestive of the imagined Native way can be found in the 1950's Beat Generation writings of Gary Snyder, in the ideology of the 'hippie' movement of the 1960's, in the back-to-the-land phenomenon which reached an apogee in the 1970's (and of which Snyder was and still is a part), and now in this personal/cultural enlightenment phenomenon known as the New Age.

It is helpful to think of the New Age as loosely divided into two realms. One relies heavily on science--or quasi-science--for legitimation, the other on ancient 'ways of the Earth' rooted in 'authentic Native cultures'. Both, whether manifested in a sacralized quantum physics or "parashamanism," are united by a spiritual ethos of holism and interconnectedness between all things, from living organisms to the universe.<sup>4</sup>

The works of Morris Berman (1988, 1989) can be used to give a basic description of the character of New Age beliefs systems. In Reenchantment of the World (1988), he puts forward the worldly disenchantment intrinsic to Newtonian concepts of rational science as being antecedent to contemporary conditions of societal disharmony in the West between ourselves and nature. A scientific worldview which divorces humanity from its surroundings in the name of objectivity is necessarily, according to Berman, unsustainable. The chaos we are now in the midst of is the inevitable outcome of the Scientific Revolution and 200 years of radical individualism inherent in the subject/object dichotomy of modern ego-consciousness. The extra-somatic perspective of the nonparticipating conscious reacts to the world as a thing outside of self. This produces a politics of exploitation, the outcome of which is destruction of the environment and entropy of human cultures. In Berman's view, the path to continued existence is in the healing of the split between subject and object, recapturing the somatic experience of the participating consciousness.

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<sup>4</sup>Terminology is problematic. A New Age spirituality borrowing from shamanic traditions is often called *urban shamanism* or *neo-shamanism* (Townsend 1988). Parashamanism comes from Grimes who characterizes it as having a "penchant for inventing, borrowing, and performing ritual in search of healing, which is understood holistically or ecologically to be a state of integrated selfhood," and "is an emergent form of religiosity" different from the scholarly construct of shamanism (1990:121-22).

The idea of healing is an important aspect to emphasize, for to New Agers of all fashions, ours is a world desperately in need of rejuvenatory care. Andrew Ross (1991) points out that personal healing as well--both bodily and mentally--is a key concept. In fact, many of the people who are drawn to certain forms of New Age creeds come from the ranks of the socially disenfranchised and/or have personal histories of abusive relationships. Alienated from the scientific medical establishment, these people take the restoration and maintenance of their health into their own hands. For some holistic health may be found in "holotropic breathwork" (the therapeutic benefits of an altered state of consciousness via hyperventilation), for others "bodywork" (massage), and for still others, an adoption of healing rituals associated with exotic cultures.

Berman goes on to say that the mending of the subject/object split does not necessitate a retreat into animistic naiveté. A "recapturing" of an organic and essential relationship between humanity and nature must be accomplished by means of going beyond modernity rather than falling back into the pre-modern (1988:189). While there are particular brands of New Age mysticisms that strive for this technological leap in consciousness, it is probably more accurate to look at the New Age as Ross does; a spectrum of mysticisms that range from alternative quantum sciences to all out simulacral reconstructions of indigenous lifestyles and spiritualities. While he places them all within the category of "psychotechnologies," I see a distinct difference between the "hardware" end of the spectrum and the "visionary end" with its shamanic rituals and animistic Nature worship.

What is central to all approaches is the self, the individual as the seat of sacredness and spiritual power. While Berman--and Robert Bly whom he quotes--call for a return to a "cosmic anonymity", the reality of New Age philosophies is the very strong emphasis on moving away from deindividuation (1988:302). In his later work, Coming to Our Senses, and apparent in this title, Berman advocates a return to our bodies as individuals in order to reconnect with the Earth (1989). Like the driving force behind the



New Age peace movement Beyond War, it is believed that enough individual conversions can change the perspective of the entire culture (Melton 1992).

New Agers who are attempting to incorporate the motifs, ideologies, and practices of specifically indigenous or small-scale cultures into their daily lives might be said to work from this one basic ethos: the modern era has caused people to lose a sense of integration with the Earth, and this loss has destroyed cultural roots. It is believed that through the practice of Earth-centered spirituality and the appropriation of motifs, etc. from indigenous cultures that are 'of a place', new roots can be developed which will allow individuals to become true natives.

New Age philosophies tend to be made up of a fragmented collection of existing and imagined spiritual practices and creeds. Even for those that have a strong, even central, ideology associated with and attributed to Native American culture(s), there is always some element of Eastern philosophies, neo-pagan (meaning ancient European and/or Celtic) rituals, quasi-Inca sun worship, pseudo-African animism, and modern Western spiritism, among other picked-over traditions. In this sense, the New Age as a religious movement, and Native American Spiritualism as a sub-movement within the greater whole, are very typical of other religious movements which are in an experimental stage, devoid of strict creeds (Luckmann 1967).

My interests, and the consequent focus of this thesis, is specifically on Native American Spiritualism in the New Age. It holds the most interest for me for several reasons: first, the particular group of individuals I am studying here in Corvallis draws most heavily from this resource; secondly, it seems to be among the most prominent resource domains in current West Coast, New Age philosophies overall; third, I see it as the domain with the greatest amount of cross-cultural discourse, debate, and contention; fourth, and perhaps most controversially, its affects on the 'culture of origin'--that being Native American culture(s)--are probably the most immediate of all the borrowed fragments making up the spiritual inventory of New Age religions. Appropriation of

Oriental philosophies by Euro-Americans may or may not affect the average Buddhist in Thailand or Nepal, but it is probably safe to say that appropriation of Native American spiritual practices by Euro-Americans talks directly back to and affects how Native Americans themselves perceive and practice their traditional ways.

### Cultural Appropriation or Cultural Borrowing? Contestations

Fieldnotes: 06/01/91 continued

*10:30 am-- The morose fellow with the cotton in his ears sings a "song for the little people of the forest." He uses no instrument this time, and just softly claps his hands. More songs from others; "I got a message from the Lord to love one another...;" "a healing song;" "the Thunderbird song to help us with our memories;" "I love the spirit...." After each, the individual who started it says a few words of explanation, thanks, or whatever comes to mind, then the gesture, the sound, "ooooooWAAAO-ooooooo."*

*An older woman says, "I'd like to share a song that came to me unbidden. I don't know what it means and I've been trying to give it away so I don't have to figure it out." People laugh. "I think it's a house blessing song, but it seems awfully big for that....Well, so, here's a house-mountain-barn blessing song." The room breaks into laughter. The woman sings, we listen, "ooooooWAAAOooooooo."*

*A younger woman starts a very slow chant with her drum. She explains that this was a "Spring Welcoming" song: "I'd like to thank the creator for this day."*

*The older woman who sang the house blessing song speaks up again. She would like to offer prayers for the people who could not be here, for those that are sick. She offers prayer, too, for the world leaders, "that the light of God be with them and that they are not twisted by negative energies directed at them."*

*A white-haired woman who could be in her seventies starts a song for Tcha-Tee-Man-Wee, "for all the strength and help that mountain has given us. The mountain will give strength and courage to all the people around it." I know from a past interview with a local artist--who is not a Circle member--that she is referring to Mary's Peak, the tallest point in the Coast Range west of Corvallis. My artist friend's notion of its sacredness is not an isolated thing, it seems.*

*Another woman offers a prayer "for the spirit of the deer that gives so much of itself for these drums." She is referring to the deer hide that makes up the drum face, and the sinew used to tie it to the wooden frame. She also offers a prayer to mothers.*

*11:05 am-- It's now time to close the Circle, Johnny tells us After two hours, I am eternally grateful. But first he tells us a story "that's the beginning of all stories." It's about a woman and her husband and a bear....I'm not following it well.*

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This recent upsurge in spiritual/religious appropriation has brought about a mounting discussion within both the academic community and Native communities as to the desirability of the trend. Although there have been several political and religious commentaries on the issue by Native Americans in the popular and academic presses, there have been no academic studies of indigenous perceptions of appropriation in the area of New Age spirituality. What the following study aims to do is address this gap by asking certain questions: how does a particular campus community of Native Americans feel about Europeans and Euro-Americans participating in appropriated versions of indigenous spirituality? Are there differing perceptions of different appropriating groups, and do differing perceptions run on gender lines?

This has become an extremely controversial issue among Native peoples. Judging by the written debate, some seem to welcome such idealization and celebration of their culture, while others regard it as the ultimate travesty in the history of colonial oppression. In an early work for the Native American spiritualism market, Hyemeyohst

Storm (1972) hinted at the motivations for bringing the "Native Way" to whites.<sup>5</sup> To him, the Circle--or the Medicine Wheel--is meant to accommodate everyone and everything, creating a "people as a whole:"

Each one of these tiny stones within the Medicine Wheel represents one of the many things of the Universe. One of them represents you, and another represents me. Others hold within them our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and our friends. Still others symbolize hawks, buffalo, elks, and wolves. There are also stones which represent religions, governments, philosophies, and even entire nations. All things are contained within the Medicine Wheel, and all things are equal within it. The Medicine Wheel is the Total Universe (1972:5).

In such a conceptualization of the openness--or, rather, inclusiveness--of the Native Way, there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the individual and individualized interpretations of stories and rituals, suggesting a presentation of the subject palatable to a Euro-dominant audience.

[These stories] are there as Teachings from which you can Learn, and which you can Build upon in your own Way. This Turning and Growing is called the Building of the Thunder Bow (11).

Given that the Native Way is all-inclusive, the proponents of this view would say exclusion based on non-Indian status is wrong.

Since the early 1970's when Storm was writing, numerous Native "spiritual leaders" have stepped forward to guide the whites into their world. Many involved in New Age activities have been ostracized by their communities of origin, while others have developed a significant following of not only Euro-Americans, but other Native Americans. Johnny Moses of the Red Cedar Circle (White 1991), Sun Bear of the Bear

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<sup>5</sup> According to one of the local artists I spoke with, Storm did not actually write this book. I was told that it was written by Harry MacCormack, a resident of Summit, Oregon near Corvallis. My source was not being negative about the book in any way when he informed me of this. Rather, he explained that MacCormack--who is acknowledged in the book by Storm--was visited by a Native American ghost, or spirit guide, who told him what to write.

Tribe (1992), Brooke Medicine Eagle of the Sky Lodge (1991), Leslie Gray (Knaster 1989), and Godfrey Chips (Wagenheim 1992) are all Native Americans who believe that the time has come for whites to embrace the Native Way. According to the story Chips tells,<sup>6</sup>

The pipe belongs to everyone. Godfrey and his family took [that] to mean that Native Americans could no longer huddle quietly in their ancient spiritual ceremonies as the world was decaying around them. It was time for the nurturing power of the *canunpa*, or 'sacred pipe' of traditional ceremony, to be shared with all the world (Wagenheim 1992:48).

These Native American "spiritual leaders" speak of a world in decay brought on by the corrupting way of Euro-dominant society. In so doing, they are reaching a wide audience of Euro-Americans suffering from cultural anomie and burdening under the assumption that to be white is to be cultureless and disconnected from everything, even the self. What Chips, et al promise is a healing world transformation which will occur as the Native Way is embraced by all. In this way, appropriation of Native American spirituality is necessary for the survival of the planet and attests to the ultimate truth, purity, and goodness of indigenous lifestyles.

By the time I write this in 1990, it is probable that close to one million people in the world have danced with the Medicine Wheel of my original vision. The power of the vision I was originally given continues to grow. People are building wheels all over the world....Isn't it amazing that the vision of one Native American has spread across the Great Water to affect so greatly the descendants of those who once crossed that water to take Turtle Island from its Earthkeepers?...The Medicine Wheel is the sacred hoop of the nations. For the world to come back into real balance the nations must be healed (Sun Bear 1992:28).

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<sup>6</sup> Godfrey Chips is the Lakota whose cover story in New Age Journal had Diana's friends at the Pine Ridge Reservation so upset. Diana explained that Chips is considered a charlatan by members of his original community, and is *persona non grata* at Pine Ridge.

Outside of the world of New Age Native American spiritualists, there seem to be few proponents of the global embracement of Native spirituality. Native American theological scholar George Tinker (1992) is an exception. He argues against the categorization of Native peoples in terms of class structures, which he notes are constructions of dominant 'Western' thought. He also describes in some detail the spatiality of Native American spiritualities as opposed to the temporality of European cognition and says, "What we call spirituality is, for us as it is for most indigenous peoples, a way of life more than a religion." He further suggests that Native American theology and gospel interpretation could lead to, "[an]...immediate and attainable vision of a just and peaceful world." Tinker's vision of indigenous spirituality and its potential seems to closely resemble the perceptions held by dominant culture appropriators, while being more explicitly political in nature.

There is no denying the fact that these individuals are involved in a political debate in which they appear to be the minority within Native American communities. Loved as they are by their white followers--and their apparently few Native followers--critical commentaries on their activities are in abundance (for example, Churchill 1988, 1990, 1993, 1994; Hobson 1978; Rose 1992).

The other side of the debate is a sizable group of political activists and scholars who are convinced that economics is more the motivation for someone like Sun Bear than spiritual altruism. While both whites and Native Americans participate in the criticism, the most vehement protests come from the latter. And it is not just the "Plastic Medicine Men" which are denounced, but their "pathetic" followers as well (Churchill 1990). The Sioux are particularly outspoken in their contempt of New Age appropriation. In a series of articles published from July to October of 1991 in the *Lakota Times*, Avis Little Eagle examined and denounced the phenomenon and the people who profit by it:

Lakota spirituality has become a new fad to many New Age non-Indians and their naiveté is being exploited to the limits by phony medicine men, to the dismay of traditional elders. Some of these exploiters are white men--or women--who claim to be Indian.

Some are actual Indian men and women spreading false rituals for profit. Some of those rituals go beyond sacrilegious desecration of spiritual objects and ceremonies. These pseudo-medicine men have plundered burial sites, used sex as part of a ceremony, molested children, and generally ripped off a naive public (1991).

Alice Kehoe provides a historical critique of the construction of "Indian religion" by Euro-Americans and Europeans and its subsequent popularization and commercialization:

Thousands of Americans and Europeans believe...that American Indians retain a primordial wisdom that could heal our troubled world. American Indians are supposed to be *Naturvölker*, in contrast to the civilized nations alienated from nature....From this supposition, a number of practitioners of 'Indian' medicine and spiritualism have gained comfortable livings (1990:194).

This essay is part of a larger work on Euro-dominant fashioning of what it means to be Indian (Clifton 1990). This collection of essays by various writers is important for its wide analysis of the way factions of dominant Euro-American culture have formulated definitions and descriptions of Native Americans to suit their own purposes. In his introduction, editor James Clifton writes about:

...[the] use of highly stereotyped images of 'the Indian' as a foil, manipulated politically either to denigrate or enhance European and American institutions and self-concepts. What has changed between the late nineteenth century...and this one is the nature of the institutions and values that are criticized....One constant theme has been disquiet about structures of subordination and inequality, with neatly fashioned, imaginative portraits of the Indian used as models for Paradise Lost or, in our time among the "counter-culture," as a fantasy of an Eden that might be regained (15-16).

In this is a clear critique of appropriation, particularly as it relates to the dominant constructions of the Indian cultural persona.

What all of the aforementioned writings seem to indicate is that there are two clear sides to the issue; one is either a part of the appropriation phenomenon, or attacking

it. Commentaries written up in spiritual and political journals are probably not a totally reliable gauge of the opinions of the average person on the street, however. If one were to judge Native perceptions of New Age Native American spiritualism by the written record, one would have to assume that it is vehemently opposed by anyone not profiting from the movement as a self-styled spiritual leader. In reviewing the literature, the obvious questions arise: do the opinions of an actual Native American community reflect the abundance of the written negative political critique? Are there really such clear sides in the debate, or are opinions in a given population of a more nebulous nature? This cannot really be a question of distinctions between a macro-level analysis and micro-level analysis, for there is no way to determine just how representatively macro the written record is.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE RED CEDAR CIRCLE

There are times when I don't feel anything; there are times when I judge it, when I sit there and I look at these people and what they're doing and I think, this is so weird. This is so bizarre. Look at what we're doing. It looks stupid....But then, when I allow myself to feel it, it makes perfect sense. But as soon as you step out of the feeling-it place, it looks pretty weird (RCC Interview: Kay, 03/93).

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Fieldnotes: Wednesday, April 8, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*Lorrain had a dream a year ago which has been coming back to her a lot lately. I didn't figure out if it has been coming to her as a dream again, or if she's just been remembering and thinking about it a lot. In it, she says that the Circle has gone up to the village where Johnny Moses is from. It is by a river and in the river is a boat made from a hollowed log. Johnny--dressed entirely in black with his long hair hanging down loose--leads the Circle down to the river and directs them to get in the boat, which they all do. He stays on the shore, sitting on a bench in the sun, with his arms back, his legs out, and his chest and face directed up at the sky. Lorrain thinks in the dream that it is good that Johnny is finally taking a rest. The Circle floats high on the water, down the river. Hugging the shore, it passes all kinds of people lined up along the bank. Everyone is shouting and spitting and making fun of the Circle in the boat, but eventually, some younger people in their 20's start getting on the boat and asking questions about the Medicine Way.*

## Background

Fieldnotes: Saturday, June 1, 1991 / The Unitarian Church, Corvallis, Or.

*7:00 pm-- We're gathering in the room we started out in this morning. Johnny opens the Circle again, but this time just for drumming and sharing of the "healing techniques." I guess he's preparing us for later this evening. As he talks, I see a woman sitting in the Circle with a plate on which there are some small cedar branches, a sage smudge stick, and a candle. She appears to be blessing herself with the smoking smudges and the candle light--she puts her hand over the light, then touches various parts of her body. Then she does an over-all gesturing from light to self, and repeats this with the smudge. Now she's passing it to the next person.*

*It's coming to me....*

*Ok. I just burned some cedar and smelled it. That was fairly painless.*

*Johnny is continuing to describe the "medicine ways" and how young people are moving toward them again. He says that the Red Cedar Circle is another name for Si.si.wiss Medicine ways. Many non-Indian people adopt this tradition, he says, because maybe they didn't have a tradition growing up, or because it's of the earth. "You can belong to other ways. It is incorporated. It's just another way of coming together and honoring Mother Earth."*

*He says that religion is a way of life that can't be categorized as something outside of everyday life. It is one air, one earth, and we share the same feelings. So I guess I could say that Johnny denies cultural ownership of spiritual traditions.*

*Now he's telling us how to become a Circle member; "If you come to the Circle three times, consider yourself a member. If you fall asleep during the teachings, you automatically become a master shaman." I don't know if he's teasing us, or what. There are lots of giggles around the room, because more than a few people fell asleep during his teaching right after lunch, including myself.*

*Johnny says that those of us who work with animal power should only call one at a time, if we have more than one such spirit guide: "If you've got a coyote and a chicken and you call them at the same time, you'll just be chasing yourself around the yard." He giggles, the room cracks up. This man loves his humor.*

*When we heal by laying our hands on someone, we must be sure to clap after throwing the sickness off. This seals the work and keeps it from coming back to us. He goes over a lot of other scattered details on healing in no apparent methodical order. The drumming, he says, is analogous to the heartbeat: "That's why it must be slow and simple." The bell was adopted on European contact: "This is an example of the new medicine, the blending of old and new."*

*Finally he tells us that the only way to really learn about any of this is by participating and praying. Instruction can only take us so far, he says.*

*8:20 pm-- We close this Circle in the way we did before. We sing a 'Water Blessing' song, say something in another language and something about "oh sacred water" in English, then get up, turn three times in our places and do the gesture: "ooooooooWAAAOoooooooo"*

In 1985, Johnny Moses, a professional story-teller and former minister in the Indian Shaker Church, began sharing knowledge of *Si.si.wiss* Medicine with a following of non-Natives through an informal organization called the Red Cedar Circle (White 1991).<sup>7</sup> *Si.si.wiss* Medicine is similar to many shamanistic traditions in its emphasis on healing through intervention with the spirit world (Eliade 1964, Hultkrantz 1987, Lewis 1971). The anthropological record lacks information about this practice as far as I or any Circle members have been able to determine, so it is difficult to piece together the scope of its history and geographical range. The character of *Si.si.wiss* as described by Moses

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<sup>7</sup> The Indian Shaker Church is not to be confused with the Shakers of the mid-Western United States. The Name Indian Shaker comes from the propensity of practitioners to shake violently during ecstatic states. It is similar to the Ghost Dance or even *Si.si.wiss* Medicine itself in that it originated as a religious resistance movement during the latter part of the nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century.

and his followers, however, indicates to me the possibility of its inception as a religious resistance movement among indigenous peoples of the southern Pacific Northwest Coast during the nineteenth or early twentieth-centuries. In it is a characteristic blending of traditional practices with elements of Christianity and other motifs of Western culture that marks many revitalistic resistance movements (Wallace 1956, White 1991).

Moses' role as a spiritual leader--some say shaman--is said to have come from the influence of his grandparents, and his own healing from childhood leukemia as a young adolescent. There are numerous ways one may become a shaman or spiritual guide: heredity, training, being born with a deformity or illness, being spiritually healed from a life-threatening illness, and being informed 'by the spirits' that this is to be your role in life, among other things (Edsmon 1967, Eliade 1964, Lewis 1971). Moses was brought up by his grandparents, who, he says, were both "practicing medicine people":

I grew up traveling with my grandparents to ceremonies all over Vancouver Island and even on the mainland....I spent much of my childhood listening to the elders share the songs and stories of our medicine ways. My grandparents mostly taught us children through the traditional stories, what we call teachings....As I got older, I was allowed to help my grandparents by singing for them while they were doctoring (Johnny Moses in White 1991:36-38).

Moses was healed of cancer at the age of thirteen, and was consequently called to the vocation of healer in the *Si.si.wiss* tradition. At this time, he was given the name of his great-grandfather, *Whis.stem.men.knee*, or "Walking Medicine Robe." He is said to have trained under seven traditional medicine teachers, and is admired by his followers for his intelligence and story-telling talents. The popular story as related to me by several Circle members and in an article about him in *Shaman's Drum* (White 1991) is that he received a Bachelor's degree in education at the early age of eighteen from the University of Victoria in British Columbia. According to the university's records, however, he was merely enrolled in some continuing education classes under the name "Dr. Johnny Moses," and never received a degree from that institution. He is now in his forties, so if

he had been eighteen at the time of his attendance at Victoria, this would have been about 25 years ago.<sup>8</sup>

Moses was traveling the small-time professional story-teller circuit in the 1980's, and developed a regular cadre of admirers who either traveled with him or regularly attended his performances. Among these were a clique of people in the Seattle area. At some point during or after these developments, it is said that he was told by his elders that "now is the time" to share knowledge of *Si.si.wiss* Medicine with the whites and "bring out the teachings so that we could begin to heal the planet."

This is the time that Mother Earth is going to transform herself and it's time for human beings to do what they can and work together (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

Everyone is invited to come a pray with us. Even if people belong to completely different traditions, they can still come together, because we're all human beings. We have the same spirit and we pray to the same God. That's the way I believe (Johnny Moses in White 1991:42).

NightHawk: "Johnny says that now is the time to bring the teachings out."

Mary S-N: "Now is a better time than any time before?"

NightHawk: "Well, now is the time to bring out the teachings, so, yes, it's better," (RCC Interview: NightHawk 09/91).

Most Red Cedar Circle members are Euro-American, though there are many Native Americans involved. Several chapters exist, most located on the West Coast from

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that this misinformation about his schooling would probably be of minor consequence when it comes to the status he has among his followers. He is first and foremost respected for his ability as a teacher and spiritual guide, and is a crucial source of inspiration, advice, and strength among Red Cedar Circle members. For others, however--particularly his critics, or critics of white appropriation of Native American traditions--the inaccuracy of his story regarding his education could very well make other aspects of his stated life history suspect.

I should advise those critics, including myself, that there are a number of ways to account for the discrepancy between the University of Victoria's records and Moses' story. One very plausible possibility, for example, could be that Moses has mentioned that he *attended* Victoria and took some continuing ed. classes, which has been translated by his followers into an embellished understanding that he actually received a degree in education. If this were the case, it would be perfectly understandable that he never bothered to correct the rumor out of ignorance of it, or simply because he didn't feel like it was a big enough issue to deal with.

northern California to Alaska. The main center--called the Mother House-- is on the Snohomish Reservation in Washington, north of Seattle:<sup>9</sup>

The Mother House...serves as a healing center for people--Indians and non-Indians from all over--who need time to work with spirit. It's open any time of day or night for people to visit....We have a community of *Si.si.wiss* people who live at the center, but we also encourage people from other traditions to come and visit us, to pray with us and for us (Johnny Moses in White 1991:43).

The Red Cedar Circle, and the *Si.si.wiss* Medicine that members practice, goes way beyond some form of traditional and/or alternative medicine. A desire for alternative medical practices actually plays a very minor role in motivating Euro-Americans, in this case, to become involved in the spiritual practices of indigenous peoples. Like participants in other New Age spiritual movements, Red Cedar Circle members believe in the need or inevitability of a personal and global transformation on spiritual, philosophical, and environmental planes. New Age Native American spiritualists, in general, feel that the continued survival of the planet rests in an overhaul of Western identities and a global acceptance of the ideologies and spiritual practices of indigenous peoples, who are defined as being close to the earth, and therefore, directly linked with the sacredness of the planet (Berman 1989, Grimes 1992, Harner 1980, Sun Bear 1992). *Si.si.wiss* Medicine as taught by Johnny Moses relies on the idea of healing, whether it be from actual physical elements in an individual body, from the enigmatic pain of spiritual longing, or the healing of much bigger woes such as the degradation of the planet. The use of the healing trope, however, along with the strong focus on neo-Shamanism so common in the New Age, can be somewhat misleading until one decodes the altered meanings of "healing", "medicine", and even "illness". These have more to do

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<sup>9</sup> According to several Circle members, Johnny Moses' Red Cedar Circle activities involving non-Indians on the reservation has many tribal members upset. The community is reportedly divided on this issue. The extent and nature of that division would be a very worthwhile field for future study.

with spirituality and a cure for the perceived culturelessness of Euro-America than anything else.

There are, of course, instances in which alternative medicine does play a significant role. Herbal healing and the creative interpretation of both physical and mental illness are both a part of the Circle. The story of Irene illustrates the concept of altered meanings and interpretive license.

I had always known there was something odd about Irene. She was very quiet during Circle meetings, rarely speaking up other than to state her name for the spirits at the opening of Circle on those occasions when the person leading felt we should all do so:

Irene is something of an odd character--a shapeless, formless, meek, quiet, 50ish woman with 'low self-esteem' written all over her. I'd really like to interview her at some point, but I've a feeling she would be very difficult to approach because of her self-effacing demeanor. She never says anything, plays no instrument, and sings the songs in a barely audible fashion, if at all (RCC Fieldnotes 10/91).

During the winter of 1992/93, I began to notice that when she introduced herself to the spirits in Circle, she would say, "My name is Irene, my Indian name is Iris." As it turns out, Irene has multiple personalities--at least these two. In February of 1993, "Iris" took over and became violent. She attacked and attempted to rape another Circle member ("Iris" is a lesbian, though Irene is not). This incident almost had the affect of dividing the local Circle because of differing ideas on how to deal with the situation; how to treat Irene, whether or not to allow her to come back to Circle, etc. What was clear to everyone, however, was that Irene was possessed by a spirit. In the end, it was decided that Johnny Moses must be appealed to for advice. His reaction was to say that, although Irene needed their prayers and compassion, the Corvallis Circle must not be expected to put themselves in any danger. This would include trying to do a healing on her, unless at least two people were present to work together.

The emphasis on the spiritual nature of her illness did not preclude anyone from feeling that she needed mainstream medical assistance. At the time of the attack, two other Circle members were able to get Irene to the hospital where she immediately underwent psychiatric treatment. She was then released after several days, but placed under the authority of a local half-way house for the mentally disturbed. With the help of counseling, medication, and possibly even the prayers of the Red Cedar Circle, Irene was eventually brought back to a state of equilibrium, and is now regularly participating in Circle activities again.

Another, slightly more mundane illustration of the Circle's methods of understanding and dealing with illness is the incident with Diana and her drum. She had been having problems with it sounding flat, in addition to her feeling ill. The man who made the drum--a Lakota from the tribe of her ex-husband--was "going crazy." She and everyone else seemed to think that the drum picked up some "bad medicine" from the spirit of this man. It was determined that this was what caused it to go flat and also what was probably causing her to feel bad.

As a remedy, Diana placed the drum on the altar and used instead a drum made during a drum making workshop. No one could remember who had made this particular drum, no one laid claim to it, and it was decided that since it was "homeless", Diana should have it. At the end of this meeting, Lorrain and Sarah "lit up" Diana, meaning they circled her with candles and directed the light from the fire onto her body. By the next week's Circle meeting, Diana was reporting to feel much better.

The drum itself underwent a healing. This was done by placing it on the home altar in Diana's house and keeping it there for several months. She said prayers over it during this time, and at the weekly Circle meetings, it was placed on the center altar. Eventually, the drum was determined to be healed, and it was given to an adolescent boy as an initiation gift during one of the large Circle gatherings.



The primary method of healing--in any sense of the word and to whatever purpose-- is through song, drum, dance, and light. At Red Cedar Circle gatherings people talk, they pray, they share stories, but mostly they sing and drum, occasionally dance, and always "light themselves up":

Singing and song can change the way you think and feel. We use healing songs to strengthen people and help them discover the richness of their being.

Dancing is both a spiritual and a physical prayer. For instance, our stomp dance helps us get the life force flowing. When we stomp our feet in time with the drum, we are connecting our spiritual roots with Mother Earth's roots, her veins.

We use candlelight and firelight the same way many groups use sage and cedar smoke. We bless our drums, bells, and feathers with the light. Sometimes we wash our hands in the light. We put light on ourselves or others. While we're putting light on someone, we pray for help and blessings (Johnny Moses in White 1991:38-39).

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Fieldnotes: 06/01/91 continued

9:45 pm-- *Everyone is getting ready for the healing ceremony now. We all lie on our backs on the floor and are led through a series of chants by Johnny. This is the "cleansing ceremony," which we must do before the healing.*

10:10 pm-- *People are busy setting up the room for the healing. Seven chairs are placed in the center of the room, all facing east. For all Johnny's explaining, I still don't know what to expect. The lights are turned off, though many people are holding candles. There are candles by the chairs, as well.*

*Singing and drumming begins and people are dancing. I'm gutless and am sitting in a dark corner watching. I feel very conspicuous in my non-participation, but it was emphasized throughout the day that we should do things only when we feel ready to do them. Everyone is dancing more or less in a circular line, though people do break off to do their own thing, so to speak.*

*After awhile, the chairs are filled up and healing begins. The person sitting in the chair sits quietly with eyes closed and palms facing up on his or her lap. One or more of the dancers approaches and picks up the candle from beside the chair. A series of gestures is made from the candle light to the sitting person, as the candle holder circles around the chair. If there's more than one person working on someone, the other places her hands on the seated one, maybe makes grabbing motions, throws her hands up in the air, and claps three times. This is repeated over and over again. The healers continue to chant. Drums, bells, rattles are passed around, set aside, picked up by anyone. It's very loud in here.*

*Sometimes people sit in the chairs for a long period: other times it's only for a couple of minutes. One woman, who's at a Circle gathering for the first time, is really getting into it. She's seated in a chair being healed, her hands held in front of her, palms up, thumb and middle finger pressed together, calmly smiling like Buddha.*

*There's a woman howling and yipping now, like a dog or a wolf or maybe a coyote. Her animal spirit guide? Now she's spinning around as if she were chasing her tail. A man comes up and 'lays on hands'. She's pretty ecstatic, laughing, howling, thrashing around. I'm feeling more and more out of place.*

*The retired economics professor I was talking to earlier, is dancing full force. It's his first time, too, and he's even doing the laying on of hands type of healing. Now he has picked up a drum and is dancing quite energetically. As he passes me he teases, "So, are you taking some good notes on all us crazy college professors getting primitive?"*

### The Local Circle Experience

At four in the morning one day I woke up wide awake and grabbed for a pencil by my bedside. I wrote down the words "Red Cedar Barque" and drew a little Northwest canoe sketch surrounding them....The next morning I remembered the dream. I

had seen the members of the Red Cedar Circle from all over the world, each in a little barque, each barque lit with a candle, each of us paddling away in our own little space of ocean, yet all of us forming a ring of light over the waves....

Since then it has come to me to keep a candle lit on the altar at all times to keep our Red Cedar Circle strong....I will keep the flame agoing here in the Heart of the Valley (Corvallis). If anyone else feels so moved by the Spirit to keep a flame agoing in the North...East...South...West for the Red Cedar Circle community, please join me in becoming Keepers of the Flame (Diana in *The Red Cedar Bark* 1993).<sup>10</sup>

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Fieldnotes: Wednesday, February 24, 1993 / The Medicine House, Corvallis. Or.

*7:05 pm-- Eight worshippers have come together tonight. Diana has laid out the altar cloth in the middle of the room. She lights the candles at each corner, and places a bowl of sacred water from Tcha-Tee-Man-Wee in the center. Nearby, a burning candle surrounded by small pieces of cedar branch and sage stands on a dish. Sarah places a letter she has received from another Circle member in a different town on the altar. A stick of driftwood Irene found at the coast lies next to the bowl of sacred water. Lorrain and NightHawk have brought beadwork and blankets they are just finishing up to be blessed by the Spirits.*

*Tim switches off the lights and everyone sits in a circle around the altar cloth. They seem tired tonight, and there is a long, silent pause before Sarah finally volunteers to lead. She asks Lorrain to drum in the Four Directions, calling the Spirits. After singing a Water Blessing Song and four songs from the Si.si.wiss tradition, Sarah announces that the Circle is open for words, thoughts, prayers, and songs from any other traditions. Many in the group have their own hand held drums, rattles, or bells which they use when bringing out the songs, but tonight is mostly a talking Circle.*

*Diana expresses concern over the neighbors, who have complained about the drumming and singing every Wednesday night. She says the drumming must end by 9:00.*

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C for an example of *The Red Cedar Bark* newsletter.

*Lucy thanks the Spirits for her give-away at the last big Circle gathering. Anna is distraught over her son, who is having trouble in school.*

*They have all come to give thanks for good fortune, express their concerns and fears, and ask for guidance in some area in their lives. As they speak and sing, the dish with cedar, sage, and candle is passed, and they each bathe in the candle light, and cleanse themselves with smoking cedar and sage.*

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The Corvallis Circle has about 25-30 members who are either marginal participants, "formal members," or "formal members/training". The roughly ten "formal" members often come to Wednesday night meetings, and have gone through an initiation ceremony into the Circle. The "formal members/training" are undergoing formal instruction in the *Si.si.wiss* Medicine way. Instructional workshops are held once a month in Washington, at the Mother House. There are about seven people in the Corvallis Circle who are undergoing this training.

Very few men are members or regular participants of the local Circle. While there are eight men listed as being members, only three or four ever show up for Circle meetings and large gatherings. It is not uncommon for weekly meetings to be made up entirely of women, or with Tim as the only man. This is a peculiar situation, for Circles in other towns have a more even representation of men and women. At one time, a Portland area Circle was, in fact, almost exclusively men, many of whom were participants in local "men's movement" activities.<sup>11</sup>

Every Wednesday night, anywhere from three to fifteen--rarely more--individuals show up. Diana is always there, as the Medicine House is at her home. The regulars include a very close-knit core of three women in their 30's, who spend much of their time

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<sup>11</sup>The "men's movement," as expounding by such people as Robert Bly and Sam Keen, can be placed under the New Age umbrella, and has much in common with New Age Native American spiritualism in its reliance on ideas of 'the primitive' and rituals modeled on those of Native cultures. In fact, many men involved in the Red Cedar Circle are very concerned with the same gender issues informing the men's movement: 'balancing' masculinity and femininity within themselves, rediscovering what it is to be a man, and understanding men's relationship to the earth. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

together in and out of Circle: Lorrain, Sarah, and NightHawk. NightHawk brings her son, Isaac, and Lorrain brings her daughter, Ocean. Both of the children are pre-teen.

Irene is almost always there, except for the period of several months during her illness. Lucille is in her 70's and is the oldest member. Tim comes often, as does Gina, who, despite being fairly new to the Circle, has immersed herself in it.

Circle meetings are always conducted in a ritual way. Everyone sits in a circle on the floor around the altar cloth. Someone volunteers to lead. This is usually one of a small group of women: Diana, NightHawk, Sarah, Lorrain, and Paula. The leader asks someone else to drum in the four directions. This is done to call down the spirits for their participation. Next, the leader starts the water blessing song while she rings a bell. Upon completion of the song, the leader calls for people to bring out four songs from the *Si.si.wiss* tradition. Occasionally, everyone is asked to state their name for the spirits, and say something about their being here, such as, "My name is Mary. I'm a student here in Corvallis, and I'm very glad I came tonight." The Circle is then open for words, songs, prayers, and thoughts from any tradition.

At this time, people can speak as they wish about anything they wish, or they may sing, read something; whatever moves them. Only one person at a time may talk. The speaker has the floor and may have it for as brief or long a time as they want or need. Some people rarely talk, or only speak for a short time. Others can go on for a significant period of time. After one is done with her song or words, she gestures from her heart to the sky, back to her heart while sounding, "ooooooWAAAOooooooo." This sends the message to the spirits and back. If only women are present, the gesture goes from heart to sky only. Because women are so powerfully connected to the earth, it is said that they do not need to bring the message back; it is drawn back of its own accord.

After about 45 minutes, the "first bell" is sounded, and the Circle continues with the words, songs, etc. from any tradition. A "second bell" and "third bell" are also sounded at intervals of 30 to 45 minutes. At the "third bell," the leader asks if anyone has

anything else they wish to share, then the Circle is closed with a Water Blessing song. Everyone then stands, circles three times in place, and gestures from heart to sky and back. Occasionally, a dancing Circle will then be held, or perhaps they will do a mini-healing. The evening can last from one and half to three hours.

The Red Cedar Circle is relatively unique compared with other Native American spiritualities practiced by Euro-Americans in the late twentieth-century. Its uniqueness lies in its members' claims to basic reliance on a specific ancient way of a specific indigenous heritage. This is not to say that there isn't a great deal of experimentation with a variety of other traditions, new and old. I want to emphasize, however, that the revelation of Whis.stem.men.knee/Johnny Moses was not of a new religion, but rather, the dissemination of an old one to non-Indians. In fact, every member of the Corvallis Circle that I have talked to about this, strongly disavows any association with the New Age: "No, no, we're not New Age. No, we're Old Age:"

Red Cedar Circle is a very ancient society and it fell into disuse....We are now, since 1985, trying to learn, trying to reestablish. In a way, it's terribly brash and irreverent to have white people now in the Red Cedar Circle. But, who else is there to weave the basket? We weave the basket. We're who there is, who's drawn to weave the basket. So it's open. So it's no longer Indian or Native American. It's human being. This is the time that Mother Earth is going to transform herself and it's time for human beings to do what they can and work together. And that has to do with the connectedness. And we're all connected (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

The Circle practices a form of eco-spirituality: that is to say, they are animists and nature worshippers. Concepts of Nature and indigenous peoples' place in it are at the core of their beliefs. They speak a language which privileges the earth and privileges peoples of the earth; a language of "centering and connection" such as described by Catherine Albanese (1990:197). To them She is the Sacred Mother, and the Sky, the Great Spirit. All things of the Earth are living, spiritual beings and are to be treated with respect and reverence:

I guess as a child I'd always felt that everything was alive. And that's called animism, and I learned that was very bad and very primitive, you know, back when I studied religions. But now I've come around full force and I'm an animist again, and I'm an animist by choice, because given we can choose nihilism or, you know, theism, or whatever, we can choose our world belief, and if we choose nothing, we are really impoverishing ourselves. So I choose animism because it makes my life meaningful, not to be surrounded by objects, but to be surrounded by relationships. All my relations. And I love that concept in Native world. All my relations does mean rocks, trees, Earth, sky, wind, not just all your cousins. So, it means you're related to everything you're connected to. You're never alone....People who live out on the land know that feeling. They love the land, they understand it, they feel-- they're part of it. They're one with the universe. Living out on the prairie, walking the buffalo pasture, I just would always feel that. Feel I was a part of the land....Now that I've left the reservation, I consciously choose to think the land out here is alive. Rocks as alive and plants as alive, because it makes my world richer than to think of everything as objects (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

People in the Circle often refer to the work they must do. This work is their spirituality, built around the process of rejecting the destructive white way and moving to the Native Way. It centers on honoring the Earth, healing the Earth, healing themselves and each other. It centers, too, on building community and "families of choice":

We're supposed to be one family. We're supposed to form community and live together, work together. 'Cause you can't do the work [alone]. So that's one of the problems of switching from white culture to Native way.

But that's so important in Native way, and that's what family and community is about and that's what Native way has to offer that is absolutely crucial. So, it's like we can't go back. We've got to move from selfishness to connectedness and responsibility. Yeah. All my relations, you know; that kind of concept. That's the only way we are going to survive in the twenty-first- and twenty-second-century. So that's why all this working toward community is important. It doesn't mean that we're all going to love each other or we're all going to live in the same room or all share the same clothes, no. It means that we have to be aware that we are connected, and that we have to think in terms of other people as well as ourselves before making decisions. It's that broad, wise view that I think all cultures have had, but certainly white culture hasn't seemed to value it nearly as much. It's been I, I, I....This is not just an experiment. It's crucial. I see it as a

crucial shift of consciousness. And that's why I'm in the Red Cedar Circle....I know that we must start doing healing work in the songs, help in the teachings, and so on. That's where I find the most power here, and acceptance of the notions that there is a Spirit world and that prayer makes a difference (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

They aren't there yet, but achieving the shift, and thereby healing the Earth, is the motivational force of their spirituality. They are working toward community, family, sharing, the Spirits, support, interdependence, and connectedness:

This is Native Way, and this is what the Red Cedar Circle's working toward; connectedness....So this is what we're moving toward, and it doesn't mean we've gotten there (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

The Circle is very much an alternative spirituality, a cult, if you will, not connected to any mainstream denominations. To the outside world, they seem a little lunatic:

Just to talk about Spirit experiences, that really disturbs people. They thought I was crazy. There's one person right in Corvallis that really thinks I'm off the deep end. Seriously. He's worried about my mind. I'm worried about his mind being limited.

Other people might see us as a lunatic fringe. I don't think we're a lunatic fringe. I think we are the core. We're the people who see. We're the forefront. We are the *avant garde*. Whether you see that as lunatic fringe or *avant garde*, the core, depends on where you are (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

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Fieldnotes: Wednesday, April 8, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

7:00 pm-- *Everyone who had drums came in with them wrapped in scarves. I recall this from the last meeting as well. Paula commented on it before we opened, and Diana suggested she do a teaching on it in Circle. As a result, this was about the first order of business. A sister up in Seattle is credited with setting everyone right in regards to their drums. It should never be laid face down on the floor with the opened back*



*exposed. If this happens, undesirable things could get into it. During actual healing ceremonies, it is especially important to remember this, because some truly dangerous things could get in there. When the drum is not in use, it should be placed on its side. It is also best it be protected from direct contact with the floor--place it on a cloth. The reason to keep it wrapped up is to prevent bad things getting into it. This is of particular importance when going out after dark with it. Night seems to be a conduit for bad spirits or medicines or whatever.*

*Lorrain was in a particularly good humor tonight, at least for the first half of the meeting. She came in giving everyone huge hugs, myself included. She held a little mini give-away, giving Sarah a pitcher, NightHawk a small pot, Robert a hat, and her daughter, Ocean, a mirror. Each had a particular significance in regards to the person receiving the gift. It all was very insider.*

*I wasn't feeling too great tonight and was a little taken aback when Diana commented that, during the course of the meeting, she had begun to feel a sadness which she suspects comes not from herself, but from someone here. Sometimes things happen at these meetings that could easily be interpreted as vaguely divine. She sang a healing song that was sung at Johnny's mother's wedding last weekend.*

*I wasn't participating much tonight. I really didn't feel like it. After a while, I guess Lorrain, who I was sitting next to, must have noticed this. She gave me her drum to use. So I did, the rest of the evening. It felt pretty odd, never having had that happen before--not even having ever done any drumming before--but I think I made a fairly good show of it. I'm glad that I'm slowly making such in-roads to acceptance.*

*Louisa's daughter spoke about her mental health problems, and how it had been once thought that she would never be able to live outside of a hospital. She has overcome a lot and has now been offered a job as spokesperson and liaison for the Oregon Mental Health Association. She credits the Circle for much of the healing she has experienced.*

*After she talked, several people made laudatory comments. Great feelings were had by all.*

*The retired economics professor expressed some concern about Claudette, the Southern woman. She hasn't been to Circle for quite some time. He wondered if anyone knew what was up with her. It seemed fairly obvious that many of the women present knew, but they weren't going to say. In response, however, Diana suggested they "rubber-band" her. This refers to drawing someone spiritually back to the Circle. What she did was call out Claudette's name in a sing-song fashion, with everyone else in the Circle joining in after the first two or three "CLAU-DETTE's." For some reason, Diana commented that she had said she would never try to rubber-band someone again, but that she really felt like doing it this time. Perhaps the last time she tried it, it was a bust.*

### Personalities of the Circle

The individuals who make up the Red Cedar Circle became known to me over the course of many months. Through my participation in Circle gatherings, I very gradually built up a picture of each woman and man. A few of them are presented here, mostly in the form of my notes.

#### *Diana*

Fieldnotes: Interview with Diana / Monday, October 26, 1992 / Plum Cottage, Corvallis, Or:

*The tiny house on Woodland Street is simple, but cluttered. Books, papers, swatches of fabrics for quilts, and quilts in the making compete for a surface to rest on. Mixed in are an assortment of rocks, feathers, small cedar boughs, and other bits of nature making the room look like that of a child with a predilection for dragging in*

*anything neat that she's found during her daily adventures. The alley kitchen is visible from the front room, like a short hall going off from it. The other two small rooms of the house are separated from the front room by doors, which more often than not are left cracked open. Through the doors are glimpses of even tinier and still more cluttered spaces. There is nothing dirty about the place. It is merely modest, and it is obvious that the owner does not concern herself with efforts to follow the conventions of American home decorating so clearly spelled out for us in "Good Housekeeping" and "Better Homes and Gardens".*

*I've been in here many times before, but not for extended periods and almost never at a time when a ceremony was not taking place. My visits to Diana's house are usually limited to the Medicine Room. She calls her entire house "Plum Cottage" and the "Medicine House," but Circle gatherings are held in the garage, which has been converted into a room with carpet remnants laid thickly on the floor. Today, however, I've come to talk to Diana, and she wishes to stay in her front room rather than retreat to the Medicine Room.*

*Against one wall is a wood stove, and on top of it is her private altar. This consists of a piece of cedar bough, a lit candle, and a plate of sage smudge in front of a pencil drawing of hands raised in supplication. As I begin setting up my tape recorder, she explains to me that she has the candle lit because she feels that this interview is a sacred event. She will be revealing her life, as well as explaining to me the reasons why the Circle exists.*

*Before we begin the interview, she has the sudden inspiration to light ourselves up for communion with the Spirits. She takes up the candle and has me stand opposite her. My discomfort is acute, but I work hard to suppress it, as any self-respecting anthropologist doing ethnographic fieldwork would do. In a voice that falters, Diana begins to sing or chant. It is a song without words; a tune, but a tune with special significance as all Circle songs are. What she sings is the "Going Ahead Song" to give us*

*the strength, courage, and inspiration necessary for getting out her story. It comes from her more powerfully with each repetition, and her voice is soon clear and reverberating. As she sings, she pushes the light from the candle toward me, touching my forehead and my upturned palms. Then she lights herself up and ends her song. We stand silently for a moment, she with her eyes closed, seeming to bask in serene contemplation of the Spirits, me with my eyes transfixed on the floor wishing the whole thing would end and wondering what could have possessed me to undertake my chosen task. Her spirituality is too intense, or rather, too open for my enculturated sense of decorum. I, after all, grew up a Methodist, known--and surpassed only by the Unitarians--for their low-key approach to matters of the spirit. But I accept my acute discomfort as part of the whole experience; an integral part of the complex web of events making up this cultural scene. Furthermore, my discomfort is transient, rapidly lifting as we sit down and she begins to talk. Three mugs of tea and two hours later, we are merely finished for the day. Diana has only begun to scratch the surface of her life, and it is clear that I will have many hours of transcription ahead of me before I have completed my task.*

Diana is in her late 50's, with a Ph.D. in English. For twelve years she lived with her Lakota Sioux husband on the Pine Ridge Reservation of South Dakota. After her divorce over four years ago, she moved to Oregon to be with her ailing father. Missing the Native Way and her life on the reservation, and not finding her spiritual needs met by the local Quaker Meeting, she stumbled upon Johnny Moses and the Red Cedar Circle. Through the Circle, she found a Native Way that was "of this place", and which reaffirmed her faith in the sacredness of the Earth and her place in it.

In many ways, her involvement has contributed greatly to the strength and cohesion of the local group. She sees herself as a "bridge" and "instigator" in the Circle's struggle for connectedness and community, and while she is not particularly modest in this admission, she doesn't seem to be exaggerating, either:

I feel I'm a bridge person, because my kids are all gone now, so I'm alone. But they're important to me, and I've had good experiences in family, and good experiences living in community. So I know this can be done really well. But also in some senses I'm very much a loner. I'm a product of my own culture. But I've had lots of experience, and I've lived, you know, all the years on the reservation in an extended family. So I know the positives and the negatives that come with that. I still think it's the only way to go, because in Native cultures, we are all connected. This Ayn Rand notion of lone individualism does not work. It's not true, it's not viable. The rugged individualist, the mountain man; it doesn't work. That's not our world. It never was our world (RCC Interview: Diana 02/92).

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### Kay

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, April 1, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*The Circle tonight was pretty mellow. Perhaps one of the more note worthy events was Kay's question regarding what to do with songs that keep coming to her. She's had a particular song which belongs to another person, running through her head lately. Since it is someone else's personal song that has not been given to the Circle, Kay is not at liberty to bring it out here. NightHawk, Sarah, and Lorrain all responded saying that when this sort of thing happens, you should pray for the person whose song it is. The Spirits are telling her that this person needs to be thought of and prayed for, and that if the reason the song keeps coming remains unclear, she should ask the Spirits to make it clear.*

Kay is 30 and single. She describes herself as a "non-joiner":

Well, I feel that I can participate, and I can utilize the ceremony of another culture...I can participate, but I don't think I could ever really be a member, because I'm not-- I didn't grow up that way (RCC Interview: Kay, 03/93).

To some extent, she also fears the commitment of joining anything, so her reluctance to consider herself a full-fledged member of the Circle may have as much to do with her sense of independence as it does with her concern that the Native Way is not her culture.

She has lived in Corvallis for ten years, and during part of the 1980's, she was involved in a couple of different New Age meditation groups. The "thing became commercialized" and trivialized, however, and she was disillusioned by it. About the same time, her massage teacher died, and she went through a period of confusion, her beliefs shaken. Things she had considered sacred were still sacred, "but they were taken in a lighter tone." Seeing a poster for a Native American Storyteller, she went to hear Johnny Moses one weekend to "see if he was for real:"

And I went and it was really wonderful. He told his stories and there was a song Circle first in the typical way that they do it. And I really liked it. And then he came back, and I saw him again. Then maybe the third or fourth time that he was here, I decided to go to Circle on Wednesday (RCC Interview: Kay, 03/93).

Kay is the only member of the Circle with whom I have become close friends. Her own doubts and her marginal status has made her someone with whom I can confide concerning my own nebulous feelings about the whole thing. And as I sit back and watch the proceedings, or speculate about them over beers with my cadre of pals, I can count on her to laugh and say, "Mary, you're such a anthropologist," (occasionally "damned" or "fucking" anthropologist).

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### *Lorrain*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, October 9, 1991 / Friends Meeting House, Corvallis, Or.

*Sister Lorraine made an incredible statement. First, she said that she had really been hoping there would be "a lot of sisters" there this evening and no men. She wanted to tell the sisters about some things without the men there. She talked about the prayers, specifically in relation to the hand gesture.*

*Lorrain said that when only women are in the Circle, they can gesture from the heart outward and upward, sending the prayer up without bringing it back to the Earth, which is what happens when one brings the hand back to the chest. Women's prayers are so powerful, she said, that they can come back to Earth of their own accord. One wonders why, if they are so powerful, such gesturing won't work when men are present in the Circle. She went on to say that, when in Circle, women can gesture out as opposed to up and out, thereby sending their prayers exclusively to the other women present, leaving the men out.*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, October 23, 1991 / Friends Meeting House, Corvallis, Or.

*During the time of the third bell, Lorrain decided to offer the Woman Warrior Song. It, like most other songs, is a chant, but has a more rapid and complex beat than many others. I'll need to find out more about this "warrior woman" stuff.*

*The ceremony closes with the fourth bell, everyone stands, turns in a circle and it's done. Lorrain commented on the smallness of the Circle this evening and thought it was cozy and nice. "We have such a nice warm Circle tonight," and she took my hand and NightHawk's, NightHawk took Irene's, and Irene and I held hands. We stood there for a while holding hands in a circle and grinning at each other - me feeling red and bothered with discomfort.*

*As the altar was being dismantled, I asked Lorrain about the cloth. She explained the difference between the winter and summer cloths. Summer cloths can be flowered or multi-colored. The blue cloths under the flowered cloths, I had seen at other meetings, were specifically for healing and not seasonal. Blue represents the sky, is the healing color, and can be used anytime during the year. In fact, Johnny Moses had it "come to him" that the "training circle" this winter should have a pale blue cloth.*

*The red and black of the winter cloth are the "sacred colors." Sister Lorrain explained that the red represents women's blood lost during menstruation or childbirth, which flows into the earth and does something sacred which I didn't catch.*

*Lorrain offered me the box to take home and bring to the next meeting. I was really taken aback. I'll definitely do it sometime, but I knew I wouldn't be the most reliable person this time around because I wasn't sure if I would be able to get to next Wednesday's gathering. I told her so, and she understood. No problem. There are power dynamics in this group, though I'm sure none would admit it. The leadership of the Circle seems to go around amongst a few women. I don't know what the deal with the box is. I'll have to watch who else takes it home at other meetings. Why did she offer it to me?*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, January 15, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*Something seems to be up with Lorrain. She talked for quite awhile about bears, saying that everywhere she turns there are more bears. She told of driving by a shop window and seeing a bear's skin that seemed to 'speak' to her. It even had a red kerchief and glasses on its head, this being significant evidently for the reason that this is a fair description of the way Lorrain looks. She felt that this bear was calling her to 'rescue' it from this window display, so she finally went into the store and started explaining to the woman shopkeeper that why she wanted to buy the skin. I guess, fortunately for Lorrain, the woman was a Native American who could dig--so to speak--where she was coming from. The bear turns out to have been in this family for a long time, and, of course, had special totemic significance for them, so they weren't willing to give it up. Lorrain was relieved to hear this and commented on how we sometimes misread the messages that we get from the spirits--in this case, the spirit of the Bear. She continued to talk about some trying times she is having, in the usual vague way that people talk about their troubles in Circle.*



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Sarah

Fieldnotes: Saturday, June 1, 1991 / The Unitarian Church, Corvallis, Or.

*It's 2:00 and I've come back. I just couldn't stay for lunch. This is all too much for me without some kind of intermission. I suppose that, as I get more used to them, I'll be able to tolerate them for longer periods of time. In any case, as I return, they are setting up for a "give-away." Is this an interpretation of a potlatch? Or is it more on the lines of a Plains Indian Give-Away? If the latter, what has it to do with a 'Traditional Northwest Coast' healing circle? Johnny explains to the group that the give-away is an "ancient healing ceremony." He then turns the floor over to "our sister, Sarah," who has a huge pile of everything arranged on the floor.*

*Sarah says, "To my knowledge, I don't have Native heritage, but people ask me, as they know I wished I did. My spirit is in that heritage and culture. The Corvallis Circle is like a home to me; I've found a place to live. I've been in since shortly after the Gulf War started." So here's a woman who considers herself a full member, is conducting what appears to be a major event, and has only been in maybe four months.*

*Sarah honors several specific people, one of whom is Diana. She asks for songs, and as people sing, she has children help pass things. As things are being handed out, people chat, comparing and admiring each other's drums between songs. Then, Sarah calls on four people to speak for her, or bear witness. It amounts to praise singing, though they speak as opposed to sing. As each person talks, people around the room come up to them and put money in their cupped hands. Some redistribution of wealth going on here.*

*I got a pair of hand beaded earrings, a bag of potpourri, candles, quarters, candy, and a record that was originally given to Diana. She doesn't have a record player, so she gave it to me. After all the giving-away was done, Sarah took a bag of coins and threw*

*them out into the center of the room. All the kids scrambled on the floor, grabbing madly at the coins.*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, February 5, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*The meeting really fizzled out fast tonight. I didn't catch a lot of it, for I had taken my medicine before going. Its side affect of being a mild sedative combined with my budding cold to virtually knock me out. Sarah evidently noticed unusual behavior--or, rather, nonbehavior --on my part, for after the closing of the Circle, she came up to me, put her arm around me and asked if I was alright. That's so like her. She is very nurturing and warm.*

*I told her I was suddenly very tired, but that I would be ok. She told me to wait a minute so she could give me some light. I didn't know what she was talking about until she got a candle and started 'putting' the light from it on me. She did this with a waving motion of her hand, palm facing the candle, and then brushed toward me. She went all around me, doing this several times, taking her palm from the light and laying it on my head, upper back, shoulders, and chest. She said that this might get me home alright. I was truly touched by her show of concern.*

In the spring of 1993, I heard from Kay that Sarah had sent a letter to the Circle explaining that she could no longer be a member, then basically vanished. No one could find her or get ahold of her to find out what was going on. She said very little in her letter beyond stating that she just needed to have some space from them, and things weren't going well for her there.

I had noticed a few months before that she always seemed a little edgy, and had even started smoking, taking smoke-breaks during Circle meetings. As of the Spring of 1994, no one really knows what happened.

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*Lucille*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, October 9, 1991 / Friends Meeting House, Corvallis, Or

*The altar was set up in the center of the room. Four lit candles were at each corner of the cloth, with one extra candle which Diana had brought and lit for Lucille.*

*Lucille, she explained, is upset over the Ann Humphrey suicide case.*

*Ann Humphrey was co-founder of the Hemlock Society and was found dead of an apparent suicide in an isolated wooded spot. Both Lucille and Diana had done "co-counseling" with her, and they had both been to Humphrey's house to practice healing ceremonies with her. I'm not at all sure what these things mean.*

*At sometime after the second bell, Lucille spoke up about being grateful she had been granted a studio by the "Great Spirit." She also expressed the desire for a women's house or center which isn't supported by government funding.*

*I might comment here on the way in which everyone seems to think things are granted to them or miraculously just happen. It seems to me that every time anyone is grateful for something, she talks about it as if the event were totally out of her control. Lucille did not explain how she got the studio, except to say that she had been hoping for one for some time, and then, all of a sudden, there it was--the perfect place. In this type of circumstance, at least, power lies outside of themselves somewhere with 'the spirits' or 'spirit'.*

Lucille came into the Women's Center on campus one day in March of 1994. She's the same cherubic little woman I last saw almost a year ago. She didn't remember me at first, but when I reminded her of the Circle, she caught on. As it turns out, she says she hasn't been going much lately: "It's kind of fizzled out." They still hold regular meetings, but hardly anyone shows up.

I asked her how she was doing, and she brightened right up. She's been doing quite a bit of painting. We talked about what a wonderful catharsis creative work like

that can be. She sympathized with my plight as a busy student trying to finish up a Master's thesis.

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*Brant*

Fieldnotes: Friday, January 17, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*After dinner, people trickled in from Diana's house to the Medicine House, myself being one of the first to do so. Already there was Sister Louisa a very large and unhealthy looking woman I had seen before at the June '91 gathering, Sister Sarah, Sister Lorrain, Louisa's daughter, and a trippy little fellow named Brant who has two little braids dangling provocatively from his beard. He's a practicing Buddhist, and sat in a lotus position throughout the evening, making little gestures such as you see in depictions of the Buddha. He also interrupted people during their times to speak in Circle, with comments and questions. It was evidently his first time, so everyone was as patient with him as possible, though the inappropriateness of his behavior was uncomfortable, even to me.*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, February 5, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*Other people began to file in, but not very many more; Rosemary showed up. She's a large, 50ish woman with a terrific voice, who I last saw at a meeting in the Fall. Mariana also showed up and sat next to me. Brant, the Buddhist, came in as well. I think there were some others, but I cannot remember them.*

*Brant had a bell and a drum with him this time. He had his drum laying on the floor next to him, opened-back up, skin side down. Sarah went over to him, ostensibly to admire the drum. He had bought it somewhere ready made, but I didn't catch where he said. At any rate, Sarah's real purpose in going over to him was to tell him a teaching of the drum: "don't leave it lying on its back (open side up) because this allows it to collect*

*all the energy that is in the room, and something may fall in there that you don't want in there."*

After only a few meetings, I rarely saw Brant again. He struck me as an experimenter, butterflying around from one spirituality to another. The Circle gets quite a few of these, it turns out, but this is not viewed as a problem:

I feel that everybody is needed. And the people that come are supposed to be here.

And, you know, we had one person come; it was a man with one leg, and it was a period of time when I wasn't really on top of things, and so he came, and I didn't get his address and I don't think he ever came again. But, hopefully, you know, he was needed, and hopefully, he got something. And I just pray to the Spirit that people realize that everybody's welcome and everybody has something to give and offer (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

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### *NightHawk*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, October 9, 1991 / Friends Meeting House, Corvallis, Or.

*During the period of the second bell, NightHawk obviously noticed that I was not gesturing. She made a point of explaining the proceedings for "the newcomers." She made mention of letting speakers talk uninterrupted out of respect, and further, gesturing as a sign of respect. She was politely letting me know that if I want to prove my respect for the group, I had better start making the gesture.*

*NightHawk's son came in at one point, curled up next to his mother, and beat on her drum under her tutelage. He looks to be about eight or so. Evidently, it's appropriate for children to join in, if they so choose. It appears to be a rare occurrence, however, which is not to be wondered at. From a kid's point of view, one of these Circle meetings makes sitting for an hour in a church pew seem positively entertaining.*

*I hung around, having decided I should introduce myself in more depth to NightHawk. I asked her if she always leads. She says that people take turns, and almost everyone is involved with that position at one time or another. My assumption is that*

*some people lead more often than others, and that the taking of turns usually circulates among a limited number of people.*

*I told her who I am, mentioning that I had spoken a little bit about my project to Diana. She seemed unimpressed. Sometimes people get really excited when I tell them what I'm doing. When I mentioned the idea of cultural borrowing, NightHawk said that where people are from or what kind of cultural background they have really doesn't matter. She's a very formidable woman. Very powerful, in some way.*

Fieldnotes: Saturday, January 18, 1992 / Summit Grange, Summit, Or.

*Of the women who acted as witness to Stan, NightHawk was the most interesting. When one is witness, he or she stands up with hands cupped in front, and starts talking about how and why they know the person and what makes this person wonderful and unique. As they talk, people around the room come and put money - coins and bills - in the open hands of the speaker. Anyway, NightHawk talked of first meeting Stan at a gathering where he was doing some photography for a 'Shaman's Drum' article on Johnny and the Red Cedar Circle. She was, at the time, in hiding from her abusive ex-husband, and felt very threatened by the fact that Stan was taking pictures. She did not really specify what sort of interaction they had, but she did say that they talked about this issue for a long time, and came to an agreement. Her greatest praise of him is that he dealt with the problem with sensitivity, and that they are now very close friends largely because of this episode.*

*NightHawk's give-away was a much more elaborate affair. I helped pile stuff onto the blankets laid out in the middle of the room. She has been collecting for this give-away for quite some time. Special gifts to particular individuals included her first quilt, given to Louisa, and another quilt for Diana. My own list of received items should give some idea of how grand her give-away was: one matted print, two lengths of fabric, candles, candle holder, candy, a woven friendship bracelet, and a scarf. It lasted forever.*

*I had wanted to leave before it got dark in order to avoid Summit's winding roads iced-over, but it went on and on. Witnessing for her were Louisa, Diana, and a couple of other women I don't know from other Circles.*

*The reason she was having this give-away was as a thanksgiving for overcoming trying times. She had been married to an abusive man and had to go underground when she finally left him. Most of the people in R.C.C. seem to have like stories of very hard times. I'm going to speculate that the ritual and spiritualism and support group atmosphere give what are essentially disenfranchised people a sense of power that they lack in the dominant cultural milieu. It's a source of power that is not really recognized by 'establishment' society, therefore, is available to people who would not otherwise have any power mechanisms open to them.*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, April 1, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*NightHawk has been doing a "cleansing" for the past few months. What it amounts to is a diet, but it's evidently a kind of spiritual weight control. I can't quite ascertain the details of it, but she does refer to this cleansing concept a lot, and sundry food restrictions. So far, she's lost 30 pounds. She looks well and happy; quite a bit happier than when I first became acquainted with her.*

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*Marsha*

Fieldnotes: Wednesday, January 22, 1992 / The Medicine House, Corvallis, Or

*This was a very eventful meeting, really. At one point, Paula asked Marsha to sing the Buddhist chant/Mary's Peak (Tcha-Tee-Man-Wee) myth song that she had introduced on January 17. This time she told the dream story that went with it. Evidently, she had told it in great detail at the big gathering on the eighteenth in Summit.*

*The whole thing took about ten minutes to tell. She started by explaining that in her brand of Buddhist practice, one is expected to have a personal dream experience, at some point. She had been bothered by the fact that she had not had one yet. One day, she saw a poster advertising a production of the Tcha-Tee-Man-Wee Great Flood play, and it stuck in her head, for her daughter had brought home some literature from school that had a rough translation of the 'original' Kalapuyan myth.<sup>12</sup> That night she had a dream which combined elements, creatures, and gods of Hindu tradition, and Tibetan Buddhist motifs with those of the Tcha-Tee-Man-Wee 'tradition'. At the end of the dream, a song was revealed to her, which starts with several rounds of a Buddhist chant and concludes with "Tcha-Tee-Man-Wee" sung several times. Everyone seems to think this is some kind of truly great thing. The tale is very prophetic, very millenarian.*

Marsha is a truly enthusiastic person, with a mind that seems to race around subjects. Unlike the other Buddhist, Brant, with whom she had originally come, she has become more or less of a Circle regular.

At one point, I tried to get her to let me interview her, but she wouldn't hear of it; she doesn't really know anything, she claims. Then she offered to take me down to Eugene to meet a revered Buddhist teacher who would be more worth my while.

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### *Irene*

The people of the Circle are in crises: crises over where they belong both culturally and spiritually and sometimes even within themselves as individuals. The multiple personalities of Irene are explicitly symbolic of the conflicted position everyone in the group can be said to stand in, at least on occasion. In the Winter of 1993, before being subsumed by Iris, she wrote the following poem:

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<sup>12</sup> This was a play written, designed, staged, and performed by several local area artists. The most striking thing about the production was the use of masks by the performers. The mask designs were suggestive of Kwakiutl masks, though the play was supposed to be enactments of Kalapuya myths. The Kalapuya did not use masks.



Lies

Lies  
 We are white.  
 Lies  
 We are white.  
 The source of all lies.  
 Don't tell the neighbors anything that happens at home.  
 They might realize we're different.  
 (They already know anyway, but we'll pretend that they don't).  
 Lies  
 We are a happy family.  
 Lies  
 We are honest.  
 Lies  
 We are white.  
 more lies.

The primary message of these words is that to be white is to be the source of all lies. To be white is to live a lie. It is important, however, to note the confusion of the poem. Looked at in another way, she appears to be saying that she (and other Circle members) are not really white: to call them white is the lie, for they have disowned that cultural heritage and all that it means, a facet of their ethos I examine closely in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MOVING INTO CULTURE: ANALYZING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

I moved into a culture, and that was a great gift  
(RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

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Fieldnotes: Saturday, January 18, 1992 / Summit Grange, Summit, Or.

*I arrived this morning, before, lunch in the middle of a prayer Circle. Johnny was there leading. Everyone is calling him "our brother Whis.stem.men.knee." This is the first time I've ever heard this.*

*I squeaked over to where NightHawk, Lorrain, Paula, and Sarah were sitting, and made myself a comfortable nest. There were a lot of people there, some of whom I'd seen at the June '91 gathering. In particular was a very small, emaciated woman with a caste on her right leg. Seems like she was wearing it last time I saw her. Anyway, she had a name change for this gathering. I believe her real name is Susan, but for this gathering she was going by 'Alice'. I don't have a clue as to why, but it was evidently a big deal because several people in the room were wearing red ribbons with that name written on them.*

*Toward lunch time, the Circle was closed, and a dancing Circle was formed while kitchen duty people laid out the food for lunch. Folks were really getting into the spirit of the dancing, most of which was just simple steps in a big circle to the beat of the drums. Two dances were not like this however. One was a spinning dance, kind of like a whirling dervish type, only not so intense. The other was a jumping dance, which required that everyone hop in the circle.*

*A few people were wearing black paint on their faces. One was the man from Seattle who had been at Diana's last night. He had circles painted around his eyes and*

*lines across his cheeks. Another was a woman, who, I'll assume, was dressed as a horse. Perhaps this is her spirit guide. She was dressed entirely in black from head to foot. Around her waist was tied a rope, left dangling behind her like a tail. Her face was painted with black designs that almost entirely covered her skin. To top it off, she was wearing black sunglasses. And for the ultimate affect, she kept whinnying and neighing throughout the day. During the spinning dance, she worked herself into a horsy ecstasy. Maybe when she was a little girl she just loved horses and wished she could be one, like I used to pretend I was a black panther when I was five.*

### Building On Dichotomies

People in large-scale, pluralistic Western cultures often frame their identity through difference and dichotomies. By setting up an image of contrasts, one can craft the self and fit it into an imagined juxtaposition. I am not that; I am this. This is who I am because that is who I am not. Members of the Red Cedar Circle are crafting themselves and their spirituality out of reference to who they are, what they reject in that identity, and who they want to become. Native Americans involved in the group may be revitalizing their own culture, asserting their original ethnic and spiritual heritage. The Euro-Americans involved--by far the majority of members--are rejecting their roots because they see them as damaging, or possibly not even existent. Being a member of the Circle is one way whites, who are dissatisfied with their heritage, can reformulate who they are. This is done by setting up a contrast between white culture and Native culture, then moving spiritually and morally from the one to the other.

Although the stated ideology of Circle members focuses on a rejection of white ways, including the concept of a world of dualities, they have understandably not been able to move away from a dualistic, dichotomized worldview. The use of a fundamental

dichotomy as a major organizing theme of the group's ideology belies their state of being ultimately trapped in Western epistemologies. To set up a frame of reference which necessarily pits white culture against Native culture or "the Native Way," is to perpetuate the concept of dualities and dichotomies as a basic structural principle in life. Contained within this constructed contrast set are explicit statements about Culture (read industrial technology) vs. Nature, and implicit gender contrasts that are very familiar to individuals in Euro-dominant societies.

Outlined in Tables 1 and 2 are some of the specific names and domains of Native culture and Euro-American culture recognized by Red Cedar Circle members and other New Age Native American spiritualists. These domain sets were developed through interviews with several informants:

Euro-American Culture
outside world (urban) mainstream society scientific, rational society white culture patriarchy the university white world

Table 1: Domains of Euro-American Culture

Native Culture
the "res" (rural) the other world psychic/spirit world Native world on the land sacred ground the woods

Table 2: Domains of Native Culture

Table 3 shows a listing of what these domains include in terms of characteristics and qualities, and some descriptive statements on what each 'world' is like:

White Culture	Native Culture
materialistic greedy obsessed with the self--the culture of 'I' non-spiritual/cultureless entrapped by linear view of time/history entrapped by general linear thinking false/phony removed from nature (disconnected) patriarchal disharmony between people and earth controlled violent	spiritual sharing think in terms of 'we'/community' rich in culture timeless/primordial/"First World" access to alternative realities real connected to Mother Earth egalitarian living in harmony free (to be themselves and be valued) peaceful

Table 3: Dichotomized Characteristics of White Culture and Native Culture

The following description of Red Cedar Circle beliefs is based primarily on the words of Diana and Kay, two of my most eloquent and thoughtful informants. Their statements about white culture vs. Native culture can be used as a fairly accurate reflection of the general ideas informing the practices of all Circle members. For them, Euro-American culture goes by a lot of names. They might call it "we" or paradoxically "them"; "mainstream society"; "scientific, rational society"; "white culture"; "patriarchy"; "this culture"; "the middle-class". Whatever the name, it is seriously flawed. The root of its flaws comes from a lack or denial of a spiritual base. The heritage of rational Newtonian science, oppressive patriarchy, and capitalism gone mad, has left white societies disconnected from the Earth. Since the Earth is our spiritual Mother, our disconnection has resulted in spiritual and cultural bankruptcy:

Here, the main goal in life is to accumulate things and collect things. And the more you have, the more you're worth, and the more you're worth, the more you're respected (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

Our white culture does not recognize or emphasize the spiritual. It's very materialistic. The main problem...is that we're disconnected from the Earth (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

Capitalism has become something deadly in white culture, leading to a greed that, when combined with our disconnection, has led us inevitably to the brink of destruction. We have poisoned our Mother and we don't care because we don't know who She is:

White culture rapes. Our values [lead us to] scrape out the earth and plant a bunch of food and spray a bunch of crap on it to kill whatever else is there and with complete control rather than nourishing and giving thanks. We don't even thank the Earth for what we're doing and what we're getting from it. There's no connection that the Earth is a living organism (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

Many people other than Red Cedar Circle members believe that Euro-American culture is actually no culture at all. Though it is referred to as a group, a way, and a culture, it is perceived as one with no traditions beyond an obsession with the individual self. Perhaps this is a product of anomie and confusion over identity in a relative world, but it is believed that white culture has taught us there is but one universal truth and that is 'Me':

Our culture teaches you to think in terms of 'I'. Our whole Western culture says we're islands, or what ever. That we can live on our own and disconnect from our families and not need anyone. And I don't believe that. I think that's a real problem with our culture (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

Whites are believed to literally "belong to no culture," and how can you have a spirituality if you have no culture, no traditions? How can you have spirituality when the closest thing you have to a tradition is this thing we call 'science', which debunks and devalues the sacred, which makes us afraid to admit it exists?

Certain Christian groups do believe in the power of spirit and the power of prayer, and they use language like guardian angels of our voices, such as Joan of Arc and St. Teresa and other mystics; they hear voices so that God speaks to them or an angel visits them. That's the same thing as spirit people; seeing spirit people or getting messages from the spirit. But in mainstream society, you know, scientific rational society, that is whacko. So you don't talk

about those kinds of experiences. As a matter of fact, you suppress the nudges of the spirit, 'cause you don't want to go crazy, so you don't even let yourself feel things on that level (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

It's us that don't live symbolically. We take things far too literally:

I think that in our culture, ceremony and ritual has been really devalued, and I think that psychically we need that. Subconsciously our intuitions, our non-rational minds really need ritual and ceremony, and to be able to connect with other people on that level. And we don't have a format in our culture to do that. Even church doesn't provide that, really (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

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The Native Way as understood in the Red Cedar Circle, stands in a place of natural juxtaposition to the ills of white society:

Native culture is connected. Socially Native Americans seem to accept their interdependence with one another in a social group, as well as their interdependence on the Earth for water, food, all those kinds of things. And Native Americans tend to try to keep in balance and harmony. And that speaks of interdependence or connections (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

The factitious Indian Story discussed in Chapter Two is a vital one for Circle members. Without it, they might not have a way to view and express their dissatisfactions with themselves:

On the reservation, it's truly the world of the spirit, and that's the most important thing, and that's the level people run at, even if they're busy denying it, which many are. But they're denying the norm. So everyone on the res really is raised in a culture in which there's a deep spiritual base. That is normal. And counting numbers with the statistics to explain something, that is odd (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

People live very symbolic lives. Everything that comes has a symbolic meaning. You find that meaning and you live by that. So rather than the Lakota psychology being primitive and childlike, I found it very sophisticated. Because people would just

take the outer surface, which in white world looks like childish behavior, but it's not. It's very sophisticated behavior. People don't worship fetishes, or anything like that. They would never get confused about that. It's us that don't live symbolically. We take things literally, but Native people don't have to because they don't have to explain things. They just live by the experience, and as a result, they don't deny the experiences that they have. They would never deny their experience. They would say, 'I can't explain it, but this happened to me.' Everybody listens and they accept that as valid (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

What's real and unreal is not divided up the same way. No, no. What's real is what you've experienced and there's no search for a scientific explanation. As a matter of fact, in ceremonies they ridicule people who look for explanations (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

Materially, as well as spiritually, the Native world is seen as being harmonious, based on equanimity, and sharing:

The Native Way is profligate, it's prodigal, if you will, because it says 'no, spend time, give.' Give.

You don't give away your cast-offs and your rags. No, no. That is not honoring. That is not high class. There are all kinds of jokes about that. The point of having a give-away is to share the very best. And to make things, and as you make them, fill them with love for the person who will receive them.

If anything, it's based more on how much you give, but you have to give it correctly. If you just, you know, do it for show, it doesn't count. It has to be done in the right spirit. That's what high class means (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

Of course, the values inherent in the Native Way have suffered under the onslaught of white society, colonialism, disease, oppression:

In the First World there was a Red Cedar Society, and they were the ones that first made and used red cedar for baskets and clothing. They were the weavers in the first world. Red Cedar Circle is a very ancient society, and it fell into disuse, or I guess in the second world it wasn't picked up again or something (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

Kay: I think there are so many levels that we experience.

Mary: And other cultures have a deeper understanding of this?



Kay: mm hmm. Or at least they haven't completely squelched it out of their culture. And it's sad to see that it's happening. We've only got a piece left of Native American culture.

Mary: So, you see major parts of those cultures as being lost?

Kay: mm hmm. Like, do you know anything about the Kahuna? They're in the Polynesian Islands. They're the shamans in those islands, and there's whole huge pieces of the Kahuna spirituality that have been lost. I mean they had to go underground for so many years that only pieces of it have reemerged.

Mary: Do you see the same thing with the *Si.si.wiss* Medicine?

Kay: I wonder. I think so. I think a lot of it was lost. And I think that a lot of the women's teachings in, particular, were lost (RCC

Interview: Kay 03/93).

Most importantly, however, is the idea that the Native way is coming back, and that white society must look to Native peoples and the Earth as teachers and spiritual guides leading it in the direction of fundamental change:

Native peoples are the teachers of the rest of us; we are hungry for doorways to the Spirit, to learn that every thing and every day is sacred. Teach us compassion, humility, generosity, connection with all living things, *Mitakuye oyasin*. Teach us materialistic selfish greedy non-natives to share and care for the earth, or we will all perish together.

Spiritual leaders need to encourage all to deepen their prayers and spiritual path. Spiritual leaders with patience. Because we non-natives must first learn to shift our thinking from "I" to "we," a concept built into many native languages, and thus learned from birth. Time and patience: good old native values (Mack 1994)

The voices of your ancestors get further and further away and you can no longer hear their teachings clearly. Only those whose grandparents had good ears can teach you, if you choose to listen. The spirit that guided your grandparents is still here. Each of us has the capacity to listen. Our Creator gave us the gift that allows us to hear for ourselves the strength that each of us can receive by listening and following the directions--of the Spirit.

Each of our wise teachers in the past have directed us to study the teaching of mother earth. This is basic to understanding our culture.

To honor, respect and have faith is taught by the culture....

I wish that each person in this world could have experienced the beauty of our culture 70 years ago.

The sharing--the fellowship--the tenderness--the appreciation of every gift from the spirit.

Simplicity of faith--discipline of mind, body and spirit embodied the philosophy of our wisest teachers.

The Earth is our first teacher. This is where you can gain the understanding about the culture of the first people.

The truth is always there in those lessons taught by the Earth!  
 Have you ever experienced the joy of anticipating a glass of clear  
 Spring water given by the Earth?<sup>13</sup>

The sentiment which states that whites are all that is left to "weave the basket...so it's no longer Indian or Native American," except for a few Native teachers and spiritual leaders, affectively removes Native Americans from Native culture. Native culture is disembodied from actual groups of people and becomes a symbolic ideal hovering above white culture as the ultimate goal in the transformation of self and society.

### The Nature/Native Link: A Question of Gender

It seems like a lot of [shamanic tradition] is connected to the female. And then when do *people* enter into it? I don't know. I think that there's more of a balance. There was. I would think. I would hope. And I would hope that we could find that again. But the female is probably talked about more because the feature of the patriarchy has become this power over us, and then also the squelching of the feminine, and so, I think it's response (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

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As I listened to Diana and Kay, and as I've listened to others sitting in Circle on Wednesday nights, I've heard many associations being made between men in general and white culture, and women in general and Native culture. Native Americans, it would seem, are viewed as having the qualities that women are enculturated to have in white culture:

*think in terms of 'we'/community':*  
 Women tend to think in 'we' more than men (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

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<sup>13</sup>From "To Coming Generations" written by the (unnamed) Director of Lushootseed Research, August 10, 1992. Given to me by Diana.

*sharing:*

Women have to be care-givers. Anchors; women are supposed to be the anchor for their men, right (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93)?

[I wanted my white, male, engineering students to read Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions (Fire 1972) because] it presented an alternative culture that was 180 degrees different than the one they were in. Where things are unimportant and honor was important. Generosity is important, and not greed and saving things, not collecting and hoarding things. Give-aways I wanted them to see that there was another way of living than the way they'd been raised. So much of this was considered the feminine world, you know, vibes and feelings and emotions and so forth.

*psychic/spirit world, spiritual, access to alternative realities:*

Mary: You said that being in touch with vibes and the Spirits and such is seen as feminine. Do you think that women are trained in our culture to be sensitive to that?

Diana: mm hmm... Although it is discounted (chuckle). Still, someone has to be in touch with what's going on, you know (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

*spiritual, sharing:*

I think women are more--we've been enculturated to allow sharing that [deeper] place with each other (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

By the same turn, when Red Cedar Circle members speak of men, they often use the same descriptives used for white culture:

*non-spiritual, controlled, disconnected:*

The contemplative place, our inner thoughts, rather than the thoughts we put out into the world; it's not as readily accessible [in white culture]. We tend to run, we tend to hide it from one another and steal it away from each other, although I believe that it's a real basic need to share that with each other. So I think it creates a lot of disharmony in terms of relationships with each other, and particularly intimate relationships with men and women. And that gets into gender issues in terms of men. Men in our culture [are] so much, you know, the pat thing of 'oh, little boys don't cry,' and the dehumanization of young boys to where they can't feel their emotions any more, or their feelings, or that place of reverence or a place of sacredness (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

And men, again, have been taught not to [feel] the deeper place. I think it doesn't attract them, or they're afraid of it, or they don't know how. All those things. It's sad. Even the men that are participating in that, or some of the men I see participating in that, at least in the Corvallis Circle, they're way different from the women. They're not as revealing of themselves and their pains

and their hurts or their joys, for that matter. [They're] much more intellectual about it. Much more rational (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

I see this with men, and maybe 'cause I'm on campus, but seeing how a person can get really far away from real basic needs of love and affection. And being attentive to another person's needs. We don't have children around us much and we can get in our little world and not be touched, not hug each other anymore-- do our little research, sit and read our books and go to a lab-- You know, I think about some of these men I see on campus that go to their little cubicle, and you think, there he goes to his little thing, and he goes to his classes, and he could be very isolated and never have-- you know, get very far away from basic love and affection. So I think that's somehow tied in, too, to spirit (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

*disharmony between people and earth, violent:*

[There] is this underlying disrespect for white males, particularly, the men in our culture. I think it's not unjustifiable, because of what basic animals men have become. And part of it is their disconnectedness, their inability to express their feelings, to feel them, and so they're able to ultimately rape. When you're so disassociated from yourself and from your humanity or another person's humanity, you can create acts of violence (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

To Circle members, relations between men and women in white culture are analogous to relations between white culture and Native culture. Men are the oppressors, the carriers of patriarchy, as is white culture. Women are oppressed by that patriarchy as Native Americans are oppressed by the dominant Euro-American culture. And so many women are involved in the Red Cedar Circle because of their intimate awareness of patriarchal oppression:

There are lesbian women and then there are married women who were screwed over by their husbands, or whatever; women who are more aware of how they're being oppressed by patriarchy, and by men (RCC Interview: Kay 03/93).

Well, put it another way-- A lot of strong, spiritual women are drawn to the Red Cedar Circle because, in this tradition, women can be strong spiritual leaders....So, [we have a] women's Circle, yes, right now, but I don't think it's inherent. I think that the Red Cedar draws women not because of something in the Red Cedar Circle, it's because of the lack in this society over here (white). The lack. You know, you read in the paper everyday, 'woman

preacher barred from congregation, ta-da-ta-da-ta-da, and so on.'  
Doors are closed. So I think it's a lack here (RCC Interview:  
Diana 02/93).

Sherry Ortner's (1974) theoretical model of 'woman:man as nature:culture' seems to intersect with and speak back to the Red Cedar Circle at this point. To recapitulate, Ortner suggested that women are universally second-class citizens because they are seen as closer to nature, a view based on their reproductive functions. Nature is seen as something humans must transcend in order to survive, and culture is the means by which we do it. Men, however, are viewed as free to create culture, as their minds and bodies are not wrapped up in perpetuation of the species. Therefore, men are viewed as superior to women.

While it has been amply demonstrated in numerous case studies that this model doesn't hold as the universal Ortner posited, I suspect that there is some veracity to it in terms of certain contexts and presumptions about women and men in the history of Euro-dominant cultures. Within the popular culture--meaning the non-academic, 'everyday' world--many of us could probably think of instances when this view seemed to be voiced, and because of the dualistic/dichotomized worldview of the Euro-dominant, Ortner's model seems reasonable when applied to certain domains within such societies.

In the Circle, and in many other women-centered groups and spiritualities, the 'female:male as nature:culture' model is accepted, but in an altered form. In these instances, nature is associated with the good and the truth, and culture, the invention of man, is associated with falsity and destruction:

Truth is wild as it always hides itself no matter how determined we human beings are to try to pin it down. This is why it appears that the truth, sooner or later, always contradicts itself. Truth must contradict itself from time to time, like all beings of nature do....Manipulation (i.e., trying to tame truth) results in violence. Just look at how the white culture has destroyed the natural wild beauty of this land (M.S., *Red Cedar Bark*, Feb. 1993).

Within the Native American Spiritualism of the New Age, Ortner's dichotomized model takes on more than just reified distinctions between man/woman, nature/culture. It can also be applied to distinctions between Native culture/nature and white culture/industrial technology:

Native Americans are to whites as Nature is to culture.

Or...

Native culture is to white culture as Nature is to artifice.

And...

Nature is to artifice as good is to evil.

So, in affect, there are two running themes here. One is:

Nature is sacred.

Women are close to Nature.

Women have a close affinity and special access to the Sacred.

The other is:

Nature is sacred.

Native peoples are close to Nature.

Native peoples have close affinity and special access to the Sacred.

In this way, women in Euro-dominant society and Native Americans are implicitly associated due to the belief that men in white culture are "dehumanized," and that women in white culture "have been enculturated to allow sharing a deeper place with each other."

Kay speculates that women in white culture still have something of a connection to the Earth because they bleed:

As women, we can't forget about our bodies, because every month we bleed. And we couldn't walk around not noticing because we'd be a mess. It would be very obvious. And I think because men don't bleed, because men don't have to pay attention to their bodies, they can really numb out.

With this, she is not saying that woman are inherently more spiritual, necessarily, but that since they are more aware of their bodies than men, they can more readily see and access the spirituality or sacredness of nature. Native peoples, who are seen as being 'of the Earth', have this awareness no matter what their gender, because they are

*connected.* According to Diana, there are distinctions made between the genders in Native cultures, to be sure. However, these distinctions, these differences, are not seen as being based on inequalities as they are in the inherently disconnected life of the Euro-dominant:

There are women's songs and there are women's teachings that the women have, and the men don't have them. The men have comparable, but different things. The men are called fire keepers. They keep the fire. So they have Fire Keeper songs and men's songs and Grandfather songs and we have Grandmother songs and Grandmother teachings. They have Grandfather teachings. When they have the separate roles, they go separately but at the same time. So they're comparable. It's like no one is left out. 'Cause when the men have a men's Circle, the women have a women's Circle (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

The members of the Circle see themselves as moving from one worldview--that of white culture as they've constructed it--to another worldview--that of Native culture as they've constructed it. Both of these constructions say a great deal about my informants, but little about any actual Native Americans. The statements about gender are more implied than explicitly stated in the doctrines of *Si.si.wiss* Medicine, but from what I can determine, associations between woman/nature/Native do exist, and are all contrasted with associations of man/technology/white culture.

As for men in the Circle, they are as much involved with reforming their masculinity as the women are involved in reifying their femininity. Being white and/or being male would not be considered privileges by Circle members because Euro-dominant culture is a trap in their eyes. The dictates of gender that whites grow up with are considered oppressive forces, rather than empowering ones. Sexuality, too, is complicated and made ambiguous in some ways, at least in terms of how people talk about it, if not how they actually behave toward each other. Johnny Moses is himself gay, and according to one source, part of a community of gay transvestites in the urban Seattle area. This is widely known, and accepted by Circle members, and as such, Moses

can be seen as symbolic of the focus on restructuring gender so inherent in the Red Cedar Circle ethos. He very easily fits within the underlying principles that make implicit associations between the feminine and Native peoples.<sup>14</sup>

What Circle practitioners are attempting to do is divorce themselves from what they see as the spiritually empty destructiveness of the "white (male) way" and bring about a revolution wherein we will all become reconnected with the Earth and "heal ourselves and our Mother." To do this, it seems, we need to tap into something Native--something "of this Earth" as a female entity.

### The Circle and Social Movement Theories

So I would go over and lay in the grass on spring days--I'm just trying to remember it. It was like I could hear voices, but I couldn't hear what they were saying. They were telling me to do something. Something was coming. It was like a premonition. I thought 'is this what happened to Joan of Arc?' And I wasn't going crazy, or anything like that. I wasn't, you know. That didn't enter my mind at all. It was like, 'oh, better pay attention. Pay attention, kind of be alert, listen. Look around, see what you're doing. Examine your life.' Things like that. It was like, they're trying to tell me something. I don't know who 'they' were, but spirits or voices or something (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

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In postmodern America, the erosion of old norms and loss of faith in the all-encompassing metanarratives of modernity can be said to characterize aspects of a rapidly changing social climate (Connor 1989). Large-scale, industrial societies such as ours have reached a level of heterogeneity which makes agreed upon foundational claims an impossibility. The sociocultural landscape is not only littered with the ruins of consensus and pockets of localized consensus, but is constantly met with a barrage of ever new and metamorphosing realities. External standards of conduct are eroded by an overload of

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<sup>14</sup> The issues of Johnny Moses' sexual orientation, his role as spiritual leader, and how this might speak back to the character of male participants warrant further discussion, but can only be raised here due to the limited scope of this study.



multi-sourced, fragmented ideologies, and, consequently, the internal foundations of identity are left vulnerable to being uprooted and dissolved (Kroker, et al 1989)

Social change brings about ideological response, whether it is a whole-hearted embracement of new conditions, a more wary acceptance of the inevitable, or a retreat from change into an idealized past. In the noise and confusion of contemporary America, there appear to be at least four domains of response that have asserted themselves into positions of relative visibility within the past fifteen to twenty years. Each of them can be said to either contain and rely strongly upon foundational claims or to disavow essentialities all together.

The first might be called the ultimate postmodern response to the postmodern condition; reveling or losing the self in pure, relativistic subjectivity. The individual becomes a "quantum energy pack" of its subjective self, jetting across and through the postmodern terrain of meanings that don't mean anything anymore, attaching, discarding and mixing up incoherent super-relativised bits of fragmented realities (Kroker, et al 1989:14). This position states that if everything is hopelessly relative--if everything is difference--everything is the same and one should be free to slip around without moral boundaries. It entails embracing the end of history and, hence, the end of responsibility.

Within fairly liberal areas of the academic arena, there is a certain amount of purposeful and methodical deconstruction of socially constructed 'realities' and reconstruction of a ordered way of living that is nonessentialist and subjective, but none the less livable. The subject and his or her lifestyle and moral stance are decentered, and become one among many narrative alternatives. But unlike the first response, this form of political life recognizes that every difference has a particular history built into it, which places it within a dialogic context of other differences. Called a "politics of positionality," this concept of diversity as norm, replacing a cultural dominant, endeavors to turn out a politically and socially responsible product (Alcoff 1988, Weeks 1989).

A third response to current conditions follows a model of retreat and entrenchment, and relies on the construction of and retreating into the simulacra of the All-American Golden Age; the Reaganite white-picket-fenced, 'Morning in America'. This is a reactionary ideological stance whose devotees claim to hold and live by fundamental, universal truths. It is felt that the salvation of social order resides in the "return to traditional values" or "family values." This collection of values amounts to a simulacral construction of an ahistoricized yester-year that never was, but that is held up as the idealized foundation of Western cultures.

Another domain of response, which relies on models of the past, is found within the New Age and the Native American spiritualism of groups like the Red Cedar Circle. This is perhaps best described as the construction of and retreating into the simulacrum of New Age Golden Ages, which include the return to a mythic vision of the world; an essentialist dreamland of indigenous, Earth-centered spiritual union with a "Great Spirit"/ "Mother Earth" / "Mother Goddess" figure. While New Age practices are based on simulacral constructions, they are generally of an earthly essence and spiritual past that never was, distinguishing them from conservative constructions based on idealized, white, middle-class Americana.

Contemporary Golden Ages are constructed out of fragments of reality: history, ideologies, cultural motifs, and/or spiritual practices become cannibalized to form models for the 'reestablishment' of an idealized past, which is, in fact, a package of concepts approximating the surface appearance of historical periods and/or mythologies. While this characterizes the general pastiche of postmodernity, in the case of foundational creeds, such simulacral packages are invested with essential and significant meanings. As such, they play a crucial role in social and religious resistance movements that can be understood in the terms of cultural revitalization movements.

Social change can bring undesirable conditions, dissatisfaction with the way things have been, and consequent high levels of individual and social stress. According

to A.F.C. Wallace's (1956, 1966, 1972) analysis of revitalization movements, individuals within rapidly transforming cultures can be caught in a situation in which their images of themselves in and of their world--called "mazeways"--do not produce a sense of balance or reduce levels of stress and social anxiety (1956:266). In such a situation, the individual either learns to live with the stress or does something to change the mazeway in an attempt to reduce stress. Therefore what a revitalization movement does, according to Wallace, is revitalize the mazeways of individuals in a culture. A revitalization movement is a conscious effort to systematically formulate a body of ideas which will assist members of a society in constructing "a more satisfying culture," (Wallace 1956:265).

The first requirement needed for the development of a revitalization movement is upheaval in individuals' lives and dissatisfaction with existing orders. Some periods provide a more fertile climate for the development of this individual dissatisfaction than others, and it could be that large numbers of revitalization movements will be found clustered in times of relative discontent and/or erosion of norms. The Reformation occurred on the heels of the disastrous fourteenth-century and the opening of ideas and possibilities during the Renaissance. Reform Protestant churches such as the Puritan, Quaker, and Methodist cropped up in large numbers during the relatively unstable seventeenth-century. The Iroquois were revived by the teachings of the prophet Handsome Lake after suffering the virtual destruction of their once powerful culture in the late eighteenth-century. The Sioux Ghost Dance followed the end of the American Indian Wars and the final destruction of their former way of life. Millenarian cargo cults developed in the South Pacific at a time of rapid social change marked by the instability wrought through colonial subjugation and influence in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. And lately, Western cultures have witnessed the development of numerous spiritual movements--including the New Age--at the same time as the West has been

straining under the stressful conditions of their own social upheaval--modernity and postmodernity.

In writing about the new religious movements which have been cropping up since the 1960's, Angela Aidala comments:

A recurrent phenomenon of the historical landscape is the periodic upsurge of movements sweeping in their condemnation of the society that surrounds them and offering alternative communities of moral regeneration and social fellowship. Such times of counter-cultural protest are characterized by relatively sudden economic, social, and demographic changes that have eroded the taken-for-granted legitimacy of prevailing institutions (1985:287).

It's in a state of panic and confusion induced by rapid, unchecked social change, erosion of norms, and fragmented reality, that individuals begin looking around for and testing out new mazeways. The members of the Red Cedar Circle can be viewed as responding to conditions of upheaval in a religiously revitalistic way. Their reliance on what they consider an authentic "old way," fits the organization into models of millenarian and revitalization movements, which often claim that the existing world order will be reversed, the ancestors will return, and the new Millennium will begin as a result of that return. Their constructed mazeway relies on a 'return' to the "Native Way."<sup>15</sup>

Practitioners of New Age Native American spiritualities get their material from appropriated and reinterpreted Native American religions. It is important for them that appropriated myths, ideologies, customs, and material motifs and objects be of true Native origin. The necessity of this seems to be based on the assumption that authentic Native Others have a monopoly on Earth-centered spiritualism deriving from their 'natural' status as 'indigenous' people and that, because of this, they are somehow better than us. Interestingly, this is radically different from the attitudes toward the

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<sup>15</sup> It is possible that the New Age term, "the transformation of self," is analogous or interchangeable with Wallace's "mazeway reformulation."

appropriation and use of Christian elements by the cultists of Melanesia. Their Cargo myths explain European possession of 'the Secret' as a theft, which the ancestors, as creators of the Cargo, would rectify. In affect, their reinterpretation of Christian themes serves to demonstrate their inherent superiority over Europeans. For Red Cedar Circle members, the reinterpretation of Native themes demonstrates the inherent inferiority of their own--white--culture. It is also the 'native' that is superior to the white, and the whites who are attempting to disown their inferior culture.

The character of the Red Cedar Circle as a revitalization movement actually falls under two subcategories described by Wallace. First, it is "revivalistic" in that it emphasizes "the institution of customs, values, and even aspects of nature which are thought to have been in the mazeway of previous generations," (1956:267). The difference here is that the previous generations are not their own, but rather, those of Native Americans. *Si.si.wiss* Medicine itself originates with existing groups of the Pacific Northwest Coast, but the local Corvallis Circle actually draws in a great deal of supposedly Kalapuya mythologies and practices, in addition to Quaker practices, Buddhist themes, Sioux rituals, and any number of other things.<sup>16</sup>

The second subclass of revitalization movements, that the Circle resembles, is the "vitalistic." A vitalistic movement stresses the "importation of alien values, customs, and material into the mazeway...but [does] not necessarily invoke ship and cargo as the mechanism," as cargo cults do (1956:267). The Red Cedar Circle is vitalistic in that they

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<sup>16</sup> The Kalapuya, or Calapooia, were inhabitants of the Willamette Valley in Western Oregon prior to European contact. Decimated primarily by disease, relocation, and integration with other Native American groups in the southern Pacific Northwest, virtually nothing remains of the culture aside from a few sparse historic and linguistic references. It is a popular motif among Corvallis area artists to suggest the Kalapuya in works and writings, though most of these references tend to be rather imaginative reconstructions based on images of other Native peoples, and perceptions of what 'Native culture' is supposed to be. In Chapter Three, I mentioned the status of Mary's Peak as a sacred place, and it is claimed that it was also sacred among the Kalapuya, who are said to have called it *Tcha-Tee-Man-Wee*. There is, however, no evidence of this, nor any historic indications that the Kalapuya used the site (or any other) for ceremonies and vision quests, as members of the Circle and other local residents claim. Interestingly, the spelling of the Kalapuya name has been altered recently by Circle members. They have started calling/writing it *Tcha.tee.man.wiss*, reflecting *Si.si.wiss*. *Si.si.wiss* Medicine, of course originates significantly north of the Willamette Valley, and it is highly unlikely that the Kalapuya had anything to do with it.

import myths, symbols, objects, etc. seen as arising out of an "alien" culture, but are revivalistic in that they are practicing "old ways of the Earth."

Both Wallace and Peter Worsley (1957) stress the role of the prophet. Aidala writes:

Where and when traditional understandings and values no longer fit emerging realities, large cracks appear in the consensus underlying existing social arrangements and prophets and visionaries can command the attention of more than a few passersby, (1985:287).

In New Age cults, sometimes there is a charismatic leader and sometimes there is not. Quite often, there may be a number of spokespeople, as in the overall Indian Spirituality movement, the various brands of Eastern mysticism, or the Goddess cults. With most of these, the mediums of choice for communication of 'the word' is through books, magazines, some public speaking, and New Age trade shows or 'expositions', making it a distinctly Western phenomenon. But I shy away from classifying these spokespeople as prophets. For the Red Cedar Circle, Johnny Moses has served as the primary communicator of the Sacred Breath--*Si.si.wiss* --but whether he could properly be called a "prophet" or not, is debatable.

Amanda Porterfield (1987) has examined feminist theology using Wallace's theory of social revitalization movements, and suggests that the role of a movement's visionary leader can stand in for that of prophet. Mary Daly, for instance, is widely considered a visionary leader in feminist theology, whose "prophetic visions are accompanied by intense moral concern," (1987:241). Johnny Moses would seem to be viewed by Circle members in a similar light; he may or may not be perceived by all as a prophet, but there is no doubt that he is a visionary leader in whose prophetic footsteps Circle members follow.

## Politics of the Spirit

Fieldnotes: Saturday, April 11, 1992 / Herbal Workshop, Medicine House, Corvallis, Or.

*I arrived at the medicine house after the workshop was on its way. Everyone was sitting in Circle, but there was less structure regarding when people can speak than normally in Circle. Present were:*

*Norma, giving the workshop: A large, middle aged, rather intense looking woman down here from near Seattle.*

*Marjorie: also an herbalist down from the Seattle area.*

*Corvallis members: Diana, Paula, Lucille, Lorrain, Irene, Robert.*

*There were several handouts Norma had brought for the workshop (Appendix D). When I arrived, they were going over the reading list. Norma was making a distinction between herbal medicine used "spiritually" and that used "non-spiritually". There were certain books that she referred to as having a particular validity because they are written by a spiritual person, or someone with a spiritual background.*

*Another handout she had was a taxonomic sheet on herb/plant classifications. We went over this and discussed the uses of several types of plants. Marjorie, with whom Norma had come, is very opinionated--as is Norma, to be sure--and there arose some disagreements between the two of them as to the usefulness of some of the herbs being discussed. Mostly, though, Norma had the floor. As she talked about using herbs and other plants, she told us that it is important to "honor" the plant when we use it. Her rules include; don't take the first plant, don't take the oldest, only take the part you need, make an offering to the plant you use. She did not specify what an offering might be, other than a prayer asking for permission to use the plant. She did say that if those who use a plant are not part of the propagation strategy, the plant will manufacture a "humanicide", so always make this offering. This indicates that the offering might also be a replanting of a cutting, or seed dispersal, etc. Paula asked about pulling the flowers*

*of dandelions so the roots will be more potent. Norma looked doubtful and told her that 'you need to ask that dandelion community if it's alright to do this.' She strongly cautions against using or controlling a 'community' of plants without first getting to know that community and making appropriate offerings. This sounds strangely like the ethics outline for ethnographers.*

*I asked about headache remedies, as I was beginning to get one. Norma told me that I need to figure out where the headache is coming from. If it's coming from someone else, I need to send out love. If it's coming from inside me, I have to figure out where in me it originates, and send love to that part, or otherwise soothe it. She didn't suggest any plants on this one. So, are headaches symptomatic of psychological distress? Not very helpful, but highly interesting that this ailment, of all things, doesn't have an herbal remedy, at least not according to this woman. It could be, also, that she was saying this purely for my benefit. Maybe she 'sensed' psychological distress.*

*There was quite a bit of talk about disappointment with medical doctors, and alternatives to modern medicine. Norma recommended two more books not on the reading list. She also talked at this time about herbal learning in Native American cultures. An individual slated for this sort of work showed signs as a child that indicated he/she should be trained for this.*

*Paula brought up some information on legislation to control herbal use. She had a letter which was sent to herb shops and natural foods store throughout the country explaining the evils of this legislation. Things got political pretty quickly. Norma started talking about going underground. She was very intense. There was some debate in the room on the appropriate ways to combat this; should they fight the trade legislation in a very public way, or go underground? Marjorie was for public opposition, but Norma cautioned that 'we' may have no choice but to become secretive. She made lots of references to witches in the Middle Ages and in Puritan America, and quoted her "favorite psychic" here in the Northwest as saying, "Don't speak out, or you'll find*



*yourself disappearing." It seems that Norma would like nothing better than to be persecuted and forced to practice her medicine underground. My sense is that, on some level, she would welcome being able to literally equate herself with persecuted witches in history. Paula was another one advocating the underground arena. She wasn't so much itching for persecution and secrecy, but was, rather, afraid to be public, and afraid of being "a political person." I made a very brief comment that 'not being political' is still a political posture.*

*My statement on the politics of being apolitical was followed by Diana stating that it's dangerous not to speak out. She said that the Medicine Circle and the Light are very helpful in doing political activism. The Circle gives strength and courage. It is a guardian spirit which doesn't merely protect, but empowers you. Bringing your spirituality into your politics calls the ancestors and spirits to you, and they lend you power. Norma, though, was not wholly convinced. She still advocated preserving our own natural freedoms as opposed to fighting something. Do your thing, but do it underground. This debate really stirred up the issue of the dichotomy between the politics of activism and the politics of inertia. Not everyone who lives in the pseudo-Native, New Age realm is apolitical. It is interesting to note, though, that some of those who are might welcome being persecuted by the ruling powers for their practices and beliefs. Is it that Norma sees a power in being oppressed? Or is it the aura of romance and adventure associated with 'going underground'?*

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Every social movement is some kind of moral crusade, and every religious movement is making some kind of sociopolitical statement with resultant consequences. Wallace, however, claims that there are two distinct variables involved in a revitalization—the amount of religious actions or secular actions which take place as a part of the movement. While he states that there are those which are "purely" political, he contends that most secular movements have at least some element of the supernatural embedded

into their symbolism and rhetoric (1956:277). Worsley notes that religion always has the potential to hurt established interests; it has the potential to be revolutionary.

Theologies, and the religions they are a part of, can maintain social structures by justifying existing ones. They can also be tools of social change. Just as they can uphold systems, they can also justify resistance to, reform, or overthrow of systems. In this way, ritual can become--or at least lead to--social/political action, as Diana contends.

John Hannigan (1991) has outlined some characteristics that he feels can be applied to all revitalization/resistance movements. Foremost, individuals drawn to them are seeking to liberate themselves from impingement by the dominant. The dominant can be defined as the people or groups who have enjoyed the power to define others and articulate their interests. These include politicians and the political structure; big business, or brokers of consumer and merchandising power; the establishment clergy, or leaders of the major religions; academicians, or the intellectual elite. These are all people or groups which have enjoyed the power to define and articulate the interests of other individuals.

While they struggle to oppose this bureaucratic meddling in their personal sphere, that sphere is made up of an identity based on categories designated by the dominant: age, race, gender, and ethnicity. In some social resistance movements, one of these categories may be emphasized over another; in the Red Cedar Circle gender and age, race and ethnicity are intricately tied into each other, forming a complex of overlapping motivations.

A resistance movement is a collective attempt to articulate grievances and visualize and articulate a desired goal or way of life. For members of the Circle the desired goal of the "Native Way" is tied in with environmental issues, constructing new identities of choice, and constructing a community which will fulfill the needs in the individual, the group, and the earth. The way to achieving these goals is through Native

American spirituality, and recovering Earth-Mother (eco-feminist) oriented ways of visioning relationships between people and the world.

According to Hanningan, social resistance movements go through three basic processes: contestation, globalization, and empowerment. Contestation refers to taking an oppositional stance to the dominant in select fields. For the Circle, these fields include gender, environmental politics, peace/war politics, and the general perceived climate of post-industrial society, particularly in regards to materialism and consumerism. In regards all of these, there is a strong emphasis on 'going back' to an era and a culture in which there was balance and health. For instance, both men and women in the Circle are concerned with restoring what is thought of as a lost balance between men and women; a time and cultural place where gender was an equalizing operative in peoples' lives, and in which there were accepted aspects of the feminine and the masculine in everyone.<sup>17</sup>

The dominant is contested in two basic ways; reactive (defensive) or proactive (offensive). On some issues the Red Cedar Circle is more reactive, on others more proactive. It also varies among individuals, and whether they take their social protest out into the streets and man the barricades, so to speak, or if they are retreating into their own comfortable constructions without making very much social noise over it. Diana is more politically involved than many others, and she uses the spirituality she is fostering, via the Circle, to give her the strength to do this. When she participates in protests, for instance--and she does quite often--she takes her drum and other accouterments with her, and may stay out at the protest site all night, singing and drumming in the four directions. For her, this is an integral part of the protest, taking it beyond the human realm into the world of the spirits.

Proactive stances and reactive stances can often be looked at in terms of how the individual involved conceptualizes and deals with certain cultural manifestations of the dominant. To demonize an objectionable manifestation, such as the hyperconsumptive

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<sup>17</sup> These ideas are shared in common with the men's movement, to some degree.

character of post-industrial society and symbols of mass consumption (shopping malls), would be a proactive stance. Marsha who learned to love shopping malls in Chapter One, however, is taking a reactive stance by sanctifying the objectionable symbol.

Another example of the reactive is from the field of age discrimination as it applies to women. Many women in the Circle attempt to valorize descriptive terms which have negative connotations in the dominant culture. To call themselves crones and hags is to contest the dominant by taking its negative terminology toward the oppressed peoples and making it positive merely by saying that it's positive.

Social movements are usually concentrated in very localized situations, whether regional or national. Hannigan now recognizes a trend toward a more global view of spirituality, with the world being a single place or the single entity of the sacred Earth Mother. Everyone is seen as necessarily affected by that spiritual nature. Within the New Age, as well as in the local setting of the Circle, individuals interpret current circumstances in a very holistic fashion, as opposed to looking at circumstances in a very localized context.<sup>18</sup>

There can be little question that spirituality is used as personal and collective power. The religious movement of the Red Cedar Circle follows the third process that Hannigan outlines as a source of empowerment for practitioners. It is seen as a means by which they can tap into the spiritual power of the Earth and feminine elements. This spiritual power is what gives them the power to go into a political arena or concentrate on physical or emotional healing. Their actions in the fields of contestation are controllable because of the perimeters that their involvement in the Circle provides them--they're not just free-floating out there anymore. They are now anchored to an ideology with which they can make sense of the world, articulate where they wish to be, and which they can use to contest the dominant.

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<sup>18</sup> The emphasis on a global spirituality or global applicability and relevance of eco-spirituality can also be viewed within the context of multi-national capitalism as discussed by Jameson 1984.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### NATIVE VOICES, LOCAL CONTESTATIONS

*Indian and White* represent fabled creatures, born as one in the minds of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European thinkers trying to make sense of the modern experience....Ever since, Indian and White have been entangled with one another in the collective thought of both European and New World peoples, like some artist's image of a mad duo coupled in a dark embrace. To borrow a thought from the Iroquois, Indians and Whites are *false faces* peering into a mirror, each reflecting the other (Simard 1990:333).

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Fieldnotes: Wednesday, January 4, 1993 / Corvallis, Or.

*Nancy is a member from Alaska who is down here temporarily while she gets her teaching certificate. She had her orals today and will be leaving soon. Tonight was her last Circle meeting. I gave her a ride home and we talked a little about my research on the Red Cedar Circle. It's always interesting discussing it with other Circle members who are working on degrees themselves. We got on the subject of the ethics of appropriation and the problem of 'plastic medicine men' who are into the eco-spiritualism game for the money. Nancy made the comment that every religion, every spiritual ideology, has its share of charlatans. There's genuineness and spuriousness in every cultural practice. The way the Red Cedar people seem to deal with the problem of the ethics of appropriation is to say that Johnny has given it to them, and that he has done so with the blessings and at the instruction of his elders. They say they wouldn't be doing it without that sanction.*

#### Imperialism or Solidarity? A Vigil at the Long House

The Circle has involved itself in the Indian community at the Oregon State University Native American Long House on a number of occasions. Some contingents of the Native community have welcomed them, though with some reservation:

With *Si.si.wiss* or the Circle, they may be European. Fine. But as long as they don't change the religion, it shouldn't make a big difference. If it's the Native ideals that are being practiced, and not European ideals, it's ok (NA Interview: Gene 04/93).

Many other Native Americans at OSU have stated that the New Age interpretation and practice of Native spirituality is inappropriate, particularly when such practices are connected to Long House activities:

I don't see the Long House as being an organizing hub or functioning social center for anybody on this campus but Indian students. I do not feel that the Long House needs to be shared. I firmly believe that the Long House is ours and it should be a sacred place. I don't think the Circle should meet there; I don't think they should organize activities through the Long House; I don't think they should be associated with the Long House (NA Interview: Hugh 08/93).

Still others not only view New Age Native American spiritualism as benefiting Native communities, but are directly involved in variations of the movement. As a consequence of these differing points of view, an inter-ethnic problem has developed into a problem of divisiveness within the Indian community. This is the context in which the following events took place, and in which a discussion of the motivations and aspirations of New Agers, Native Americans, and anthropologists will be discussed.

On October 21, 1992, a candlelight vigil was held on the Oregon State University campus in support of the Native American community. Many racial and ethnic groups were initially represented, though solidarity broke down due to differing positions on appropriate action. A group of minority students, bitterly, if indirectly, stung by the proceedings which had led up to this night, sought atonement through the expression of rage. A call rang out for a march across campus, through dorms, into peoples' faces. The people who had gathered as a community divided, some heading off for a short-lived rendezvous with outspoken dissidence, others to the Native American Long House for a quieter contemplation of what had brought them together.

The latter group included not only the Native American participants, but several members of the Red Cedar Circle. They had come to the vigil with drums and bells in tow, shawls of sacred red and black draped over their shoulders. Having asked if it would offend anyone, and having received no dissenting opinions, they formed a circle outside the Long House, partially blocking the main entrance, and began to sing and play their instruments. They sang what they call "healing songs", many of Quaker and Indian Shaker origin. One Native American described the scene like this:

Then there were some women with shawls standing outside the Long House, drumming and singing some kind of songs. Sounded like Christian songs to me; I don't know what it was. I mean, they were old white women with shawls. It didn't feel Native to me. I guess it was kind of nice. There was good heart feeling there, but I certainly wouldn't classify it any kind of Native American ceremony, and the real Natives were left hanging around the fringes. It was kind of weird (NA Interview: Marcus 03/93).

The year of Columbus, the 500th anniversary of Europe's first explorations and exploitations of the Americas, became an opportunity for Native Americans to not only reflect on the ways their cultures have been affected by the last half-millennia, but air their griefs and frustrations to the larger Euro-dominant. It became an opportunity for everyone to challenge assumptions about America's heritage, and point out the ways something 'great' had been achieved at the expense of real people, real lives.

In preparation for a Columbus Day rally, several people involved in the Native American Long House and Native American Student Association had painted signs meant to draw attention to the less positive aspects of the past 500 years. A group of rowdy fraternity brothers, returning inebriated from a football game, passed by the Long House where the signs were out drying in the sun. Spurred on by the competitiveness of the game, and irritated at the challenge to their Euro-American conceptualizations of the past, an assault was launched on the offending signs. One young man led the charge,

tearing the poster board and yelling racial epithets at two Native American students relaxing in the Long House.

The vigil just described was in response to this incident, and resulted in what some viewed as yet another assault; that of white Red Cedar Circle members drumming to sprits of debatable origin outside the Long House, while members of the campus Native American community stood perplexed at the fringes. "Good heart feeling" or not, the Circle's activities alienated the people whom they claim to most respect and desire to emulate. Assuming that they earnestly wished to show solidarity with the Native Americans present, the affect undercut their sincerity to the point where they were seen by many as no more than another bunch of imposing colonialists.

I was absent, inconspicuously enough, to all but myself. The Circle chose to consider me a member, which has the potential for putting me in some awkward positions. In fact, I am in many ways, biased against their activities, if not all of their motivations. While I have been able to subvert my biases with some degree of success, in order to represent them fairly, and make a point of interacting with them in the respectful manner the ethics of ethnographic research call for, I do not wish to be seen as going Native myself. To have been present at the vigil, which would have made for a very interesting field experience, might have either jeopardized my relationship with the Circle, due to my refraining from joining in their singing, or put me in the position of being a white appropriator in the eyes of the Native American community. By not attending, I did not eliminate the problems of my own positionality, but I did begin think of the ways in which I can, as an anthropologist, be implicated in the dilemmas of appropriation.

Anthropologists should view themselves as intimate players in the game, whether through current research or via the baggage of the discipline's history. The subject of this chapter is not solely the ethics of spiritual and cultural appropriation and how Native communities feel about it, but of dilemmas that face anyone dealing with the issue. The



problems of appropriation (or borrowing, to use a softer term) affect not only those being appropriated from, but those in the position of borrower. Further, the anthropologist studying the phenomenon can be discomfited and placed on ethically unstable ground by the situations of such fieldwork. In the New Age of white defined Native American spiritualism, conflicting needs and sensibilities are inevitable. At the center of conflict are issues of identity politics and, as far as the researcher is concerned, roles. The activities leading to the interacting dilemmas of Native Americans, New Age fanciers of Native motifs, and anthropologists searching for their positions in all of this noise, are not new. However, they have increased in scale at a time when indigenous people throughout the world are ever more assertive about recapturing their right of self-definition. In my research among the Red Cedar Circle, the dilemmas of appropriation have imbued my task of ethnography with a complexity I was hardly expecting at the onset.

### Native Lives

The problems in this community are all about Indian politics, and Indian politics is all about identity. It's a fight between the traditional and the non-traditional. One person's idea of what makes him Indian is going to challenge someone else's identity as an Indian (NA Interview: Ruth 05/93).

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The local Native American community at Oregon State University has been debating the proper use and appropriate atmosphere of the Long House for several years, culminating with a heightened degree of political turmoil within the past year. Non-Native appropriation in the New Age, and Indian authenticity are major concerns regarding activities in this community.

Ideas of political autonomy play a large role in disputes over white involvement in Long House activities, but underlying even that are identity conflicts in OSU's Native community. Reduced to simple terms, on the one side are those who are traditional

Native Americans, more than likely raised on a reservation, and seemingly secure in their identities. They not only have a cultural background which is unquestionably considered authentic, but they also have the blood quantum/tribal registration cards issued by the Department of the Interior to prove it. On the other side are the urban-Indians who may know that they are Native American, but are in a state of self-discovery. They did not grow up on reservations, and may have had little or no experience with what is considered authentically Indian, prior to coming to OSU, though they may be registered with a tribe. These individuals have been called "neo-Natives" by traditional Natives on campus.

Likely to intermingle with this group are the "wannabees"--whites who pretend or truly believe that they have some Native ancestry and wish to connect with that heritage--and non-Indians who have a strong interest in the culture. Some of these Euro-Americans, such as members of the Red Cedar Circle, are motivated by personal spiritual impulses to mingle with Native Americans, but this is certainly not the case with all. There are no clean demarcations between these sides, and there are, indeed, many non-traditional Indians whose sympathies clearly lean toward traditional people.

Non-Native involvement in the Native community and in Native spirituality is seen by many Indians as encroaching on their already threatened identities and autonomy. While a sense of this may be common throughout a large part of the community, the question becomes intra-ethnic when it comes time to define what is authentically Indian and what is not, and the use of the Long House seems to be where any discussion of the community's authenticity begins. It is meant to be a space where Native Americans can go to be with other Native Americans, to get away from being 'different' in the largely foreign environment of the campus. At the same time, it is meant to be a place where non-Indians and Indians alike can learn and experience Native culture. Furthermore, regulations state that the Long House must be open to everyone due to its receiving university funding as a campus cultural center. These functions appear to be

irreconcilable and are complicated by the question of just who is going to define what Native culture is. The resulting challenge to identity may be particularly potent when the traditional Natives are doing the defining, for it would seem that the non-traditionals are easily denied authenticity. But, in the local situation, the non-traditional person is the privileged one, for it is people from this group that more or less have controlled the Long House as coordinators and officers for several years. While this environment has been changing during the 1993-94 school year, the question over identity has been very destabilizing within the OSU Native community, and has led to individuals in all camps being labeled either 'genuine' or 'spurious'.

A definitive part of this struggle has been the recent upsurge in spiritual/religious appropriation by whites. To the general Euro-dominant community, the Long House is automatically associated with Indian authenticity, making it a popular place with non-Natives interested in doing "Indian" things, as one Native student put it. This includes the Red Cedar Circle, which has scheduled at least three women's gatherings there. Among traditional Natives at OSU, there is a great concern that the New Age is changing the meaning of Native spirituality in ways that traditional people have no control over:

I think it poses a threat to Native communities because it seems like they're taking it away, that they're going to change it, that it's not going to be the same anymore, and if they learn how to do all these things, they'll change it. They can't help but change it. Then everyone will be doing it, and it will be sort of lost in a way. It's quite scary to think about it, that everyone wants to do this (NA Interview: Janine 07/93).

The individuals who are attracted to the Long House and Native community by a desire to reconnect with their Native selves, are often seen as connecting along the lines defined by popularized white versions of Indianess, or as one traditional woman put it, along the lines of the "Dances-With-Wolves model." Another traditional Navajo student commented, "I feel like an alien there. It's all white." In many respects, she is right, for the Western epistemologies which inform the ideologies of the New Age are, likewise,

creating a particular atmosphere at the Long House, arguably more valorizing to Euro-dominant sentiments of Native Americans than to any actual Native peoples. The fact that the OSU Long House is the local representation of Indian authenticity in Corvallis makes anything going on in it or coming out of it, unquestionably authentic in the public imagination. There is, consequently, a great deal of justified speculation and worry on the part of traditional Native Americans that the Red Cedar Circle's involvement there, including their well-meant song circle, on the night of the vigil, has been and will be wrongly taken as "really Indian."

### Native Voices

Gene is what some traditional students would call a "neo-native." He grew up in the white world, and is of only limited Native American descent. He says his grandmother was full-blood Cherokee, and that he did spend some time with her before he was five. However, he says he really knew nothing of his heritage before coming to Oregon State and getting involved in the Native American community at the Long House. He is currently a major player in Long House activities:

First of all, people say, "I'm Indian or black or gay or straight or whatever." But people often overlook that we are all human first, above and beyond whatever their beliefs or race is, whatever their religion is, whatever their sex is. They're human first, and anything beyond that, well, it matters. I mean, I'm not going to take anything away from anybody. I mean being Indian for me is one of the most important things there is because it has such a great affect on how I live my life. But that's really secondary.

There's been some controversy over non-Native people coming into the Long House--not necessarily coming in, but being involved too much. And I can see both sides of it, because people who don't like it are generally tired of, like in the past, whites saying, "I know what to do for you. I can help you." That's happened a lot. I can agree with them. I can understand why they don't want them involved in Long House government structure....

But, if you look into the past, tribes would adopt a person into their group and they still do that. There was a professor here that

was European, white, but he was adopted into the Poncha tribe.<sup>19</sup> As far as I'm concerned, he's Native. And maybe this is going to sound kind of off, but I would say he would be a person for whom it's harder being Native than for anybody else, because he's not. He had to show that he had the beliefs he needed. He had to prove what he was. It's kind of hard for the Red Cedar Circle in the same way, because they aren't Native....

A lot of people in the (Red Cedar Circle) don't fit into society, and they looked for something else. That's great. They found something that makes sense to them. The Circle accepts them and it works. I don't see really a problem with that. I don't know a lot about it, though I do know a lot of people in the group. I know they have some very traditional beliefs of some kind. And they are very spiritual. I don't have a problem with people, Native or non-Native in the Circle, but I do have some concerns about what they practice; if they try to change it to fit their culture or upbringing. As long as it's pure, I don't have a problem with it. If it's the religion, it's the religion, and it doesn't matter who it's practiced by. It's not a matter of who you are, but what you do....

Really, I think whites learning about and practicing Native spirituality is positive. Native people have always had a really strong connection with the land and they're very spiritual. Right now we're at a very critical point as far as the earth goes. The more people we can educate, the better. Native people say our religions are really great because we honor the earth, and everyone should do that. Then when whites try to follow those religions, the Indians say, "Don't. You can't do that cause your white." But I don't think you have to be Native to understand....

And I think whites should be welcomed into our religions because there's no point in bringing something back if only five percent of the population knows what's going on. The Old Ways need to be brought back and shared in order for them to do any good.

Patty is a Navajo with a very strong traditional background, and is almost the antithesis of someone like Gene. She has been involved in the Native American Church most of her life, and views herself as being completely culturally removed from white society. She expresses not merely reservations, but deep distrust of whites who involve

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<sup>19</sup> This professor in Psychology--now retired--led the predominantly white ScissorTails drum circle which met for several years at the Long House. He and this group were and are extremely controversial figures in the community among Natives and non-Natives alike. Some acquaintances and colleagues of mine may very well be offended by my even bringing him up within the context of this thesis and this limited quote, and to them I apologize. However, I feel that Gene's statement about him is revealing of the type of sentiments Gene's voice represents.

themselves in Native communities on a level so intimate as spirituality, and feels that it is ultimately extremely dangerous:

If you don't have any background in Medicine, and you don't know what you're doing, you can hurt somebody, physically and spiritually. Your spirit especially, because it's so fragile....

I guess I'm too worried about it, because if they haven't learned it by now, they won't ever. You would have to leave everything behind that you grew up being. It would be like becoming a whole new person. And it would be hard to do, because the practices of different indigenous peoples isn't written in books, it's not out on video tape, it's something that you grow up with. And it doesn't take a degree. It takes your whole lifetime to understand. You have to be a part of the culture to really understand Native spirituality. I mean, it's just who you are, and if you are not that, you can't be that....

It's strange to have outsiders trying to be what you are and what you know so intimately. When I grew up, people used to call you names, used to ignore you just because you were a different color. They made you feel ugly inside, because of who you were. And then all the sudden it's like a total switch around, and they're saying, "oh how neat, how beautiful." And your saying, "Woah, what are you trying to be? To me you're just two-faced and trying to be something you can never be." For me, when I was growing up, I wanted blue eyes and blond hair, and you always got this feeling of wanting to be someone else. But then, as you get older you realize that you can't be anyone but yourself. And you realize this by listening to your own people. Why don't they [whites] listen to their own people?

Matt is an older student, in his thirties. His mother is white, his father Native American from Eastern Oregon, and he grew up both on and off the reservation, very much caught between the two worlds, never fully accepted in either. He has found a place of acceptance in the local OSU Native community, however, and is highly regarded by nearly everyone, whether they agree with all of his views or not. For a couple of years, he was involved in the ScissorTails drum circle, but gradually had less and less to do with them because of the controversy surrounding them. He likes to keep the middle ground, and seems to often act as a bridge between the various factions at OSU. He has also been marginally involved in the Red Cedar Circle:

I attended some Red Cedar Circle meetings a few years ago, and I got to see and meet Johnny Moses. He's a really nice guy. I like Johnny Moses. And he's got a real good message. The people who are involved in the Red Cedar Circle are really looking for something to fill a void in their lives, and they feel that maybe this is the answer. I think they're kind of missing something, or at least one thing. They really need to get out into nature as individuals and learn from the earth. It's not bad what they're doing, you know, their meetings where they're drumming and singing and smudging, and I didn't feel uncomfortable when I went most of the time. I did have one bad experience with a woman who was a leader in the group who treated me like I was a nobody who didn't even exist. I thought that was really rude. After that, I kind of backed off from the whole thing, thinking if there were people like that in the Circle, I didn't need it. I mean, when you say hello to someone, you should be able to expect a polite hello in return, but when I said hello to this person, she just started telling me where my son and I should be, and what we should be doing, like I was a little kid....

I think that they're on the wrong track if they want to find out about Native American spirituality. They have to by themselves, go out into nature, somewhere alone for a while, and get in touch with nature and themselves and find how the two relate to each other, and where their place is. I don't think you can do that meeting in a building on Wednesday nights every week with the same group of people. It's something that you have to do alone, outside, and it takes time. And I haven't really seen that sort of instruction come out in the group. It's more a reliance on Johnny's teaching and the fellowship that they have together. It might not be out of order for me to go into the group and suggest that to everybody. If you still don't feel fulfilled, then this is what you ought to do....

They did have some prayer meetings for Mary's Peak during the big logging controversy up there. And that was a real good idea, that was a good start for them, but a lot of religions of Native Americans really depend on the personal experiences that you have. That's where you get your guidance, your own message or revelation that you receive, not so much what you can get in a group....

I can see they're looking for community, but I think they've already got that. It's not good if you completely depend on community for your strength. Human beings will ultimately always fail you. The trap of the community is that you can be misled. You can get lost in the community and lose yourself. That's one of the biggest lessons I've learned is that you can't depend on humans.

Olive has sentiments very similar to Patty's. She is half Irish, half Cherokee from a small, culturally insulated branch of that larger tribal group. Her father is very traditional, and made sure that she was involved in her Native culture and religion. She does not like to spend time at the Long House because of the overwhelming presence of "one-sixteenth, one-eighteenth" Indians--Indians who, in her opinion are not really Indians. Among her people there is a saying, "full-blood, half-breed, white"; if you're not at least half Native, you're white. She has strong feelings about appropriation which reflect that belief, but her condemnation is tempered:

I have a real problem with whites who I've seen that wear the blankets that they bought from some department store, and the feathers that they've bought from somewhere. Don't do that....

Our religions are based on balance. You have to walk solid, on top of your feet. Even non-Natives need to learn to be that way. So people who go into the Long House to learn about our culture, and who want to do part of it as their religion, I guess that's fine, but a lot of us feel that so much has been taken from us already that you shouldn't try to call yourself Indian just because you know something. Don't claim it as your own, because it's not. They should remember that they're just borrowing, and if it improves your life, then do it, but you have to have respect for where it came from. Don't call it your own, and don't try to act like an Indian....

The Circle came here in Fall term, and someone invited me to come to what was supposed to be a prayer Circle. But I don't mess around with magic unless I really know the people who are doing it. And I don't feel like I could trust any European-American, no matter how strong spiritually, with that kind of magic. My cousin is chosen to be the spirit keeper after my uncle dies, which will probably be soon. And although my cousin is pretty young, he's been being prepared for this role since he was four years old, so I have a real sense of security with that and the fact that he was chosen. But these women in the Circle, they're just messing with things that are new to them and that are too powerful for them to understand and control. If they just wanted to pray, that would be fine, but there's stuff that can mess you up. So the only problems I have with it is that they don't really know what they're doing, and that they shouldn't be calling it theirs....

Women shouldn't be drumming, for one thing, because they have so much magic and power themselves. They are able to give birth, to create life, and their power would overpower and kill the drum. There's no way I would do it....



And as for them being in the Long House, we already have a problem with it being kind of a white rendition of what Indian is, so the Circle having meetings there isn't going to make much difference. It shouldn't be that way, but it is. The Long House is the place for whites to go "be Indian." It's pretty disgusting.

Janine is a soft-spoken young Navajo woman from a traditional background. She, like many other traditional students, plans to return to her reservation after completing her university education. She is planning on medical school, and is interested in the intersection of traditional and Western medical practices for Native American communities. Although she is involved in the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, she has stayed away from the Long House and its controversies, and expresses a great deal of confusion over white involvement in the local community and Native spirituality:

There have been quite a lot of complaints that there's a lot of non-Native Americans at the Long House, and they try to get Native Americans to hang out there, but I think the only time we really go there is when we have AISES meetings....

I really have no idea why whites want to get involved. Maybe it's just the culture. I call them 'wannabees'. I don't know why they would want to. It would be like me hanging out with blacks at the black cultural center because I want to be black. I just want to be myself, and why wouldn't they want to...?

I just don't listen to that New Age stuff about Native Americans. I sort of brush it off because in my Native culture I strongly believe in the spiritual beliefs that we're told from the medicine man, and we have our own ceremonies that we go to, which emphasize that it's a Native American thing, and outsiders just shouldn't be practicing it. They're welcome to be bystanders, and look and watch, but not to get involved. That's how it's always been emphasized for me. It would be a bit odd to have an outsider involved in the ceremonies and stuff. At times I find it offensive that white people are out trying to get into our spiritual things, but I try to ignore it. It's the only thing I can do. I can't really tell them go buzz off....

The real Native American students here just kind of raise their eyebrows at it, I guess.

Mary: Do you have anything to tell the Circle or other whites involved in Native spirituality?

Janine: Quit. Just quit. It's something you just don't bother with. You're going to offend lots of people. I'd pretty much like to tell them to quit. Just stop it. Why do you want to be Native American?

Hugh comes from a culturally mixed background. Although he is full Native American, he grew up in a white community in Oregon. He has a very strong affinity with his Native heritage, however. He feels very connected to it, and has close ties to his community of tribal registration. For him, Native American identity, authenticity, and representation are at the center of the controversies surrounding the Long House and New Age Native American spirituality:

Sometimes I think if I had it my way, what I really feel, I might portray kind of a radical attitude. I think that it's (the Long House and Native spirituality) something that should be reserved for us. But I know that we can do a lot more through cooperation and tolerance, so to say, "You can't do this, it's ours," may be counter-productive....

I'm afraid of being represented by them as a Native American. I want to be represented by people with whom I share a common spirit and culture.

Nobody really owns the patent on a religion. Those (white) people can embrace that any way they want, and that's fine with me. As long as only Indians represent Indians. Even though certain groups may embrace the religious part of it, I don't want that to reflect back on me or reflect my people. And I would question whether or not I would openly invite them to participate in Indian celebrations. If they want to have their own pseudo-Indian celebrations, that's fine, but when it comes down to it, ours is ours, and let us represent ourselves, and that's pretty much it.

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### Imagining Anthropology: Conclusions

We worry about cultural borrowers threatening the integrity of traditional shamanism. When they play around with it, they get it wrong, and this can hurt. What we as anthropologists need to do--are morally obligated to do--is teach them about the traditional societies so they don't get it wrong. Perhaps we can be gatekeepers. Perhaps we can help protect traditional integrity by

teaching non-Natives the correct methods (Peter Furst in concluding statements for the American Anthropological Association panel "Ethical Issues in the Study of Spiritual Traditions: Exploitation or Cultural Borrowing?" Washington D.C. 1993).

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One of the sentiments motivating Euro-Americans who get involved in New Age versions of Native spiritualities is a sense that Euro-dominant cultures lack culture. Ironically enough, there are ways that the discipline of anthropology is partially responsible for the development of this idea. Traditional anthropology seems to say that the only groups who do have culture are small-scale, indigenous societies. That is, after all, the groups on which anthropologists have focused much of their studies, and these are the studies that have always gotten the most attention.

This has changed within the discipline to the point where many anthropologists (though not all, as Peter Furst seems to demonstrate) are now enjoying the pleasures of gazing upon themselves, but popular culture is not in the same place as academia either philosophically or theoretically. Anthropology is still very much viewed by popular culture as the study of "the Primitive," which is taken to mean the study of "true" culture. Furthermore, what anthropologists--both professional and amateur--write about the Primitive is used by the New Age Native American spirituality movement to aid in construction of the universal 'Native truth'. Given this, we can hardly avoid implicating ourselves and our profession in the political turmoil surrounding Native American authenticity and its representation--or misrepresentation--in the New Age.

It is useful to delineate the similarities between New Agers and anthropologists, and requires no great leap, for both have evolved out of the same epistemological sources and constructions of knowledge. As an extension of this, I will describe some of the ways anthropology and this anthropologist have been used by Red Cedar Circle members

in their quest for authentic knowledge of Native American ways. In conclusion, I will describe my own internalized ethical dilemmas resulting from that use.

New Agers and anthropologists are, at least on the surface, seeking different types of knowledge. More often than not, however, the distinctions become blurred under close scrutiny. While the purpose of becoming accurately informed in the New Age is spiritual enlightenment, academic anthropology claims to be more interested in 'dissemination' and 'useful' application of acquired knowledge. It is not uncommon, however, for anthropologists to 'go Native', and have their studies lead to personal applications, as was the case with neo-Shamanist and New Age pundit Michael Harner, and anthropologist Felicitas Goodman whose book Where the Spirits Ride the Wind (1990) offers readers a "practical guide" to experiencing ecstatic states through "trance postures." No doubt a great many people who go into anthropology are, at some point in their education, either explicitly or implicitly inspired by a search for self, spirituality, and alternative personal philosophies.

The New Ager searches for the universal truth, not unlike many anthropologists who search for the unifying principles, as well as differences, of humanity. The anthropologist wants to get into peoples' cultural heads; the New Ager wants her own head and soul filled with the culture of another. The anthropologist, we were told in all of our earliest classes, is striving to make the alien familiar, and sometimes to make the familiar alien. The New Ager wants to become the alien.

Current popular Euro-dominant perceptions of indigenous peoples are a result of at least 500 years of Western constructions and their influences on academic anthropology. People can never escape the affects of their own cultural filters, and professional anthropologists are especially cognizant of that fact. Due to the discipline's claims to some amount of objectivity as a social science, however, the popular imagination sees us as providing for them a relatively unclouded truth. To a very limited

extent, this may be a justified image. However, once our knowledge is presented, we have no control over its interpretation.

Anthropological sources are continually used by New Age enthusiasts to investigate ways in which an individual can become more Native. I have had informants refer to both academically legitimized and marginalized ethnographers and scholars in explaining to me their own religious beliefs and practices, occasionally leading to the odd sensation of interviewing my academic ancestry. Franz Boas, Carl Jung, and Joseph Campbell are perennial favorites. At one point in an interview, I was left speechless when my informant interrupted her descriptive narrative of her own 'Native' beliefs by saying, "Well, you're the anthropologist. You already know all this stuff." This, of course, refers back to the popular assumption that anthropologists specialize in Native things and have a particular understanding of them, unmuddled by cultural biases.

The status of academic recognition and acceptance has put me in the awkward position of being viewed as a potential 'expert' for the Corvallis Red Cedar Circle. As I am considered a believing member who should participate and add to the group to her greatest capacity, it has been hinted on numerous occasions that I could do research for the group, thereby helping to increase their level of authenticity. But as I stated earlier, the fact that I am even conducting a study of them boosts their sense of being authentic, and may even lead to interpretations of my work to mean that they are, indeed, authentically Native.<sup>20</sup> When interviewing members of the Native American community, I found myself having to be very careful how I word my description of the work I'm doing with the Circle. On the one hand, I do not want people to suspect that I consider the Circle a genuine Native American spiritual expression. On the other hand, there are Natives who do consider it genuine, and I do not wish to offend them by suggesting it isn't. It is not always easy to understand where someone stands on that

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<sup>20</sup>Naturally, I already consider them "authentic" but not in their sense of the word. By authenticity, Circle members are referring to their acquired Native Americaness, whereas I view them as a genuine Western cultural phenomenon.

issue, and made my avoidance of the candlelight vigil a professional necessity, as well as a personal wish for moral comfort.

Possibly the greatest dilemma facing everyone in this game of identity formation, reformation, and representation is the traps we have laid for ourselves, including the particular traps the Euro-American players have laid for their object of desire. Everyone seems to be empowered to define what Native identity really means: the New Agers by their reference to a well-established popular narrative of Indian people, the scholars by their claims to academic authority, and, of course, the Native Americans by their being Native American. While Native people now have more political power to define themselves than ever before in Euro-dominant America, their self-definition has to compete with everyone else's. They do have a voice, but it is part of a cacophony, and academia and the popular culture have greater access to the tools of definition and dissemination. This is not a situation that any of us would claim to want.

My personal dilemmas are very specific. The New Agers of the Red Cedar Circle are my "Natives" to whom I have a moral obligation as a professional anthropologist. I can critique and explain, but no matter how much I may sometimes want to, I should not condemn. I am dealing with the very legitimate needs and desires of real people, and must try to remain as true to them as possible, even by defending them against their attackers. My greatest difficulty with this is getting around my own criticisms of their practices and recognizing that my ideas come from a common cultural source as theirs.

I also see myself in the traditional anthropological role of wanting to protect the integrity of cultures which are being exploited by the New Age. This position has been tempered by my explorations of the ways I and my chosen field are similar to the New Age and other phenomenon of popular Euro-dominant culture. In my interviews with Native American students at Oregon State University, I have discovered that my anthropological self is viewed by many as being not much different from the New Ager.

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Yet what if identity is conceived not as a boundary to be maintained but as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject (Clifford 1988:344)?

In the spring of 1988, I was traveling through New Mexico and Arizona with my family. We lived in Germany at the time, and I was more acutely aware of my identity as an American than I have ever been. In the Southwest, however, or visiting anywhere in the United States at the time, I felt foreign, removed from others around me, and never knew quite what to say when people would ask where I was from. "Well, I'm American, but I've been living in Germany since I was nineteen, so...."

We had stopped at a large trading post in Ship Rock, New Mexico, just inside the Navajo Reservation lands. As I made my purchase of several skeins of yarn, I got into a conversation with the man working the counter. He asked where we were from, and I went through my usual muddled tale of being from one place and living in another. As it turns out, he, too, had lived in Germany as a soldier, and we soon lost ourselves in comparing stories of driving on the *Autobahn* and being American among Germans. He was very Navajo, I was very Anglo, he was probably well into his fifties, I was twenty-six, he was economically working-class, I was the wife of a well-paid, white-collar government man. But for the moment, these complex markers and powerful cultural identities were suspended. For one brief moment, he and I had a bond--our own little cultural clique--that placed us beyond the realm of the U.S., the Reservation, the trading post, the separate sides of the counter at which we were both standing. In hindsight, that bond seems extraordinarily superficial, but at the time, it felt very significant. Who I was and who he was shifted just for a second to the point where we could share a culture and be in a space that held just us. Others were around us--Navajos like him, Euro-American and European tourists like me--but for this man and myself, they were outsiders, aliens to our shared experience.

Identity is a major theme, not just in the local context of whites and Native Americans in Corvallis, Oregon, but also within the greater arena of late twentieth-century global politics. Perhaps it is the loosely defined 'postmodern dilemma'--the inconstant and obscure experiences of *being*--that makes individuals and groups grab for something to hang onto, something that will give them a feeling of substance. Perhaps it is the sense of being constantly in motion, always on the road, always a traveler of sorts, that makes individuals in contemporary societies so acutely aware of--possessive of, confused over, dissatisfied with--who they are.

The members of the Red Cedar Circle are looking for some kind of way to escape lack: lack of culture, lack of identity, lack of spirituality. For them, being white literally means being without color and definition. They see the answer in religious expression and spiritual depth which they feel cannot be gained by any other means than reaching outside of a shallow and colorless 'white world'. In the process, they unintentionally challenge the means by which other cultural groups define themselves. For many local Native Americans, identity does not come from a spiritual search, but from the power to define and maintain territory. This is both the actual physical territory, which the Long House represents, and the more nebulous territory of the culture/spirituality link. The sense of territory, and the role of it in cultural property rights, is not just a political tool or necessity, but an integral part of their cultural expression.

There are other Native Americans in the local community who feel that spiritual things cannot be defined as territory. There is, as they say, no patent on religion. What matters is what you call it. 'Practice whatever you will, but don't call it Native American.' Still others complain that whites who are practicing 'Native' spirituality aren't acknowledging the Indian origins enough. 'Practice it, but call it Native American and give more credit and recognition to the source.'



The white and the Native American in this story of the Corvallis Circle and the campus Native community are engrossed in and haunted by the idea of identity and either finding or fixing boundaries. They are where they are because of these concerns, because difference is exacerbated and made antagonistic. But their lives are also informed by very different ideas of what identity is. This is not just a relatively simple matter of two sets of individuals arguing over who gets what identity and who, therefore, gets the privilege of defining it. While there is, here, just such a situation, it is complicated by differing ideas of selfhood.

For the Euro-Americans I have talked with, identity is something you find, chose, and/or create. We (meaning white Americans) are brought up in an atmosphere of seemingly limitless choice: we are told, "make something of yourself," "find yourself," "be all that you can be." This idea of forming the self in any image we chose is an integral part of our frontier mythology, in the Horatio Alger myth, in the cultural memory of the 1960's. And because of our privilege, we can pick and choose to a very high degree what we wish to be and represent.

Other cultural groups have identity foisted on them by the Euro-dominant; they have been categorized and limited by European-based taxonomies. At the same time, many cultures were probably much more stable in terms of what we perceive of as cultural identity prior to contact with footloose Europeans. For many Native Americans even today, identity is not something you spend a whole lot of time thinking about. As Patty explained to me, being Native American is not something you choose:

You don't read about it in books and then decide to be that. Being Native is just who you are. It's your family. It's the way you were brought up. It isn't something you buy or learn or just decide you are going to be. It's just who you are.

For her, as for many other Native Americans I talked with, the idea of Euro-Americans either trying to be Native, or trying to reform their cultural selves according to some

model of Indianess, is incomprehensible. As the local Native American students have been finding out, however, being in contact with white appropriators, or even just being the only Rikagua Cherokee in a sea of (mostly white) faces, can make you start contemplating identity in a way you might have never conceived of before.

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And so, seeing everything as alive is a profound way of treating everything with respect, and balance and harmony in the world. Which is what we need now, to save our world, to live in peace with Mother Earth, or whatever you want to call it. So, that's part of this seeing everything as alive, and if you're related, then you have to think 'what does my action do and how does it affect that world? And it's even to the point where, like, I've now realized, do I want to remove a rock from the ocean? From the seashore where it belongs where I found it? Do I want to bring it back here, or do I want to respect it and leave it where it belongs? I've actually taken rocks back, after thinking about that. They're lonesome for where they belong (RCC Interview: Diana 02/93).

The people of the Red Cedar Circle are lonesome from where they belong, both spatially and spiritually. At the same time, they have no idea where that spatial/spiritual place is, so they must create it. What they may not be totally aware of, however, is that their creation has threatened to remove another group from where they belong. While Diana has come to an understanding of this with rocks, she has yet to realize that her separation of actual Native Americans from the idealized Native Way could have a very negative consequence for real people.

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## APPENDICES



Appendix A  
Johnny Moses Postcard

**JOHNNY MOSES**  
Whis.stem.men.knee  
Walking Medicine Robe



Johnny Moses is a Nootka Shaman entrusted by his Elders to carry the sacred knowledge of his ancestors into the world to be shared with those of open heart and mind through the tradition of the Red Cedar Circle. He calls for an awakening of the healer within each of us in this time of great change throughout the planet.

This 100% recycled paper postcard supports wholeheartedly the preservation of the tradition of the Red Cedar Circle.

**Appendix B**  
**Announcements of Red Cedar Circle Events**

# TRADITIONAL N.W. COAST NATIVE AMERICAN TEACHINGS



Donations encouraged  
(SACRED TEACHINGS  
CANNOT BE SOLD)

## NORTHWEST COAST NATIVE AMERICAN SHAMANISM

The workshop provides an opening to the experience of shamanic consciousness through medicine songs, dances and healing practices of the Pacific Northwest coast peoples.



Johnny Moses is a Nootka Master Shaman from the remote village of Ohiat, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. He has been sent by his Elders at this time to share the teachings of Si.se.wiss, the Medicine Teachings of the Earth, with those of open heart and mind.

## JOHNNY MOSES

AND

THE RED CEDAR CIRCLE

SATURDAY JUNE 13 9-5pm

SUNDAY JUNE 14 2-5 pm

Summit Grange Summit, OR

For more information



POTLUCK MEALS  
TOGETHER

TRADITIONAL NORTHWEST COAST SACRED

# GRANDMOTHER TEACHINGS

OPEN

## GRANDMOTHER CIRCLE

for women, men, and others -  
to strengthen our female energy  
with traditional Grandmother songs  
and teachings

7<sup>30</sup> Feb 6 at Queen Anne  
Christian Church

All welcome - Donation will be taken to cover  
hall rental and teaching

---

Women's 1-Day Intensive Workshop

Sat Feb 7 9<sup>30</sup> am - late


Pre-registration required

call [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

---



# STAR CEREMONY



FIRST WORLD STAR SONGS

TEACHING

LIGHTING CEREMONY



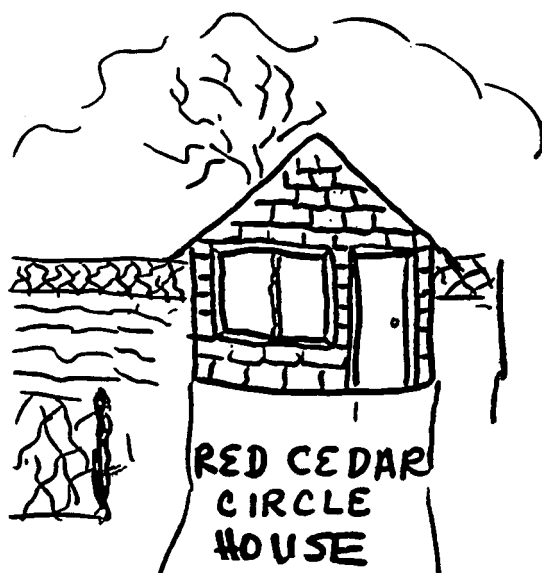
To aid in healing ourselves, realizing our sacredness, and turning our feelings into teachings, we are all invited to bring our private altars from home to lay upon our sacred family altar, to pray for ourselves.

The star medicine may bring us a different perspective on our strengths, our suffering, and our joy.



Fri JAN. 24 7<sup>30</sup> p.m.

Queene Anne Christian Church, Seattle



## 50-SONG FEAST

The following songs will be invited to come out:

- 8 water blessing songs
  - 6 altar songs
  - 2 dreamer songs
  - 3 dance songs
  - 6 Shaker songs in English
  - 2 Shaker healing songs
  - 20 Sisiwis healing songs
  - 20 other Sisiwis songs  
(animal, tree, house blessing,  
giveaway, going ahead, etc.)
  - 9 women's society songs
  - 2 Sisiwis chants
- as the Spirit moves.

SATURDAY JAN. 11

noon on... (till done)

Feast + giveaway to honor  
50 Sisiwis Songs

— [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] —  
All welcome to come eat  
sing, drum, listen —  
to all or any part of  
this honoring ceremony

E - heich-ka Sisiwis  
Sister

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**Appendix C**  
**The Red Cedar Bark**



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**THE RED CEDAR BARK**

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**A Note from Brother [REDACTED]**

Well, I get "de feeling" to write a few words about our brother [REDACTED]. It's incredible how one "poor boy from Austria" (as he referred to himself) can touch so many lives. Our brother returned to his homeland on March 4, and is doing his work there. He said that he will come back to be with us again sometime, possibly next winter. Until then, he will be missed.

[REDACTED] brings a special quality to the interactions he has with brothers and sisters. He told me that part of his work is to somehow connect and bring together the different lands and people of the old European ways with the people of this region, to be a bridge.

He first passed this way nearly 2 years ago on a quest to find a spiritual teacher, and among the many things he "found" since that time was himself and a new way of life, a way much closer to his own truth. He also made many friends along the way who have been gifted with what he has to share.

We miss you, brother [REDACTED], and we all hope to see you again in the future to do more work "in de humble way."

**SEA OTTERS AND SEALS**

by [REDACTED]

Recently I visited Orcas Island to pray for the land of the ancestors -- the land where the SiSiWis Medicine began, the land taken away, the land crying for prayers, the land where we will return. Sister [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went with me to Madrona Point, ancient sacred beach and grove of trees. While we were singing and drumming, a lone sea otter swam alongside us, out just a few hundred feet, playing, dipping down, re-emerging, flipping over on its back with webbed feet waving in the air, staying with us the whole prayer time.

Then we took a ferry over to San Juan Island to pray for [REDACTED] ancestral land, also a burial ground. She was one of the last Lummi fisherwomen, and there were two ancient longboats with high sternseats rotting in the undergrowth by the beach. A seal playing in the bay dived and resurfaced at my approach, then eventually swam out to the far point. My drum began beating by itself, a slow steady rhythm as I walked the land and beach from point to point: songs I do not know nor remember came from me. We sang and prayed for protection of this peaceful place. That was Wednesday.

On Friday, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] visited Orcas Island, going to Madrona Point to pray. About the third beach out, washed up amid the rocks, was a dead sea otter. [REDACTED] slid down the steep cliff, walked out on the rocks, and pried driftwood away from the body: a large gash above the eye was the only wound. [REDACTED] managed to wrest a nearly-square piece of driftwood loose from the debris, placed the body on it, carried it over the rocks to the ocean, and sent it on its way with a prayer.

Friday night at a Red Cedar Circle gathering in Tulalip, I shared about our work praying for the land, and how the sea mammals, sea otter and seal had been with us at the beaches. I asked for their protection and guidance, and asked Johnny for a sea otter song: the one he sang was an ancient doctoring song, very powerful.

I do not understand, yet I know the sea otter and seal are important in guiding us to find the Red Cedar Circle ancestral communal land: but I did not realize until later the powerful connection: as we were gathered we sang a doctoring song to honor the sea otter that we didn't even know was dead. Had we not done this, finding out later about the sea otter who had gifted us with its presence, would have been too much grief. But now this loss is bearable because I realize even more that the sea creatures are our guides: we must continue to follow them, study their teachings, and honor them in our work.



Sister [REDACTED]

#### PARENTS & CHILDREN IN OUR RED CEDAR CIRCLE

A parent cannot fully attend circles unless she or he is easy in their mind about their children's care during circle. It is difficult for me as a parent to attend circles knowing that kids may or may not be taken care of well. I have often been with the kids because I was not easy in my mind about the child care situation. I have felt outcast and alone in this important work.

This can change. What would a kid-friendly circle look like? For sharing circles, singing circles, and dancing circles we can have an area for older children, and an area for toddlers and younger children to play in. During the healing circles, we need to arrange for child care activities in other areas.

The toddler's area can have age-appropriate toys, a diaper changing mat, sleeping mats, and finger food. The older children's area can have handicraft projects, coloring pages, and age-appropriate toys. Games and motor activities should be available outside also.

For each circle time I would like to see the people who volunteer be recognized, honored, and publicly thanked. The service they provide to the circle is the most valued I can think of, next to our leaders. I suggest the child care volunteers wear vests of red & black or blue & black so the children can identify them easily, and so adults can know who to honor for their child care work. I would like to see two helpers for each age group so that there is less pressure on the caretakers, and less chance of potential abusive situations.

Western culture is very oppressive and non-supportive of parenting. The children bear the brunt of this oppression by being taken care of by people who also feel oppressed and isolated. We can change this kind of oppression in our circles.

Working with children often reminds us of our own inner child. We may not want to remember, and we may not want to be around kids. However, we can support those who can and want to work with kids in real and meaningful ways. This can in turn loosen up our hurt around our inner child, and let us heal in the medicine in powerful ways.

The Corvallis-Mary's Peak Gathering June 5-6, 1993 will be set up in the manner described to see it will work. I hope this article sparks ideas about quality and FUN childcare in our circles. Send me your ideas! (And your name if you want to wear one of those new snazzy vests!) E-heichka Sisiwis.

[REDACTED]  
Eugene, OR [REDACTED]

---

 TEACHINGS
 

---

Johnny Moses  
Medicine Teachings, August 1992

### WORK

I truly thank the Creator for the way to be made open.. And this Medicine Path that, when we are working in our jobs, whatever it might be, in this world, whether you're a cook or a salesman or cleaning houses or whatever. Remember that it is part of your Medicine work. Remember that is not any different. . . To call your Medicine helpers to help you.

You know, my grand-aunt [redacted] and [redacted], when they go out and work in the fields, they would call on the spirits to help them to . . . like when they go pick cucumbers or potatoes. Potatoes is hard work. It's really hard on your back. And those old ladies, I don't know how they did it. They used to help each other. and they were getting, they were so old, you know, but they would help each other picking potatoes with one sack. They would help each other carry the sack, 'cause, you know, those big sacks are real heavy, you know, those of you who have picked potatoes before. And they would ask the power, the strength. They asked the Medicine Powers, "Please come and help us pick these potatoes," or "Give us strength so that we can get lots and lots of potatoes so we can get lots and lots of money to share with all our friends and relatives who we care about. We want to earn enough money to be able to have some nice food on the table, or buy something nice for someone, or have gas money for our car," or whatever. This is what the elderly ladies used to think about. They'd say, they'd call on their helpers when they were working.

[redacted] Prayer Chant -- this chant was brought out on March 22, 1993. The last time it was brought out was in 1974. Prior to March 22, it has never been brought out "in public" outside of strict SiSiWis circles with Native people. Johnny brought out some teachings concerning this chant. The chant tells the story of the sun and moon from the second world, which includes the star sisters -- black haired sister being the red & blue star, the red haired sister being the white star -- and Diaper man was the sun, and Star man was the moon. *Sili* means "soul, life force, life energy."

*E hychka si cel siam*  
Thank you Creator

*Ne nahn Twalia*  
the moon

*Ne smae waekia*  
the sun

*Ne sili sin ne kazeli*  
the soul of the earth

*Ne sili sin ne kazeli*  
the soul of the earth

*E hychka si cel siam*  
Thank you Creator

---

 OUR VIEWS
 

---

Teachings from the River, Old Man and Old Woman Cedar Tree, Kosiak, Si shekest lakt, sila, sila.  
 Brother ██████

That week had been a sordid one, the magnitude of devastation, destruction of the land, the forests and rivers. To boot, the government and politicians seemed to be fully impervious and repellent to any change that could stop this headlong rush into oblivion. So, in those weeks, we seemed hard pressed to be happy about our future, our possibility of survival, what would indeed be left for our children. Everything seemed lost, seemed hopeless and absolutely discouraging.

After our visit to Shannon Falls, that night an extremely lucid dream came, or rather, vision, as it was to all one's senses very tangible and real. We were walking by the river, in its rush, swirl and roar, yet she seemed vulnerable, open, exposed. The boulders and rocks seemed to be like the tenderness and vulnerability of human body, of flesh. The colors too, the water, the sound and sight did all to punctuate this. As I walked up the pathway, still brooding, a strong breeze blew, and curled around us, smoothing and caressing. A large branch from this enormous cedar tree was brushing my face and body. At first it seemed to be only the wind, but it actually was the "arms of the tree". And in this gesture, in these movements and expression of great tenderness, these words came, but not as words, for I formulated the words later. Rather it came as a sequence of feelings. Both Grandmother and Grandfather Cedar Tree said,

"Do not worry, my son, do not worry. Yes, they are killing many, many of our brothers and sisters and for this we weep, we grieve. Yet if the forces that took so long to make us, and the billions of years we emerged, can man destroy the ageless past, the roots that reach so far back. Have not we the forests, the people lived this long? All the forest people can be destroyed by man, yet the 'purpose' that made us so, the Spirit, this they cannot, and for this we will return again. Be still in your heart, for your people are young, they will learn and so will you. Share this with all who grieve this passing."

---

 POETRY
 

---

## Mystery

*She goes for a walk  
 this mild winter evening  
 carried by her father  
 through two blocks of the village  
 from his office to the store*

*"Moon", she says, though it still  
 comes out "boon"*

*"pretty"  
 the misty clouds  
 swirl a bit of rainbow color about*

*"reach"  
 her little arm stretches out*

## Daffodils

*Who would know  
 from looking at you,  
 hard,  
 weathered by your winter,*

*of the hope within . . .*

*that if you found  
 a place to rest  
 and set your roots,  
 a place along the creek  
 protected from the wind  
 where sun  
 could warm a soul  
 so long in making,  
 you*

Poetry continued on the next page



---

*CHILDREN'S PAGE*

---

*An Open Invitation from [REDACTED]*

I would like to be a coordinator for a Red Cedar Circle Summer Children's Camp, the first one being this summer of 1993. This is an invitation for other brothers and sisters to join me. Some ideas and activities I envision are: A week-long camp, overnight for those interested. All ages of children will be welcome and included in most activities the camp offers. Although there may be some activities which could be challenging or enjoyable for only certain age groups and not others, the main intent for the children's camp is to be inclusive for all children and not separated based on age. Three meals a day, prepared, served and clean up done by different "shifts" of children (with the assistance of adults) each day. Guest speakers, storytellers, etc. . . . encouraged to plan a time of sharing with the children. Adult supervised and/or taught activities throughout the week long camp providing encouraging learning experiences, fun, laughter and positive growth.

I would like to coordinate and teach a play or plays of the children's stories that Johnny Moses shares. I'd like to work with a committed group of children two or three hours each day of the camp on performance, mask making and perhaps props. The depth in which we would proceed with the plays would depend on the children and how much they want to do. Even the very young children would be included for the plays, perhaps attending practice three times that week (?). I would need at least one other adult working with me in this activity. The last day of camp would include a final performance for all.

Other activities that others might like to coordinate and or teach: Drumming and singing traditional songs (teaching drumming to the very young on the cedar drum), cooking, SiSiWis language, storytelling, hiking, plant knowledge, canoeing, swimming, beading, basketry, sewing, and many more.

Please contact me with your ideas and suggestions and what you would like to do at the RCC Children's Camp. We would really like to hear from the children involved in every aspect of the camp including the coordinating and teaching. Contact me soon, as summer is nearing, and we need to pool together our ideas for planning.

I see the first RCC Children's Camp being focused on RCC children (to avoid legal matters). When we have the Children's Camp firmly established and strong in working together, then in the future we would like to invite children outside the RCC.

The adults working for our first RCC Children's Camp would probably all need to volunteer their time. There may be a donation asked, or a fee charged to the children to cover the cost of food and materials. Other suggestions?

Sincerely,  
[REDACTED]

Contact:  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] age 22 months, sees deer frequently near her home on Orcas Island. Just recently she's begun starting the Deer Song herself when she sees one . . . "Hey ho" . . . and saying "again" until one of her parents has sung enough verses.

[REDACTED] is also very friendly with the Moon and the planet Venus, which she calls by name. One recent evening when they were close together, she looked up at them and said, "Hi! How doin'?"

---

**CIRCLE INFORMATION**


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**WASHINGTON****Swinomish**

Sunday afternoon and Tuesday night

**Olympia**

Every other Wednesday night

Contact: [REDACTED]

**Seattle**

Seattle Medicine House

Seattle, WA [REDACTED]

Monday and Thursday nights  
Wednesday night at Queen Anne Church in Seattle  
-- call for information

**OREGON****Portland**

Portland, OR [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] -- Mondays

Monday - Regular Circle  
Last Thursday of the month --  
Men's and women's circle -- call for info  
Regular Circle at [REDACTED]'s

**Corvallis**

Corvallis Medicine House

Corvallis, OR [REDACTED]

Wednesday nights

**CANADA****Sunshine Coast**

Sechelt BC Canada [REDACTED]

Wednesday night  
Women's Circle -- Call for information

BC Canada [REDACTED]

Wednesday night

**CALIFORNIA****Nevada City**

Nevada City Medicine House

Nevada City, CA [REDACTED]

Every Sunday

**Berkeley - Oakland - East Bay**

Alameda, CA [REDACTED]

Saturday nights, every other week  
Call for schedule

*For upcoming events and circle information -- we print all of the information we are given about an event. That means if you don't give us correct contact names, dates, or phone numbers, then we can't pass it along!! Please remember to give us complete information. Thanks to all who have contributed!!*

*Upcoming Events*

April 16, 17, 18 -- Berkeley, CA -- Gathering in Tilden Park. Johnny will be hosting a Beginner's Workshop. Johnny will be there from April 13-18. Contact: [REDACTED]

April 23 -- Corvallis, OR -- Dinner for Sister [REDACTED] on Friday night, 6:00 p.m. at the Corvallis Medicine House. Honoring our Elder as she enters her 70th year. Contact: [REDACTED]

May 1-2 -- Drum Making Workshop in Nevada City, CA. Contact: [REDACTED]

May 7-8 -- Women's Pampering Circle on Orcas Island. Contact: [REDACTED]

May 8-9 -- Drum Making Workshop in Nevada City. Contact: [REDACTED]

May 22 -- Corvallis -- Oregon State University Pow-wow -- Robert C. Dana from Rochester will be telling stories. Contact: [REDACTED]

May 22 and 23 -- Gathering in Portland. Call [REDACTED]

June 5 and 6 -- Gathering in Corvallis. Saturday, June 5 -- Red Cedar Bark Honoring Ceremony -- Honoring the Ancestors. Sunday, June 6 -- Ceremony on Mary's Peak. Contact: The Corvallis Circle.

June 10-14 -- Johnny will be in Nevada City, CA. Contact: [REDACTED] at the Nevada City Medicine House [REDACTED]

Hooray for Aunt [REDACTED]!! She called the First-Ever Red Cedar Circle on Tulalip Reservation on Friday, March 26th. A landmark event -- and it will now be a monthly gathering. For information, call Aunt [REDACTED].

---

*We will be printing the Red Cedar Bark on a bi-monthly basis. Six issues a year at one dollar an issue. Please send your subscription information to: The Red Cedar Bark, [REDACTED] Corvallis, OR [REDACTED]*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1 year subscription \$6.00

Address \_\_\_\_\_

☐




Appendix D  
Handouts From Herbal Workshop

HERBS AS HEALERS: A WEAVING TOGETHER OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES - -

Suggested readinglist for the intermediate herbalist.  
The Beginners List + :

The Anatomy Coloring Book 

Erna Gunther Einobotany of WESTERN WASHINGTON

Hitchcock & Cronquist Flora of The Pacific Northwest  - or an equally complete flora for any area where you live.


David Hoffman The Holistic Herbal - /excellent organization,

Jethro Kloss Back to Eden

Julia de Bairclei Levy The Complete Herbal Handbook for Farm & Stable


" " " " " The Dog & Cat


" and other works available.

(ALL)   
Any of her work is outstanding, authoritative, very good but recipe proportions are not always given

Walter B. Lewis & Memory P.F. Elvin-Lewis Medical Botany

John Lust & Michael Tierra The Natural Remedy Bible 

Wm McGarvey, MD The Edgar Caycee Remedies 


Mark Pedersen Nutritional Herbology 

Jeannie Rose Herbal Body Book

Herbal Guide to Food 

" " " Inner Health

Kitchen Cosmetics



Modern Herbal 

Some overlap, but all are good - browse & pick 1 or 2

Michael Tierra The Way Of Herbs - verify all illustrations: mistakes cause accidents.

Paul Twitchell Herbs, The Magic Healers — some info here you won't get elsewhere, get it used



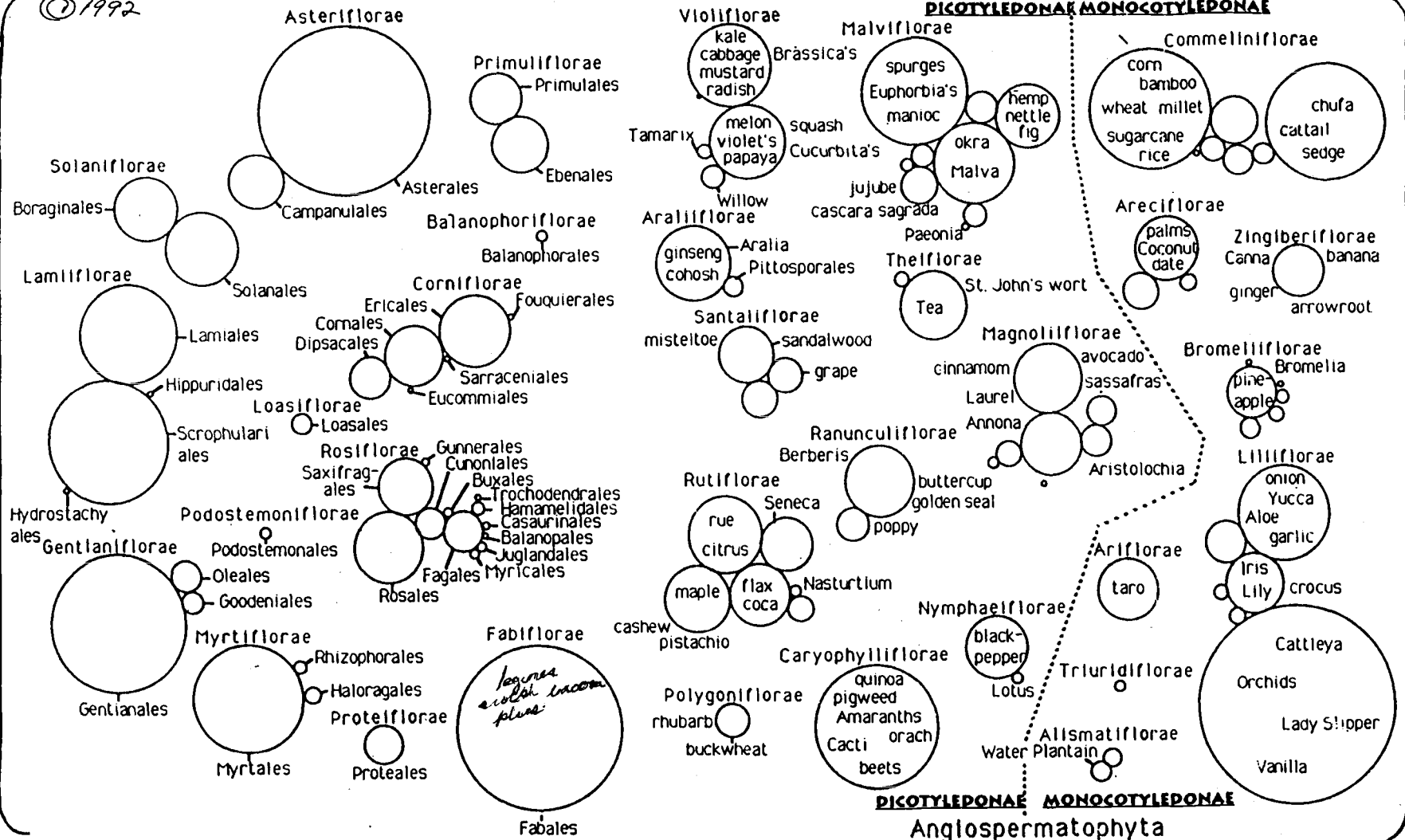
highly recommended  excellent bibliography  excellent illustrations

by Dr. Alan Kapuler

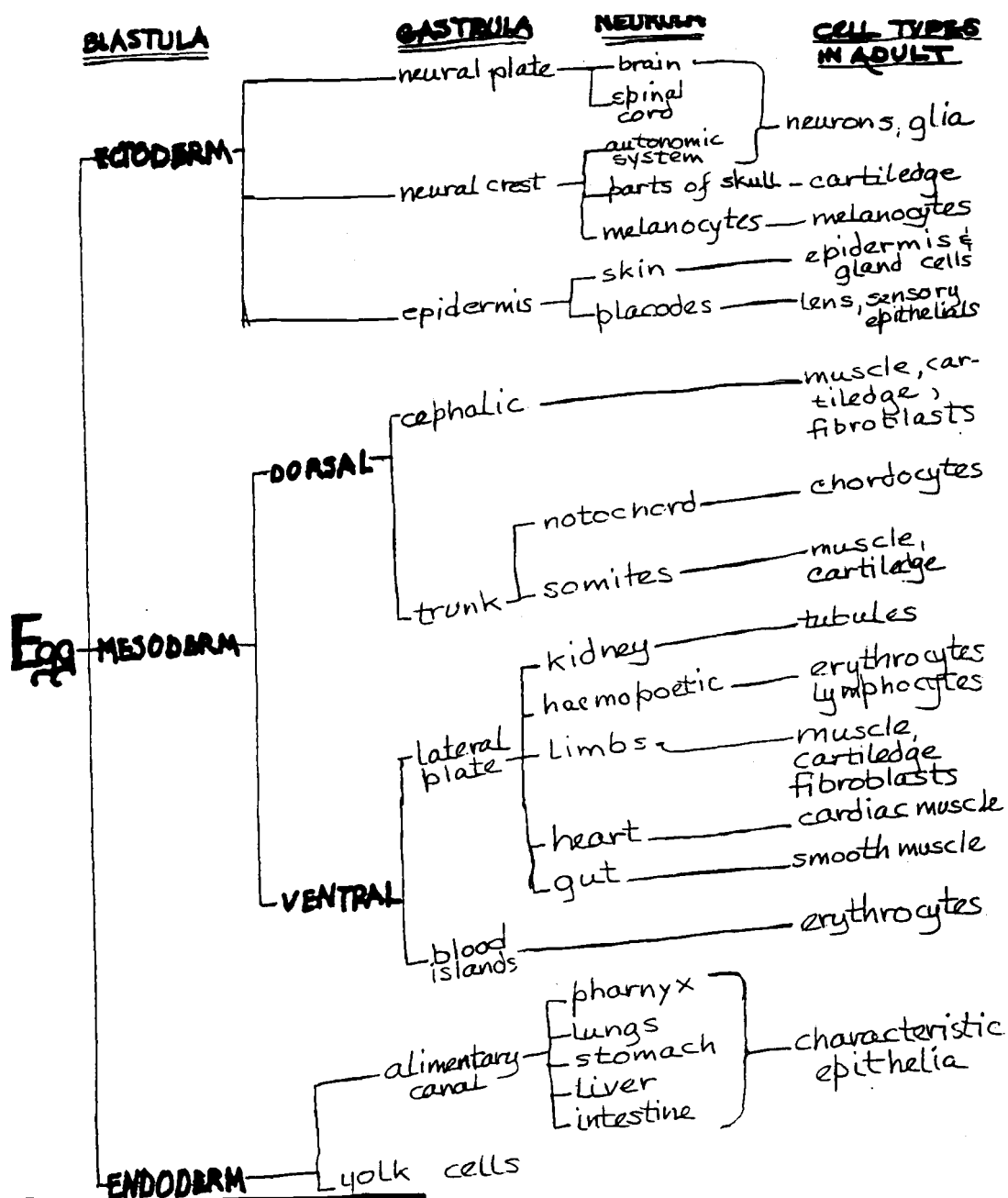
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# A COEVOLUTIONARY LAYOUT FOR THE FLOWERING PLANT KINGDOM

**DICOTYLEDONAE MONOCOTYLEDONAE**





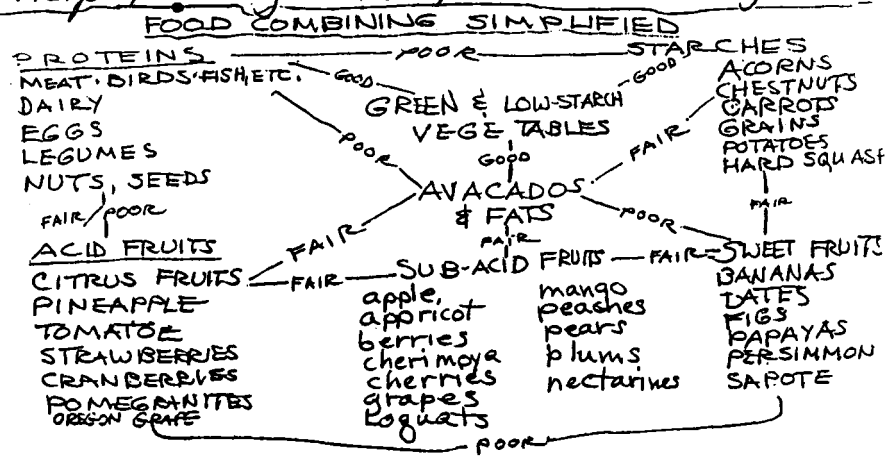
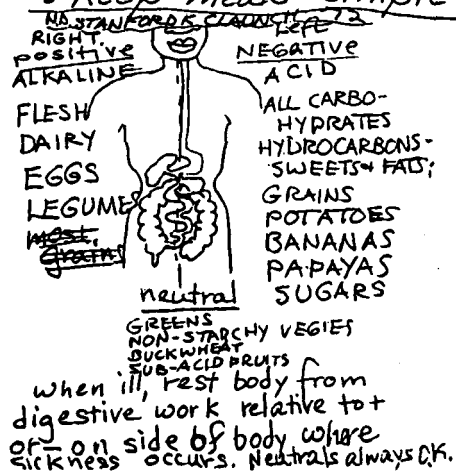


**CELL SPECIALIZATION:  
EGG TO ADULT**

after diagram, page 5, FROM EGG TO  
EMBRYO. J.M.W. SLACK, Cambridge  
Press, 1991

## Food Intake For Healing: Comparisons of Theories from several (many) different sources

- Foods consumed at room temperature help body adapt. In <sup>season</sup> foods grown in your area best.
- "...ine" as a food word ending usually indicates <sup>an</sup> addicting substance.
- In times of famine or extreme cold, keep protein intake high from non-animal sources if possible to protect body from ravages of stress.
- Ordinarily high protein or high fat diets kill, as do those very high in sugar, which often masks fat cravings.
- Wheat is a rocket-fuel type food concentrate which when removed from the diet often quiets allergic reactions to other substances, but it is very good for making plastic, gas and alcohol. ~~If~~ you must use it, adding rice polish helps detoxify it for some people.
- Mellons & raw apples are best eaten alone. Tomatoes are best with greens, nuts, ~~avacados~~, not with ~~proteins~~ or starches.
- Keep meals simple to help your digestive system work well for you.



# FOOD INTAKE FOR HEALING: COMPARATIVE THEORIES

## ETHERETS MUCOUSLESS HEALING SYSTEM

### MUCOUS-FORMING FOODS

Salt meat  
Salt fish  
Beef  
Pork  
egg white  
cows milk  
fats  
most grains  
legumes  
prunes  
nuts  
plums  
chocolate (cocoa)

### MUCOUS-DESTROYING FOODS

Fish  
fowl  
goat  
lamb  
human or goat's milk  
egg yolk  
buckwheat  
starchy root veges  
non-starchy root  
greens, fruit  
plain tea  
coffee  
chickory  
wine  
horseradish, carrots

## SUPER RESOURCE FOODS

garlic & alliums  
ginkgo  
gotukola  
Sage (salvia)  
basil, oregano  
umbelliferac seeds  
hops  
radishes (horse)  
Brassicas  
dulse  
Cayenne  
(kelp), (brewer's Y)  
(rice polish)

Rosemary  
Rose petals  
tea  
cocoa  
LEMONS & CITRUS  
CLAMS  
OYSTERS  
~~Crab~~  
Salmon heads  
pumpkin seeds  
Legumes  
Lettuce  
Lemon balm  
Cucumber

## EDGAR CAYCE'S DIETARY PRINCIPLES

- STRIVE FOR BALANCE OF FORMING
- MORE THAN 80% ALKALINE FOODS
- LESS THAN 20% ACID-FORMING "
- 60%+ RAW FOODS, 80% ABOVE GROUND
- PROPORTION DIET FOR  
4 VEGETABLES TO 2 FRUITS  
TO 1 PROTEIN

- UNDERSTAND THAT AN ALKALINE SYSTEM IS MORE RESILIENT

- WHEN CITRUS FRUIT CAUSES DISTRESS - IT IS STIRRING UP ACIDS/TOXINS STORED IN THE BODY. THOUGH ACID, CITRUS FRUITS ACT STRONGLY ALKALINE IN THE BODY.

### ALKALINE FORMING FOODS

All fruits - fresh & dried  
except large prunes, plums,  
& cranberries  
10 apples  
apricots  
berries  
dates  
figs (unsulph)  
citrus  
honey  
peaches  
pears  
raisins  
grapes  
small prunes  
pineapple  
mangoes

### All vegetables

artichokes - reg. & jerusal.  
asparagus  
alliums  
Brassicas  
Carrots & family  
eggplant, tomatoes  
& family  
green peas & beans  
mushrooms  
olives  
salsify  
compositae  
root veges  
sprouts  
millet  
buckwheat

Fish  
egg yolks  
milk & dairy products.

### ACID FORMING FOODS

Animal & vegetable fat  
Most cereal grains  
Amaranth?  
Refined starches/sugar  
egg whites  
meats, poultry  
legumes, nuts, seeds  
Cranberries, rhubarb  
large prunes, plums





Appendix E  
Interview Protocol  
OSU Native American Students

- 1) How did you hear about OSU and the programs it has to offer?
- 2) What made you decide to come here?
- 3) Did you visit the school before you applied and enrolled?
- 4) What were your impressions?
- 5) Did you have any expectations about the school before you started attending?
- 6) Describe your first few weeks/months here--your first term/year. How were your experiences different from or the same as what you were expecting them to be?
- 7) Tell about some of your classes--have you had any particularly good experiences?
- 8) Have you had any particular bad experiences?
- 9) What has been your favorite class or best classroom experience?
- 10) What has been your least favorite class or worst classroom experience?
- 11) Do you feel that the classes you have taken meet your needs?
- 12) Have your classes been relevant to your life and your future plans?
- 13) What is your general opinion of the faculty on this campus? Have you found your instructors helpful and sensitive to your needs, or not so helpful and sensitive?
- 14) Are you involved in any clubs or other extra-curricular activities, such as sports?
- 15) How do you spend your time when not in class?
- 16) Has it been easy or difficult to meet people on this campus or in town?
- 17) What is your general opinion of the student body as a whole here at OSU?
- 18) Do you feel welcomed on this campus?
- 19) Have you had any particularly good experiences at OSU outside of classes?
- 20) Have you had any particular bad experiences outside of classes?
- 21) Have you made use of any campus services/administrative offices?
  - health clinic?
  - residence halls?
  - E.O.P. office?

Multi-cultural Affairs?

Office of Indian Education

Graduate School?

Research?

Library?

Counseling Center?

Women's Center?

College of Liberal Arts advisors?

College of Sciences advisors?

Other?

- 22) What kinds of experiences have you had with each of these?
- 23) Have they met your needs?
- 24) In what ways have they been beneficial to your experience here?
- 25) In what ways have they not been helpful--how can the services provided be improved?
- 26) Has your experience in Corvallis been positive or negative?
- 27) Has your experience been what you expected it might be? How has it been different?
- 28) Do you come to the Long House? How often? For what reasons?
- 29) Can you tell me what a typical visit to the Long House is like for you?
- 30) Do you enjoy the atmosphere and the people there? Is it welcoming?
- 31) What do you like about it? Is there anything you like about it?
- 32) What do you dislike about it? Is there anything you dislike about it?
- 33) What do you see as the role of the Long House? (community, spirituality, learning)
- 34) Who do you think the Long House should be open to?
- 35) What kind of role do you think different people should play there?

- 36) Do you see much non-Native involvement in the Long House and in the Native American community in general?
  - 37) What kinds of non-Native involvement do you see?
  - 38) Do you feel that non-Native involvement is positive or negative?
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The questions that follow have to do with my own research for my thesis project and are not directly connected to the video project being done for the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs:

- 39) Do you know anything about non-Native involvement in Native American concerns other than the Long House?
- 40) Do you know about any non-Natives involved in Native American spirituality?
- 41) What sort of examples of that do you know about? Can you describe some of the things you've heard about?
- 42) Have you ever heard of the Red Cedar Circle?
- 43) Should Euro-Americans or other non-Natives be involved in Native American spirituality?
- 44) What are some of the positive things about that involvement? Is there anything positive about it?
- 45) What are some the negative things about that involvement? Is there anything negative about it?
- 46) Have you heard about the Red Cedar Circle being invited to the Long House?
- 47) What are your feelings on that?